

Sweet Temptations of Salzburg

By Genevieve Northup | Photos from Stripes file



My husband and I took a road trip last winter, stopping in several European cities and ending with a few days of skiing. Salzburg had made the itinerary, but I really didn't know what to expect. All I knew of the city was that it was Mozart's hometown and that much of "The Sound of Music" was filmed there. I fell in love with the city and did not have nearly enough time – less than 48 hours – to experience Salzburg, a city with so much to explore.

Mozart's Birthplace

Born in Salzburg, composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is still center stage for many of the city's attractions. Your hotel will likely have brochures for Mozart concerts, but you should choose and book in advance for weekend and summer shows. Browse concert options at www.salzburg-ticketshop.at/en/concerts and www.classictic.com.

My favorite part of our trip was dinner and a concert at the Baroque Hall of St. Peter



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Stiftskeller, documented in 803 by one of Charlemagne's followers and touted as the oldest restaurant in Central Europe. As we made our way to the Baroque Hall, I peeked into each of the restaurant's themed salons, still lavishly decorated for Christmas. The hall – with a frescoed vaulted ceiling, crystal chandeliers and etched windows – was lit by hundreds of candles. Between courses of delicious regional cuisine (based on recipes from the 18th century), the harmony of strings and opera singers filled the air. It was as if we had been transported back in time. To recreate this romantic evening, book your table at www.salzburg-concerts.com.

For more Mozart, visit Getreidegasse 9 to see the rooms of his childhood home, his instruments, family portraits and other mementos. And tour Mozart's Residence at Makartplatz 8, a grand home perfect for hosting musicians.

The Sound of Music

Salzburg was the backdrop for many of the memorable scenes of "The Sound of Music." See the gazebo where Liesl and Rolf sang the duet "Sixteen Going on Seventeen," and other spots by bus, bicycle or rickshaw tour: www.salzburg.info/en/art_culture/sound_of_music/

[sound_of_music_tour](http://www.sound_of_music_tour). Or book the Sounds of Salzburg Show & Dinner for performances of the city's most celebrated music, including favorites from "The Sound of Music" and Mozart's masterpieces. Make reservations at www.thesoundofsalzburg.com.

Other City Sights

Visible from almost anywhere in the city, Fortress Hohensalzburg is the largest fully preserved citadel in Central Europe, built in the 11th century.



Fortress Hohensalzburg

We were astonished at the impregnable exterior, and it became clear why the fortress was never captured by enemies. From the ramparts, you'll have unparalleled views of the city, so take your camera.

Try your luck at roulette, sip martinis and enjoy international cuisine at the luxurious Casino Salzburg, located in the historic Klessheim Palace.

Open between April and November, Hellbrunn Palace was built as a summer residence for Prince Archbishop Markus Sittikus nearly 400 years ago. The Renaissance palace is considered one of the most beautiful in the region, but you'll want to spend most of your time in the magnificent gardens, amused and quite possibly soaked by the trick fountains or *Wasserspiele*.

At the Salzburg Marionette Theater, hand-carved puppets steal the show in "The Sound of Music," "The Nutcracker" and works by Mozart, Wagner, Shakespeare and the Brothers Grimm. English subtitles are usually available, and an hour-long afternoon show is ideal if you don't have much time or have young children.

The city's oldest cemetery, St. Peter's, is nestled in a courtyard near the Salzburg Cathedral. Each plot resembles a garden, as seasonal flowers and plants sprout in front of grave markers. The cemetery and cliffside

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catacombs were the inspiration for the von Trapp family's hideout in "The Sound of Music."

Salzburg also has countless breweries, a natural history museum, zoo, state art gallery and modern art museum.

The Coffee House Tradition

Coffee was brought to Western Europe in the 17th century, and cafés quickly opened in a few major cities. In 1705, Café Tomaselli opened in Salzburg and still offers a unique coffee house experience today.



Café Tomaselli

We ventured into this bustling establishment mid-afternoon. Women in black dresses and ruffled aprons navigated the tables crowded with customers and their shopping bags, while balancing platters of assorted cakes and pastries. Male servers dressed in coats and bow ties took drink and snack orders. Tomaselli's classic coffees include Viennese Melange, traditional *Mocca* mixed with milk and topped with whipped cream, and *Einspänner*, Melange sans milk.

