

Coolcation in Austria: How to stay refreshed this summer

Too hot to handle? With temperature records across Europe every summer over the last years, more and more holidaymakers are looking for alternative destinations to beat the heat. This new trend – coined “coolcation” by the likes of “CN Traveler”, “Conde Nast Traveler” or “The Independent” – sees a notable shift in holiday planning, with travellers increasingly swapping southern beaches for the mountains, rivers, and high-altitude lakes during the peak of summertime.

Luckily, summer holidays in Austria are delightfully refreshing. Let us show you what “coolcating” can look like.

The art of “Sommerfrische”

While the concept of coolcating – or “Sommerfrische” in our lingo – has turned into a key holiday trend, it’s technically not new. In fact, the Brothers Grimm were fans too! The famous storytellers from the late 18th century defined “Sommerfrische” as the art of getting away from the bustling city and retreating to a space with comfortable temperatures to recharge and relax, as a delightful change in scenery to cool off both the body and mind and heal and relieve stress.

This welcome escape from everyday life, often paired with active adventures in nature, can still be found today, in the form of swapping the office for a holiday in the summer breeze.

Beat the heat on an active break in the Austrian Alps

To cool down the body, Austria offers a wide range of mountain and lake activities, allowing for comfortable temperatures even in the peak of summer. Due to the high and central location of alpine regions such as [Paznaun - Ischgl](#), [St. Johann in Tirol](#) or [Kitzbühel](#) holidaymakers can enjoy the sun without getting too hot while moving their bodies. Hiking in the cool mountain air, working up a sweat through gravel biking, and then dipping into one of Austria’s many swimming lakes to cool back down, that’s what summer holidays in Austria are all about. Guests can enjoy swimming, sailing, stand up paddling, or even fishing, if they’re so inclined.

While Austria doesn’t technically have any beaches or oceans, its numerous lakes more than make up for it, offering a backdrop of stunning nature as a bonus. [Lake Achensee](#) in Tirol, for example, carved out of the Alps by glaciers more than 20,000 years ago, is a popular surfing and diving spot. The [Zell am See – Kaprun](#) region, a perfect combo of lake, mountain, and glacier, further elevates the coolcation experience. Hopping into Lake Zell, cooling off in the snow, or a mix of both – it’s a region just made for a memorable summer! Similarly, [Zillertal](#) is home to 85 glaciers, allowing for icy fun even in the peak of summer. The region is also home to the [High Mountain Nature Park Zillertal Alps](#) and Europe’s highest adventure playground.

All around the Alps (and beyond), holidaymakers are guaranteed to find activities for all ages on and off the water, and can make use of adventure playgrounds, beach volleyball, rafting, and balloon rides, without becoming too sticky in suffocating humidity.

Yoga and meditation: Refreshments for the soul

However, it's not all about being active and filling the days with movement and adventures, summer holidays are the perfect opportunity to cool down the mind as well. City living comes with large amounts of stress, from the honking of cars to the persistent ringing and binging of phones. Mindful activities or just spending time in the outdoors are known to improve mental health and boost overall happiness levels. Travellers will find untouched nature throughout Austria, but especially in the mountain regions. The [Krimml Waterfalls](#) in the [Hohe Tauern National Park](#) are known as Europe's highest waterfalls – and their spray mist offers a welcome refreshment on a hot day. In the [Schladming-Dachstein](#) region, holidaymakers can recharge their batteries among lush green valleys, sunbathe in the grass and admire colourful flowers along the mountainside. Mindful activities, such as paddle boarding in calm lakes, leisurely hikes, or even birdwatching, are widely available.

Yoga and meditation can help with concentration, preventing anxiety and depression as well as reducing stress levels, lowering the blood pressure, and generally releasing tension. While many holiday regions these days offer classes, [St. Anton am Arlberg](#) draws in yogis from around the world every year. The popular [Mountain Yoga Festival](#), set in delightfully untouched nature, aims to rejuvenate body, mind, and soul.

Cool down in Austria's cities

Finally, coolcations are not limited to the countryside. Austria's cities, too, offer plenty of options to refresh and stay cool during the peak of summertime. [Vienna](#), [Salzburg](#), [Innsbruck](#), or [Graz](#) all have beautiful green spaces and gardens, offering plenty of shade for picnicks and sightseeing breaks, while rooftop terraces and outdoor pools are also widely available. In Innsbruck, cable cars take guests up the [Nordkette mountain range](#) right from the city centre, and Graz has beautiful [vineyards](#) just outside the city. When in Salzburg, take a stroll on the [Mönchsberg](#) overlooking the city. And in Vienna, guests can head to a city beach at the Danube or even on a sailing or paddling tour at the [Alte Donau](#), just a short underground ride from the city centre.

As always, we are happy to assist you with additional information, images, and research trips to Austria. Please get in touch at pressuk@austria.info.

Austria Tourism

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