

A Tour of Graz City Center: Important Sights in Graz

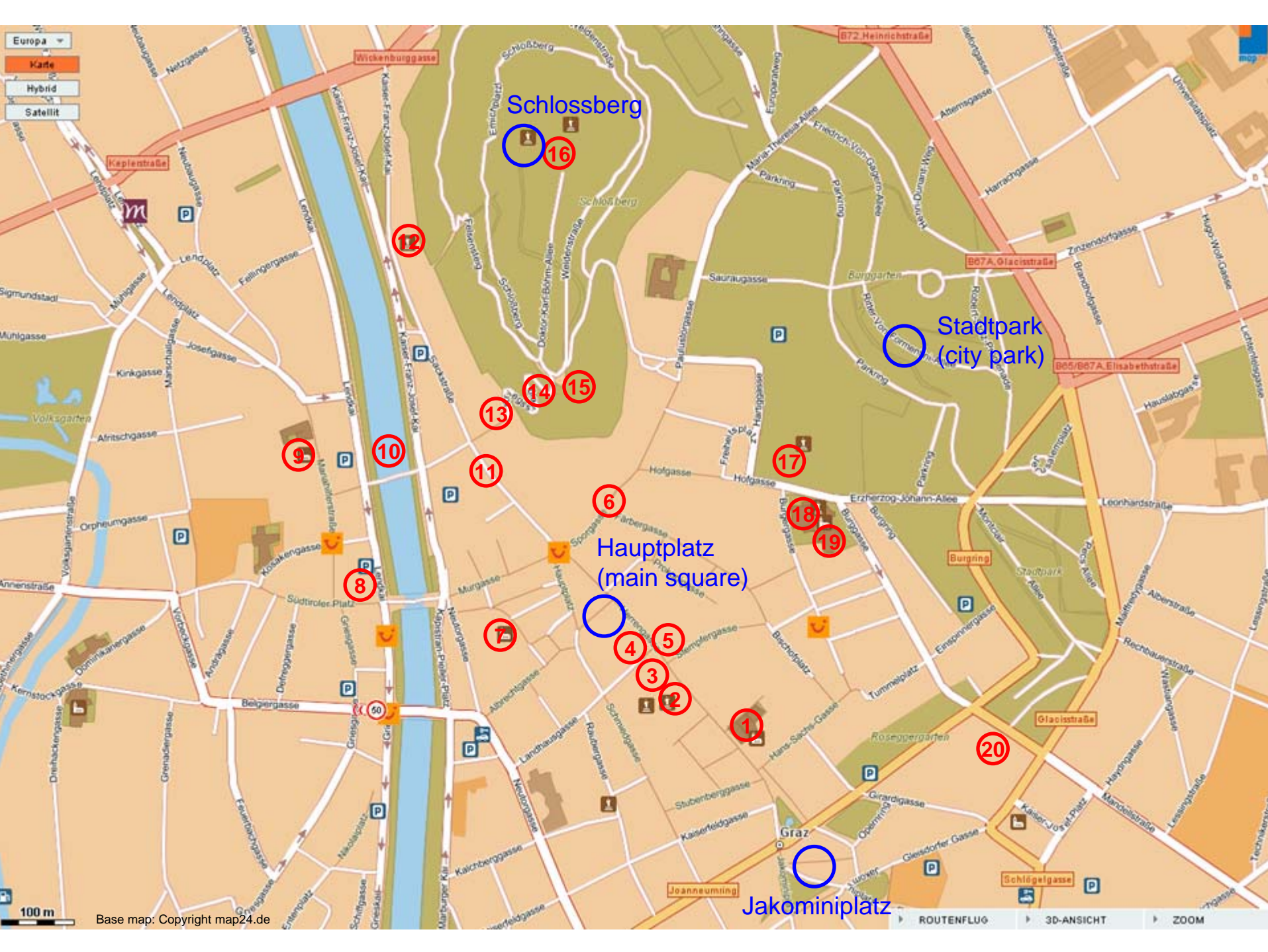


The Cultural Capital

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Europa
Karte
Hybrid
Satellit

Schlossberg

Stadtpark
(city park)

Hauptplatz
(main square)

