



Vienna The Open Museum

The Music Never Sleeps

Vienna-Motaz Othman

The penguins Joe and his friend Sally, symbols of Austrian tourism, were right. After having visited the seas, oceans, mountains, plains, cities and villages of the world, they arrived in Austria, met its distinguished people and said: "We arrived at our terminus". They decided to marry and settle in Austria and had many children.

I visited Austria 30 years ago, aged 20, with some friends. We bought a car from France and returned to Jordan, crossing several European countries. I never forgot Austria and waited for the opportunity to revisit it. My dream came true this year when I was able to participate in the exhibitions of Vienna. What makes this country more lovable was the kindness of its highly civilised people, in particular Miss Brigitte Pasler, general director of the travel agency Servus Amigo.

I arrived in Vienna in the evening, coming from Madrid, after my participation in FITUR. It was -15C but services remained unaffected and I was able to see a number of exhibitions on the first and second day of my visit.

On the third and fourth days, the office of Vienna Tourism provided me with a guide, Susanne. Our first visit was to the Summer Palace where Austrian monarchs once resided. Vienna was

the capital of the greatest empire of the east of Europe. The rooms of this large palace conceal valuable works, tables and pieces of furniture. Among the most beautiful paintings was the queen of France, Marie Antoinette. Then, we went to the 40 square km palace garden covered with trees. We also visited the zoo which is close to the palace and saw the penguins that the Austrian tourist office adopted as its symbol.

A visit to the opera house, of which the Austrians are proud, followed. We dined at Mr Lee's famous Chinese restaurant, located in Nash Market, where one finds various Asian and Eastern restaurants, as well as the popular market. We passed close to the Winter Palace, the seat of government, and made a "cake stop" in the famous Demel coffeeshop. Vienna is a real shopping paradise for high quality, reasonably priced clothes.

In the evening, I was invited to a performance of the symphonies of Mozart and Strauss at which Japanese tourists closed their eyes, seemingly in a yoga pose, to help them concentrate on the music.

The Travel Exhibitions of Austria and Danube

More than 800 guests from various countries, mostly owners or branch managers of travel and tourism agencies, and 150 journalists accepted the invitation of Austria's national tourism office to attend two exhibitions. There were more than 500 exhibitors representing travel agencies, hotels and Austria's tourism professionals. The most distinguished stand commemorated the 250th anniversary of the world famous composer Mozart, born on January 28. His work astonished Austrians and music ➤

lovers throughout the world. Whoever is born on that date is considered lucky and those born one day before or after the 28th consider themselves Mozart's twins.

The first press conference dealt with tourism on the Danube River. The bordering countries, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Romania took part. The participants spoke about the traffic through the river and the services offered to visitors pointing out that the Danube is one of the most significant rivers in the world whose tourism potential is fully exploited. A special organization has been set up by the countries through which the river flows. There are more than 109 ships and tourist boats, of various sizes, for river voyages offering delicious cuisine, beautiful music and an insight into the folklore of the countries of the Danube.

At the end of the conference, I introduced Islamic Tourism magazine to some of the participants as the marvelous symphonies of Mozart accompanied the chatter of businessmen. Thereafter we were invited to a lunch of numerous famous traditional Austrian dishes.

In the evening, six concerts were organized in honor of the guests in six different venues.



We moved from one place to another to listen to these sublime symphonies in a convivial climate – an expression of hospitality and kindness extended by the Austrians to their guests.

The next day, the second press conference was held addressed by the leaders of Austria's tourist industry including the president of Austria's National Tourist Office and the general manager of Vienna Tourism who presented a summary of the country's tourist programs. There was an exchange of views between the participants about the problems which the sector faces.

The international tourism games

The office of Austria Tourism is organizing the world tourist games from June 21st – 24th with the participation of more than 1,000 sportsmen competing in golf, tennis, volley ball, races, javelin, ice-skating, motor bike racing, swimming etc.

These games will take place in the Styria area, known as "the green heart" of Austria. One expects the arrival of hundreds of thousands of spectators who will also discover Austria. We hope that Arab-Muslim countries will follow this example and organize similar events. ■



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