

OFFSHORE
— land of mozart

Salzburg

A symphony to hum forever



If Austria is Europe's cultural nucleus, then its second most famous city, Salzburg is the hotspot of a centuries-old music tradition. All credit to the genius of its best known son, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose legacy is celebrated in the Salzburg Festival every year since 1920

Words // **Punita Malhotra**

A

scenic three-hour train journey from Vienna is all it takes to arrive at the mecca of all things melodious. Timeless first image...a gentle river flowing through a charming old pastel-tinged town, dotted with baroque spires and domes, a medieval hilltop fortress in the background and a lock bridge weighed down with love. Precious UNESCO-protected historic center ahead. Let the trail of notes begin...





A glimpse of ornate wrought guild signs on doorways

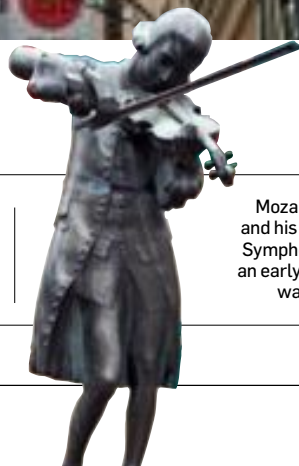
GETREIDEGASSE: FIRST CHORDS OF HOMAGE

A popular starting point to explore the town is Getreidegasse, Salzburg's most famous shopping lane, which was an ancient trade route during the Roman times. Drool-worthy elements lurk everywhere...in its medieval houses, romantic courtyards, covered galleries and vaulted passages. A unique feature is the hundreds of ornate wrought guild signs on doorways. Dainty patterns of flowers, tendrils, animals, stars and birds make each signboard a showpiece. Hours melt away peeking into hidden alleys, relishing traditional Schnitzel at atmospheric taverns and shopping for authentic take-me-homes. 'Mozartkugel' chocolates, 'Mostly Mozart' concert posters and hundreds of souvenirs stamped with Mozart's wigged face and red costume continue to pique curiosity until one reaches the modest, canary-yellow House No.9, the Mozart Museum.

The Mozart Museum is one of the best-known icons of Salzburg. This is where the child prodigy learned the piano and violin and composed his first boy-genius work. Exhibits including his music instruments, letters, memorabilia and portraits tell tales about the skilled composer who was forced to play for royals since a young age and died in his thirties, melancholic and discontent. Music fan or not, this museum will thrill one and all.

pitstop

Mozart's Requiem Mass in D minor was composed in 1791 and was left unfinished at the time of his death.



Mozart wrote his first symphony in London in 1764–5 and his last in Vienna in August 1788. The last symphony, Symphony No.41, which was believed to have come from an early arrangement for piano by Johann Peter Salomon, was later nicknamed as the 'Jupiter' Symphony.



Insider's view



Ronit Baugh |
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“Once you’ve had an overdose of Mozart and his compositions, put on a fancy outfit and head to Salzburg’s best jazz club, the Jazzit. Located unassumingly (just as all jazz clubs should be) about five minutes on foot from the Salzburg Hauptbahnhof (main station), Jazzit is the perfect place to enjoy concerts and energetic jam sessions with new local and international talents. Enjoy the relaxed ambience or dance the night away, Jazzit surely deserves an evening on your itinerary. Just make sure you make a prior reservation; it’s closed on Sunday and Monday.”

ALTERMARKT: RISING TEMPO OF
TEMPTATION

A two minute walk from the Mozart Muesum takes one to the next pitstop, AlterMarkt (old market), a lovely neighbourhood surrounded by a row of slim burgher houses and the central St. Florian fountain. The ancient dairy, herb and vegetables market is long gone, but a traditional flower market still pulls crowds. The main attraction is the former court pharmacy, now the main outlet of chocolatier ‘Fürst’, inventor of Austria’s famous chocolate treat, ‘Mozartkugel’. Pure, hand-made

indulgence at its best, the only downside being the price tag 31 euro for 25 pieces. Luxury never comes cheap.