Jakominiplatz

16

12

13

14

15

9

10

11

6

17

18

19

8

7

4

5

3

2

1

20

100 m

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ROUTENFLUG 3D-ANSICHT ZOOM

Sights Overview

- 1) Stadtpfarrkirche
- 2) Armoury
- 3) Landhaus
- 4) Town Hall
- 5) Painted House
- 6) Sporgasse
- 7) Franciscan Monastery
- 8) Kunsthaus
- 9) Minorite Monastery
- 10) Mur Island
- 11) Sackstrasse
- 12) Schlossbergbahn
- 13) Schlossberg Tunnel
- 14) Schlossberg Stairs
- 15) Clock Tower
- 16) Bell Tower
- 17) Burg
- 18) Cathedral
- 19) Mausoleum
- 20) Opera

Take A Walk Around Graz ...

... to see many beautiful sights, which are in proximity to the city center. We suggest to start at *Jakominiplatz*, which is the central hub for public transport (tram and bus). Walking north, you'll get to *Herrengasse*, which leads to *Hauptplatz* (main square). Along the way you pass the Stadtpfarrkirche (1), Armory (2), Landhaus (3), and Painted House (5). On Hauptplatz, you can find the Town Hall (4). At the North-East end of Hauptplatz you can visit Sporgasse (6), and at the North end Sackstrasse (11). To the East of Hauptplatz is the Franciscan Monastery (7). From there you can already see the Kunsthaus (8) on the other side of the Mur. Crossing the Mur, you'll get a closer look of the Kunsthaus, and upstreams there is the Minorite Monastery (9) with the Mariahilferkirche. From there, you can have a good view of the Schlossberg. Cross the Mur again using the Mur Island (10).



Jakominiplatz

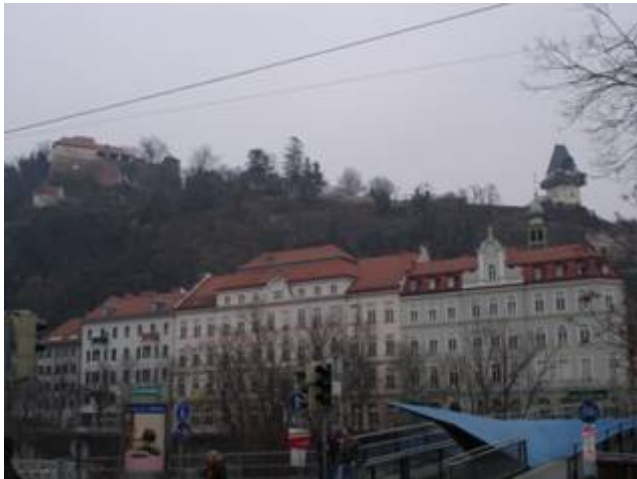


Herrengasse



Hauptplatz

We recommend to ascend Schlossberg (caste hill) from there. The Schlossbergbahn (12) is the most convenient way to get to the top. But you can also enter Schlossberg and go through the Schlossberg Tunnel (13). You might want to pass through the whole tunnel and ascend at the far side of *Schlossberg*, at the tunnel exit. Alternatively, there is a glass lift inside the Schlossberg, which directly leads to the Clock Tower (15). For the sporty, there are also the *Schlossberg Stairs* (14) to get to the Clock Tower. From the Clock Tower you can go up to the top to visit the Bell Tower (16). Descending at the East side of Schlossberg, you'll get to *Freiheitsplatz*, with the adjacent Burg (17), Cathedral (18), and Mausoleum(19). Going down the Burggasse, you will come to the Graz Opera House (20). From there it is just a few minutes until you are back at Jakominiplatz.



Schlossberg



Schlossberg Stairs



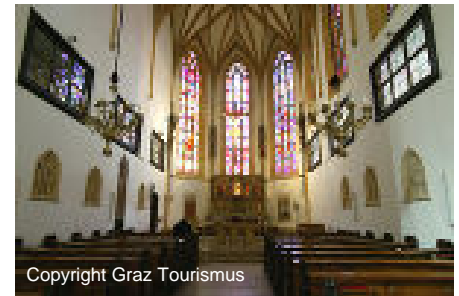
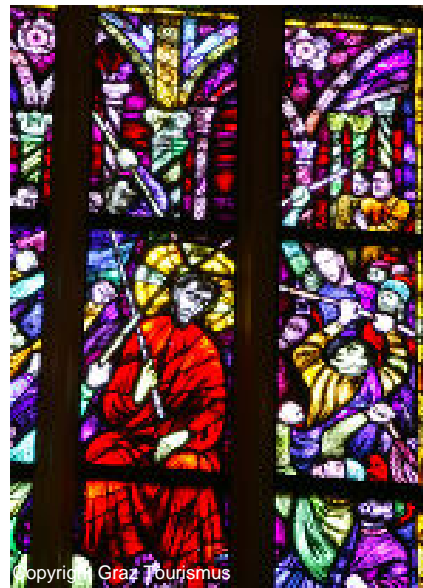
Freiheitsplatz

