

# Media Dossier - Sustainability in Austria

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## Sustainability in Austria – an introduction

*Our innovative tourism enterprises work day after day to offer their guests an even more climate-friendly and resource-saving experience at any time of the year. And this is about more than preserving Austria's wonderful nature for future generations. Sustainability is the key when it comes to the development of Austria as a holiday destination. It plays a major role for our guests, with sustainable offers becoming an increasingly decisive factor when booking.*

*Austria's tourism industry was one of the first to embark on its sustainable transformation. Our companies are amongst the pioneers when it comes to integrating resource-saving and innovative processes into their operations. Examples of this are the increased use of regional produce within cuisine or sustainable ways to arrive and get around once here. And in Austria's ski resorts, 90 percent of the energy used to produce snow, which ensures high-quality slope conditions, comes from renewable energy sources.*

*We also have a focus on social and economic sustainability: employee satisfaction, a mutual understanding between tourism and the local population plus a sustainable economy with added value that remains within the regions. And the excellent values for tourism acceptance, which have been collected annually since 2020, are proof that Austria is on the best possible track.*

*Austria is at the forefront of sustainable tourism in international comparison too, moving up to third place in the Sustainable Travel Index by Euromonitor out of the 99 leading countries. A fantastic achievement which can be attributed to the entire industry. From individual establishments to tourism associations and national organisations: we are all working together to ensure that Austria remains one of the most sustainable tourism destinations in the world.*

**Astrid Steharnig-Staudinger,  
Managing Director of the Austrian National Tourist Office**

## Sustainable winter in Austria

### Energy and winter tourism

We overestimate the industry's energy consumption. According to the Environment Agency Austria, the accommodation, catering and cable car sectors – the core sectors in Austrian tourism – account for 1.6 percent of the country's annual final energy consumption (Ø 2017 - 2019). Winter tourism alone accounts for 0.9 percent.

For years the tourism industry has been taking measures to **reduce energy consumption** on the one hand and **diversify energy sources** on the other. This is reflected in the share of renewable energy in the hotel and catering industry which, according to Statistics Austria, rose from 36 percent in 2008 to 55 percent in 2019 (the Austrian average is 34 percent). According to calculations by Statistics Austria, energy consumption per night fell by 54 percent between 2008 and 2019.

In Austria, all sectors are called upon to implement **energy saving measures**. In recent years in particular, many companies and establishments have taken individual technical and energy measures to use energy as efficiently as possible so that winter holidays can take place under the best conditions.

### Cable cars and snowmaking

In Austria, 18 kilowatt hours are required per skier and ski day. This includes the operation of the infrastructure, the use of catering facilities, heating, piste grooming, snowmaking and cable car operation. For comparison: half an hour of jet skiing is equivalent to 7 days of skiing. In the last 10 years, the ropeway industry has been able to save almost 20 percent of energy, measured in terms of transport capacity.

Snowmaking technology has made decisive progress in recent years. Today, only 2.1 kilowatt hours of energy are required for one cubic meter of snow. Around 90 percent of the energy used for technical snow comes from renewable energy sources. A flight to the Caribbean (there and back) with 200 passengers requires around 1,500,000 kilowatt hours – that's equivalent to making enough snow for 100 hectares of slopes for the winter, an area the size of 140 football fields.

Around 3,000 cubic metres of water are used per hectare of slopes every year. Under ideal conditions, one cubic metre of water produces around three cubic metres of snow. Water is not wasted when making snow, but used. It then returns to nature when the snow melts and through evaporation.

Snowmaking is not in competition with the need for drinking water. Strict guidelines such as the EU Water Framework Directive ensure regulated water abstraction and a high standard of quality. No additives are allowed in Austrian water, for example, in order to be able to supply snow at higher temperatures. Technical snowmaking is covered by 90 percent surface water and 10 percent groundwater.

### **Natural snow areas in Austria**

There are still ski areas that do not have snowmaking systems in place and rely exclusively on natural snow. These include:

- Vorarlberg: the Diedamskopf near Au-Schopperrau, the Sonnenkopf in the Klostertal, the Bödele above Dornbirn
- Tirol: the Nesselwängle lifts in the Tannheimer Tal
- SalzburgerLand: the Hochkeil on the Hochkönig
- Styria: the Aflenzner Bürgeralm
- Lower Austria: the Unterberg

## **Mobility in Austria**

### **ÖBB – Austrian Federal Railways**

In cooperation with tourist resorts and regions, the ÖBB and Rail Tours Austria offer combination tickets for day trips and travel packages for winter and summer holidays across Austria. Combination tickets include the train journey and day ski pass (in summer a cable car ride or museum visit is often included). For excursions with local trains (R, CJX and REX trains or S-Bahn), such as from Vienna to the Wachau or from Linz to the European Capital of Culture 2024 Bad Ischl, "Einfach-Raus-Tickets" are the best choice. They are valid for two to five people for journeys of any distance. In addition to the train journey and local transfer, travel packages include the overnight stays at the accommodation of your choice and – in winter – the multi-day ski pass. In addition, Nightjet connections from several European cities make an environmentally friendly arrival possible.

[www.railtours.at](http://www.railtours.at) (German only) and <https://kombitickets.railtours.at/de/im-nightjet-zum-schnee> and <https://www.oebb.at/de/regionale-angebote> (German only) and <https://www.oebb.at/de/tickets-kundenkarten/freizeit-urlaub/einfach-raus-ticket> (German only)

### **Ski and hiking buses**

In many of Austria's ski and hiking areas, the ski passes and/or guest cards or regional inclusive cards are also valid for travel on public transport. This makes a significant contribution towards reducing car journeys and keeping the need for parking spaces down.

### **The Alpine Pearls – traffic-free places**

Five resorts with the highest quality standards for climate protection and sustainability belong to the string of Alpine villages that are committed to car-free mobility. Guests enjoying a sustainable holiday can rely on hiking, valley and ski buses, hiking taxis and even horse-drawn carriage rides. In summer, e-bikes and bike rentals are available free of charge.

- **The Transdanube.Pearls:** A network of regions along the Danube in Upper Austria offers guests sustainable mobility – from bus, train and bicycle to boat trips (in summer).
- **Alpine Pearls – Werfenweng SalzburgerLand:** SAMO ("Sanfte Mobilität" meaning gentle mobility) is the holiday concept here. The focus is on environmentally friendly mobility for a relaxing stay. SAMO guests arrive by train, take a transfer to their accommodation and are mobile on site: by bus, e-car, pedelec or e-mountain bike.  
<https://www.alpine-pearls.com/en>

### **Tips: How holidaymakers can contribute**

Guests have the power and responsibility to make changes too. If travellers are aware that they leave traces and influence the living conditions of the local population and the condition of the natural and cultural attractions they visit, holiday destinations can remain attractive and hospitable in the future.

So the successful implementation of sustainability principles also depends on Austria's guests. There needs to be demand from holidaymakers for sustainable travel products to be created.

Winter holidays can be made more environmentally and climate-friendly with the following measures:

- Arrive by public transport and use public transport to get around once there
- Select regions and resorts that operate in an environmentally and climate-friendly manner and take into account the interests of the residents and their share of economic benefits through tourism
- Book with tour operators, travel agencies and hotels that have recognised sustainability certifications
- Choose sports and leisure activities that minimise your impact on nature and the environment
- Opt for local and regional produce on holiday (= reducing the transport of goods, strengthening the regional added value)
- Ask your travel agency, tour operator or accommodation for offers that meet sustainability criteria in order to create demand for sustainable travel products

## Certifications

### **The Austrian Ecolabel**

Those who travel sustainably try to have as little impact on the nature and environment at their holiday destination as possible, to take the cultural and social aspects of the holiday destination into account and, in doing so, are likely to enjoy profound and authentic experiences. The Austrian Ecolabel has existed since the early 1990s. The government-awarded quality seal identifies accommodations, restaurants, tour operators, campsites, museums and many other tourism enterprises that act and operate ecologically in line with defined criteria. The Austrian Ecolabel is awarded for four years, after which a new inspection is carried out.

<https://www.umweltzeichen.at/en/home/start>

### **EMAS certification**

The European Union's environmental management seal of approval stands for eco-management and a comprehensive environmental programme that is audited by accredited environmental verifiers. The Schmittenhöhebahnen (Zell am See-Kaprun, SalzburgerLand) are currently the only cable car company in Austria to have undergone this certification.

<https://www.schmitten.at/en/Company/Ecology>

### **ISO 14001 – the standard for environmental management systems**

This certification identifies ski resorts that set environmental goals and implement the defined measures. The lifts in Lech in Vorarlberg, the Planai-Hochwurzen ski area in Styria and the Gletscherbahnen Kaprun in SalzburgerLand are all ISO 14001-certified.

### **Best Tourism Village by UNWTO: Zell am See and Wagrain-Kleinarl**

The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) awards the "Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO" seal to rural tourism destinations that are particularly committed to preserving their cultural and natural assets, promoting community based values, products and lifestyles and are fully committed to innovation and sustainability. The Austrian regions that bear this seal are Kaunertal and St. Anton in Tirol, Schladming Dachstein in Styria as well as Zell am See-Kaprun and Wagrain-Kleinarl in SalzburgerLand.

[www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/villages](http://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/villages)

### **The Austrian Alpine Club's environmental label**

The Austrian Alpine Club awards its environmental label to Alpine Club huts that operate in a particularly sustainable, energy-efficient and climate-friendly manner

[www.alpenverein.at/portal/huetten-wege/quetesiegel-und-kampagnen/umweltquetesiegel/umweltquetesiegelhuetten.php](http://www.alpenverein.at/portal/huetten-wege/quetesiegel-und-kampagnen/umweltquetesiegel/umweltquetesiegelhuetten.php) (German only)

## Austria-wide sustainability initiatives

### Climate and energy model regions

Austria has 124 climate and energy model regions (= KEM) which implement climate protection projects in 1,134 communities. Model regions with a focus on tourism are Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee in Carinthia and Zell am See-Kaprun in SalzburgerLand. [www.klimaundenergiemodellregionen.at](http://www.klimaundenergiemodellregionen.at) (German only)

### Holidays on the Farm

“Holidays on the Farm” unites around 2,350 quality-certified farmstay hosts in eight Austrian provinces. All establishments can be booked online. You can choose from baby and children's farms, farms for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, organic and vitality farms, horse farms, vineyard stays, herb farms and alpine huts. When booking online there is also the option of selecting farms that can be reached by public transport. You can currently get to around 300 holiday farms by train and/or bus.

<https://www.farmholidays.com/en>

## National parks in Austria

### Visiting Austria's national parks

Austria has six national parks: the Neusiedler See-Seewinkel and Donau-Auen national parks in the east of the country, Thayatal National Park in Lower Austria and the mountainous Gesäuse, Kalkalpen and Hohe Tauern national parks. There are excursions on various topics in these particularly protected natural areas all year round.

<https://www.nationalparksaustria.at/en/>

## Spring awakening in Austria

### To the origin of regional delights

Some Austrian regions are known for their fruit specialities and are particularly delightful to visit when the trees and shrubs begin to blossom in spring. From March onwards, “Dirndl” (Cornelian cherry) bushes fill the Pielach Valley in Lower Austria with bright yellow. The fruits are used to make jams, chocolates, liqueurs, brandies and many other delicacies here in the “Dirndl Valley”. The Wachau in Lower Austria is known for its specialities made from and with apricots – from apricot strudel to jams and fine brandies. Thousands of apricot trees are in bloom from about mid-March. The Neusiedler See-Leithagebirge region in Burgenland is known for its lush cherry blossom, which begins to unfold in early April, and delicacies made from cherries such as jams and juices. From the end of April, the pear tree blossom reaches its peak in the Mostviertel in Lower Austria. The pears are used to produce excellent perries, ciders, sparkling pear wine and fine brandies. Along the Apple Road in Styria, the end of April marks the beginning of the apple tree blossom. Later in the year, the crunchy apples are available throughout Austria. The refined apple products include juices, ciders, jams, dried apples, liqueurs, brandies and much more.



