

Austria 
Feel the spark

Austrian Summer News 2021



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Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has added greatly to the stressors of our already fast-paced, high-tech lives, with our ability to move around freely greatly impacted, and time with friends and family confined to Zoom socials and telephone calls. The Austrian National Tourist Office will therefore be communicating stories of active and mindful experiences in Austria to the UK market in 2021 and 2022. The first focusses on adventures and outdoor activities, the latter on wellbeing and relaxation in nature. We'll discover Austria through the eyes of its locals, leading sportspeople and inspiring conservationists, exploring in depth the cultural and environmental significance of the country's magnificent natural landscapes and the enriching experiences they offer, and we will look at the ways in which post-pandemic holidays in Austria allow one to reconnect with nature, with others, and with oneself.

With very best wishes,
Martina & Hannah



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Finding Wellbeing in Austria's Nature

After months of lockdown, the desire to get away is high, as is the need for nature. Austria and its forests, meadows, lakes, and mountains offer the perfect conditions to restore mental balance.

According to the world's largest survey on rest and wellbeing led by Durham University, being in the natural environment is perceived as the second most restful activity, only trumped by reading. The connection between nature and overall health has become even more apparent throughout the past year.

The Healing Power of the Forest

The forest is an energising place that awakens all of our senses with its treasure trove of scents and relaxing silence. Body and mind benefit from the trees, which release phytoncides that help reduce anxiety, improve sleep, lower blood pressure, boost mood, energy levels, and the immune system. In addition, the forest is rich in medicinal plants that grow along the edge of the path and under the protection of the trees. Those longing to go foraging for a natural boost will find what they are looking for in Austria. Almost half of the country is covered by forests and it has a total of six national parks and 47 nature parks that offer shelter for trees and plants. These include the Biosphere Reserve Großes Walsertal, where guests will be able to continue to feel the force of nature into the night from June 2021 in the mobile Dream.Alive-Lodge (a glass-enclosed hotel room), and Hohe Tauern National Park, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Learn more: austria.info/wellbeing

From Natural Highs to Refreshing Lows

Did somebody say mountains? The Krimml Waterfalls in the Hohe Tauern National Park region are Europe's highest and their healing power has been scientifically proven. When inhaling, the ion-rich spray enters the lungs and its cleansing, anti-inflammatory effect alleviates health conditions such as asthma. Nature's feel-good programme is so simple and almost a matter of course – yet it procures upmost relaxation for body and soul. The clean air, warmth of the sun, green pastures, and light are all impulses from nature that have a soothing and reviving effect on our senses, to be found in abundance up in Austria's lofty heights. From here, there is only one place to go: to the depths of Austria's rivers and lakes. But after a year of seeing more of our own four walls than most would in a lifetime, we can do better than just a refreshing dip! As one of the world's most water-rich countries, there are plenty of different ways to experience the "land of water". Take the mighty Hölltal Gorge in the Lechtal Valley, for example, home to the "Trail of the Senses". The trail starts at the Maria Schnee pilgrimage church in Bsclabs, crosses the suspension bridge over the Streimbach River and leads to the "Place of Silence". Or how about canoeing on the Thaya, gliding through the mostly wild river landscape of the Waldviertel?



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Exploring Nature in Karwendel Nature Park

At the foot of the impressive Karwendel Mountains, Austria's largest nature park, the Seefeld Plateau, offers one-of-a-kind outdoor experiences. In 2021, an exclusive programme put together by the local tourist board will take guests to the unknown highlights of this special natural environment for the first time. Excursions such as wildlife watching or walks through the forest by night will provide unforgettable holiday moments.

Seefeld (Tirol)
www.seefeld.com

Star Gazing at Austria's First International Dark Sky Park

The nature park Attersee-Traunsee in the Austrian lake district has been certified as Austria's first Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), only one of 35 in Europe. This means that measures are in place to protect the night sky by using environmentally friendly lighting systems; the goal is to achieve an increase of quality of life for people and nature. The outstanding darkness of the sky allows you to easily see the Milky Way with the naked eye. Here, you can ponder the big questions in life and get lost in space.

