

Sustainable Skiing: Austria's Most Eco-friendly Winter Resorts

Whisking down the slope, enjoying the fresh mountain air and splendid snowy views, it might be easy at times to forget your eco footprint. However, with the consequences of climate change getting more apparent by the day, sustainability is a key factor for more and more holidaymakers when choosing their travel destination. Winter resorts are especially under the radar – after all, we all want to ensure that not only we, but also our grand and grand-grand children can continue to enjoy skiing for many more years to come.

Austria and its ski regions have worked and continue to work hard to make winter holidays more environmentally friendly. In 2020, Austria ranked in third place [Euromonitor's Sustainable Travel Index](#) after Sweden and Finland, with both its tourism and nature protecting concepts being a key factor in the decision. According to the tourism strategy of the Austrian Federal Ministry, the so-called Plan T, sustainability is now the key foundation of domestic tourism. Austria's long-term goal is to become the most environmentally friendly winter destination.

Train travel, green cable cars & snowmaking

Austria has a well-developed train system in place, with the Austrian Railway (ÖBB) running on 100% renewable electricity. Additional night connections from many European cities allow a sustainable journey to the winter resorts. Many of them also offer free transfers and ski buses, making it easy to head to the slopes without a car. However, sustainability doesn't stop after guests have arrived. Many lift and cable car companies have heavily invested to make skiing more eco-friendly, with lifts, cable cars, and even snowmaking machines running on green energy. More than 90% of the power used for the later comes from renewable sources these days. Right now, it's predominantly hydropower and eco-power, but solar energy is on the rise.

While all Austrian regions are aiming to become more sustainable, some are especially known as environmentally friendly. Let us show you some best practice examples!

SkiWelt goes Green to stay White

[SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental](#) in Tirol is one of the largest most modern, and eco-friendly resorts in the world – it has won [multiple sustainability awards](#). It is home to the first solar lift in the world – opened in 2008 – and has developed countless sustainability projects throughout the years.

- All 83 [lifts](#) at SkiWelt run on 100% renewable electricity.
- SkiWelt has 1,051 snow cannons and 829 lances, with only pure drinking water used for snowmaking. It comes from 16 local reservoirs with a total holding capacity of 3,135,000 m³.
- Heat recovery systems support the heating system of mountain and valley stations, ski lifts and mountain restaurants.
- [Charging stations for electric cars](#) are available at all valley stations. Day ticket guests receive a code enabling them to charge their cars for free.
- Restaurants and mountain huts mainly use regional and seasonal produce, minimizing the CO₂ imprint while at the same time strengthening the local economic structures.
- [Read more](#)

Zell am See-Kaprun: Skiing in an eco-conscious way

Surrounded by glaciers, mountains, and a lake, [Zell am See-Kaprun](#) is a natural paradise. To make sure that many more generations can enjoy skiing in this dreamy setting, the resort has taken numerous sustainability measures over the past years.

- All lifts and gondolas on Schmitenhöhe and the Kitzsteinhorn operate on green energy generated from renewable sources. The [Schmitenhöhe cable car](#) is currently the only one of its kind in Europe fulfilling all of the EU's [EMAS guidelines](#).
- The energy recovered from the high-performance motors of the larger lifts is used to heat buildings such as the [Alpincenter Restaurant](#) and the terminals of the [Panoramabahn](#) and [Gletscherjet](#).
- The snowmaking system is fed and powered by water from the [Kaprun High Mountain Reservoirs](#), the drinking water supply comes exclusively from springs in the Kitzsteinhorn area.
- Buildings are equipped according to the latest energy efficiency standards, and in part with solar and photovoltaic systems.
- A permanent sustainability programme ensures high-alpine re-cultivation and re-naturing.
- [Read more](#)

Ischgl: Green Energy & Reforestation

[Ischgl](#), right in the Tirolean Alps, is the perfect place for active travellers as well as those looking for more leisurely experience in the snow. In recent years, the resort has implemented several measures to reduce its CO2 emissions.

- Since, 2021, all [Silvrettaseilbahn AG](#) cable cars and lifts, mountain restaurants, snowmaking machines etc. have been running on 100% green energy (no CO2 emissions) from Austria.
- Thanks to the use of solar and heat recovery systems, Ischgl saves around 80,000 litres of heating oil per year.
- The [Ischgl Slope Food mountain restaurant](#), the valley station of the Gampen E4 chairlift, and the new [Silvretta Therme](#) are mainly run on geothermal energy, saving about 1,800 tons of CO2 per year.
- All snow groomers are equipped with GPS technology, which is used to collect accurate snow depth data. This allows to determine exactly where snow cannons need to be placed, reducing the amount of water required as well as the operation hours
- As part of a regional nature conservation commitment, Ischgl actively supports reforestation, with around 10,000 pines and larch trees planted in May 2020 and another 25,000 in summer 2021.
- [Read more](#)

If you are interested in covering Austria's winter regions and sustainability projects in line with a commission, we will happily assist you in mapping out your press trip.

For any inquiries, questions, additional information, and images, please get in touch at pressuk@austria.info.

Austrian National Tourist Office UK

Marie de Waal / Astrid Hofer

pressuk@austria.info

<https://press.austria.info/uk/>