1) Stadtpfarrkirche



In Herrengasse a luxuriant Baroque tower rises above all other buildings. It belongs to Stadtpfarrkirche, the municipal parish church of Graz. Its eventful history tells about a little Gothic chapel in the dissolved Jewish quarter, about its time as the church of a Dominican monastery, about Baroque and neo-Gothic redesigning, and about the bombs in the Second World War.

The new stained-glass windows by Albert Birkle made headlines in the fifties. What was causing the stir? The faces of Hitler and Mussolini in the windows. But Birkle, whose works were regarded as "degenerated art" in the Nazi era, shows the two dictators side by side with Christ's tormentors.



2) Armory



Incredible 32,000 historical arms and military equipment on five floors. The Landeszeughaus (Provincial Armory) in Herrengasse is reputed to be the most outstanding historical weapons collection in the world. On the ground floor - an exhibition explaining the historical background. And above it, an impressive arsenal of rifles, armors, staff and bladed weapons dating mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries.

And all that in the original building which was erected in the middle of the 17th century to serve as an armory for the Styrian estates. Especially in their fight against the Ottoman Turks.



3) Landhaus



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A touch of Northern Italy in Herrengasse, right in the centre of Graz? In fact, the Landhaus is reminiscent of some Venice palazzo. In 1557, the Italian architect Domenico dell'Allio started to construct a prestigious building for the Styrian estates.



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It still is the provincial parliament of Styria. Not only the main façade of the building is outstanding. People are especially amazed by the Renaissance-style arcaded courtyard.



4) Town Hall



The prestigious town hall with its dome, its clock and the corner towers has dominated Graz Hauptplatz since the late 19th century. The town hall is not only the seat of the mayor and the city administration.

There are also shops and an open-air café in the courtyard, which bring additional life to the building. Many a couple have romantic memories of the town hall. It was there in the wedding hall that they took their marriage vows.



5) Painted House



Strolling through Herrengasse, you can cast a glance into the realm of gods. In 1742 the Baroque artist Johann Mayer painted frescos on the facade auf Gemaltes Haus which show gods of Greco-Roman mythology.

The building is also called Herzogshof. Up to the second half of the 15th century, the Habsburgs carried out their official business as princes of Styria in this house. The manager of the building was released from paying any taxes for putting up the "prince's chair".



6) Sporgasse



Sporgasse is like a picture book of art history. Therefore, it is not advisable to look only into the nice ground-floor boutiques. From Gothic window frames, Renaissance and Baroque buildings to historicist and art nouveau façades - all styles are represented.



So Sporgasse is exemplary for the historic centre of Graz as a whole, whose elements in different architectural styles form a harmonious ensemble. By the way, that's one of the reasons why Graz was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999.



7) Franciscan Monastery



Apart from Clock Tower, the tower of the Franciscan church is probably the most prominent among the traditional Graz landmarks. It belongs to the oldest monastery in town, founded in 1239 as a monastery of the Minorites. In the south-west, next to the town walls, in a strategically important position.

So the stately tower, uncommon for beggar's orders, was built in the 17th century as a fortified tower on the orders of the city authorities. Adjacent to the Gothic parish church *Mariae Himmelfahrt* there is the monastery of the Franciscans. Atmospheric cloisters are open to everybody seeking silence in the heart of the city.



8) Kunsthaus



Something extra-terrestrial in the World Heritage site of Graz? Like a huge bluish bubble the landmark of new Graz is hovering above the right bank of the river Mur. Since October 2003, Kunsthaus - affectionately called "a friendly alien" by its creators, Peter Cook and Colin Fournier - has attracted people with spectacular architecture and changing exhibitions of contemporary art. Moreover, Kunsthaus is a symbol of the harmonious co-existence of old and new in Graz. After all, it is growing out of the Eisernes Haus which in 1848 caused quite a stir as one of the first cast-iron buildings on the Continent.



