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Land and People

The Alps traverse Austria from west to east and occupy three fourths of the country. The highest peak in Austria is the Grossglockner (12,460 ft/3,798 m) in the Hohe Tauern group. The scenic beauty of Tyrol, the Salzkammergut, Innsbruck, the Austrian Alps, Kärnten, and Salzburg city, and the attractions of Vienna and other cultural centers have made Austria a major European tourist center. The country is drained by the Danube and its tributaries, the Inn, the Enns, the Mürz, and the Mur.

Its nine provinces (Ger. *Bundesländer*) are [Vorarlberg](#), [Tyrol](#), [Salzburg](#), [Carinthia](#), [Styria](#), [Upper Austria](#), [Lower Austria](#), [Burgenland](#), and Vienna. Over 91% of Austrians are of Germanic ethnic origin, and some 74% are Roman Catholics. German is the official language, but Slovene, Croatian, and Hungarian are also spoken. Since 1945, Austria has received nearly 2 million refugees from the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere in Europe, though many of these continued on to other destinations. There are universities in Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz, Klagenfurt, Leoben, and Krems an der Donau.

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