

Eight movies that will make you fall in love with Austria

Travel Hints

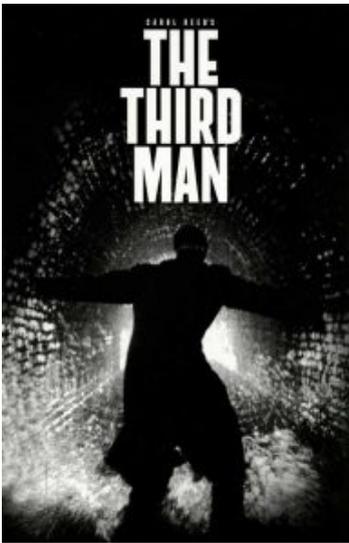


Need inspiration to plan your next vacation to Austria? Looking for a little insight on Austria before you visit? Austria is not necessarily the first country that comes to mind when you think of movie locations. But I have found 8 movies that will provide a glimpse into the breathtaking scenery, history and customs. Movie fan or not, these films have immortalised some of the most picturesque spots and historical events in Austria.

Vienna in “The Third Man” is a more particular and unmistakable *place* than almost any other location in the history of the movies; the action fits the city like a hand slipping on a glove. Roger Ebert

The Third Man

“The Third Man” has been hailed the Greatest British film ever made and no list of movies set in Austria is complete without it.



The "Third Man" is a 1949 British film noir written by Graham Greene and directed by Carol Reed starring Orson Welles as the charming but morally repugnant racketeer Harry Lime.

The film centres on Holly Martins, an American writer who is given a job in Vienna by his friend Harry Lime. When Holly arrives in Vienna he hears that Harry – "the worst racketeer who ever made a dirty living in this city" – had died in a traffic accident. Martins attempts to investigate what he considers a suspicious death.

The city of Vienna stars as an important character in the film.

The film begins with a spoken prologue "I never knew the old Vienna, before the war. . ." In 1949, Vienna was still under occupation, divided into British, French, American and Soviet zones and in ruins following World War II. Vienna had become a playground of Cold War politics- a hub of international espionage, racketeering and moral corruption. People were destitute, the black market was thriving and the city was overflowing with refugees avoiding repatriation by the Soviets.

As Martins follows in the footsteps of Lime, amidst the rubble left by the war, we are transported through the seedy locations of the city's dark side- the subterranean sewers, rain-sodden cobbled streets, war-damaged buildings, half lit cafes, and the Viennese Giant Ferris Wheel- the scene of the infamous "cuckoo-clock speech".

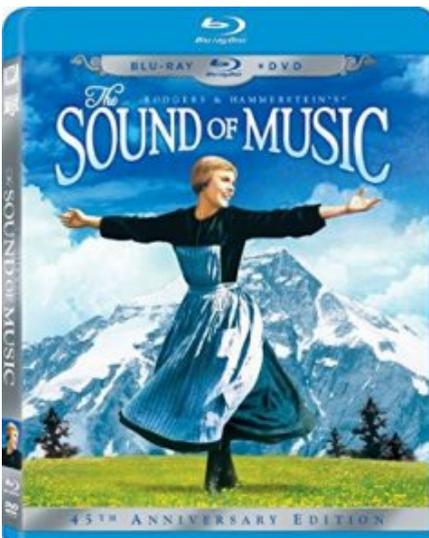
The atmosphere of black and white cinematography combined with the iconic Anton Kras zither theme music evokes the atmosphere of an exhausted, cynical, post-war Vienna.

Visitors today can retrace the footsteps of Harry Lime on the [Third Man Sewer Tour](#) or a [self-guided walking tour](#), visit [The Third Man Museum](#), ride the Riesenrad (the Giant Ferris Wheel in the Prater) or take a trip out to the Zentralfriedhof (Central Cemetery) in Simmering – which can be seen at the beginning and end of the film (also the burial place of Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss)

The [Burgkino cinema](#) on Opernring shows The Third Man every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday.

Rotten Tomatoes Score: 100% "one of the undisputed masterpieces of cinema"

The Sound of Music



One of the most recognized international films set in Austria is "The Sound of Music". Surprisingly the film is not popular Austria- although Austrians are quite aware of the phenomenon of the tourism associated with the film.

The 1965 American musical, an adaptation of the 1959 Broadway musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, starred Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer.

Julie Andrews plays the role of Maria, the tomboyish postulant at an Austrian abbey who takes a job as a governess in the home of a widowed Captain von Trapp to care for his seven children. Captain von Trapp is ordered to accept a commission in the German navy, but he opposes the Nazis. He and Maria decide to flee from Austria with the children.