Attersee-Traunsee (Upper Austria)
www.sternenpark-attersee-traunsee.at

Sleeping under the Stars: Dream. Alive-Lodge

From June 2021, guests will be able to spend the night comfortably in the solitude of the mountains at the Großes Walsertal Biosphere Reserve – in a glass-enclosed hotel room dubbed the "Dream.Alive-Lodge", which is mobile and can be placed where desired. The Samina sleep concept bed can be positioned as desired too: either under the glass roof or on the terrace outside. The lodge is also equipped with a table, fridge, shower and toilet. Its prototype is based next to the Alpenresort Walsertal fishpond, so guests can take advantage of the hotel's amenities, from the spa area to its cuisine. Founded in Vorarlberg in 2020, Dream.Alive is a start-up that aims to give more importance to sleep and relaxation via unique sleeping experiences in special outdoor places.

Großes Walsertal Biosphere Reserve (Vorarlberg)
www.dreamalive.world

Plenty of Room: Carpe Solem Rauris by Alps Residence

The Carpe Solem Rauris by Alps Residence will be opening at the valley station of the Rauriser Hochalmbahnen family ski area on 1st July 2021. The complex houses 70 apartments between 35 and 105 m² in size, offering space for two to ten people. Amenities also include a 700 m² wellness area with saunas, an Alpine roof garden, a heated infinity pool and a children's pool. Guests can enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner at the on-site restaurant or choose a self-catering holiday. All apartments are equipped with a kitchen.

Rauris (SalzburgerLand)
www.alps-residence.com



Carefree Outdoor Adventures in Austria

The uncertainty and social restrictions of the past months have prompted us to turn our attention back to the basics of health, freedom, and togetherness in a major way. Austria provides the ideal space to rekindle the spark for active experiences all year round. Its cultural landscapes and highly developed infrastructure offer a reassuring environment to share carefree adventures.

Those Who Climb a Mountain Leave the Everyday Behind
Austrian extreme mountaineer Peter Habeler once said: “To walk, move, climb a mountain and get back down again – that is a parallel to life.” The mountains fascinate us, not least because of their unpredictability, but it is precisely this risk factor that can put novices off taking to the heights. Fortunately, there are shelters across the Austrian Alps, maintained and managed by the Alpine associations and clubs. Amongst them are the Seethalerhütte on the Dachstein and the Erzherzog-Johann-Hütte on the Großglockner, the latter being the highest hut in the Eastern Alps at 3,454 metres. That is almost 3.5 kilometres higher than your last walk on the beach.

Not got a head for heights? Good preparation and the right route can open the door to the world of mountain hiking for you too. Insider’s tips such as the Ameisberg in the Upper Austrian Sauwald which leads to a Celtic place of worship provide everything those with a fear of heights like: flat

mountain ridges with fantastic views and leisurely hikes along forest roads through enchanted woods. And don't be put off by the fact that you're a beginner, either. With some simple rules such as checking the weather before and throughout the hike, making sure you have the right equipment and good walking shoes, selecting the right tour, keeping your rucksack as light as possible and an eye on the time, and knowing the dangers, you'll make a smooth transition from walker to mountain hiker. And in addition to the health benefits of exercising outdoors, Danish researchers found that positive memories such as overcoming a fear evoke positive emotions. So even long after the experience, you'll feel better when recalling the memories of it.

With Those You Love Most

Another result of the restrictions of the past year is the desire for our children to be able to experience an authentic and safe environment, which can most certainly be found in Austria. Familien-Erlebniswelt Podersdorf opened by Lake Neusiedl in mid-May with water features, an enormous sand playground, and a 57-metre-long climbing route furthering visitors' motor skills, all carefully interwoven with nature. In Lower Austria, the walk through the gorges of the Myra Falls is refreshing and inspiring for adults and children alike. Follow the roaring stream across winding bridges and steps, then let the little ones go wild in the large play area, water playground, and on an adventurous raft ride.



