

Flag of Austria - A Brief History



Where In The World



Trivia

While the Austrian flag is one of the oldest in the world, its actual use as the symbol of a distinct nation has only been a recent development.

Technical Specification

Adopted:	1919
Proportion:	2:3 (other ratios are often acceptable)
Design:	Three equally-sized horizontal stripes, in red, white and red.
Colours:	PMS: Red: 172 C CMYK: Red: 0% Cyan, 100% Magenta, 100% Yellow, 0% Black

Brief History

Austria emerged from the Duchy of Bavaria in 1156, as the chief component of an international entity known to historians as the 'Habsburg Monarchy', or 'Habsburg Empire'. This was an important constituent of the nascent Holy Roman Empire. Strangely, as a composite monarchy, the realm incorporated countries both within and without the Holy Roman Empire. More strangely, the elected Holy Roman Emperor was often the same person as the Habsburg monarch.



Flag of the Habsburg Monarchy



An Imperial Banner of the Holy Roman Empire

Austria took centre stage in the Battle of Vienna, when the Ottoman Empire looked poised to overrun western Europe and was forced into full retreat by a Polish-led relief force.

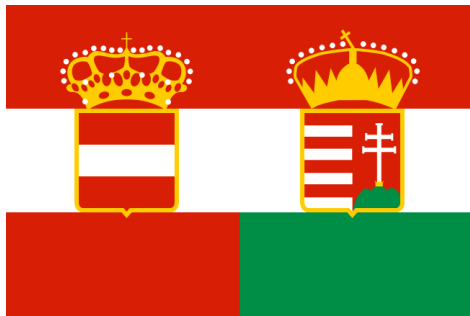
However, the concurrent Thirty Years' War in Europe resulted in a partially dissolved Empire, prone to the military conquests of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Following Napoleon's defeat, the dismantling of the Holy Roman Empire had been keenly felt; the many Germanic states were in disarray, and its two largest surviving descendants, the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia, distrusted one another. Rather than launch unilateral conquests of the independent Germanic states, the two major powers formed the German Confederation.

This arrangement did not survive the century. When Otto von Bismarck embarked on the unification of Germany, Austria responded with war. The German Confederation was abandoned in favour of Prussia's North German Confederation. In a compromise with a Hungarian nationalist uprising which took advantage of Prussian incursion, Austria formed a union with Hungary - the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was pressured by the Germans into declaring war on Serbia following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The Central Powers were eventually defeated, and Austria-Hungary was dismantled. The Republic of German-Austria was created as an ethnocentric nation for German-speaking Austro-Hungarians.

The Hungarian colours were removed from Austria's flag, and its heraldic banner from long years past became the national flag.



Flag of Austria-Hungary



Present Day

Other Flags of Austria

Austria has a state flag, which is also used as a military and maritime ensign.

There is also a coat of arms, featuring an avian character derived from the standard of the Holy Roman Emperor.

It carries a hammer and a sickle, but only as symbols of industry and agriculture; Austria never succumbed to communism.

The broken chains on its legs, added in 1945, symbolise liberation from national socialism. The mural crown is meant to symbolise the middle classes.



**First Republic
1919–1934**



**Federal State ("Corporate" State)
1934–1938**



**Austrian Coat of Arms
1945 - Present**