More sinful temptations await at the legendary Cafe Tomaselli, where Mozart spent many afternoons gathering inspiration for new symphonies. There’s outdoor seating on the cobblestone square and tables under green-white striped awnings on the upper balcony. But what makes it one of the most ‘Viennese’ cafés in all of

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You can fly to Austria
with Vistara's interline
partners Lufthansa,
Turkish Airlines,
Aeroflot, Qatar Airways,
Air France, British
Airways and Emirates.

Austria is its interior. Polished wood paneling, glowing chandeliers, marble tabletops, oil paintings in gilded frames, newspapers on racks and coats on hooks, all soaked in old-world nostalgia. Cravings for an 18th-century experience are fulfilled over frothy cappuccino and rum-soaked pastry, right here.

DOMQUARTIER: RHYTHM AND RELIGION

Adjacent to the AlterMarkt lies the town's former power centre, the baroque DomQuartier. The draw: grand structures like the Residenzplatz (Archbishop palatial residence), St. Peter's Abbey and the 17th century Salzburg Cathedral. Green copper domes and delicate carvings adorn the exterior, and gold leaf and murals beautify the inside of this 330-ft long and 230-ft tall cathedral, which can seat over 10,000. The object of affection is a 4,000 pipe organ, with the greatest organ-power of any church in Europe. Mozart was baptised here, and he often played the organ

Mozart was baptised here and he
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The Salzburg Cathedral (Salzburger Dom) is a 17th century baroque cathedral

under the mighty frescoed dome designed by Florentine Mascagni.

At the Kapitelplatz nearby, an attraction of a different kind awaits. Sphaera, an offbeat, contemporary sculpture by German artist Stephan Balkenhol, is a nine-metre-high gold orb, on which stands the statue of an ordinary man. That aside, this is the perfect spot to gaze at the star attraction of Salzburg, its acropolis.

HOHENSALZBURG: HARMONY OF A HAVEN

Reaching 400 feet up the steep Festungsberg cliff to one of Europe's mightiest castles is a 10-minute

breeze, thanks to the 110-year old funicular built by the Emperor Franz Josef. Interestingly, Hohensalzburg has always remained a siege-proof and secure haven. Never conquered, since its foundations were laid in 1077.

