



Salzburg Eisriesenwelt Caves
Photo by Andy Christiani

Great Drives Salzburg

Around Salzburg - Humbled by nature

Let an **Avis car** help you discover the dramatic natural beauty just outside the city of Mozart. The countryside around Salzburg is positively awe-inspiring, with giant white-topped mountains and deep bottle-green lakes.

Test drive this two-day tour for the best of Austria

Collect your Avis hire car from [Salzburg Airport](#) and head south on the E55 road. This exhilarating road trip takes in three regions – **Salzburger Land**, **Carinthia** and **Salzkammergut**. With its imposing cliffs, **Werfen** is the obvious choice for a lunch stop before following the Salzach River west to **Zell am See** – the gateway to the Alps. The 30-mile traverse through the mountains to **Heiligenblut** on the Grossglockner Road is studded with heart-stopping vistas. From there, just cruise through the countryside to **Seeboden**, before heading back north through the lakeside village of **Hallstatt**.

High Points en route

Obauer restaurant, Werfen – Fine dining near the fortress

Book a window table at the stylish, two-Michelin-starred **Obauer restaurant** for dramatic views of the craggy mountains as you tuck into classic dishes like trout strudel and tender Werfen lamb. Any overindulgence can be easily undone with a 15-minute hike to the Hohenwerfen fortress, perched on the rocky outcrop to the north, for arresting views across the valley.

Crazy Daisy, Zell am See – Lakeside après-ski fun

Drive the banks of the Salzach River for less than an hour and you'll discover this quintessential Austrian town, sandwiched between the bottle-green **Zeller See** Lake and glittering **Schmittenhöhe** mountain. Go with the laid-back flow of this popular snowboarder's hangout, carving it up on the powdered slopes or gazing at the scenery from a rowing boat on the lake.

Heiligenblut – Grossglockner views

Cruising along the winding **Grossglockner Road**, with its vistas of snow-capped 3000-metre peaks and glaciers, is a highlight of this tour. The village's iconic Gothic church supposedly holds a vial of Christ's blood (**Heiligenblut** means holy blood). A photo of the slender spire against the giant snow-clad Grossglockner, Austria's highest mountain, is a must. Admire Grossglockner and the

shimmering Pasterze Glacier from the Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe viewpoint.

Seeboden – Water and torture

Feel the rush as you parasail over **Lake Millstättersee** for a unique eagle's-eye view of this bustling town and the lush surrounding countryside. When you come back down to earth, head for the hills to explore **Sommereg Castle**, home to the grisly **Foltermuseum** – Museum of Torture – with over 70 eye-watering exhibits. Check out their Iron Maiden – a macabre human-shaped cabinet fitted with spikes.

Hallstatt – Hillside hideaway

Cruise back up north to this village, literally clinging to a mountain on the western shore of the glassy **Hallstättersee**. Hop on a ferry across the lake to the train station and back for views of pastel-coloured baroque buildings rising from the water. Back in the village, lose yourself in the narrow, cobbled shopping alleyways before settling down at **Café Derbl**, on the pint-sized triangular **Marktplatz**, to watch the world go by with a hot chocolate and a slice of apple strudel.

AVIS

We try
harder.

High Points en route - Free time on your hands? Take your pick from the following five gems:

1/ Eisriesenwelt Caves- Thrills and chills

The cable car ascent to the entrance of this gigantic ice cave – over 1600m from the valley floor – is a thrilling jaunt in itself. Wrap up warm to navigate a maze of frozen passageways, climb hundreds of wooden stairs, and then be completely awestruck when your guide lights up the immense, glimmering towers of ice!

2/ Krimml Falls – Water wonder

Follow the steep trail up the side of Austria's longest waterfall to hear the roar and feel the spray as water from 12 surrounding glaciers cascades 380 metres over three rocky levels into the lush **Hohe Tauern National Park**. The rainbow-striped mist hanging over the pine trees is an unforgettable sight.

3/ Warmbad Villach – Bubble baths

It's worth a detour to this chic spa resort two miles south of Villach for an invigorating soak in the warm, mineral-rich water which gushes out of the thermal springs. For bona fide luxury, follow up your dip with soothing

treatments and massages at the plush five-star **Warmbaderhof hotel** nearby.

4/ Hochosterwitz Castle – Fairytale fortress

Lording it atop a giant 160-metre cone-shaped rock rising out of the plains, this medieval fortress, with tiers of turret-studded ramparts draped around the jagged slopes below, is said to have inspired the castle in Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*. True or not, it's worth the climb to the top for the fairytale views – up to 20 miles on a clear day.

5/ Hüttenburg – A slice of Tibet

The birthplace of explorer Heinrich Harrer, whose *Seven Years in Tibet* were immortalised by Brad Pitt, is a suitably soothing experience. Colourful prayer wheels, prayer flags and a giant picture of Buddha enhance the uniquely relaxed atmosphere of this tiny village, which even has a cliff-side stairway – *Lingkor* – to aid meditation.

Avis Great Drives Route Map: Salzburg



Need to know

Round trip

281 miles (450 km)
Approx 7 hours driving time.

Best time to come

The Grossglockner road is open early May to late October.

Soundtrack

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –
Mass in C Minor

Essential item

Binoculars

With offices in 4000 locations in 114 countries, Avis can help with your car rental needs wherever you are in the world – and help turn a drive into an experience.

For car hire tips or to see other road trips in the Avis Great Drives series visit our blog www.wetryharder.co.uk

To book visit www.avis.co.uk or call **08445 818181**

Last updated August 2010.