## Sustainability in Burgenland

Nature conservation has a long tradition in Burgenland. The cross-border Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park is a huge nature reserve. With its reed belt, saline lakes and wetland meadows, it offers a habitat for almost 300 species of birds, many of which take advantage of the mild climate and spend winter at Lake Neusiedl. Excursions to the national park take place all year round.

Burgenland also has six nature parks which can be explored at any time of year: Neusiedler See-Leithabirge, Rosalia-Kogelberg, Landseer Berge, Geschreibenstein-Írottkö, Weinidylle and the three-country nature park Raab-Örség-Goricko.

<https://www.burgenland.info/en/experience/experience-nature>

### ❖ Mobility in Burgenland

Northern Burgenland in particular is very well served by public transport. There are also a number of regional public transport options, from municipal buses to local taxis. Another excellent way to get around Burgenland is by bike. The cycle path network is 3,300 km long and rental bikes are available in many places.

<https://www.b-mobil.info/en/>

### ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Burgenland

#### **Environmentally friendly holidays**

All accommodations that bear the Austrian Ecolabel can be found here:

<https://www.burgenland.info/uebernachten/unterkuenfte/nachhaltige-unterkuenfte> (German only)

#### **Sustainability at thermal spas**

In Burgenland, Hotel-Therme-Spa Larimar in Stegersbach, St. Martins Therme & Lodge in St. Martin and the Sonnentherme in Lutzmannsdorf are particularly committed to sustainability.

- The Larimar is characterised by its ecological design and heats in a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral manner using bioenergy. The kitchen is certified organic and has been awarded the green toque for its natural and gourmet cuisine. Biogas is produced from biogenic kitchen and garden waste. <https://www.larimarhotel.at/en/sustainability/>
- One of Austria's largest photovoltaic systems is located in the Sonnentherme Lutzmannsburg parking lot. 400 parking spaces are covered with carport elements and PV modules. They supply ecologically clean electricity and shelter for guests' vehicles in every weather. <https://www.sonnentherme.at/en/>

St. Martins Therme & Lodge produces its own electricity with the help of a photovoltaic system and has been ISO certified in the field of energy management since 2016. The spa uses the excess thermal water to feed a wetland on its premises with the aim of it developing into a saline lake again. <https://www.stmartins.at/en/corporate-social-responsibility.html>

### **Hotel Landhofmühle in Burgenland: naturally sustainable**

Claudia Fartek, manager of Hotel Landhofmühle, has wholeheartedly been implementing sustainability and regionality within her establishment for over 30 years. Her hotel was the first "Naturidyll Hotel" in Burgenland and thus also the first to bear the Austrian Ecolabel. In the meantime, the hotel has also been certified with the AMA GENUSS REGION quality seal, which stands for controlled quality and regional origin. Yoga and art classes as well as detox seminars invite guests to find greater inner balance. Claudia has plenty of ideas when it comes to the daily breakfast too. She serves regional and seasonal products wherever possible, either 100% natural or imaginatively refined. You can find the recipes for her pumpkin breakfast burger filled with balsamic vinegar plums and pumpkin seed pesto, "South Sea" carrots or energy balls on the hotel website.

<https://www.landhofmuehle.at/home.asp> (German only)

### **Shop regionally in the my burgenland shop**

At the beginning of April 2023, the first my burgenland shop opened at Designer Outlet Parndorf, the largest outlet centre in Central Europe. Around 150 producers from Burgenland offer their culinary delights there. The selection includes around 600 products, and the regional specialties are also available in an online shop.

<https://myburgenland.shop> (German only)

### **PhytonIQ: indoor farming**

PhytonIQ was founded by Eszter Simon and DI Martin Parapatits with the help of crowd funding in 2017 as a start-up pioneer in indoor farming. The aim is to establish a climate-friendly form of agriculture on small areas without chemicals, which only requires short transport routes and can be used locally anywhere. This would be a way to avoid carbon-intensive imports in particular, as PhytonIQ's wasabi cultivation already shows.

<https://www.phytoniq.com/en/>

### **Bullinarium: a hotspot for sustainable meat**

Christoph Haller is the son of a farmer from the Bregenzerwald and is therefore familiar with small farming structures. As a vet, he also understands the needs of his cattle from a scientific perspective. With his cattle shed, which is the largest in the country, he demonstrates that a ruminant-friendly circular economy with larger structures is also possible in Austria. You can find out more at the Bullinarium, where everything revolves around the Bull Beef® from Haller's own circular economy.

[www.hallers.com/](http://www.hallers.com/) (German only)

### **The Fabulous Winery**

Winemaker Stefan Pfeiffer took over the small family winery in 2018 and gave the business in Mörbisch am See a fabulous update. He has been producing Pet Nat, Frizzante, Blaufränkisch and various white wines with names such as #BubbleMood, #AfterWork and #GreatNightOut according to biodynamic principles ever since. In 2020, Stefan bottled a designated Pride wine for the first time: a Chardonnay Frizzante named #TasteTheRainbow. <http://fab.wine/wp/>

### **Regional wines and delicacies**

Wine is one of Burgenland's internationally known specialties. The local winemakers grow grapes across 11,600 hectares of land. Falstaff lists 559 winegrowers in Burgenland, 50 of whom operate according to organic guidelines.

Burgenland is also home to numerous gourmet manufacturers, ranging from bakeries to oil mills, breweries, beekeepers and pasta producers. Fish thrive in Lake Neusiedl and grains, fruits and vegetables grow around its shores. Erich and Priska Stekovics are amongst the best-known vegetable farmers for growing an incredible variety of tomatoes. They also collect seeds to preserve old varieties.

There is a long tradition of keeping geese here too, with Saint Martin being the patron saint of Burgenland.

<https://www.genussregionen.at/en/region/burgenland>

### ❖ **Spring awakening in Burgenland**

#### **Relax and go on a safari**

Visitors get to witness incredible flora and fauna at the Neusiedler See – Seewinkel National Park. Those who would like to combine their explorations with a relaxing break should stay at St. Martins Spa and Lodge, which offers a variety of safaris accompanied by a team of experienced rangers. Whether on foot or bike, with a focus on birds, plants or bees, participants are guaranteed to learn interesting facts about the national park and its habitats along the way.

<https://www.stmartins.at/en/safariangebote.html>

#### **Leithaberg cherry blossom**

The culinary region of the Leithaberg cherries has dedicated itself entirely to the red fruit. This Burgenland region is particularly attractive during cherry blossom season which falls between the beginning and middle of April, depending on the weather. The best way to experience this natural spectacle is on a tour along the Cherry Blossom Cycle Path. The approximately 40 km long circular route begins and ends in Purbach am Neusiedler See. It leads through picturesque villages with cellar alleys, past hilly vineyards, pastures and orchards with thousands of cherry trees. Beautiful views across the lake to the Hungarian Plain are an added bonus.

<https://www.edelkirsche.at/> (German only)

## Sustainability in Carinthia

Carinthia has increased its share of renewable energy sources in the total energy consumption by 15.1 percent to around 55 percent since 2005, making it one of the best in Austria and Europe. Almost 100 percent of electricity from Carinthia has been generated from hydropower, biomass or photovoltaics for years. The province of Carinthia is taking various measures to lower energy consumption and make it CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral. With the Energy Master Plan and Mobility Master Plan, a multi-faceted range of implementation strategies was determined years ago.

Carinthia is also the only province that has already introduced a target attainment system. With the jointly agreed climate agenda, more coordinated measures are being implemented to achieve goals in the short and medium term. These ambitious programmes will help Carinthia reach the targets set out in the Paris Agreement.

<https://carinthia.com/en/business-technology/sustainability-renewable-energy/>

### ❖ Mobility in Carinthia

#### **Kärnten Card Winter**

Similar to the inclusive cards known from summer, the Kärnten Card Winter offers a number of advantages. It is valid for selected mountain lifts, excursion destinations, museums, guided sports and much more. The Kärnten Winter Card is available for 3, 7 or 14 days or even for the entire season.

<https://www.kaerntencard.at/winter/en/destinations/>

#### **Getting around by "Nockmobil"**

The "Nockmobil" serves the eight municipalities of the Carinthian Nockberge region (including Millstatt am See, Bad Kleinkirchheim, Spittal an der Drau and Reichenau) all year round. The shared taxi, operated by local taxi companies, takes visitors to the starting point of hikes, sights and ski resorts across the region. You can either call the Nockmobil Hotline +43 123 500 444 24 or use the app by mobility partner ISTmobil to book.

<https://www.nockmobil.at/en/>

#### **Carinthian Station Shuttle**

Take the train to Carinthia and have a shuttle take you from the station to your accommodation or excursion destination. The Carinthia Station Shuttle makes this possible. Journeys can be booked via the website up until 8 pm the day before.

<https://www.bahnhofshuttle.at/bhs/en>

## ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Carinthia

### **Slow Food**

Carinthia is particularly committed to the topic of Slow Food and focuses on local producers as well as culinary experiences and the wonderful variety across the regions. Regular workshops and guided tours are held in the world's first Slow Food Travel Destination, from the Gailtal and Lesachtal to Lake Weissensee. The Lavanttal with its orchards and vineyards is flourishing as Carinthia's second Slow Food Travel Destination in the east of Carinthia.

<https://www.visitcarinthia.at/activities/summer/culture-culinary/slow-food-carinthia-on-the-trail-of-conscious-enjoyment/>

### **Accessible: mindful nature experiences for ALL**

The Arge Naturerlebnis Kärnten is an association of eleven protected areas, nine tourism regions and the Kärnten Werbung. Its goal is to develop unique, brand-compliant, sustainable and innovative nature experiences in the protected areas. One of these projects is aimed at guests of all ages, with and without disabilities. The “Nature Experience for All” programmes, recommended by the ÖZIV (Federal Association for People with Disabilities), invite you to explore Carinthia’s nature in a special way. Specially trained guides accompany holidaymakers into the protected areas.

<https://www.visitcarinthia.at/service/barrier-free/>

### **Magic Moments**

In summer and winter, guides are on hand to accompany you through the eleven protected areas of Carinthia. All programmes are led with great consideration for the protected fauna and flora and are certified by a special committee. The programmes promise “Magic Moments”, combining nature with local experiences and regional delights.

<https://www.visitcarinthia.at/hiking/magical-nature/>

### **Nature park unplugged**

On certain dates throughout summer and winter, visitors can experience “Magic Moments” amidst Carinthia’s nature. One of the programmes takes you “unplugged”, i.e. in a completely nature-friendly way without artificial light, to Dobratsch Nature Park. The night hike leads participants to a hut where they tuck into a traditional Jause platter in the light of the lanterns.

[www.kaernten.at/aktivitaeten/winter/nachtschwaermer/](http://www.kaernten.at/aktivitaeten/winter/nachtschwaermer/) (German only)

### **Region Nassfeld-Pressegger See / Lesachtal / Weissensee**

The Nassfeld-Pressegger See / Lesachtal / Weissensee region has been a pioneer for sustainable tourism for years. Numerous awards such as “Austria’s Most Sustainable Tourism Region” show just how untouched the “World of Mountains & Lakes” is, despite the variety of experiences on offer. As a member of the Alpine Pearls, Lake Weissensee is committed to gentle mobility and climate-neutral holiday experiences. Two thirds of the shores are undeveloped, car-free and freely accessible. The region, together with Tarvisio/Val Canale across the border, was Austria’s first to undergo GSTC certification (Global Standards for Sustainable Travel and Tourism). This is currently the highest award for a region in the EU’s “Sustainable Tourism Destination” category.

