

## 8 Reasons to Spend Autumn in Austria

Summer is nearing its finish line, and the skiing and Christmas market season is coming closer by the day. But what about the months in between? Sometimes overlooked by holidaymakers, autumn is actually a great time to visit Austria. Just picture yourself hiking, biking or walking through the colourful autumn landscapes or mingling with the locals at centuries-old festivities. And let's not forget the fact that autumn, being off-peak season, often comes with great money-saving deals.

Not fully convinced yet? Read on for more reasons to spend autumn in Austria!

### Indian Summer in the Austrian Alps is spectacular

What part of the world springs to mind when talking about Indian Summer? Chances are, it's North America. However, you don't have to spend at least half a day on a plane to see the leaves turning colour. The panoramas in the Austrian Alps are just as stunning (and a lot closer). Late September and October is when the landscapes look the most stunning. Add the mild temperatures and mostly clear skies and it really can't get much more picture-perfect.

### It's the perfect season for hiking and biking

Yes, you can hike and bike in Austria all-year round (literally, there's winter hiking and fat biking in the snowy months). But autumn truly is among the best times. Think lower temperatures, the leaves turning colour, and less busy trails. The options are nearly endless: Hikers can head on the [legendary Streif in Kitzbühel](#), explore the [High Mountain Nature Park Zillertal Alps](#) on foot, or, if up for a challenge, opt for the three-day [Arlberg Trail](#), connecting the five Arlberg villages of Lech, Zürs, Stuben, St. Anton and St. Christoph. [St. Johann in Tirol](#) is a go-to place for family hiking. Mountain biking is equally popular with [Paznaun-Ischgl](#) and [Schladming-Dachstein](#) (with its designated Bikepark) among the current hotspots.

### Watch cattle drive – a one-of-a-kind spectacle

Alpine transhumance has shaped Austria's mountain regions for thousands of years: Cows spend the summer grazing pastures at a higher elevation, and when the temperatures drop, they're led back down to the valley. The latter is an annual spectacle, known as "Almabtrieb". The day of the event, cattle, sheep, and goats leave their summer home and are paraded through the villages, wearing flowery headdresses and bells around their necks. There's also usually music, regional food, and dancing to mark the homecoming. Cattle drives happen throughout the country, but some of the most popular places to watch them are [Hintersee in the Salzkammergut](#) (13 September), [Wildschönau in Tirol](#) (20 September), and [Fügen-Kaltenbach in Tirol's Zillertal](#) (13 September – 4 October). Prefer horses? An experience like no other is the [descent of the world-famous Lippizaners in Piber](#) near Graz (20 September).

### It's "Sturm" time!

Sturm, literally "storm", is one of the most popular beverages in Austria only available during the harvest season. It's a partially fermented juice with a low alcohol percentage, made from local grapes, and available in white, red and rosé. The fermentation process creates the signature sweet and slightly acidic taste. Sturm is best enjoyed in vineyards, known as "Heurige", throughout Austria, e.g. along the [Styrian Wien Roads](#). City trippers get their

share too as [Vienna](#) is the only major town in the world with significant wine growing (and lots of wine taverns). Blend right in with the locals by adhering to their drinking etiquette: Hold your glass in the left hand and say “Mahlzeit!” (“Enjoy your meal!”) instead of “Prost!” (“Cheers!”) when toasting, then take a sip without clinking glasses.

### Harvest festivals & game weeks

September and October are generally great months to indulge in local delights. City or countryside, and [Vienna](#) to [SalzburgerLand](#), there’s always a harvest festival going on somewhere. And, unsurprisingly, celebrating agriculture means there’s tons of foods and drinks to try. Expect producers selling their products right on site, lots of food stalls dishing up all the regional favourites, and live music. It’s also very common to see the locals dressed up in dirndls and lederhosen gathering for some traditional dances.

Another autumn favourite are the game weeks in October and November, with many restaurants offering special menus, think venison ragout, roasted wild boar, or deer dish.

### There are tons of events in the Alps

In Austria, we’re ending summer with a big hooray, so get ready for a fun-packed event schedule: Paznaun-Ischgl welcomes the autumn season with its [Golden Summit](#) series, think sports competitions, concerts, and food experiences (31 August – 13 October). In Zell am See-Kaprun, [Tones of Autumn](#) features the region’s own version of the Oktoberfest, hikes, city tours, a kids festival, and more (4 October – 1 November). Yogis will flock to St. Anton am Arlberg for the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the [Mountain Yoga Festival](#) (4-7 September), while Zillertal is the place to be for trailrunning fans, with the [Mayrhofen Ultraks](#) taking them up to 101 km through the region (5-6 September). Love food? St. Johann in Tirol hosts its annual [Dumpling Festival](#), where 26,000 dumplings made from 27 recipes are served on a 595-m-long table (20 September), while Kitzbühel hosts the [KITZ Kulinarik x Piemont](#), a joint event of producers and chefs from both regions (9-12 October).

### It’s a great time for city trips

City trips during the peak of summer are doable, no doubt. Especially when it’s a destination like [Innsbruck with cable cars taking you right up the mountains from the centre](#) for a cooling break (and stunning vistas of the city). Or take [Graz](#) with its easy access to the [South Styrian Wine Road](#). But the autumn months have their very own charm: They’re a little cooler, making sightseeing tours easier and more enjoyable. Plus, there’s the benefit of shorter queues at the most popular attractions. Salzburg, besides its local star Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, is still celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “[The Sound of Music](#)” until the end of the year, with tours running daily throughout the autumn months. Movie fans might want to combine their trip with Vienna, where the [Viennale](#), one of Europe’s top film festivals, runs from 16 to 28 October.

### Off-peak hotel deals as a money saving hack

Peak season is over, which means guests with some flexibility can bag great deals, including at some of Austria’s top luxury hotels. [Nesslerhof](#) in Großarl offers 5 nights for the price of 4 with full board and spa access from early October to early November (from € 723 / approx. £ 627). Hotel [Der Löwe](#) in Leogang has a “Stay 4 – Pay 3” offer during the same period with half board and spa access (from € 576 / approx. £ 500), while nearby [Forsthofgut](#) scores with its “Autumn Holiday Escape” package for 4-14 nights (free use of the forest spa on your departure day, from € 1,140 / approx. £ 988). Families with kids can also benefit from deals:

At [Krallerhof](#) in Leogang, one child up until 13 stays for free when booking 5 nights or more, full board and spa included (from € 1,440 per adult / approx. £ 1,250), while Carinthia's [Falkensteiner Schlosshotel Velden](#) offers free stays for kids under 12 during the "Falky's Family Weeks" (from € 455 per night / approx. £ 394). [Hotel Feuerberg](#), also in Carinthia, has a "Colourful Family Autumn" package for 3-7 nights, including full board, spa access and activities (from € 723 / approx. £ 627). And Hotel [Im Weissen Rössl](#) in the Salzkammergut offers special packages for dance and beer fans (from € 740 / approx. £ 642).

For further information, please contact [pressuk@austria.info](mailto:pressuk@austria.info).

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