

Sustainable Holidays - the Austrian Way

With the consequences of climate change more apparent by the day, sustainability ranks high on many holidaymakers' checklist when choosing their travel destination. We all want to make sure that our children, grand and grand-grand children can continue to enjoy the beauty of our surroundings for many years to come after all.

Austria, home to a whopping 695 three-thousanders, eight official national parks, more than 25.000 lakes (97% with excellent water quality!) and almost 48 percent of its land covered by forest takes great pride in its natural treasures – and more and more holiday regions commit themselves to protecting them, introducing sustainability concepts, and encouraging guests to minimize their carbon footprint.

Green energy, organic food, and eco-friendly travel

Eco-energy, think water or solar power, plays a key role in many resorts these days, and is used to run everything from hotels to cable cars, restaurants, and spas, depending on the resort. E-biking and electric cars are also seeing an increase in popularity, with the infrastructure – from rentals to charging stations – mirroring the trend. And then there's the Austrian foodie scene: While seasonal cooking has always been popular in Austria, more and more restaurants are using organic ingredients.

Holidaymakers are invited to follow the Austrian sustainability way. With a railway network covering more than 5,000 km and many mountain regions and cities like Innsbruck and Salzburg including free use of public transport in their guest cards, it's perfectly possible to enjoy a car-free summer break. Guests can also look forward to 11,000 km of hiking trails and the 380 km long Danube Cycle Path among other eco-friendly activities. While all Austrian holiday regions are aiming to make tourism more sustainable, some are known as especially environmentally friendly. Have a look at three best practice examples below!

Zell am See – Kaprun: A Climate & Energy Model Region

Surrounded by mountains, a glacier, and a lake, Zell am See-Kaprun is a natural paradise. To ensure that future generations can still enjoy its beauty, the region takes sustainability seriously, aiming to become a role model for other tourism hotspots.

- Zell am See – Kaprun proudly calls itself a “**Climate & Energy Model Region**” according to the [KEM scheme](#), meaning the region has committed to eleven concrete steps to reduce its carbon footprint, including a strong focus on solar power and increased use of waste energy, the expansion of e-bike infrastructure and sustainability consultation for its local businesses.
- Summer visitors are encouraged to [arrive by train](#) – connections are available from all major Austrian cities as well as the neighbouring Germany and Switzerland.
- Both the [Zell am See – Kaprun Summer Card](#) and the [Pinzgau Mobility Card](#) include free train and bus travel throughout the region.
- Several of Zell am See – Kaprun's local businesses have been certified with the [Austrian Eco-label](#), a seal of quality for businesses committed to both environmental and social sustainability.
- [Read more](#)

St. Anton am Arlberg: A holiday paradise running solely on green electricity

Alternative energy generation, sensible waste disposal and more – St. Anton am Arlberg is determined to protect its picture-perfect landscapes and fresh mountain air. Check out some of their sustainability projects.

- In spring 2021, St. Anton am Arlberg officially became a [“KLAR! Model region”](#) (climate change adaptation model region). These regions aim to minimize the consequences of climate change by committing to sustainability measures.
- Since 2006, St. Anton has been self-sufficient in terms of electricity supply. The storage lake for the [Kartell power plant](#) holds around 8 million m³ water and supplies roughly 33 million kw/h of electricity per year.
- St. Anton also operates a biomass heating plant with wood chips, designed for up to 80 residential units. A solar system is used to heat up the water.
- [Read more](#)

Innsbruck: An eco-friendly city (and mountain) destination

Tirol's capital awaits guests with the perfect mix of stunning outdoors and urban amenities. And to make the deal even better, it's one of the most eco-friendly cities in Austria, too. Due to its size and setting, guests can explore everything from sights to summits car-free.

- The [Innsbruck Welcome Card](#) includes free use of public transport in the city and region as well as cable cars up the mountains, allowing visitors to go exploring in an environmentally-friendly way.
- 23% of Innsbruck's population travel by bike instead of by car all year round. Guests are invited to follow their lead and make use of the [350 rental bikes at 44 different locations](#) throughout the city.
- In contrast to the general travel trend, visitors to Innsbruck tend to stay for a longer period instead of making several mini trips, which significantly reduces the travellers' ecological footprints.

As always, we are happy to assist you in planning your research trip. Please get in touch at pressuk@austria.info.

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