<https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/Nachhaltigkeit>

### **Climatic mountain Katschberg**

Together with its neighbours, the Lungau in SalzburgerLand and the Lieser-Maltatal in Carinthia, the Katschberg has set itself an ambitious goal: the region wants to intensify its efforts towards sustainable tourism and become CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral by 2030. The corresponding measures are being implemented within the local establishments – from increased sustainability management to climate-friendly food. Das Katschberg is one of the hotels on board, for example, which wants to be climate-neutral by 2030. Mobility is to be improved for guests on site. And the proportion of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that cannot be further reduced is compensated for through "Klima-Erde" (climate-earth) certificates.

[www.der-klimaberg.at](http://www.der-klimaberg.at) (German only)

### **❖ Spring awakening in Carinthia**

#### **Hike around Lake Millstätter See**

The mild climate makes this Carinthian lakes an ideal place to hike and spend time from early in the year. The "Via Paradiso" promises a delightful tour around Lake Millstätter See. This 55 km long hiking trail can easily be covered in four days. Those who would like to spend the night somewhere truly unique along the way should book a "Bivouac under the stars". Six of these tranquil hideouts can be found along the "Via Paradiso". They are built out of pine wood elements and furnishings are reduced to the essentials. Each bivouac has a terrace with a view and can accommodate two people.

<https://www.millstaettersee.com/en/holiday-themes/summer/viaparadiso.html>

#### **Slow Trails in Carinthia**

Carinthia has over a thousand lakes, some of which have boasted Slow Trails for a few years now. There are currently 20 Slow Trails throughout Carinthia. Slow Trails invite you to relax, slow down and take time to appreciate nature. They are easy paths, all close to a lake. The actual walking time is no more than three hours along the max. 10 km long trails, although you are likely to find yourself spending additional time at the particularly lovely spots with inviting swings, hammocks and benches along the way.

<https://www.visitcarinthia.at/hiking/slow-trails/>

### **Carinthian Easter traditions**

The preservation of customs and cultural heritage are of great importance in Carinthia. Many traditions are associated with Easter, beginning on Palm Sunday when children carry willow branches into church to have them blessed in some regions. Sweets and pretzels are hung on the branches, much to the children's delight. It is customary to eat spinach on Maundy Thursday and wooden ratchets replace the sound of the church bells which remain silent until Easter Sunday. Families tuck into the traditional "Osterjause" on Holy Saturday or the morning of Easter Sunday after it has been blessed in church. It generally includes smoked ham, horseradish, "Selchwurst" sausages, tongue, painted boiled eggs and sweet "Reindling" made from yeast dough filled with cinnamon, sugar and raisins. Easter bonfires on the mountains mark the end of the Easter season.

<https://www.kaernten.at/aktivitaeten/sommer/kultur-kulinarik/kaerntner-ostern-braeuech-riten-und-kulinarik/> (German only)

## Sustainability in Lower Austria

Sustainability plays a major role in the 2025 tourism strategy of the province of Lower Austria. On the one hand, the measures relate to environmentally friendly arrival and mobility on site, with the local places and regions concentrating on specifically communicating and developing options. On the other hand, Lower Austria is focusing on the variety of high-quality food that is produced in the province and served at its many inns and restaurants. The choice ranges from wine (Lower Austria is the largest wine-growing province in Austria) to Wachau apricots, Pielachtaler Dirndl (cornelian cherries), Waldviertel poppy seeds, pumpkins from the Weinviertel and fish, bread, and brandy specialties.

<https://www.lower-austria.info/>

### ❖ Sustainable winter in Lower Austria

Lower Austria offers the entire spectrum of winter sports – mostly within a tranquil space. If you're looking to unwind on long winter hikes, you've come to the right place. Sports fans will get their money's worth on the numerous cross-country ski trails and in over 20 ski areas, which range from the small family resort in the Waldviertel to the snow-sure ski area on the Hochkar. And children's eyes don't just light up at the sight of the fluffy Kaiserschmarrn served in the huts, but also when hiking through the snow with alpacas and llamas.

<https://www.lower-austria.info/winter-hiking-in-lower-austria> and <https://www.lower-austria.info/animal-adventures-in-lower-austria>

### ❖ Mobility in Lower Austria

#### **Getting to the slopes sustainably**

Trains and buses serve many of Lower Austria's ski areas. An overview can be found online. [www.niederoesterreich.at/oeffentlich-schnee](http://www.niederoesterreich.at/oeffentlich-schnee) (German only)

#### **Hiking and culture shuttle in the Semmering-Rax region**

The Semmering and the towns at the foot of the Rax are not just popular hiking destinations in summer, but also venues for important cultural events. In order to encourage visitors to arrive by public transport (the region is on a main railway line), there has been a special service in place since summer 2022. In addition to the regional buses, visitors can use demand-oriented shuttles. The service is free for overnight guests and has been so well received that more shuttles are continuously being added.

<https://semmering.at/en/rufbusengl/>



## ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Lower Austria

### **Eco-hotel Wagner in Semmering**

Panoramahotel Wagner in Semmering has been a certified eco-hotel since 2001, making it one of the first of its kind. All of its rooms are equipped with natural and sustainable materials. Thanks to the good connection, guests can travel comfortably to Panoramahotel Wagner by train. <https://www.panoramahotel-wagner.at/en/>

### **Green Events: Kasematten Wiener Neustadt**

The Kasematten in Wiener Neustadt, once part of the city fortifications, underwent extensive renovation for the Lower Austrian Provincial Exhibition in 2019 with a focus on sustainability. A green roof terrace was created, among other things, and the Kasematten were turned into an event location. The venue has its own waste avoidance concept and numerous other green measures in place. It also benefits from its excellent connection to the public transport network. The Kasematten were certified with the Austrian Ecolabel in 2022 and are officially listed as a "Green Location".

<https://www.kasematten-wn.at/en/>

## ❖ Spring awakening in Lower Austria

### **Spring excursions in Lower Austria**

A particularly large number of fruits thrive in Lower Austria, thanks to the mild climate. The grapes throughout the many wine regions are used to produce first-class wines and experts turn pears, "Dirndl" (Cornelian cherries) and apricots into sweet and high percentage delights. Visitors can expect a feast for the senses in such a fertile area, especially in spring. Hikers and cyclists head to see the "Dirndl" blossom in the Pielach Valley, the apricot blossom in the Wachau or the pear tree blossom in the Mostviertel. "In die Green gehen" (going into the green) is the motto in the vineyards of the Weinviertel at this time of year – an excellent season for culinary excursions. The wine regions celebrate the wine spring, fresh and pretty produce can be found at the Easter markets and concerts and theatre performances are on the cultural agenda.

<https://www.lower-austria.info/spring>

### **Admire the apricot blossom in the Wachau**

Not only first-class wines come from the Wachau. The river valley on the Danube is also known for its delicacies made from the apricots that grow there. Numerous producers turn the fruit into jams, liqueurs or fine brandies. Apricots refine strudels, cakes and all kinds of other desserts. The apricot blossom is a much visited and celebrated event between mid-March and mid-April each year, when thousands of flowering trees adorn both sides of the Danube. The best way to experience their splendour is on foot, such as along the Wachau Apricot Trail which begins in Krems-Angern and runs along the south bank of the river.

<https://www.donau.com/en/the-danube-in-lower-austria/eating-drinking/richly-laid-tables/apricots-asparagus-co/wachau-apricot/>

### **Where the poppies bloom**

As the spring blossom in Lower Austria draws to end, the next colourful highlight soon follows. From mid-July, the grey poppy fields in the southern Waldviertel are in full bloom. The spectrum ranges from white to red and violet. A particularly large number of poppies grow around the “poppy village” of Armschlag, where the “Mohnblütensonntag” celebrations take place in mid-July with music, dancing and culinary delights. And specialities made from and with poppy seeds – for example “Mohnzelten” (flat pastries filled with poppy seeds), cakes, dumplings, poppy seed ice cream, poppy seed noodles, sheep's cheese with poppy seed oil pesto and carp cooked in a poppy seed crust – are served all year round at the Mohnwirt Neuwiesinger in Armschlag.

<https://www.waldviertel.at/en/waldviertel-poppy-seeds>

## Sustainability in Upper Austria

The fact that Upper Austria plays a pioneering role in terms of sustainability and organic cultivation is demonstrated by initiatives such as the Bioregion Mühlviertel, Mühlviertler Hoch.Genuss, the Bio-Kräutergenossenschaft Mühlviertel herb cooperative and Biohof Geinberg, a greenhouse that is heated CO<sub>2</sub>-free using geothermal energy. The increasing number of organic farm shops underlines this trend. It's also worth mentioning that more and more hosts are consciously focusing on sustainability, which has been very well received. Best practice examples include Hochhubergut organic farm in Aschach an der Steyr, the Balthasar Volcano holiday apartments in St. Wolfgang am Wolfgangsee and the SCHÜTZ Art Museum, the world's first zero-energy art museum.

<https://www.upperaustria.com/en>

### ❖ Sustainable winter in Upper Austria

#### **The silence of winter**

Anyone who appreciates the silence of winter will find many ways to enjoy it in Upper Austria. Excursions take you to Kalkalpen National Park, ski tours to lone mountains, snowshoe and winter hikes through picturesque landscapes. Upper Austria has also drawn up fair play rules under the motto "In our nature" for winter activities away from the slopes. <https://www.upperaustria.com/en/activities/winter-sports.html>  
[www.in-unserer-natur.at/fair-play/fair-play-regeln-fuer-wintersport-abseits-der-piste](http://www.in-unserer-natur.at/fair-play/fair-play-regeln-fuer-wintersport-abseits-der-piste)  
(German only)

### ❖ Mobility in Upper Austria

#### **Freizeit-Ticket Upper Austria**

The Freizeit-Ticket Upper Austria is a day network ticket that can be used on all public transport within the province. It is valid for up to two adults and four children under 15 and costs 24.90 Euros (as of 09.23). <https://www.ooevv.at/?seite=freizeit-ticket-ooe&sprache=EN>

#### **Shuttles and shared taxi services**

Shuttle services supplement local public transport in summer in several regions. These include the Mondsee shared taxi in cooperation with the Postbus shuttle, the Traunstein Taxi and the Kurti shuttle bus in Bad Schallerbach. <https://www.postbus.at/en/>  
<https://traunsee-almтал.salzkammergut.at/en/arrival-local-transport>  
<https://www.vitalwelt.at/en/oesterreich-poi/detail/430025017/ortsbuss-bad-schallerbach-kurti.html>

## ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Upper Austria

### **Natural wonders**

Curtains up for Upper Austria's natural wonders: 130 guided tours invite you to experience the big and small wonders of the local flora and fauna at 40 natural locations. The tours take place all year round. <https://naturschauspiel.at> (German only)

## ❖ Sustainable hosts and producers in Upper Austria

### **IKUNA Nature Resort**

The IKUNA Nature Resort combines a large adventure park with tepee suites and night sky chalets for overnight stays. The environment is extremely important to the owners and the resort boasts 12 e-charging stations, its own photovoltaic system, pellet and wood chip heating as well as 100 percent e-mobility on site. What's more, the parking areas are not sealed, but have a water-permeable subsurface. The Nature Resort has also planted around 1,500 new trees and shrubs to date.