A further experience you can enjoy as a family is an animal encounter. Animals are balm for the soul. In the past, studies have repeatedly shown the positive effects of pets and animal interaction on our mental health; and most recently, it was reported that companion animals staved off loneliness during the pandemic. Shared adventures, playful activity, and invigorating ease do not just brighten the everyday, but also your holiday. Austria provides wonderful opportunities across various locations to forget the daily grind in this way and recharge your batteries. Be it a llama expedition through the picturesque Mühlviertel, donkey hiking in Southern Styria, or leading a fluffy alpaca through the idyllic Waldviertel, exercise and fun come together here.

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Hohe Tauern Panorama Trail

As the Hohe Tauern National Park is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the new Hohe Tauern Panorama Trail will offer ambitious hikers a new challenge and sensational views of Austria's highest mountains from mid-May. It comprises ten daily stages, is 150 km long and traverses 7,000 m in altitude. Hikers begin their tour at the foot of the Krimml Waterfalls; their goal is the Schmittenhöhe high above Zell am See. The walking times are between four and seven hours per day. Depending on where the day's stage ends, the long-distance hikers spend the night in a hut on the mountain or in accommodation of their choice in the valley. Mountain lifts, shuttle services at the end of each stage, and a bookable luggage transfer offer maximum comfort.

Hohe Tauern National Park
(SalzburgerLand)
www.nationalpark.at

Learn to Ride Park in Saalbach

How do you master a mountain bike trail as a beginner? From May 2021, the Learn to Ride Park in Saalbach will show adults and children how it's done. The park features miniature versions of Saalbach Hinterglemm's most popular trails. Beginners take the "Magic Carpet" to the starting point of Little Monti, Little Pro Line, Little Panorama and to the mini edition of the legendary (Little) Hacklberg. The practice trails are between 180 and 340 m in length and lead across gentle terrain. Use of the Learn to Ride Park and its "Magic Carpet" is free of charge.

Saalbach (SalzburgerLand),
www.saalbach.com

Mountain View: Kraftalm on the Kleine Salve

At the middle station of the new Salvistabahn in the heart of the Hohe Salve hiking and skiing area, Kraftalm guests enjoy the best views of the Kitzbühel Alps and the Wilder Kaiser. The inviting, newly designed wooden building stands at 1,305 m above sea level and houses 29 rooms of different categories. Warm up in the panoramic sauna or cool down in the outdoor infinity pool. The kitchen spoils guests with regional Alpine cuisine, fish from its own pond, and fruit from grandma's garden.

Itter (Tirol)
www.kraftalm.at

Central: All-Suite Resort Fieberbrunn

Located in the centre of town, the newly built "All-Suite Resort Fieberbrunn" features 36 luxuriously furnished holiday apartments with balconies, sized between 45 and 137 m². The building offers both a sauna and a fitness room on-site. Guests can start the day with a breakfast box delivered to their apartment or enjoy brunch at the Brotkultur bakery. Come dinner, there are Tirolean specialties waiting at the Genusskultur delicatessen shop, which can also be delivered.

Fieberbrunn (Tirol)
www.all-suite.com



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A Land of Magical Inspiration and Gentle Refinement

Austria may be small in size, but this country in the heart of Europe is birthplace and home to an astonishingly large number of artists.

Poets, painters, architects, musicians, designers – Austria has been home to more preeminent artists and scientists than any other country of comparable size. Refreshingly creative is also the cooking in Austria, which offers more than just the common favourites Schnitzel and Sachertorte. With excellent local, often sustainable products and a respect for traditions and craftsmanship, Austria is a top culinary destination.