More than 300,000 “Sound of Music” fans come to Salzburg every year to walk in the footsteps of the von Trapp family. Fan’s must-see sights include:

- the Nonnberg Abbey,
- Salzburg’s Old town,
- Mirabell Gardens (Do-Re-Mi),
- Schloss Hellbrun (Sixteen going on Seventeen gazebo),
- St Micheal’s Church in Mondsee (Maria’s Wedding),
- Felsenreitschule (music Festival),
- St Peter’s graveyard (inspiration for the cemetery where the von Trapps hid from the Nazis- the actual scene was shot on a Hollywood set).

There are a plethora of “Sound of Music Tours” on offer. To avoid the busloads of tourists-an alternative is a [self-guided tour](#) or for something a little different- [Fräulein Maria’s Bicycle Tour](#).

Rotten Tomatoes Score: 86%

Sissi



“Sissi” (German with English subtitles) is a 1955 Austrian film starring Romy Schneider as the Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary. The film depicts the romantic pursuit of Elisabeth – nicknamed Sissi – by Emperor Franz Joseph I. The Emperor’s domineering mother, Archduchess Sophie, had made plans for him to marry his cousin Princess Helene (Sissi’s older sister), but as fate would have it, he meets Sissi instead and is charmed by the vivacious princess who prefers fishing to courtly receptions.

“Sissi” was filmed throughout Vienna and Austria including Schönbrunn Palace, Kaiservilla in Bad Ischl and St. Michael’s Church, Vienna. The movie is a fascinating glimpse, even if

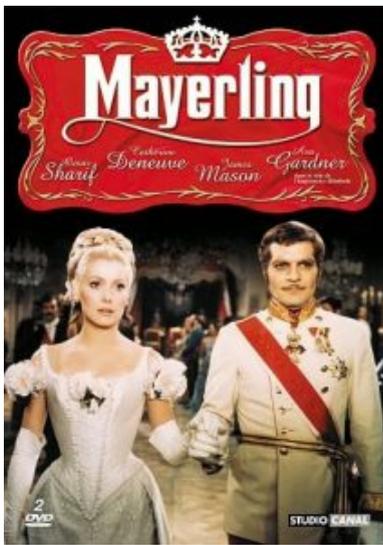
fictionalized, into aristocratic life and it handsomely captures the imperial atmosphere of 19th - century Hapsburg Vienna.

The success of the movie marked Empress Elisabeth’s entrance to popular culture which made the historical figure even more legendary. Sissi’s life has been compared to that of Diana, Princess of Wales. Both had similar lives- centuries apart. Both were beautiful and charismatic women married off to future Kings at a young age, who had to deal with formidable mother-in-law’s and difficulties in dealing with the rigid royal protocols amidst unhappy royal marriages. Unfortunately, both Sissi and Diana died tragically knowing that fairy-tale weddings don’t always end in happily ever after.

Mayerling

The 1968 film is based on real life events that led to the tragic deaths of the Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria (played by Omar Sharif) and his lover Baroness Maria Vetsera (played by Catherine Deneuve).

The movie depicts Viennese society and politics in 1889. The story precedes the turbulent times and the fall of the House of Hapsburg and their Austro-Hungarian Empire. Twenty five years



later, WWI started when the ultimate successor to Rudolf, Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Yugoslavia.

The movie has magnificent location settings, great scenery and costumes and glitters with royal pomp and splendour.

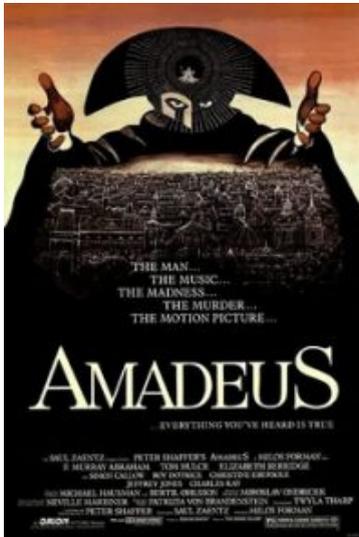
The tragic death of the Crown Prince, coupled with the Emperor's rigid silence, rumours of cover-ups and secret papers has led to a multitude of conspiracy theories that still abound – suicide? Murder at the order of the Emperor? The Austrian Prime Minister? The Secret Service?

The site of the untimely deaths was at the Prince's manor and hunting lodge Mayerling in the Vienna Woods. After the deaths, Emperor Franz Joseph had a convent built directly over

the spot of the hunting lodge.

Today, the building is a [museum](#) and tourist attraction in Austria. Prayers are still said daily by the nuns for the repose of the soul of Crown Prince Rudolf.