<https://ikuna.at/en>

### **Insulated with bark: guesthouse Balthasar Volcano**

Max Eisl and Anna Winkler not only came up with a special name for their guesthouse which opened in 2021, but also many ecological features. The Balthasar Volcano is located on a hill near St. Wolfgang. Wood, glass and steel are the dominant building materials. Together with a wood expert, Anna and Max worked on the most environmentally friendly insulation material possible. They eventually decided to use larch bark for the outer shell, which had never been done before. For the floor insulation, the hosts chose foam glass made from recycled glass. Anna and Max also generate their own electricity using a photovoltaic system on the roof. Balthasar Volcano has been awarded the Austrian as well as the EU Ecolabel.

<https://www.balthasar-volcano.at/en/>

### **Own hydropower: Natur Resort Dietlgut**

At the end of the Stodertal, beneath the peaks and wooded slopes of the Totes Gebirge, Natur Resort Dietlgut will open in autumn 2023. The Dietlgut, built in 1925, was originally a hunting lodge. Over the decades it transformed into a bed and breakfast, then into a hotel and now the property is changing again. As part of a comprehensive redesign, the family business is becoming a nature resort with 30 spacious apartments, some with private saunas, and six forest houses, each with 144 m<sup>2</sup> of living space, a private sauna and open fireplace. Local produce can be purchased from the on-site shop. Water comes from the estate's own spring and the electricity for the entire resort and its e-charging stations is supplied by its own power plant on the Steyr river, which originates not far away.

[www.dietlgut.at](http://www.dietlgut.at) (German only)

### **Mühlviertler Hochgenuss**

The “Mühlviertler Hochgenuss” initiative is formed by 20 inns and restaurants that promise authentic and sustainable enjoyment. Commonly defined criteria stipulate, for example, that they offer traditional regional dishes which are freshly prepared. All the member establishments use quality-assured products, preferably from Upper Austria.

[www.hochgenuss.at/](http://www.hochgenuss.at/) (German only)

### **Guided tours of Biohof Geinberg**

Biohof Geinberg opened in Geinberg in May 2022, growing vegetables in an eleven-hectare greenhouse according to organically certified principles. Visitors are welcome in the farm shop. The vegetable farmers provide insights into their concept and the greenhouse during two-hour tours that take place on specific dates. Participants learn more about the energy supply, which primarily relies on geothermal energy, and the self-sufficient water supply.

[www.biohof-geinberg.at](http://www.biohof-geinberg.at) (German only)

### ❖ **Spring awakening in Upper Austria**

#### **Fasting makes you fit for spring**

Many people make the most of spring to recharge their batteries and do something good for themselves. One way to get rid of winter baggage is fasting. There are eight specialised spa resorts and hotels that offer expertly supervised fasting weeks in Upper Austria. The choice ranges from classic therapeutic fasting to alkaline fasting and detox cures. Take, for example, Kurhaus Schärding and Gesundheitshotel Gugerbauer, beautifully located on the Inn. Close to the Danube is the Curhaus Bad Kreuzen, which is also a centre for TEM (Traditional European Medicine). A full list of specialists plus excellent fasting recipes can be found at <https://www.oberoesterreich.at/fasten-in-oberoesterreich.html> (German only)

#### **Pilgrimages in Upper Austria**

When nature reawakens, it's a great time for pilgrimages. Walking awakens the spirits and gets the thoughts flowing. The blossoming countryside contributes to well-being and stimulates mindfulness of nature's treasures and of oneself. Upper Austria is particularly rich in pilgrimage routes. There are 21 trails of different lengths in total that run across the hills and high alpine landscapes, to the lakes of the Salzkammergut and along the Inn and Danube.

<https://www.oberoesterreich.at/wandern/pilgern-in-oberoesterreich.html> (German only)

### **An eventful spring day in Linz**

The Upper Austrian Tourist Board has put together suggestions for a varied spring day in Linz. The excursion starts with breakfast in the café of the modern Lentos Museum. Afterwards we recommend a tour of the museum, which will be hosting an exhibition on art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt from 28th March 2024 until 27th October 2024. You could then take a stroll through the tropical realms of the Botanical Garden. The nearby Mariendom, Austria's largest church, is also worth a visit. The compilation of tips further includes recommendations for eating out and shopping.

<https://www.oberoesterreich.at/aktivitaeten/fruehling/ein-erlebnisreicher-fruehlingstag-in-linz.html> (German only)

## Sustainability in SalzburgerLand

SalzburgerLand has long been protecting the environment, nature and climate with strict guidelines. Around two million Euros are invested in good air quality each year, for example. A speed limit of 80 or 100 km/h applies on many motorways in line with the Emission Control Act. Water is another of Salzburg's most important resources and the mountains and glaciers are precious reservoirs that rely on an intact cycle. The best water flows from every tap and virtually all of Salzburg's lakes and mountain streams are of drinking water quality.

Trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub> which is why the forest is considered a real climate protector. More than half of SalzburgerLand is covered by forest, which is not only an important source of income for small scale forest owners, but also an invaluable recreational space. It has now even been scientifically proven that spending time in the forest allows us to breathe more deeply and has an incredibly relaxing effect.

A winter holiday without skiing is unthinkable for many, but you can have a clear conscience when hitting the slopes in SalzburgerLand too. Salzburg's mountain lifts are pioneers when it comes to climate protection and energy efficiency. The Schmittenhöhe in Zell am See-Kaprun and the Rauriser Hochalmbahn are considered to be trailblazers in sustainable tourism. And you don't have to worry about artificial snow in SalzburgerLand nowadays either. Thanks to the state-of-the-art snowmaking techniques (which do not require any chemicals of course) and the reservoirs on the mountains, the snow returns to nature as meltwater.

<https://www.salzburgerland.com/en/>

### ❖ Sustainable winter in SalzburgerLand

#### **The Leogang lifts use plant fuel**

The Leoganger Bergbahnen are becoming a real role model when it comes to sustainability and resource conservation. They have purchased all fuel for the coming winter of 2023/24 in the form of HVO100 renewable fuel. This means moving away from fossil fuels and towards saving up to 90 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

<https://www.saalfelden-leogang.com/sustainability-en>

### **Snow Space Salzburg to use HVO fuels**

From winter 2023/34, the snow groomers in Snow Space Salzburg will run on HVO fuels, saving 90 percent of CO<sub>2</sub>. The ski region is also pursuing the goal of being climate-neutral in operations on the Shuttleberg by the end of 2024. In order to achieve this goal, e-fuels are being used and its PV systems are being expanded. By the end of 2028, the region also wants to generate more renewable energy than it consumes in total.

<https://www.shuttleberg.com/en/ski-resort/sustainability/>

### ❖ **Mobility in SalzburgerLand**

#### **Snow Space Salzburg encourages arrivals by public transport**

Sustainability plays a major role for the Snow Space Salzburg ski area, formed by the resorts of Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann im Pongau. In cooperation with the ÖBB, the region offers a package that, in addition to the train ticket, includes the ski pass, hotel transfer and, if required, rental ski equipment and clothing. Once there, guests can make use of the free ski buses within the region.

<https://www.snow-space.com/en/winter/information-ski-resort/general/sustainability/clean-energy-arrival>

#### **Getting around in the Gastein Valley**

The towns in the Gastein Valley are connected to the international rail network and thus easy to reach by public transport. In addition to the many local buses, the valley offers e-car sharing as an added mobility service for guests. A number of e-cars are already in use and the plan is to have a fleet of around 25 vehicles across the valley in the near future. <https://www.gastein.com/en/urlaub-mit-gutem-gewissen/>

#### **Local shuttle services**

The Loigom Shuttle has been serving residents and guests in Leogang since autumn 2022. The demand-oriented shuttle service complements the existing bus network with 14 additional stops.

<https://salzburg-verkehr.at/fahrplaene/ods> (German only)

Werfenweng offers a local shuttle service too. The W3 shuttle collects guests from the train station and takes them to their accommodation. It also drops day trippers and hikers at their desired destinations.

<https://www.werfenweng.eu/en/holiday/werfenweng-card/soft-mobility/>

### ❖ **Sustainability initiatives in SalzburgerLand**

#### **Recharge your batteries in SalzburgerLand**

From the Gastein Healing Caves to the Krimml Waterfalls: SalzburgerLand has a wealth of destinations for sustainable and beneficial holidays.

<https://www.salzburgerland.com/en/healthiness-in-salzburgerland/>



### **Austrian Ecolabel for the Wagrain-Kleinarl region**

Since June 2023, the Wagrain-Kleinarl region has been certified with the Austrian Ecolabel. The environmental label, which is preceded by a detailed certification process, highlights the numerous measures that the region takes in the interests of nature and social responsibility.

<https://www.wagrain-kleinarl.at/en/wagrain-kleinarl/sustainability/pilot-partner-region-austrian-ecolabel.html>

### **Austrian Ecolabel for Saalfelden Leogang**

Saalfelden Leogang has borne the Austrian Ecolabel since October 2023. In addition, Tourismusverband Saalfelden-Leogang has been the first tourism association in SalzburgerLand to be a member of the Climate Alliance Austria since April 2023. The association is also a member of respACT (austrian business council for sustainable development), Austria's leading corporate platform for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development.

<https://www.saalfelden-leogang.com/en/service-info/sustainability>

### **Austria's first climate hike**

Once a week you can go on a journey through time on the trail of ice, water and change in Saalfelden-Leogang. The guided, approximately three-hour hike deals with the effects of climate change. The aim of the project is to impart knowledge on the topics of nature and climate; to show visible and tangible impacts and create an understanding of future challenges.

<https://www.saalfelden-leogang.com/en/service-info/sustainability/climate-hike>

### ❖ **Sustainable hosts and producers in SalzburgerLand**

#### **High holiday spirits, low carbon footprint**

Which hosts place a particular emphasis on sustainable initiatives? Find particularly committed hotels and guesthouses here.

[www.salzburgerland.com/de/so-nachhaltig-kann-urlaub-sein/](http://www.salzburgerland.com/de/so-nachhaltig-kann-urlaub-sein/) (German only)

#### **Alpin Life Resort Lürzerhof**

The Alpin Life Resort Lürzerhof in Untertauern is completely energy self-sufficient.

Thanks to a unique concept of water, heat and electricity, the hotel is supplied entirely from its own resources. [www.luerzerhof.at/hotel/nachhaltigkeit/](http://www.luerzerhof.at/hotel/nachhaltigkeit/) (German only)

### **Zero-emissions spa: Alpentherme Bad Hofgastein**

Together with Siemens, the Alpentherme in Bad Hofgastein is working on measures that will pave the way to become a climate-neutral spa resort. The entire system hydraulics and swimming pool ventilation have been adapted, for example. By changing the system hydraulics it has become possible to generate a large part of the required thermal energy with low-temperature heat pumps. This means that recovered thermal energy sources are used and energy production costs are reduced. The Alpentherme is already saving around 82,000 euros annually, whilst at the same time a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of almost 370 tons is being achieved per year.

<https://www.alpentherme.com/en/service/sustainability>

### **The BioArt Campus in Seeham**

For decades, Seeham has been shaped by its residents' organic commitment. 80 percent of all farmers work according to organic principles. Sustainability is lived in all areas of society.

The BioArt Campus was opened in Seeham in 2022. It is dedicated to the topics of organic, sustainability and a liveable future for coming generations. The BioArt Campus has five gourmet manufactories, a gourmet workshop, a think tank, an organic shop and an organic restaurant. Seminars and workshops make it possible to experience organic with all the senses.

