

BICYCLE FRIENDLY: CITY BIKES GROWING IN POPULARITY IN VIENNA



Buggys and horses in Vienna – kitsch or romantic sightseeing tour? Whatever you think about it, they are out! 2010 is the year of bicycles in the Austrian capital.

Bicycles are quick, environmentally friendly and they are a funny tool of keeping people fit. These reasons made the City of Vienna decide to increase the share of bicycles in overall traffic and to introduce the "City Bikes Wien" in 2003.

The city was inspired by the Copenhagen model where people simply go to a city bike station, pay 20 crowns (€2.5), go wherever they want and just return the bike in the nearest city bike station. According to Welt.de, Vienna's city bike system includes currently 62 stations throughout the city where you can rent and return the bike. They are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The system is simple and cheap. The cyclists have to register online or via credit card, pay €1 as a one-time registration fee and they can ride wherever they want. The first hour is free with prices rising progressively from there on – a minimum of €1 from the second hour.

For tourists there are special Citybike Tourist Cards available so they can rent a bike even without an Austrian credit card. The Card can be borrowed at one of the City Bike offices as well as many Vienna hotels and pensions against a small fee (€2/day).

The popularity of City Bikes has led the authorities to develop the system even further. The city plans to double the number of available bikes (currently there are 1,200 bikes) as well as the bike stations by 2015. In 2010 for instance Vienna plans to buy 300 new bicycles.

Last year the city cyclists covered in total 1.3 million kilometers which is approximately 400,000 rides. Compared to the previous years these results represent an increase of 10%. The number of registered users also rose in 2009 – from 50,000 to 210,000.

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