

Austria Guides for Future - experience the future of the city

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Vienna is a diverse, multi-layered city. From the imperial legacy to exciting new projects that point the way to the future. But much of it is still little known, sometimes even undiscovered. The Austria Guides for Future are now making part of it visible.

I recently met Cristina-Estera Klein. She and some other Austria Guides met in the middle of the Corona year 2020 when the whole world stood still and founded the [Austria Guides for Future](#) to show you completely new aspects of the city. In the format of a city tour, you will discover the sides of Vienna that will shape the future.

The group created Austria Guides For Future in the middle of the first lockdown in 2020. How was it founded?

The fact that we found each other and do something together shows that positive things can also emerge from the crisis. With the first lockdown in 2020, we all lost our jobs, orders were canceled, and there was great uncertainty about how things would go from here.

But then a small group formed met regularly and developed an idea from here. Namely, the idea of taking up topics in Vienna that have not yet been discussed so much. Subjects that did not appear in our classic training as a guide, such as environment and climate protection. These issues were very present in the first period of the lockdown; the images of how nature takes back living space went worldwide. We have founded [Austria Guides For Future](#) so that these central topics will not be forgotten and remain part of our work in the future.

As guides, we talk about history on our tours, visit historical places, and talk about the present. But there was hardly any room for the future here. It is important to us that people talk about it precisely. Since we have not yet found an offer in Vienna that already covers what we want to convey, we have started.

In short, out of the crisis, from the statement "Ok, we can no longer work, what do we do now?" There was this reset moment for us as a group and as individuals. To reflect and to question which topics are essential.

The nice thing about our work is that we are very flexible and dynamic and work independently. But as long as you are in the daily routine, there is often little room for change. Only when there are moments like this, do you pause and think about what else is possible. Something positive can emerge from a crisis because it triggers change if you want to.

We then started at the beginning of June 2020, discussing the topics in a lively exchange with experts and organizations to get to the proper sources. Because literature about future, site-specific developments is and was for us guides very little available for these "new" subject areas



The idea and vision of Fridays for Future are reflected in your principles and your name. How are you connected

We deliberately chose Austria Guides For Future because our claim is an activist and a specific form of activism light. We act as mediators, and we can inspire and draw attention to topics—all of this in a very low-threshold, positive way. We encourage people to think about things, to deepen issues, or to get involved. Above all, we want to show that everyone can contribute.

[Our principles](#) are based on the principles of all For Future groups and also to show that we support this movement. We are officially an alliance of the For Future movement and are actively involved in the design and implementation.

You have already indicated that there are very few typical documents and materials to work out your tours. So what does the research look like for you?

We let ourselves be inspired. Inspiration always comes when you go through the world with open eyes, are interested, inform yourself and read. We are constantly discovering new projects and stories in Vienna. Seestadt, or an exciting project in the 15th district Pelzgasse, was built and designed according to the sponge city principle. A fascinating subject. Of course, we take up something like that immediately, do

research and see what is available there. So a tour evolves.

All the new projects and regions that are currently emerging in Vienna are also fascinating. Such as the already mentioned Seestadt. A completely new part whose hidden treasures many people are not even aware of at first glance.

And that's what we are. To make new parts of the city come alive, get a new look at them, and show the positive aspects. However, always with a critical eye.

We also work with partners such as assemblies for whom we develop tours. We are a cooperation partner of the [IBA Vienna](#), for which we then create exceptional tours.

It is also very nice when our tours provide the impetus for a subsequent discussion. For example, we plan events made up of a 90-minute tour followed by a 90-minute conversation.



Your enthusiasm for this topic and your goal to make a difference are simply noticeable. What about challenges that you can feel?

One of the biggest challenges is that we haven't been allowed to go on tours so far, as it has been tranquil in Vienna for a very long time. The foundation was in mid-2020; we set up everything, such as the website and network, and then came the subsequent lockdown. Despite the upcoming wintertime, we already had a few tours that, unfortunately, were canceled.

But now we are finally getting started. We have prepared a lot that we currently implement.

Austria Guides for Future is quite different from the typical city tour. Where do you see your place in the tourist offer in Vienna?

The imperial heritage of Vienna is very present in tourism and the associated offer. But Vienna has so much more to offer than what we show on the classic tours. The city needs both. The flashy imperial has

its magic and attraction. But then there are also the other sides to be discovered in Vienna. The town is just so much more, so colorful, diverse, new subcultures, talented artists whose stage is the city, hidden places to be found.

Especially if you "dare" to go beyond the Ringstrasse into the other districts of Vienna. You will find so many new things there. That's why we made a conscious decision to do more in the neighborhoods with our tours. We connect the old with the present with the future.

In Vienna, too, you slowly notice that visitors to Vienna are coming back, or at least want to come. What is your wish for the future for you as a group?

We look forward to collaborations and opportunities to draw people's attention to these topics.

What we find remarkable when we can offer our tours and the participants have to pay for them, since cooperation partners or the clients take over the tour. It is also great when the districts accept our offer as an offer for the residents, and we can also reach people who are perhaps somewhat skeptical.

The exciting thing is who do we reach. Those who are already very intensively involved with the topic or those for whom these topics are still entirely new. Low-threshold offers are ideal, especially embedded in a package, a festival, or a more significant event. Because in Vienna, there are so many important initiatives and projects whose story needs to be told. We want to find new ways together and rediscovering the city in all its facets. If we can do that, then beautiful things can happen here.

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