[www.bioartcampus.at](http://www.bioartcampus.at) (German only)

### **Sawa Eco Fashion from Nußdorf am Haunsberg**

A few years ago, Sabine Wagenhofer suffered from burnout. In that period she rediscovered spinning, which her grandmother had taught her as a child. She soon knitted her first jumpers from the wool she had spun herself and decided to devote herself entirely to wool and the craft, also because much of what we wear today has become disposable. Sabine has wanted to counteract this with high-quality and accordingly long-lasting clothing ever since. In Nußdorf am Haunsberg she produces knitwear for children and adults from hand-spun wool dyed with natural colours. The raw materials all come from the local area, from the sheep to the alpaca wool. Each item is knitted by hand and is unique.

[www.sawa-ecofashion.at](http://www.sawa-ecofashion.at) (German only)

### **❖ Spring awakening in SalzburgerLand**

#### **Relax at Lake Fuschl**

From as early as mid-May, swimmers venture into the idyllically situated Lake Fuschl. Stand-up paddlers explore the lake too and those who don't fancy getting wet can choose one of the many paths that run around the lake and across the nearby hills. There are some nice places to stop for a bite to eat such as Café Edenberger, right by the lake in Fuschl am See with the best views of the sunset.

<https://fuschlsee.salzkammergut.at/en/>

### **Hike into spring**

Snow still lies on the high mountains in March and April, so hikers looking to explore green spaces should choose trails at lower altitudes. There is a path leading to the Müllerfuchs in Leogang, for example, with a walking time of about one and a half hours. Legend has it that a blasphemous miller ("Müller") was reborn as a fox ("Fuchs") after his death and terrified the area with his howls – hence the name "Müllerfuchs". It takes around two hours to reach the Edelweißalm through the larch forest from Wagrain. And the hike to Lake Schödersee in the Grossarltal takes about four hours.

<https://www.salzburgerland.com/de/magazin/wir-wandern-in-den-fruehling/> (German only)

### **Inspiration at weekly markets**

The assortment of regional products is particularly fresh and vibrant at the weekly markets in spring. Several markets across the city of Salzburg sell colourful flowers, fruit and vegetables. The Salzburger Schranne is a popular one on Mirabellplatz every Thursday. The name "Schranne" comes from the grain storage depots that used to be found in the "Schrannenhalle" buildings around Mirabellplatz. You will find delicacies and regional products at the Grünmarkt from Monday to Saturday and the organic farmers' market is held on Kajetanerplatz every Friday.

<https://www.salzburg-fibel.at/wochenmaerkte-in-salzburg/> (German only)

### **Hike to the last occupied hermitage in Europe**

North of Saalfelden, above Lichtenfels Castle, a bright white chapel nestles against the rock at 1,006 m above sea level. This is the hermitage of Saalfelden and the last occupied hermitage in Europe. The natural rock cave was converted into a chapel in the 17th century when its resident hermit built a hermitage in the rock on the Palfen as accommodation. Locals appreciate the tranquillity of the spot as a "place of rest for the soul" and like to come here to recharge their batteries. The hermitage can be reached on an easy hiking trail with fantastic views of Saalfelden and the surrounding mountains along the way. The current hermit is usually at home here from April to November.

<https://www.saalfelden-leogang.com/en/region-experience/attractions/einsiedelei>

## Sustainability in Styria

The Green Heart of Austria has always acted sustainably in many areas – out of responsibility towards nature and future generations. The fact that Styria is rich in natural areas worth protecting plays an equally important role. With around 62 percent covered by forests, Styria is Austria's most densely forested province. The website provides an overview of environmentally friendly mobility, Styria's pioneers in all things sustainability and establishments that bear the Austrian Ecolabel.

<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Plan-your-holiday/Sustainable-holidays>

### ❖ Sustainable winter in Styria

#### **Winter retreats**

Browse 12 locations in Styria that offer magical winter experiences, from snowshoe hikes to wintry city tours and learning to cook on the farm.

<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Styria/Active-holidays-in-nature/Winter-retreats>

#### **Energy self-sufficient snowmaking on the Riesneralm**

The Riesneralm Bergbahnen have made a far-sighted investment. Instead of a reservoir for snowmaking on the slopes, they erected a hydropower plant in winter 2019/20 which was connected to the pipe system of the existing snowmaking facility. By doing so, the system produces electricity as well as snow. In the medium term, the construction of the power plant will be financed through electricity sales, as two and a half times as much electricity is produced as the mountain railways need to operate and for snowmaking. The new system is intended to help make the Riesneralm ski area energy self-sufficient.

[www.riesneralm.at](http://www.riesneralm.at) (German only)

### ❖ Mobility in Styria

#### **Regional mobility services**

- The GUSTmobil operates in the greater Graz area and takes holiday guests to the town centre all year round.  
<https://www.holding-graz.at/en/mobility/the-gustmobil-graz-perfect-connection/>
- The WEINmobil and Gamlitzer Gasttaxi operate in Southern Styria. They take guests from their accommodation to restaurants, wine taverns and excursion destinations.  
<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Suedsteiermark/Holiday/getting-around>
- Take advantage of the ski and hiking buses in the Schladming-Dachstein region.  
<https://www.schladming-dachstein.at/en/sustainability/buses>
- The Salzkammergut Shuttle has been running since July 2023. The service supports the local public transport system and can be used every day from 7 am to 10 pm all year round.  
<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Ausseerland-Salzkammergut/Plan-your-holidays/Mobility-on-site>

## ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Styria

### **Schladming-Dachstein**

Sustainability is very important to the Schladming-Dachstein region. The website provides information about all of its initiatives – from environmentally friendly mobility to measuring snow depth for targeted snow production and accommodations with the Austrian Ecolabel.

<https://www.schladming-dachstein.at/en/sustainability#10/47.4095/13.8563>

### **The Murau energy vision**

The Murau region has been relying on renewable energies since 2012. 89 hydroelectric power plants, 51 heating plants with combined heat and power or biomass, 10 wind turbines and 973 photovoltaic systems already produce around three times as much electricity as can be consumed in the region.

<https://www.holzweltmurau.at/energieregionmurau/> (German only)

## ❖ Sustainable hosts and producers in Styria

### **Geothermal energy: Rogner Bad Blumau**

With the Rogner Bad Blumau thermal baths, artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser realised his ideas of living in harmony with nature. But it's not just visually that the thermal baths blend into the surroundings. The property covers 30 percent of its own electricity needs using geothermal energy. And an aquaponics pilot project has also been running since 2020, combining sustainable fish farming with the cultivation of herbs and vegetables.

<https://www.blumau.com/en/arrive-and-discover/hydropower.html>

### **Energy self-sufficient: Hi5-Hotel in Seiersberg**

The Hi5-Hotel opened in Seiersberg, a ten-minute drive from Graz, in June 2022 with 20 rooms and 6 apartments. The new building is energy self-sufficient and considered to be the first zero-emissions hotel in Austria. The rooms are cooled and heated with concrete core activation. The energy for this system is provided by the in-house canteen. When it comes to style, the hotel combines Styrian charm with American ease. Pastel wall colours, floral patterns and soft wood tones convey a holiday atmosphere. Guests can make use of the hotel's e-bike rental and eight e-charging stations. There is also a restaurant, small wellness area, seminar room and supermarket on site.

[www.hi5-hotel.at](http://www.hi5-hotel.at) (German only)

### **Wine and theme trails**

Styria is particularly rich in culinary treasures, with wines from the various wine-growing regions and Styrian pumpkin seed oil being amongst its best known. These products are the focus of culinary theme trails. Along the way, traditional wine taverns, restaurants and gourmet manufactories invite you to sample the regional specialities or take them home as souvenirs. The Southern Styrian Wine Trail, the Schilcher Wine Trail and the Sausal Wine Trail lead through the south of the province. In addition, there is the Styrian "Ölspur" (oil trail), on which where everything revolves around the green gold of Styria – Styrian pumpkin seed oil. There are different ways to follow these trails on foot, bike or e-bike. The respective starting points plus many other destinations can be reached either by public transport or, at a reasonable flat rate, with the Weinmobil wine taxi.

<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Suedsteiermark/Region/wine-theme-trails> and  
<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Suedsteiermark/Holiday/getting-around>

### ❖ **Spring awakening in Styria**

#### **Styria in bloom**

Which parts of Styria are particularly lovely to visit in spring? Styria Tourism has compiled a list of the best excursions and the selection ranges from the Apple Road in Eastern Styria to a tour through the historical gardens of Herberstein Castle and the Hanging Gardens of the Sulamith in St. Kathrein am Offenegg. Spa and herb gardens plus the parks in the provincial capital of Graz make the green offerings complete.

[https://www.steiermark.com/de/Magazin/Aufbluehen-in-der-Steiermark\\_mad\\_28614720](https://www.steiermark.com/de/Magazin/Aufbluehen-in-der-Steiermark_mad_28614720)

(German only)

#### **Practical: the interactive holiday planner**

Where exactly can you find the gardens and parks across Styria? Find all of the details at a glance with Styria's interactive holiday planner. Depending on your selection, the map also displays many other destinations worth visiting in the categories of nature and sport, wine and culinary, art and culture, wellness and health as well as mobility and infrastructure.

<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Plan-your-holiday/Holiday-planner>

#### **Fresh spring air**

Excursion tips for all those who want to soak up the spring air while hiking or cycling in particularly lovely surroundings can be found on the Styria Tourism website. The Mur Cycle Path is a great choice for the first bike ride of the year. The 453 km long route takes you along eight predominantly leisurely stages. Moderately hilly Eastern Styria scores with its family-friendly hiking trails. It's also a pleasure to spend mild spring days in the vineyards of Southern Styria.

[https://www.steiermark.com/de/Magazin/Fruehling-wird-s-Hier-atmet-man-die-beste-Frischluft\\_mad\\_27700513](https://www.steiermark.com/de/Magazin/Fruehling-wird-s-Hier-atmet-man-die-beste-Frischluft_mad_27700513) (German only)

### **The Grünkraft formula**

"Grünkraft" is the name of the Styrian happiness formula for those who want to do something good for themselves and their health. The Grünkraft hosts use the healing power of nature in their specialised offers and give impulses to find one's own balance again. They organise workshops and accompany forest bathing, Kneipp and yoga sessions amidst nature. Some establishments invite you to relax in thermal water and treat yourself to soothing treatments. When it comes to meals, the Grünkraft hosts focus on regional and seasonal delights.

<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Styria/Wellness-health/Gruenkraft-Steiermark>

### **Spring feeling in Southern Styria**

An up and down of hills covered in vines characterises the landscape of Southern Styria. The region has come up with all kinds of ideas for tasty spring excursions, such as a picnic in the vineyard service. From Easter, spring packages consisting of three to seven nights invite you to make a holiday of it with plenty of tips for seasonal experiences. They range from tractor tours to gourmet manufactory visits such as an oil mill and a distillery or hikes accompanied by donkeys and goats.

<https://www.steiermark.com/en/Suedsteiermark/Spring>

## Sustainability in Tirol

The adventure tour through one of the nature parks, a snowshoe hike in the mountaineering village, an excursion by public transport, the accommodation with the green seal of approval, restaurants and hosts who keep supply chains short and buy locally: these are just some of the ingredients for sustainable tourism in Tirol, which more and more establishments are pursuing and which guests with a green heart truly value. Arrive comfortably by bus and train, stay at a guesthouse that consciously redevelops the old, enjoy Slow Food at selected huts and restaurants – the consideration of resources goes hand in hand with taste, enjoyment and well-being here. A holiday in and with nature is gentle and yet action-packed. Tirol offers many ways to holiday in harmony with yourself and nature.