9) Minorite Monastery

On the right bank of the river Mur, in close vicinity of the Kunsthaus, the Minorite Monastery and the adjacent Mariahilferkirche (Church of Our Lady of Succor) are situated. The church has been built at the beginning of the 17th century by Pietro de Pomis (who also built Castle Eggenberg). He is also accredited with the Gnadenbild (icon) Mariahilf, which is commonly seen as his most important work.



10) Mur Island



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The open part - an amphitheatre for performances but also a resting place for sun-seekers. The covered part - a very trendy café. The island also functions as a bridge between the two banks of the river Mur.

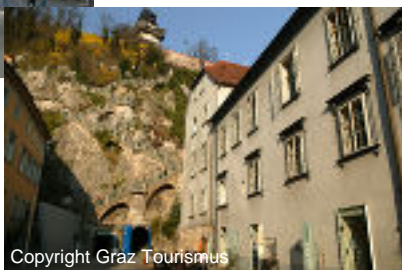
What was meant to be a temporary project of the Cultural Capital of Europe, Graz 2003, has turned into an attraction - the island in the river Mur. The New York artist Vito Acconci designed a steel grid structure in the shape of a half-opened shell.



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11) Sackstrasse

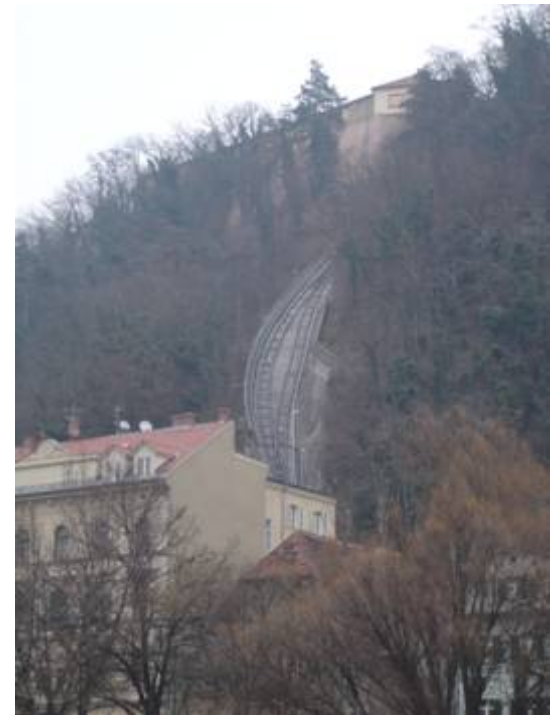
What does not sound inviting at all (Sackstrasse means dead-end street), is really worth a visit. In the Middle Ages Sackstrasse was the first street market, bounded by the town wall. Today - a truly open place, especially with regard to arts: two museums, the headquarters of two festivals, innumerable antique shops.



And all that in a remarkable architectural setting. From the oldest documented building of the city, from Renaissance courtyards and Baroque palais to modern buildings. Not without reason, Sackstrasse is also called "Kunstmeile" (the art mile).

12) Schlossbergbahn

This funicular is the stylish way to get up the Schloßberg. It has been trundling up and down its tracks on a 61% gradient since 1894. Take your time to explore the paths twined around the hill. A puzzle: can you work out how the cars of the Schloßbergbahn sidestep past each other? If you find the right spot on the path, maybe...



