

THE WALTZ KING – JOHANN STRAUSS (1825-1899)

A Vienna city walk by Tita Büttner

Walking time (excluding museum visits and stops) approximately 1 hour 30 min.

Ask your hotel or the **Tourist Information Office** on Albertinaplatz (open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.) for a **free city map** (also available online www.vienna.info) and the Vienna Tourist Board's **Calendar of Events** which gives a run-down of what's on.

The **Vienna Card** is also a useful companion. Costing EUR 18.50 it gives you 72 hours unlimited travel on the city's underground, bus and tram network as well as 210 discounts and special deals at museums, tourist attractions, theaters, concert halls, shops, cafés, restaurants and Vienna's wine taverns.

Start at the underground station U1 "Nestroyplatz". A few steps from the station you find the

Johann Strauss Wohnung (Apartment) (Praterstrasse 54, www.wienmuseum.at)

The Waltz King and his wife "Jetty" lived in this apartment for several years. Great works were composed here, including the world-famous "Blue Danube Waltz". Many personal effects of Johann Strauss are on display and his wonderful music can be listened to on the head phones.

With the underground lines U1 and then U4 you reach the **Stadtpark**: Here you will find **memorials to the famous Austrian composers** Anton Bruckner, Franz Lehar, Robert Stolz and Franz Schubert, as well as one of the world's most photographed monuments: the **Golden Johann Strauss Statue**. Surrounded by dancing and floating figures, the Waltz King is shown with his violin posed, ready to play. The musical genius wrote approx. 500 works, among them the unforgettable "Blue Danube" and "Emperor" waltzes and the operetta "Die Fledermaus" ("The Bat").

Now cross the Ring Boulevard and walk along Johannesgasse to Seilerstätte 30 to the

"House of Music" (www.hdm.at)

Covering four floors, this theme world treats you to fascinating and unique listening experiences, from simple sounds through to the music of the future. Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, Mahler, Schoenberg and, of course Johann Strauss, are entertainingly presented. From the excellent café-restaurant **Cantino** on the top level you can enjoy a wonderful view across the city's rooftops.

Go along Krugerstrasse to Akademiestrasse, continuing across Kärntner Ring to arrive at Bösendorferstrasse 12 and the

Vienna Musikverein (www.musikverein.at, guided tours in English)

The **Golden Hall** of the Vienna Musikverein is probably the world's most famous concert hall, thanks to the worldwide broadcast of the Vienna Philharmonic's annual **New Year's Day Concert** Johann Strauss composed the waltz "Freut Euch des Lebens" for the opening ball in January 1870.

*Take the underground passage to the "**Secession**" and this brings you to Linke Wienzeile. There you find yourself right in the middle of the*

“**Naschmarkt**” (market) and its exotically aromatic, colourful “Standln” (Viennese for stands) where you can also sit down, relax, have a delicious little snack, and catch a glimpse of several fine art nouveau facades. Here is the

“Theater an der Wien”

(Linke Wienzeile 6, www.theater-wien.at)

Built in 1801, the theater opened with **Mozart**’s “Zauberflöte” (“The Magic Flute”). Since then it was viewed as the most important Vienna stage for operas, operettas, Singspiele, plays and concerts of all kinds. **Beethoven**’s opera “Fidelio” had its premiere here, and almost all operettas by **Johann Strauss** – the most famous: “Die Fledermaus” (The Bat) and “Der Zigeunerbaron” (“The Gipsy Baron”). Later, the theater played full houses with musicals like “Mozart”, “Elisabeth” and “Cats”. Since 2006 it has been rededicated to its original use as an **opera house**.

At the Kettenbrückengasse underground station take the U4 towards Hütteldorf until station

Schönbrunn

(www.schoenbrunn.at)

Enjoy the wonderful walk through the Orangerie at Schönbrunn Palace. In this magnificent setting concerts by Strauss and Mozart are performed every evening (www.imagevienna.com).

Continue your walk to the **Palace of Schönbrunn** and through the Park and its many attractions. Leave the Park at the gate of “Hietzing”. To your right you see the **Parkhotel Schönbrunn**. Until 1908 a magnificent entertainment establishment with luxurious ballrooms stood on this place, called Dommayer’s Casino. Here the forefathers of the Viennese waltz, **Johann Strauss father** and his partner **Josef Lanner**, were cheered by the crowd until 15th October 1844. On that day a new “Waltz King” presented himself for the first time: the 19 year old Johann Strauss junior! And “Schani” – as the Viennese called their new idol – had conquered their hearts by storm. But this was only the beginning: Soon his unique music and his fame spread all over the world.

Johann Strauss SENIOR and Johann Strauss JUNIOR: the similarity of name between the two waltz legends often causes confusion. To make things worse, papa Strauss also had two other musical sons, Josef and Eduard. And then there is Richard Strauss and Oscar Straus, neither of whom is related to “**the Strausses**”. Here a few facts to clear up any confusion:

Johann Strauss Senior	1804-1849, compositions include the famous “Radetzky March”
Johann Strauss Junior	1825-1899, is the “Waltz King”
Josef Strauss, the second son	1827-1870, compositions include “Austrian Village Swallows”
Eduard Strauss, the third son	1835-1915, wrote around 300 dances
Richard Strauss (not related)	1864-1949, compositions include “Der Rosenkavalier”
Oscar Straus (not related)	1870-1954, composed “Ein Walzertraum” (“A Waltz Dream”)

On **Maxingstrasse 18** you can see the house where Johann Strauss lived and composed his famous operetta “Die Fledermaus” (“The Bat”) in only six weeks time (it is a privately owned house and cannot be entered).

A few steps further on (corner Auhofstrasse and Hietzinger Hauptstrasse)

Café Dommayer (www.dommayer.at) offers excellent coffee and cakes, and every Saturday afternoon (2 to 4 p.m.) you can enjoy listening to a pianist playing Strauss waltzes.

Tita Büttner is a native of Vienna who has lived abroad for many years. She worked in fashion, marketing and tourism, and is also a freelance journalist.

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