For a listing of Salzburg's coffee houses, visit www.salzburg.info/en/gastronomy/coffeehouse.

Sweet Treats

I have an insatiable appetite for sweets; the more decadent the dessert, the better. I can attest that the Austrians have developed some interesting and tasty confections.

The Sacher torte was invented in 1832 by royal pastry chef apprentice Franz Sacher, and the original is only available at four Café Sachers in Austria. Drop by the Salzburg location at Schwarzstraße 5-7 for a piece of this dense chocolate cake brushed with apricot jam and encased in a chocolate ganache.

First baked in Linz in the 1650s, the Linzer torte has a lattice pastry crust, jam filling and slight almond flavor from chopped nuts. And savor a strudel, a flaky pastry filled with apples (*Apfel*) or soft cheese (*Topfen*) – even tastier when served warm with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Many restaurants serve Salzburg *Nockerl*, a sweet soufflé that is whipped to look like mountain peaks. My husband and I shared *Nockerl* filled with hot raspberry compote; it was light and somewhat sweet, though too large for us to finish.

At dinner one evening, I ordered *Kaiserschmarrn*, pan-fried pancake pieces topped with a vanilla sauce. It reminded me of funnel cake and bread pudding – a wonderful carb overload. *Kaiserschmarrn* may be dusted with powdered sugar or served with a sauce. It usually comes as a huge portion, and despite my sweet tooth, I couldn't finish mine.



Nockerl

Nearby Must-Sees

Built as a retreat for Adolf Hitler, the Eagle's Nest, *Kehlsteinhaus*, is perched on a ridge 6,000 feet above Berchtesgaden, Germany (30 miles from Salzburg). After wending up the Bavarian Alps by bus, ride the brass elevator inside the mountain to reach the former retreat, which has been transformed into a restaurant. Wear hiking shoes so that you can explore the mountain trails. Visits are only possible between May and October, and little historical information is available onsite, so read up before you go (www.kehlsteinhaus.de), or take a guided tour with Eagle's Nest Historical Tours (www.eagles-nest-tours.com) or Panorama Tours (www.panoramatours.com).

At the Berchtesgaden salt mines, change into overalls and trek underground to find out how the mineral makes it to the dinner table. You can reach the salt mines by car, or take the 840 bus line from Salzburg and get off at the Salzburgwerk stop. Visit www.salzzeitreise.de for more details.

Eisriesenwelt is the largest series of ice caves in the world, located in nearby Werfen, Austria. The bizarre maze of icy caves was formed over the past 100 million years and spans 25 miles. Eisriesenwelt is open from May to October; visit www.eisriesenwelt.at to find out more.

The best advice I can give is to schedule enough time to enjoy all there is to see and do in Salzburg and the surrounding area. And though the city has much to offer year-round, visit between late spring and early fall for festivals, alfresco dining, garden strolls and views from the Eagle's Nest. ■

Salzburg Festivals

Mozart Week

Fine arts festival
Jan. 23 to Feb. 2, 2014

Eat & Meet Culinary Festival

Tasting menus and events at 40+ restaurants
March, 2014 dates TBD

Easter Events

"The Passion," Easter Dance Days, Arts & Antiques Fair, Easter Market, Easter Festival
Easter season

Whitsun Festival

Fine arts festival
May, 2014 dates TBD

Salzburger Dult

Folk festival
May-June, 2014 dates TBD

Salzburg Festival

Fine arts festival
July 19 to Sept. 1, 2013

St. Rupert's Fair

Country fair
Sept. 20-24, 2013

Harvest Festival

Farmers' fest
Aug. 24 to Oct. 27, 2013

Jazz & the City

Free concerts at 50+ venues
Oct. 9-13, 2013

Culture Days

Fine arts festival
Oct. 16-27, 2013

Jazz Festival

Among most distinguished European jazz festivals
Oct. 27 to Nov. 3, 2013

Winterfest

Circus festival
Nov. 28 to Dec. 31, 2013

Advent and Christmas Markets

Nov.-Dec., dates vary by market

New Year's

Party at Residenzplatz
Dec. 31

Visit www.salzburg.info for additional event details and to confirm 2014 dates.