Amadeus



The true celebrities of 18th century Austria were not the royalty but the composers. Undoubtedly, one of the most famous was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart was born in Salzburg (you can visit his birth house) in 1756. From an early age he showed prodigious musical ability- composing and performing in front of royalty from the age of 5. Mozart composed more than 600 works, and widely recognized as one of the greatest composers of all time.

“Amadeus” is set in Vienna during the late 18th century. The film fictionalizes the rivalry between court composer Antonio Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) and Mozart (Tom Hulce). Salieri is the only person in Vienna who understands Mozart's genius, yet this realization accentuates his frustration, fostering jealousy and

bitterness.

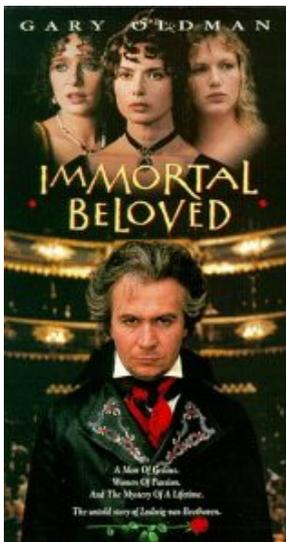
While the film may be historically inaccurate in many ways (the intense rivalry between Mozart and Salieri is probably not true), the film wonderfully portrays 18th-century Vienna. The streets of Vienna are meticulously recreated and filled with late 18th-century Austro-Hungarian splendour. The film stages lavish and passionate performances of Mozart's symphonies and operas.

Rotten Tomatoes Score: 95%

Immortal Beloved

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, and moved to Vienna at the age of 21 to study with the Austrian composer Joseph Haydn. Beethoven established his career in Vienna and he lived there until his death in 1827.

The 1994 film “Immortal Beloved” chronicles the life of infamous classical composer Ludwig van Beethoven (Gary Oldman) and his painful struggle with hearing loss. Following Beethoven's death in 1827, his assistant, Schindler searches for an elusive woman referred to in the composer's love letters as “immortal beloved”. As Schindler solves the mystery, a series of flashbacks reveals Beethoven's transformation from passionate young man to troubled musical genius.

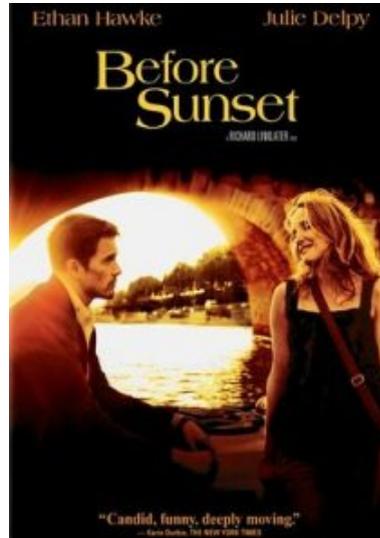


The film is based on a three-part letter found among Beethoven's private papers addressed to his "immortal beloved". Written in the summer of 1812, the letter has generated speculation and debate amongst scholars as to her identity.

The movie provides a fictionalised glimpse into one of Vienna's best loved sons with music performed by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Georg Solti.

Rotten Tomatoes Score: 56%

Before Sunrise



Before Sunrise is a 1995 American film starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy. Jesse and Céline meet on a train from Budapest and disembark in Vienna, where they spend one evening together. Unfortunately, both know that this will probably be their only night

The 1995 cult classic was shot entirely on location in Vienna. As Jesse and Céline roam the city, they take viewers on a romantic tour of Vienna. They walk along the

Zollamtssteg Bridge, taking a tram to the 6th district in Vienna passing the Votiv Kirche, stroll through Maria Theresien Platz, sharing their first kiss on the Riesenrad, Vienna's Giant Ferris Wheel, Céline has her palm read at the Kleines Café, visit Café Sperl and they later drink in the enchanting view from the balcony of the Albertina Museum.

A number of fans of the movie come to Vienna to retrace Jesse and Celine's footsteps. Here are two self-guided tours: [Tour 1](#) and [Tour 2](#)

Rotten Tomatoes Score: 100%

Museum Hours



Director Jem Cohen fell in love with the Kunsthistorisches Art Museum when he was a guest of the Viennale, film festival. "Museum Hours" depicts the relationship between an aging museum security guard Johann and a middle-age Canadian Anne, who is in Vienna to tend to a comatose cousin. Their platonic friendship evolves as they bond over artworks by Brueghel, Rubens, and Rembrandt. As they meander round Vienna, with Johann acting as an impromptu tour guide, the city is documented like a tapestry created by Brueghel.

This is the "Before Sunrise" for a very different platonic couple.

Rotten Tomatoes Score: 94%

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