

## The Sound of Salzburg (and Stress!)

Written by Jill Kerr Tepe

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We're all guilty of having eyes bigger than our...calendars, when it comes to trip planning.

Packing as much into a single trip as humanly possible is a tempting yet risky maneuver. So many questions and fears fill one's mind:

- Will I ever make it back to this area again?
- Shoudn't I take advantage of everything while I'm here?
- I can't afford to miss out on this opportunity!
- I've always wanted to see this, and it might be my only chance!

A jam-packed schedule with no room for error is the ultimate gamble. I should know, as I've fallen prey to it a myriad of times, including last December on my way from Munich to Vienna. The allure of Salzburg was too hard to resist, and since I had never visited before, I decided that my husband Nick and I could stop in for a few pleasurable hours. Right. Relying on train schedules and disregarding the possibility of problems to squeeze in a precious few hours at a location that should take days and weeks to explore. Won't I ever learn?



While the city of Salzburg has a plethora of charms, one huge draw for Americans is the musical ["The Sound of Music"](#) (I confess that I feel especially tied to the story since as a child I played the role of 7-year-old Marta in the local high school's production. A Tony Award-worthy performance, I think.). So after a little research, I decided we could squeeze in a condensed [sights-from-the-film tour](#)

. We just wanted to hit the main sites: The [gazebo at Schloss Hellbrunn](#), just outside the city; a view of [Nonnberg Abbey](#)

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; a photo in front of the

[Rock Riding School Theater](#)

; and

[Mirabell fountain](#)

from the Do-Re-Mi scene. Easy, right? Wrong.

Salzburg is an incredibly popular Christmas destination with its countless Christmas markets and Mozart-themed concert performances (Mozart was born here, after all). And let's not forget the reverent [Silent Night](#) was penned here. Nick and I had our first taste of just how popular the city was when our regional train departing from *Hoptbahnhof* in Munich suddenly changed. It was not only departing from a different platform, but from a completely different station,

*Ostbahnhof*

. Cue the music from the scene in 'Home Alone' where the family is rushing to the airport (

['Holiday Flight' by John Williams](#)

) and visualize Nick and I sprinting with our giant suitcases through the station, taking the U-line to

*Ostbahnhof*

and jumping onto a train with no available seats for the 2-hour ride to Salzburg. Utterly ridiculous, but not the most terrible thing in the world. Unfortunately, a situation can always get worse, and it did.

A mere hour from Munich, the train came to a stop, a German voice over the loudspeaker barked something unintelligible, and suddenly everyone started to depart the train and cross over railroad tracks. I was able to weasel a translation out of an obliging French woman, who said there was something wrong with the train and we would need to change trains. Splendid.

Again we were sprinting with our suitcases over railroad tracks, up and down staircases at a train station, and were corralled onto a train that was even more crowded than the first and continued to get more suffocating as each stop closer to Salzburg had more people boarding than disembarking. The train became so squished that when a man boarded with his bicycle, he unknowingly hooked the handlebars through someone else's backpack straps. So when the backpacker tried to disembark, both a massive tangle and hilarity ensued. Or rather, it would have been hilarious if I didn't have the ability to laugh robbed from me by having my face smashed on the back of the obliging man to my front.

We finally arrived at Salzburg to a station under such intricate construction that it was impossible to navigate in under 30 minutes and contained at least 10 up-and-down staircases to drag a suitcase over. Add to that, storing our luggage and our inability to understand the bus numbers, despite having studied them previously, and then having to return to the train station to buy the bus ticket when we realized they didn't sell them at the bus stop. Just perfect.

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