13) Schlossberg Tunnel



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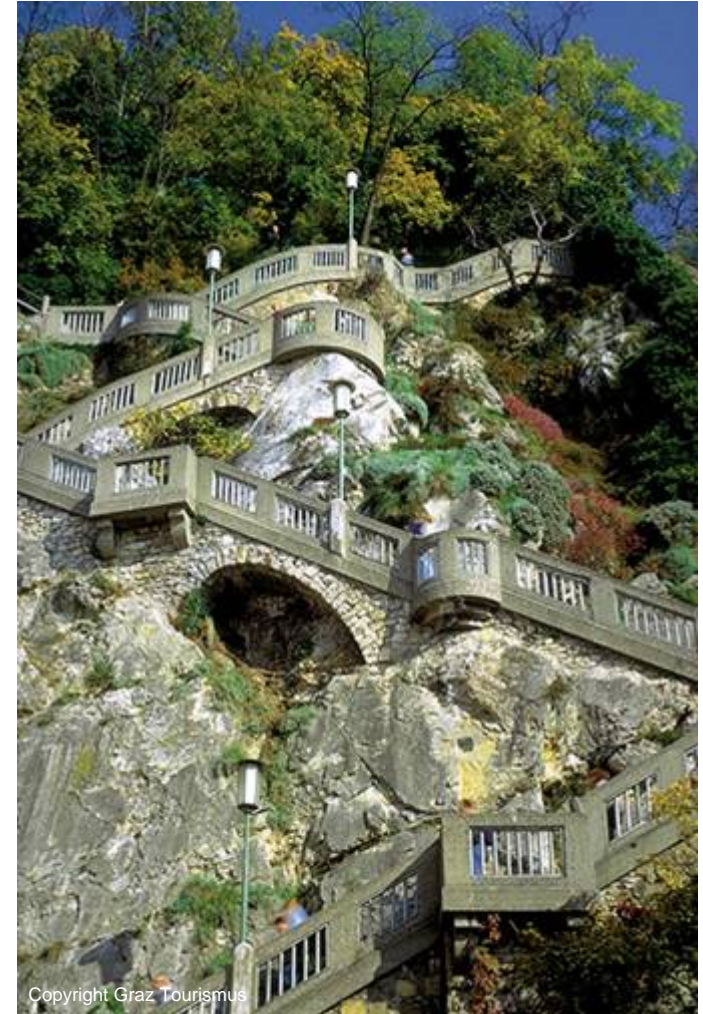
The foot of Schlossberg is served by a wide-stretching system of tunnels. They were built during World War II, primarily to protect the civilian population, but never completed. During air raids they offered shelter for thousands of people. Today, a tunnel leads from Schlossberg-platz to Kameliterplatz. Some tunnels have been extended in 2000 to the “Dom im Berg”, a venue offering room for 600 persons. Since the end of the sixties, a part of the tunnel system is accessible though the Grottenbahn (grotto train). There is also a glass lift from the bottom tunnel leading up to the Clock Tower.



14) Schlossberg Stairs



A sporty alternative to the comfort of Schlossbergbahn or the glass elevator in the heart of Schlossberg, is the steep stairway also known as “Kriegssteig” (war stairs). About 260 stairs lead you up from Schlossbergplatz to the famous Clock Tower, situated at the South end of Schlossberg.



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During you ascend, you'll pass numerous vantage points which allow you a fantastic view over the roofs of Graz.

15) Clock Tower



Although the clockworks in the tower have struck the hours accurately since 1712, standing at the romantic landmark of Graz you could be forgetting time. The fortified medieval tower got its present shape around 1560. And its characteristic wooden gallery as a fire station.



Three bells are ringing from the Clock Tower. Three coats of arms decorate the walls. People often come here in pairs. To dream or to kiss. A truly uplifting feeling.



16) Bell Tower



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On top of Schlossberg there is much to discover. The Bell Tower dates from the 16th century, housing the heaviest bell of Graz (the "Liesl"). The casemate open-air stage in the former cellars of the destroyed main building of the fortress. A cistern, the Türkenbrunnen (Turkish well), 94m deep, and the mighty Stallbastei bastion were all built by Domenico dell'Aglio. He was leading among the architects from Northern Italy who in the mid-16th century erected new city walls in Graz and a 400m-long fortress on Schlossberg, which no one could take - not even Napoleon. However, after a victory over the Habsburgs in 1809, Napoleon demanded the demolition of the fortress. A huge amount of money paid to the French by the burghers of Graz prevented the Clock and Bell Tower from being destroyed. Thirty years later, Baron of Welden transformed the former fortress hill into today's romantic park.

