

Winter in Osttirol **Authentic, Surprising, Unique**



266 three-thousand-metre peaks, 10,000 square metres of space per skier, 25 Gault&Millau toques across twelve restaurants, and Austria's last night watchman – East Tyrol's uniqueness lies in this blend of mountains, tradition, and culinary excellence. © TVB Osttirol/Willi Seebacher, Hotel Rauter, TVB Osttirol/Elias Bachmann

Sometimes it's a breath of crisp mountain air, sometimes a plate of Schlipfkrapfen, or the mystical charm of the Rauh Nächte: winter in Osttirol reveals itself in countless small details. Together, they create a picture as distinctive as the "Land of Mountains" itself. Between the Dolomites and the Großglockner, experiences emerge that are deeply rooted in the region – authentic, approachable, and surprisingly diverse.

Culinary Delights – From Hearty Fare to Haute Cuisine

Anyone who spends time in the mountains knows the value of honest, nourishing food. East Tyrol serves it in all its facets: from hearty Schlipfkrapfen to fine dining at the highest level. The East Tyrolean version of these crescent-shaped pasta pockets is filled with potatoes, local herbs, and spices. Locals love their power food – they eat an average of 232 pieces per year, estimates Lydia Nöckler from St. Veit in Deferegggen, who produces around 200,000 pasta pockets per year.

But the region south of the Alpine main ridge also shines with award-winning culinary artistry: twelve restaurants honoured by Gault&Millau 2025 boast a total of 25 toques. The variety ranges from traditional alpine dishes to creative Alpe-Adria and fish specialties, modern interpretations with international influences, and light vegetarian or vegan options – always with a focus on regional products and artisanal finesse.

Pressekontakt

AHM Kommunikation www.ahm-agentur.de

Ariane Husung +49 8807 21490-16 ariane.husung@hermann-meier.de

Lisa Mang +49 8807 21490-12 lisa.mang@hermann-meier.de



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East Tyrol's winter enchants locals and visitors alike: cosy Advent markets in the district capital Lienz and picturesque mountain villages, thrilling challenges at the Dolomitenlauf, and unforgettable days at the 12th Austria Ski Touring Festival in the Villgraten Valley. © (from left to right) Peter Maier, sportshot.de, Peter Maier

Festive Meeting Points During Advent

When the scent of mulled wine and regional specialties mixes with crisp mountain air, a magical world opens and reflects the Osttirol's character: traditional, welcoming, and full of love. Romantic lights, open fires, and countless small huts transform Lienz's main square into a fairytale winter village every November. A highlight: the town hall becomes a giant Advent calendar. Smaller markets in Sillian and Heinfels delight families with child-friendly attractions. Insider tip: the quaint traditional markets in East Tyrol's mountain villages, where visitors can "wake the Christ Child" in the wild-romantic Villgratental or enjoy glassblowing and lucky charms at the Bergweihnacht in Kartitsch or Anras.

Green Travel – White Adventures

Starting winter 2026, holidays in Osttirol begin with relaxed, eco-friendly travel: thanks to the new Koralm Railway, Vienna and Graz move closer to the mountains, making public transport to Osttirol faster than ever. On-site, guests enjoy free use of all public transport with or without sports gear thanks to the guest card – whether for skiing, cross-country, winter hiking, or ski touring in idyllic Villgratental, where buses take you directly to the trailhead.

About Osttirol

"Osttirol is naturally different. Naturally, in the sense of nature." This is the credo of the region south of the Alpine main ridge. Framed by the Hohe Tauern National Park, the Lienz Dolomites, and the Carnic Ridge, Osttirol is defined by authenticity, tradition, and untouched landscapes.

Home to 266 peaks over 3,000 meters – including the Großglockner, Austria's highest mountain – with good reason Osttirol calls itself "the Alpine Tyrol." Nature lovers find freedom and pristine beauty, while outdoor enthusiasts revel in ideal conditions for mountain sports. Among climbers and mountaineers, Osttirol enjoys cult status.

Gourmets savour the region's culinary diversity, from rustic alpine huts to award-winning fine dining. Centuries-old farming traditions, genuine craftsmanship, and a deeply rooted cultural heritage shape life here – just as they always have.

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Ariane Husung +49 8807 21490-16 ariane.husung@hermann-meier.de

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