<https://www.tyrol.com/things-to-do/ecotiro1>

### ❖ Sustainable winter in Tirol

#### **Ecological SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser - Brixental**

The SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser - Brixental has been named "Ecological Ski Resort of the Year" several times for its various projects in ecology and sustainability. This begins with the fact that the entire SkiWelt is powered by 100 percent green electricity from Tirolean hydropower. The 17 reservoirs save electricity and the SkiWelt only uses pure drinking water for snowmaking.

<https://www.skiwelt.at/en/skiwelt-goes-green-to-stay-white.html>

#### **The Stubai Glacier – sustainability in practice**

The Stubai Gletscherbahnen ensure that nature and the existing resources are treated with utmost care: from targeted energy management to the renaturation of the slopes, the advantages of the reservoirs and environmentally friendly transport for guests and employees.

<https://www.stubaier-gletscher.com/en/ski-area/sustainability/>

#### **Shared taxi service in Gries**

The first shared taxi service in the Imst district has been connecting Gries im Sulztal with the public transport network of the Ötztal all year round since December 2022. The new system came about through a cooperation between the municipalities, the Transport Association Tirol and the Sölden and Gurgl mountain railways.

<https://www.laengenfeld.com/summer/everything-about-laengenfeld/infrastructures.html?viewType=detail&itemId=100309>



## ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Tirol

### **Slow tourism spots in Tirol**

Wild water, lone mountains, enchanted places – and not a trace of stress. Tirol is full of slow tourism hotspots. Some are tucked away at the end of the valley whilst others lie right next to transit routes. Here are 5 regions that will uplift and help you unwind:

<https://www.tyrol.com/blog/b-recommendations/slow-tourism>

### **Sustainable accommodation**

You will find a compilation of sustainable accommodation in Tirol here:

<https://www.tyrol.com/book-your-holiday/sustainable-hotels>

### **Austrian Ecolabel for the Seefeld region**

The Seefeld region is particularly committed to the environment. In close coordination, all relevant parties – from the tourism association to the hosts and those responsible for the nature park – looked at the UN sustainability goals and defined their own. Part of the initiative is the “Genuinely Sustainable” project which encourages all tourism businesses in the region to implement ecological and social improvement processes. The Seefeld region has carried the Austrian Ecolabel since May 2023 and was the first tourism destination to receive this award at the time. Wagrain-Kleinarl in SalzburgerLand has also been certified since June 2023. The Plateau Pioneers in Seefeld carry the Austrian Ecolabel for tourism destinations too. The group consists of eight pioneers from the local nature park, tourism association and accommodations. The Seefeld region has been focusing on sustainable winter activities for many years with a particular emphasis on cross-country skiing and around 245 km of cross-country trails to enjoy.

<https://www.seefeld.com/en/> and <https://www.seefeld.com/en/pilot-partnership-region.html>

### **Barrier-free holidays in Kaunertal**

For many years, the Kaunertal has specialised in accessible holidays with no ifs or buts. Many of the local accommodations and shops are barrier-free and there are six mountain trails that can be accessed with a wheelchair or buggy. The 2 km long path through the impressive Piller Moor in Kaunergrat Nature Park, for example, is designated as an easy wheelchair hike. The Adlerblick viewing platform above Feichten is also barrier-free. Wheelchair users who want to head high with ease can rent Swiss-Tracs on site. These towing devices can be taken on board the mountain lifts, as can buggies. Kaunertal was named "Best Tourism Village" by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 2021 for its commitment to sustainability and inclusion.

[www.kaunertal.com/de/Nachhaltigkeit/Gelebte-Nachhaltigkeit/Best-Tourism-Village](http://www.kaunertal.com/de/Nachhaltigkeit/Gelebte-Nachhaltigkeit/Best-Tourism-Village)  
(German only)

<https://www.kaunertal.com/en/Your-kaunertal/Accessible/accessible-holiday>

### **Museum of Tirolean Farmhouses**

How did farming families used to live and what characterises the architecture of the farms in the different parts of Tirol? The Museum of Tirolean Farmhouses in Kramsach provides insights. An approximately one and a half hour tour takes visitors to and into 37 historic farmsteads, with information boards, video installations and an audio guide app to lead the way. The Museum of Tirolean Farmhouses is open daily from 24th March to the end of October 2024.

<https://www.museum-tb.at/> (German only)

### ❖ **Spring awakening in Tirol**

#### **To the Christmas rose blossom in Kufstein**

Kufstein is an excellent starting point for spring hikes. If you would like to enjoy a special natural spectacle, you should visit the city on the Inn towards the end of April/beginning of May when thousands of Christmas roses bloom on Kufstein's local hill. You can either hike up the 1,205 m high Brentenjoch or take the Kaiserlift, which operates again from 1st May 2024.

<https://blog.kufstein.com/en/christmas-rose-hike-a-natural-spectacle.html>

#### **Spring hikes in the Gaistal**

The high plateau of Seefeld and Leutasch is ideal for spring hikes, such as along the idyllic trail that leads through the Gaistal near Leutasch. It takes around one and a half hours to reach the Gaistalalm, through open forests and with a view of the Leutascher Ache. After a refreshment or bite to eat you return to the starting point along the same path.

<https://www.seefeld.com/en/hiking-tours-in-the-gaistal-valley.html>

## Sustainability in Vorarlberg

Sustainability is one of the pillars of the Vorarlberg Tourism Strategy 2030. Numerous establishments, producers, farmers, cooperations and many other institutions and people associated with tourism have long been following a path that conserves resources and nature. It goes without saying that the hotel and catering industry uses local produce wherever possible. And energy efficiency, for example, plays a central role in the contemporary architecture for which Vorarlberg is so well known. Climate-friendly mobility is very important in Vorarlberg too and the public transport network is excellent. In summer the regional inclusive cards are valid for travel by train and bus, and in winter the ski passes include free use of scheduled buses and ski buses.

[www.vorarlberg-tourismus2030.at/kernziel5/](http://www.vorarlberg-tourismus2030.at/kernziel5/) (German only)

### ❖ Sustainable winter in Vorarlberg

#### **Lech Zürs am Arlberg**

Lech Zürs am Arlberg uses many measures to help protect the environment. For many years now the buildings in Lech and Zürs have been heated with energy from the biomass heating plant. The “Blue Fleet” delivers environmentally friendly mobility in summer and winter. In summer, guests can rent e-bikes and e-scooters. The district of Oberlech is almost car-free. Guests reach their accommodation by cable car. The hotels are served by an underground tunnel system. Goods heading to and from the hotels are transported exclusively by electric cars. Since 2020, the Ski Zürs AG has relied 100 percent on renewable energy sources. It operates all lifts, mountain restaurants and snowmaking systems with green electricity from hydropower. Since the beginning of 2023 there has also been a small hydroelectric power plant that supplies the region with renewable energy and covers around 15 percent of the electricity consumption of Lech Zürs.

<https://www.lechzuers.com/en/guide/sustainability>

### ❖ Mobility in Vorarlberg

#### **Environmentally friendly travel in Vorarlberg**

Vorarlberg’s trains and buses have been running in a network system for many years and connect at regular intervals. This means that you can explore the entire province using the hop-on, hop-off principle. Regional inclusive cards, guest cards, ski passes and tickets for some museums and events are also valid for travel on public transport.

<https://www.vorarlberg.travel/en/day-trips-in-vorarlberg-by-bus-and-train/>

### **Free travel by bus and train in Vorarlberg**

All guests who spend at least one night in the Brandnertal, Bludenz or Klostertal enjoy free travel with all trains and buses in Vorarlberg. In winter this enables guests to easily get to know other nearby ski areas such as the Montafon or Arlberg.

<https://www.vorarlberg-alpenregion.at/en/guest-cards/mobility.html>

### **Through the Kleinwalsertal by Walserbus**

The Walserbus provides Kleinwalsertal guests with an efficient transport system that takes them quickly and safely around the valley and to Oberstdorf (D). It runs on the main Kleinwalsertal line and serves all districts with secondary lines. Kleinwalsertal guest card holders can use the Walserbus free of charge.

<https://www.kleinwalsertal.com/en/Current-and-Service/Service/Walserbus-and-Allgäu-Walser-Card>

### **❖ Sustainability initiatives in Vorarlberg**

#### **Climate-neutral: Golm Silvretta Lünersee Tourism**

The Golm Silvretta Lünersee tourism association based in Montafon has made a name for itself as the first climate-neutral tourism destination in Austria. It is formed by Erlebnisberg Golm, Silvretta Bielerhöhe and the Lünersee in Brandnertal. The organisation pursues three goals: the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 62 percent by 2030, the dedicated advancement of e-mobility projects and the continuous increase of energy efficiency.

<https://www.gsl-tourismus.at/de/nachhaltigkeit> (German only)

#### **“Echt Lech” makes mountain farming more visible**

In order to make their everyday life with the animals on the sometimes steep slopes of the Arlberg more visible, seven mountain farms from Lech, Zug, Oberlech and Zürs have founded the “Echt Lech” association. They sell their specialties – from fresh hay milk and pork, beef and chicken meat to various types of sausage – under the “Echt Lech” label. The initiative also aims to raise awareness of animals, farming, and high-quality agricultural products.

<https://echtlech.at/> (German only)

#### **PIZ Montafon**

PIZ Montafon was founded in 2022 as a future laboratory for sustainable tourism. The initiative sees its purpose as promoting awareness of sustainable tourism. Tourist enterprises are to be involved to form a network of experts and the next generation. Together they are to develop concrete solutions with success stories opening up new opportunities for the region.

<https://piz.montafon.at/> (German only)

### **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Großes Walsertal**

"Using nature without harming it" has been the motto in the Großes Walsertal since 2000 when the valley became a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere reserves are model regions in which the preservation of biological diversity goes hand in hand with sustainable development. In line with this, the valley focuses on gentle tourism. The initiative received the European Village Renewal Award in 2002, the EDEN Award as "European Destination of Excellence" in 2009 and the European Energy Award in 2019. In addition, the Großes Walsertal is energy-efficient with the highest possible status of e5 and a Climate Alliance region.

[www.grosseswalsertal.at](http://www.grosseswalsertal.at) (German only)

### **The Rhine Delta nature reserve**

The Rhine flows as a border river between Vorarlberg and Switzerland. Before it was regulated over 100 years ago, the Rhine formed an extensive delta that was declared a nature reserve in the 1940s where it flows into Lake Constance. The approximately 2,000 hectare area by Lake Constance is one of the most important wetlands and bird breeding areas in Central Europe. It stretches along the shores of Lake Constance from Hard to the Swiss border, providing a home for around 330 rare types of bird. The untouched banks and extensive shallow water areas provide spawning grounds and habitats for the Lake Constance fish. Walking and cycling paths lead through the nature reserve. There are also bathing areas, some of which have sandy beaches.

<https://www.vorarlberg.travel/en/rhine-delta-nature-reserve/>

### **The #zäm initiative**

A region is considered particularly liveable, attractive and authentic when its hosts and producers complement one another. The #zäm initiative ("zäm" means together in the Vorarlberg dialect) showcases the many successful partnerships in the Lake Constance-Vorarlberg region. Articles, images, videos, and podcasts give tourism professionals, but also anyone else interested, an insight into how tourism establishments, producers and craftsmen shape the offerings of the Lake Constance region together – highly enjoyable, seasonal/regional, and sustainable.

