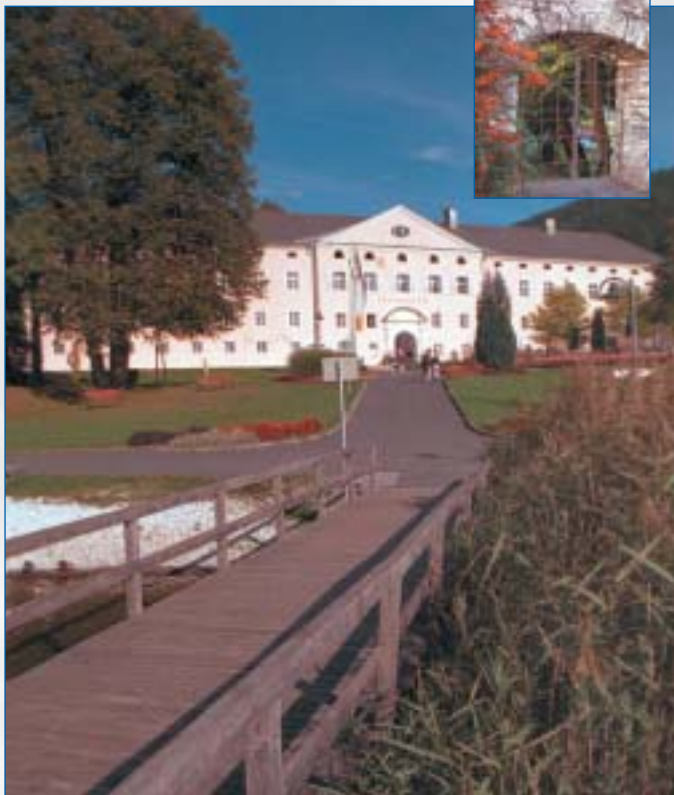


Ossiach Collegiate Church

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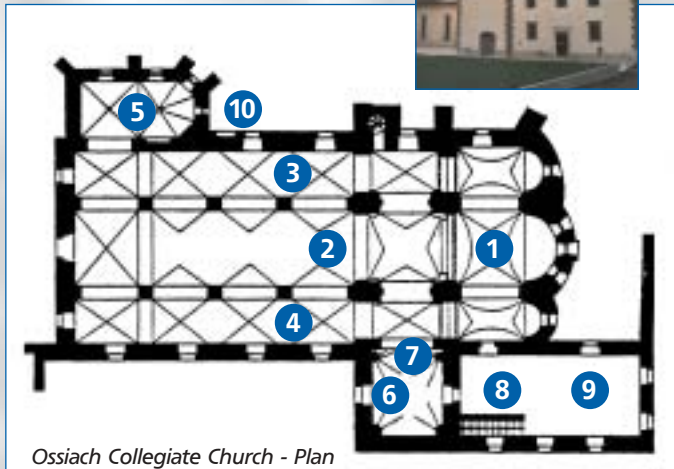
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Places of special interest

- 1 Apse (chancel)**
High altar (dedicated to the Assumption) and apse altar
- 2 Nave**
Ceiling frescos and pulpit
- 3 Left aisle**
Frescos and altar (dedicated to the Blessed Virgin)
- 4 Right aisle**
Frescos and altar (dedicated to the Day of Pentecost)
- 5 Gothic chapel**
Winged altarpiece, sarcophagus, ceiling paintings
- 6 South chapel**
Glass window (donated by Karl May)
- 7 South gallery**
Baroque organ
- 8 Sacristy**
Baroque cabinet, glass window (donated by Karl May)
- 9 Oratory (above the sacristy)**
Abbot's chair and choir benches
- 10 Northern outer wall**
Tomb of King Boleslaus



Ossiach Collegiate Church - Plan



Ossiach Collegiate Church

Ossiach Collegiate Church was built in about the year 1000 as a Romanesque pillared basilica. The building was the oldest Benedictine monastery church in Carinthia: indeed, the first documentary evidence of the building goes back to 1028. A total of 65 abbots presided over the monastery from the beginning of the 11th century until it was closed by the Emperor Joseph II in the year 1783.

After a fire in 1484, the whole church was rebuilt in Gothic style. The winged altarpiece (about 1505) in the Gothic Chapel, which originally stood in the nave of the church, dates back to this time.

During the period from 1737 and 1746, the church was almost completely renovated in Baroque style. The stuccoes in the style of the Wessobrunner School, and the frescos by the Carinthian artist J. F. Fromiller are famous examples of their kind. The Baroque organ built in 1680 today stands on the south gallery. The monks used to meet for prayer in the oratory above the sacristy: the Abbot's chair and the choir benches are still standing there.

The tomb of the Polish King Boleslaus, on the north side of the church, attracts a great many

visitors. It is said that, in 1081, the King entered the monastery dressed as a simple pilgrim, in order to do penance for the murder of Stanislaus, the Bishop of Cracow. Because the King only revealed the secret of his identity on his deathbed, he was called the "silent penitent of Ossiach".

The mighty graveyard walls and the defence tower were built in the 15th century as a defence against the invading Turks.

After the closure of the monastery, the monastery and church buildings were in danger of falling into ruin. Although repeated efforts were made to refurbish the buildings, it was not until the period from 1965 and 1975 that it finally became possible to thoroughly restore the whole church. The new chapel of rest is adorned with a group of figures created in about 1815 by the South Tyrolean sculptor Johann Probst.

Since 1969, the Collegiate Church has provided a solemn yet festive setting for the "Carinthian Summer" concert series. The organ in the main gallery, which was installed in 1971, is dedicated to the famous pianist Wilhelm Backhaus, who gave his last evening performance in this church in June 1969.