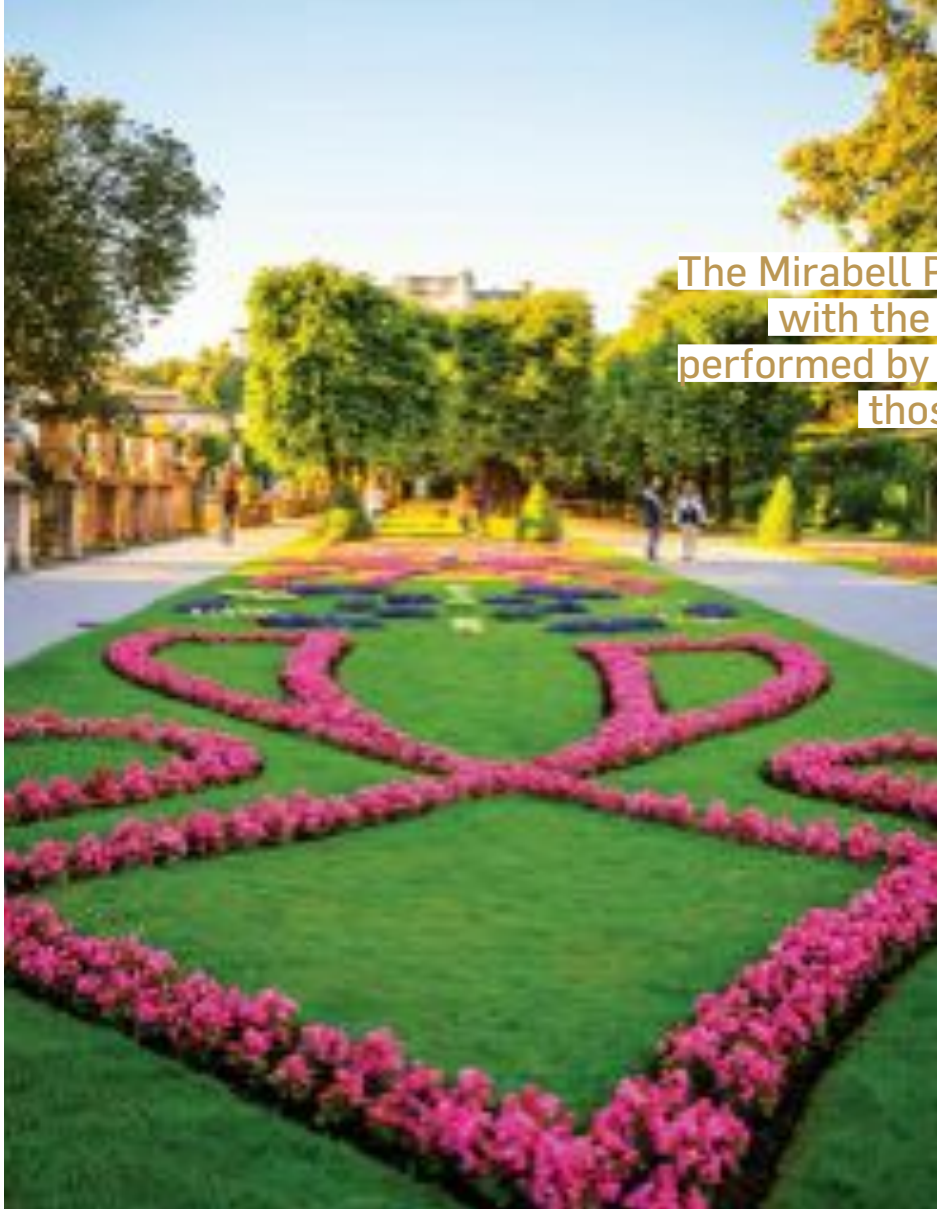
Inside the protective plain white Romanesque walls, it still resembles the medieval village that it once was, though the knights and blacksmiths who called it home, have departed ages ago. Visitors can tour the Gothic-style rooms with intricate wood paneling and star-studded ceilings and gape at the fascinating exhibits in the Marionette Museum.

A lookout post, 100 steps up, boasts of breathtaking views of Mozart's town...mighty Salzburg Dom, curving Salzach river, snow-capped Alps and endless green carpeted countryside. This is the stuff that dreams are made of.

MIRABELL GARDENS: ORCHESTRATING THE PAST

Finally, to bring the curtains down, a luxurious stroll in the baroque Mirabell Gardens, located on the other side of the Salzach river, comes highly recommended. Landscaped greens, colourful flower beds, hedged pathways, marble statues and some of the most





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picturesque views of the castle fortress add to the grandeur of the city. A stroll around the garden transports one to the famous scene from the yesteryear musical *Sound of Music* where Maria and the children were filmed dancing around the winged horse statue of Pegasus and the fountains singing 'Do-Re-Mi.'

And of course, there's the Mozart connection again. The Mirabell Palace still echoes with the timeless pieces he performed within those walls. Music aficionados can attend classical concerts in the ornate concert hall for the ultimate Mozart experience. The palace is called the Taj Mahal of Salzburg because it was built by Prince-Archbishop Wolf Dietrich for his lady love. It is now occupied by offices of the Mayor and municipality, but the whiff of romance lives on in every brick. As it does in every inch of this ancient city discovered by Romans in 15 BC, feeding on riches from its salt mines and rebuilt from scratch after a massive plague and two world wars. Today, it receives eight million visitors annually. 🌸

Not to MISS

'Salzburg Dwarf Garden' in the Mirabell palace is a display of grotesquely deformed dwarfs, some of who actually lived on the court of the Prince Archbishops of Salzburg.