[www.zaem.at](http://www.zaem.at) (German only)

### **Climate-neutral: the Sutterlüty retail chain**

The Sutterlüty Group is based in the Bregenzerwald. It operates 26 stores in Vorarlberg and employs around 700 people. Cooperating and networking with its around 1,500 regional partners as well as sustainability play an important role for the family business. The shelves contain around 3,000 products from Vorarlberg and the Lake Constance area which generate more than a third of all sales. Sutterlüty builds its locations itself according to green building standards. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, Sutterlüty has made its entire operation CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral, meaning that customers shop in 100 percent climate-neutral markets. The group has set itself the goal of becoming the supermarket with the smallest ecological footprint by 2025.

[www.sutterlueuty.at](http://www.sutterlueuty.at) (German only)

### **Climate-neutral: Montforthaus Feldkirch**

Feldkirch is the most energy-efficient city in Austria and has already received the European Energy Award Gold twice. The processes in the Montforthaus, the town's culture and congress centre, are sustainably optimised too. Thanks to numerous measures, the Montforthaus Feldkirch can claim to be Austria's first climate-neutral certified congress centre. In autumn 2021, the certifier ClimatePartner calculated the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, examined possible avoidances and then offset the remaining emissions. The Montforthaus uses groundwater to cool and heat. Its restaurant sources regional ingredients and the ideal connections make it easy to reach by public transport.

[www.montforthausfeldkirch.com/de/news/montforthaus-klimaneutral](http://www.montforthausfeldkirch.com/de/news/montforthaus-klimaneutral) (German only)

### **CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral: the open air pool in Braz**

In 2022, the Open Air Pool Braz completely overhauled its energy supply and has since become Vorarlberg's first CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral outdoor pool. A photovoltaic system and an air-water pump ensure a constantly pleasant water temperature and supply the buildings with electricity.

<https://www.vorarlberg-alpenregion.at/en/klostertal/open-air-pool-braz.html>

### **Eco-friendly Kunsthaus Bregenz**

At the beginning of 2023, the Kunsthaus Bregenz (KUB) replaced all lighting fixtures with LEDs as part of its energy optimisation program that has been running for several years. 660 lamps were replaced on the three above-ground floors alone. Then there were the lighting fixtures in the escape routes and lower levels. Thanks to these measures and the daylight-dependent control, the Kunsthaus Bregenz will be able to save more than 50 percent of the electricity previously consumed by the lighting system. At the beginning of 2024, the Kunsthaus Bregenz was awarded the Austrian Ecolabel.

<https://www.kunsthaus-bregenz.at/en/news/lighting-replacement>

### **Unique: Hittisau Women's Museum**

Austria's only women's museum is located in Hittisau in the Bregenzerwald. In changing exhibitions, it highlights the lives and cultural work of women. The museum places great emphasis on participation and inclusion and wants to enable cross-generational learning using different formats. Hittisau Women's Museum won the Austrian Museum Prize in 2017 and received a special commendation at the European Museum of the Year Awards in 2021. The museum has also carried the Austrian Ecolabel since 2023. Spring cleaning inspiration and insights into the history of cleaning can be found at the "SPICK-AND-SPAN! On cleaning and cleansing" exhibition, running until 27th October 2024 at the Hittisau Women's Museum and the Lech Museum in Lech am Arlberg.

<https://www.frauenmuseum.at/english-1>

### **Werkraum Bregenzerwald**

Contemporary Vorarlberg architecture stands out. Innovative craftsmen play an important role in this, especially those brought together by Werkraum Bregenzerwald. The association to promote crafts and building culture, founded in 1999, has 95 members. Since 2013, Werkraum Bregenzerwald has also had its own centre: the Werkraum Haus, designed by well-known Swiss architect Peter Zumthor and built by the Werkraum members, hosts exhibitions, events, and educational programmes. Werkraum Bregenzerwald has also initiated its own school which combines apprenticeships and training.

<https://www.werkraum.at/en>

### **Umgang Bregenzerwald**

Walks along the 12 Umgang Bregenzerwald trails are leisurely and informative at the same time. The circular routes lead through 13 Bregenzerwald villages, lasting one and a half to four hours. On each path around ten information columns draw attention to a particular building, the special features of the cultural landscape, craftsmanship or ecological details, artistic facets or culinary or touristic works.

<https://www.bregenzerwald.at/en/good-to-know/umgangbregenzerwald/>

### **Special: plenter forests**

The Bregenzerwald is characterised by plenter forest structures. This is special, because of all the forests in Austria only around two percent are plenter forests. To visitors, plenter forests can feel like a jungle, with trees of all ages (mainly fir, spruce and beech in the Bregenzerwald) growing side by side. But they are actually systematically managed forests, in which trees of different species, sizes and ages grow. The task of the foresters is to moderately but regularly fell the large older trees to create light for the young ones waiting to grow in their place. This means you don't have to invest any work or money in planting young trees. The plenter forest rejuvenates itself, referred to as "natural rejuvenation". This is considered the pinnacle of forestry, because it takes a lot of knowledge and experience to care for a plenter forest.

Plenter forests make a significant contribution to the preservation of biodiversity. They are also significantly more resilient to the effects of climate change. Plenter forests cope better with harmful outside influences such as drought or storms and pests such as fungi and bark beetles than forests that predominantly consist of one type of tree.

<https://www.bregenzerwald.at/en/thema/experiencing-forests/>

## ❖ Sustainable hosts and producers in Vorarlberg

### **Model sustainable hotels**

- **Hotel Lün** in Brand im Brandnertal is one of Austria's first climate-active hotels. It uses local wood as part of a pellet heating system to heat and has been supporting the "One Tree Planted" reforestation project since 2019. For each booking, the hotel donates an amount that allows a tree to be planted. 4,220 trees have been planted so far (as of December 2023). Construction and renovation work is carried out by architects and craftsmen from the region and the hotel obtains most of its food from certified organic producers in the surrounding area.

[www.hotel-luen.com](http://www.hotel-luen.com)

- **Hotel Mondschein** in Stuben am Arlberg and the **Mondschein Chalet** have received several certifications and awards, including the European Ecolabel, klima:aktiv Gold for sustainability and the "Luxury Ecogreen Hotel Award" (2020). Since its full renovation in 2011, the hotel has relied on a holistic ecological concept. The aim is to reduce the ecological holiday footprint per guest by around 80 percent compared to similar four-star hotels. Hotel Mondschein is a long-standing member of the Climate Neutrality Alliance 2025 and offsets part of its CO2 emissions by supporting the myclimate climate protection project in Nepal.

[www.mondschein.com](http://www.mondschein.com)

- **Naturhotel Chesa Valisa** in Kleinwalsertal has been a certified BIO Hotel since 2007. It was the first BIO Hotel in Vorarlberg at the time. The hotel kitchen thus relies entirely on certified organic products, most of which come from the local area. There is a "Green Day" once a week on which exclusively vegetarian dishes are served at the evening meal. In addition, the Chesa Valisa is a climate-neutral hotel. Electricity comes from hydropower and the hotel's own solar and photovoltaic systems. It uses district heating to heat, generated from wood chippings provided by Kleinwalsertal farmers. The ecological, energy-saving wooden design and use of natural building materials such as clay ensure a healthy indoor environment. The hotel encourages its guests to leave their cars at home during their stay. Around 80 percent of guests follow this recommendation and receive a piece of mountain cheese on departure under the motto "cheese for kilometres".

[www.naturhotel.at](http://www.naturhotel.at)



- **Hotel Post Bezau** by Susanne Kaufmann and the certified **Bio-Hotel Schwanen** in Bizau grow their own vegetables, herbs and fruit. The tasty treasures are grown in their own gardens and on the fields of solidarity farms in Bezau, which both hotels support. Hotel Post Bezau by Susanne Kaufmann has also developed its own line of ecologically degradable and pollutant-free cleaning agents and detergents. Plastic waste avoidance is a top priority and the hotel is able to supply “zero kilometre water” by filling its own water into glass bottles from a spring in Bezau. At Bio-Hotel Schwanen in Bizau, the kitchen exclusively uses organically certified ingredients from the surrounding area. Food is largely prepared according to Hildegard von Bingen. "Reduce to the max" is the motto here: only the most important of everything and only the best of the most important. The development of renewable energy sources has helped save around 30 percent of the hotel's primary energy demand since the end of 2023. In addition, the building now has a green facade and roof. <https://www.hotelpostbezau.com/en> and <https://biohotel-schwanen.com/>

### **The Vetterhof in Lustenau**

Numerous types of vegetables thrive in the fields of the Vetterhof in Lustenau. The organically certified establishment won the Austrian Climate Protection Prize 2017. The Vetterhof delivers vegetable boxes climate-neutrally by bike or electric car.

[www.vetterhof.at](http://www.vetterhof.at) (German only)

### **Mountain butcher Johannes Gassner**

With his slaughter and butcher room in Raggal in the UNESCO Biosphere Park Großes Walsertal, Johannes Gassner has fulfilled his dream of producing sustainable food. He attaches particular importance to regional and high-quality products that are all about animal welfare. [www.derbergmetzger.at](http://www.derbergmetzger.at) (German only)

### **"Moorwirte" innkeepers Krumbach**

You can explore the local moorland landscape on a hiking trail in Krumbach in the Bregenzerwald. Three "Moorwirte" innkeepers have devoted themselves to culinary delights from the moor. At Restaurant Schulhus, Gasthof Adler and the Krumbacher Stuba, plants, berries and herbs from the moor refine dishes and drinks.

<https://www.bregenzerwald.at/en/activity/moorwirte-innkeepers-krumbach/>

### ❖ **Spring awakening in Vorarlberg**

#### **Spring at Lake Constance and in the mountains**

At Lake Constance, which acts as a heat reservoir, the flourishing nature calls to be explored on foot or by bike as early as March. Sun and spring air can also be soaked up on the nearby mountains, where the snowfields are visibly melting away. The Lake Constance ships start operating again from 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Further spring excursion ideas can be found at: <https://www.vorarlberg.travel/en/spring/>

### **Spring hikes in Vorarlberg**

The flowers are in bloom, birdsong fills the air, nature is reawakening to life. The Rhine Delta nature reserve and the Bangs-Matschels European nature reserve are particularly beautiful at this time of year, with purple irises lighting up the meadows. Colourful flowers are also shooting up across the moors of Krumbach in Bregenzerwald and on the Hörnlepass in Kleinwalsertal. Hikers can enjoy stunning views from the Muttersberg near Bludenz, easily reached by cable car, and from the Bartholomäberg in Montafon.

<https://www.vorarlberg.travel/en/activity/blooms-scents-and-whizzing-insects-10-hiking-tips-for-spring/>

### **Wildpark Feldkirch**

The wildlife park on the Ardetzenberg in Feldkirch awakens to new life in spring as well, with a number of young animals – from boars to goats and wild cats – to admire. The walk from Churer Tor via the Himmelsstiege to the freely accessible wildlife park (open daily) takes around 20 minutes.

<https://www.wildpark-feldkirch.at/> (German only)

### **Picking wild garlic and collecting wild herbs**

Petra Manke knows a thing or two about wild herbs. The expert lives just a few kilometres from Bregenz in Hörbranz. Petra passes on her knowledge of herbs and wild plants such as wild garlic, which starts growing in abundance in spring, on herb hikes. Along the way, participants learn how to find the herbs. They are also introduced to their properties and how best to process them into teas, spices, ointments or tinctures.

<https://www.natursachen.com/> (German only)

## Sustainability in Vienna

Conscious shopping, organic farming and a smart infrastructure show that quality of life and sustainability go hand in hand in Vienna. Austria's capital continually receives awards for its high quality of life. Renowned British news magazine "The Economist" named Vienna the most liveable city in the world for the fourth time in 2023. The Global Liveability Index published annually since 2004 by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) enjoys worldwide attention and compares over 140 major cities around the world. Vienna is a remarkable city in many ways and, above all, a green one. Over 860 hectares of organic growing land are cultivated on three city farms. And with almost 600 hectares of vineyards, Vienna is the only European capital with significant wine production.