Travel to Places that Inspired the Masters

But what is the secret behind such inspiration? We do know one thing: Hardly ever do we succeed in finding inspiration when looking for it. It finds us. There are, however, places that are more inspiring than others, and Austria is full of them. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was inspired by Salzburg's romantic old town. For the painter Gustav Klimt, the magical light around Lake Attersee was a source of inspiration for his landscape paintings. Sigmund Freud, explorer of the soul, was hiking in the Alps to clear his head for his ground-breaking discoveries in psychoanalysis that led to worldwide recognition. And it is both enticing and enriching to experience culture right where it was born and created: a visit to the Benedictine Abbey of Melk high above the Danube or to the Imperial Palace of Schönbrunn, tracing the footsteps of Beethoven through the charming vineyards and villages on the outskirts of Vienna;

Learn more: austria.info/culture & austria.info/culinary-austria

or a visit to the salon of Graz native Lena Hoschek, whose Dirndl dresses blend tradition and modern style and are made exclusively from sustainable materials sourced in Europe, are just a few examples of such manifested inspiration.

Fruits of Nature on our Plates

When it comes to food, we want to enjoy our meals with a good conscience – with regard to our bodies, the environment, and the animals. But what distinguishes “good” food? Love for our regions and nature has been embedded in our way of life and agriculture long before it became a trend. In Austria, farmers, producers, and chefs often place their emphasis on tradition and the knowledge of their forebears. At the same time, they are open to new influences; they travel all over the world in search of inspiration and return full of ideas. These people have one common vision: traditional recipes prepared with high-quality, sustainable ingredients refined through innovative approaches. The recipe for success already begins with the cultivation of old varieties of fruits and vegetables, or with the raising of long-forgotten animal breeds like the Mangalica and Turopolje pigs. Innovations and new techniques are used to take full advantage of our land and to produce food of outstanding quality, while keeping soil and biodiversity intact. The combination of knowledge, pioneering spirit, and mindfulness results in creative dishes, uncontrived and genuine. Straight from the field to your plate, that is what you will be able to taste during your holiday in Austria.



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Water Installation on the Silvretta-Bielerhöhe

From June 2021, visitors will be able to admire an unusual water installation by Swiss sculptor Roman Signer on the east side of the 2,032 m high Silvretta-Bielerhöhe mountain. A stream that flows into the lake under a bridge will be dammed and fed back into the lake as an arched fountain over the path, simultaneously creating an arch of water and a bridge. "Installation am Bielbach" is a joint project between Kunsthhaus Bregenz and illwerke vkw AG, Vorarlberg's main hydropower-based energy producer.

Silvretta Bielerhöhe (Vorarlberg)
www.kunsthhaus-bregenz.at

Charming: Hotel Gilbert

Hotel ViennART near the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna's 7th district will be reopening in 2021 under the new name "Gilbert". It will be a much greener hotel, with plants on the facade and in the covered courtyard having a cooling effect. Hotel Gilbert will offer 57 rooms of different sizes as well as loft apartments and new seminar rooms.

Vienna (Vienna)
www.hotel-gilbert.at

400 Years of Augustiner Brewery Mülln

When in Salzburg, a trip to the Augustiner Bräu brewery is a must: the huge beer garden alone is worth seeing. Founded by Augustinian canons in 1621, the brewery is located in Salzburg's Mülln neighbourhood at the foot of the Mönchsberg, whilst the affiliated Bräustübl is Austria's biggest beer tavern. Inside the building, it extends across several halls covering around 5,000 m² in total. There is also space for up to 1,400 guests under the chestnut trees in the garden. The beer still comes in traditional wooden barrels and is served in stone pitchers. Food can be purchased at stalls at the "Schmankerlgang" (literally "delicatessen hallway") food market.

Salzburg (SalzburgerLand)
www.augustinerbier.at

Route 66: The Culinary Highway (Styria)

A new road leads foodies and explorers through the volcanic spa country of Styria. "The Culinary Highway", which is part of European Route E66 (an international road leading from Italy through Austria to Hungary), connects around 100 wine growers, taverns, inns, and restaurants, plus more than 50 artisan manufacturers who regularly open their doors to visitors and allow them to participate in creating regional delights. Amongst the most renowned are the Vulcano World of Ham, the Zotter Chocolate Factory, Berghofer Mill, and a number of wineries.

E66 (Styria)
www.thermen-vulkanland.at

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