17) Burg



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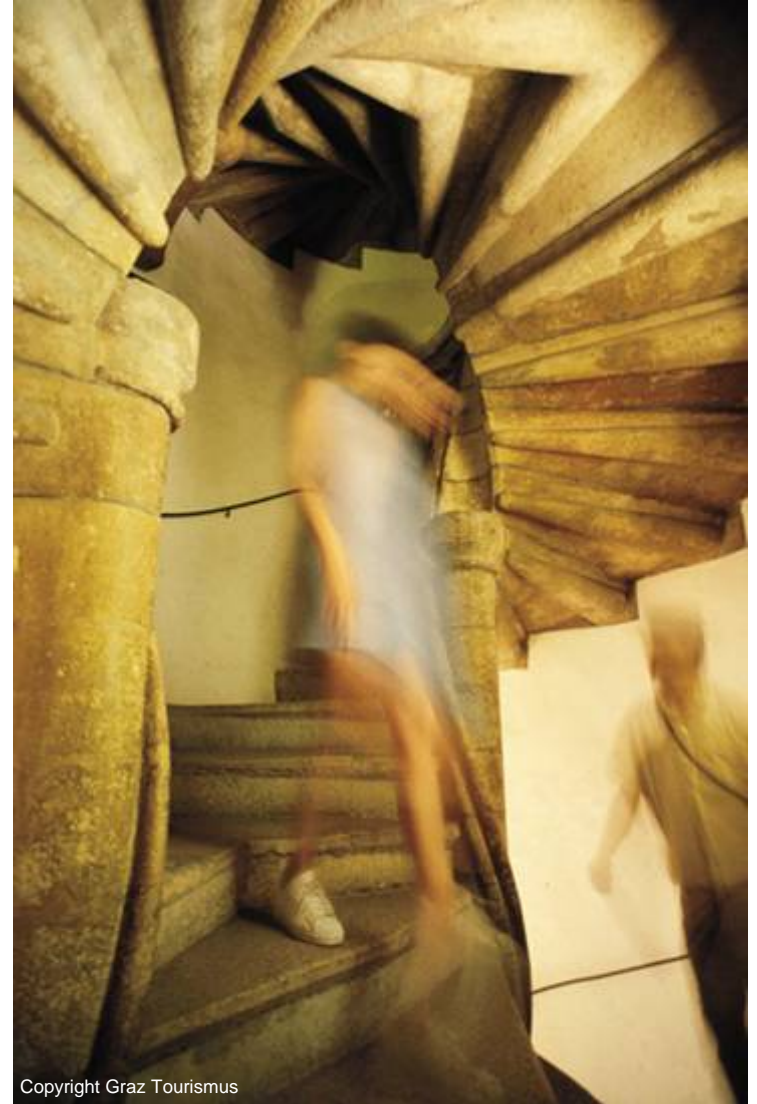


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The centuries have left their traces on the residence of the Habsburgs in Graz, erected in 1438 and now seat of the governor of Styria. Some wings have been added, others destroyed. But there are still many impressive testimonies of the past. From the Biedermeier period back to the Renaissance and Gothic eras. From the latter period the famous double-spiral staircase remains. And those enigmatic inscriptions: AEIOU.



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18) Cathedral

Today's cathedral reminds of the days when Graz was an imperial city. Emperor Frederick III erected the church together with his new residence in Graz. In the course of history, the cathedral saw many changes.



Construction work of the court and parish church in late-Gothic style was started in 1438, as Jesuit church it was refurbished in Baroque style in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Since 1786 it has been the cathedral, i.e. the bishop's and main church of the Catholics in Styria.



19) Mausoleum



Green domes, golden caps, monumental statues above the façade - the ensemble of Mausoleum and St. Catherine's Church bears witness to imperial greatness. After all, it is the final resting place of an emperor.

It was Emperor Ferdinand II who - still prince of Inner Austria and residing in Graz then - erected the most important Habsburg tomb, in terms of art. Giovanni Pietro de Pomis, Ferdinand's Italian court painter, was entrusted with the planning. The often praised Italian atmosphere of Graz especially manifests itself in the architecture of the Mausoleum.



20) Opera

Second largest opera house in Austria. Springboard for music careers. "Opera House of the Year" in 2001. Remarkable attributes for the theatre on the ring road. It was erected in 1899 by the architects Fellner and Helmer, who planned buildings all over Europe.



A fascinating contrast to the neo-Baroque building is the steel sculpture "light sword" by Hartmut Skerbisch (1992). In the Human Rights City of Graz it is a symbol of open-mindedness and tolerance.

We hope that you've enjoyed the tour of Graz. For more information on the city's sight, please visit <http://www.graztourism.at>