Residents and visitors alike appreciate Vienna's large number of parks and recreational areas. The Prater with its extensive forests and meadows is one of the largest green oases. Cycling and walking paths invite you to explore the Danube Island which becomes a 42 km long beach in summer. The Old Danube unfolds a little further on, lined with a cycle path and lidos. The Lobau with its riparian forests and still waters is part of the Donau-Auen National Park. In the west of the city, right by the Vienna Woods, Lainz Game Reserve and the graceful vineyards and forests of the city mountains Cobenzl, Kahlenberg and Leopoldsberg are among the popular destinations for those who want to be out and about in nature.

There are plenty of places to shop sustainably in Vienna, with the range extending from fashion to food. Numerous cultural institutions focus on sustainability too and ecology plays a key role for many of Vienna's hotels.

Learn more about green and sustainable Vienna here: <https://www.wien.info/en/livable-vienna/sustainable-vienna>

### ❖ Mobility in Vienna

Vienna is well served by public transport, with subways, trams and buses running on the main lines at short intervals. You can purchase day and multi-day tickets. The Vienna City Card is a special type of multi-day ticket that gives reduced admission to numerous museums, sights and theatres as well as discounts on shopping, at selected restaurants and wine taverns. What's more, the WienMobil app gives visitors access to rental bikes and there are private companies that hire out e-scooters.

[www.wienerlinien.at](http://www.wienerlinien.at)

## ❖ Sustainability initiatives in Vienna

### Nature meets architecture

Making roofs and facades green with plants has a long tradition in Vienna. As early as the 1980s, Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser created a stir with his lavishly planted Hundertwasserhaus. Another Hundertwasser building, the Kunst Haus Wien, will reopen at the beginning of 2024 after renovation. The green building will be hosting the Vienna Climate Biennale from 5th April to 14th July 2024. Plant-covered roofs and walls help cool the building and its surrounding area, especially in summer. Examples of green facades can be found along the Wiener Gürtel and the facade of the Agency for Waste Prevention and Separation is green too. Those looking to buy their own plants will find a nice selection in the "Blumenhaus zum Dom" on Stephansplatz or in the branches of garden designer Lederleitner.

<https://www.wien.info/en/livable-vienna/sustainable-vienna/green-walls-in-vienna-347292>

### Sustainability in art and culture

- Colourful areas, irregular shapes, many overgrown with greenery: that's how unmistakable the **Kunst Haus Wien**, created by artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser, is. The Kunst Haus Wien will be reopening after a renovation that will also make it more climate-friendly at the beginning of 2024. It will be hosting the Vienna Climate Biennale from 5<sup>th</sup> April to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024. <https://www.kunsthausewien.com/en/>
- The **Austria Guides For Future®** take you to environmentally friendly places such as the urban wilderness in Simmering, the world's second highest wooden skyscraper and the many green facades of Vienna. <https://austriaguidesforfuture.at/?lang=en>
- The **Spittelau waste incineration plant**, a Viennese landmark, can be visited on guided tours. Inside the building, recognisable by the tower designed by eco-architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser, visitors learn how heat is produced from waste. [www.wienenergie.at/privat/erleben/standorte/muellerverwertungs-anlage-spittelau](http://www.wienenergie.at/privat/erleben/standorte/muellerverwertungs-anlage-spittelau) (German only)

### Where energy is art

Two Viennese power plants not only supply the city with clean energy; they also stand out with their artistic and innovative design. The colourful tower of the **Spittelau waste incineration plant** can be seen from afar, which was **redesigned by artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser** after a major fire in 1989 along with the colourful facade. You can take a look around on guided tours. Another eye-catcher is the Danube power plant at Freudenu, one of the most modern hydroelectric power plants in the world. The power plant is also accessible as part of guided tours.

<https://www.wien.info/en/livable-vienna/sustainable-vienna/vienna-power-plants-363592>

### **National park in the city**

Part of the Donau-Auen National Park lies in Vienna. The **Lobau**, the “jungle” of the Viennese, can be explored individually and on guided tours.

<https://www.wien.info/en/livable-vienna/parks-green-spaces/lobau-jungle-351164>

### **Sustainable Advent and Christmas Markets**

A relaxed atmosphere and local craftsmanship characterise the small design and creative markets in Vienna. Recommendations can be found at: [www.energieleben.at/die-top-7-alternative-weihnachtsmaerkte-in-wien/#1](http://www.energieleben.at/die-top-7-alternative-weihnachtsmaerkte-in-wien/#1) (German only)

### ❖ **Sustainable hosts and producers in Vienna**

#### **Model sustainable hotels**

- **Boutiquehotel Stadthalle** is the first city hotel with a zero energy balance. Thanks to photovoltaics, solar energy and the conscious use of energy, it produces the same amount of energy as it consumes throughout the year. By not putting minibars in the rooms alone, the hotel saves around 21,024 kilos of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. The hotel bees find plenty of nectar on the green roof and in the green oasis of the inner courtyard garden. Guests can enjoy their honey along with many other regional products at breakfast. Consistent waste separation, the use of LED lights and eco shower heads are amongst the givens here too.  
[www.hotelstadthalle.at](http://www.hotelstadthalle.at)
- At the centrally located **Hotel Gilbert**, the green facade contributes to noise reduction, air purification and the natural cooling of the building. In addition, the plants provide a home for bees and birds. In the kitchen, products from local suppliers are always first choice. A herb garden as well as rooms and spaces decorated with plants further underline the focus on sustainability.  
[www.hotel-gilbert.at](http://www.hotel-gilbert.at)
- **Boutiquehotel Henriette** is considered to be the first hotel in Vienna with a Common Good Balance Sheet. In addition to the financial figures, the Common Good Balance Sheet reflects the establishment’s ecological and social commitment. Boutiquehotel Henriette focuses on sustainable products, chemical-free room cleaning and regional and seasonal menus put together using certified organic ingredients in every respect. Heating comes from an innovative air-to-air heat pump system and all of the lighting was changed to LED a while ago. The mini bar fridges are energy-efficient and eco-certified body care products from reusable dispensers reflect the hotel’s dedication to sustainability. Having already been awarded the Austrian Ecolabel and the EU Ecolabel, Boutiquehotel Henriette is constantly working on further measures in cooperation with OekoBusiness Vienna.  
[www.hotelhenriette.at](http://www.hotelhenriette.at)

- **Hotel The Harmonie Vienna** has been awarded the Austrian Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel and the European Allergy Label. Special features of the sustainably oriented hotel include its breakfast buffet which offers many certified organic and vegan delicacies. The green facade is a real eye-catcher.  
[www.harmonie-vienna.at](http://www.harmonie-vienna.at)
- **Hotel Wood**, which opened in 2020, is a particularly climate-friendly hotel. The seven-storey, 50-room building was created from 1,500 sustainably sourced spruce trees. The innovative construction method using prefabricated solid wood elements underlines the hotel's concept. The aim is to bring the forest into the city and thus store more CO2 from the atmosphere. Wood brings a forest feeling to the city in the rooms too. What's more, for every tree trunk processed during construction, one or two new trees were planted in Heiligenkreuz in Lower Austria.  
<https://numastays.com>

### **Organic cosmetics in Vienna**

There are several manufacturers that offer nourishing products made in line with traditional and sustainable processes in Vienna. Sonja Baldauf follows an old Viennese recipe to produce **Wiener Seife** (Viennese soap) with different ingredients. High-quality natural cosmetics and fine fragrances are created in the **Saint Charles Cosmothecary** and at **Lederhaas Cosmetic**. And products from a range of producers and expert advice are offered at **natural perfumery Staudigl**.

<https://www.wien.info/en/livable-vienna/sustainable-vienna/organic-and-natural-cosmetics-354694>

### **Hut und Stiel**

How do you grow oyster mushrooms at home? The start-up Hut und Stiel shows how it's done during guided tours and workshops. The innovative team uses a resource that is abundantly available in Vienna to grow the mushrooms: discarded coffee grounds. This also prevents countless tons of coffee grounds from ending up in the bin every day.

[www.hutundstiel.at](http://www.hutundstiel.at) (German only)

### **blün: sustainable fish farming and fresh vegetables from Vienna**

The name "blün" comes from the combination of blue and green ("blau" & "grün"), of fish and vegetables. These are also the colours of sustainability for the founders of Viennese start-up blün. Four young farmers with a vision are behind the business which is devoted to aquaponics, an innovative recirculation system. It is the first commercial aquaponics system in Austria. Visits are possible as part of guided tours and you can also purchase products from the farm shop.

<https://bluen.at/> (German only)

### **Gugumuck: Viennese snails**

Snails were once a widespread specialty in Austrian cuisine and Vienna was considered the snail stronghold from the 18th century onwards. Andreas Gugumuck is reviving this tradition on his farm in Vienna's 10th district. You can enjoy the Viennese snails in the pretty bistro with a view of the snail fields. The host personally accompanies you through a sophisticated multi-course menu. From May to October, visitors can explore the snail fields on guided tours and learn all about sustainable breeding and Andreas' visionary future food concepts. A tasting is included, of course.

<https://gugumuck.com/en/>

### **ZIRP: insects as food**

Healthy, sustainable and delicious; eat insects and do something good for your body and the entire planet! ZIRP is committed to making insects a more appealing source of animal protein and high-quality superfood. They offer cooking courses that approach the topic with a 5-course insect menu and reveal exciting facts about insects as food. Those who would like to take a more tentative approach can order goods with valuable insect protein from the online shop: from juicy insect burgers to protein-rich energy sources and snacks for in between meals.

<https://zirpinsects.com> (German only)

### **❖ Spring awakening in Vienna**

#### **Vienna Climate Biennale**

The first Vienna Climate Biennale will take place from April to July 2024. During this period, a large number of art, design and architectural projects will be realised at locations across Vienna that will artistically and creatively deal with the climate issue in the broadest sense. In addition, collaborations between artists and selected municipal departments and Viennese enterprises are planned. The Kunst Haus Wien will be the biennale centre and will invite other cultural institutions to participate.

[www.stadt-wien.at/wien/news/stadt-wien-ruft-klima-biennale-ins-leben.html](http://www.stadt-wien.at/wien/news/stadt-wien-ruft-klima-biennale-ins-leben.html) (German only)

#### **Exhibition on the topic of climate change**

Climate protection needs indigenous rights: the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology is opening a new permanent exhibition on the subject of climate change in spring 2024. It will feature the voices of environmental and climate activists who are campaigning for climate protection measures in various ways. One strong voice is that of indigenous leader Juma Xipaia, chief of a village belonging to the Xipaya people in the eastern Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

<https://www.technischesmuseum.at/en>

### **Shop locally and seasonally at farmers' markets**

Markets are a popular place for the Viennese to shop. There is a varied choice which comes largely from the local area and prices are usually cheaper than in the supermarkets. Many of the markets are open every day except Sundays. Farmers' markets complement the selection on certain days of the week at some, with local farmers offering their freshly harvested and hand-refined specialities. The farmers' market on Yppenplatz, which extends from the Brunnenmarkt on Saturdays, is a popular example. Fruit, vegetables, baked goods, juices and wine are available on Saturdays at the organic and speciality market in Lange Gasse in the 8th district. The Lerchenfeld farmers' market, which takes place on Fridays, is a good point of call for the weekend shop. The speciality market at Margaretenplatz is open on Thursdays and an organic farmers' market takes place in the middle of the city on the Freyung every Friday and Saturday.

<https://www.wien.info/en/dine-drink/markets>