



AllWays Traveller

Salzburgerland, Austria

www.allwaystraveller.com

Biking and hiking in the stunning Austrian Alps

The Austrian state of Salzburg, or Salzburgland to distinguish it from the state capital of the same name, is located in the north of the country, near to the border with the German state of Bavaria.

It is an area of exhilarating natural beauty and, as such, an excellent choice for those wanting to spend as much time as possible out and about in this Austrian Alpine region during the late spring and summer months.

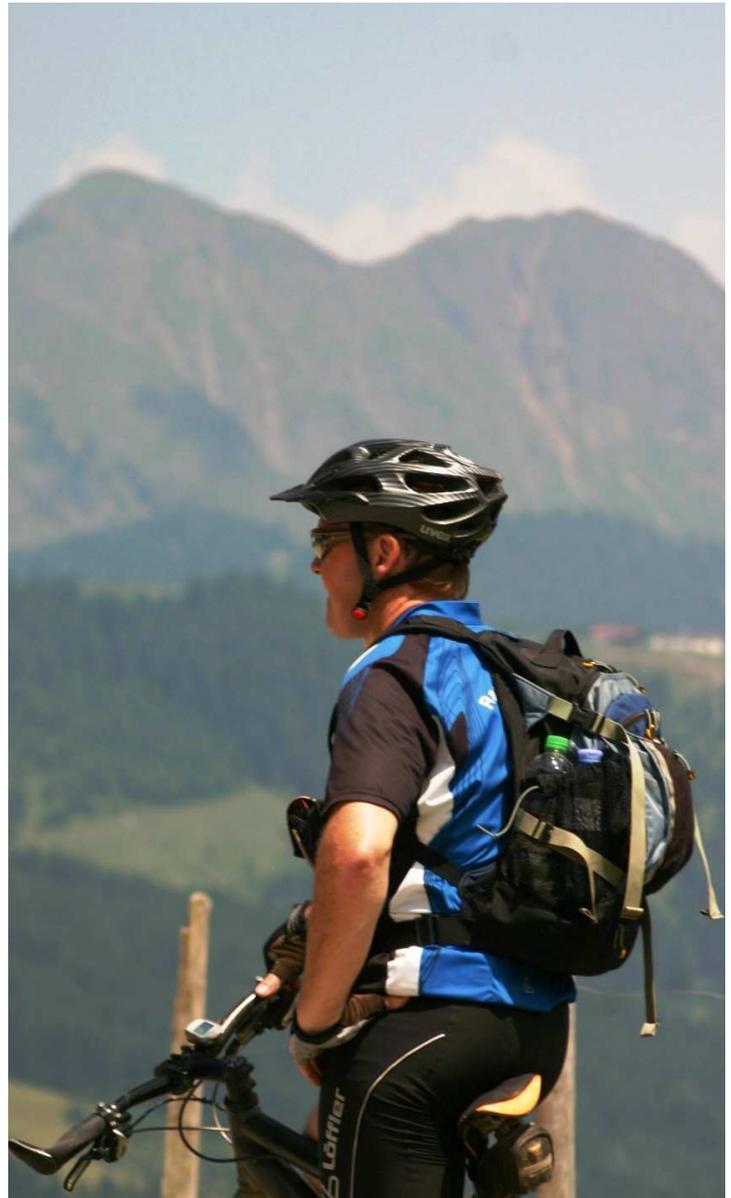
At this time it's biking, hiking and hill walking that attracts, with over 400km of clearly marked tracks and routes to suit all ages and abilities.

In Winter, Salzburgland is one of Austria's premier ski resorts, offering a wide range of runs, extensive off piste and a fine snow record.

The twin villages of Saalbach-Hinterglemm, an hours transfer from Salzburg airport, provide the base for exploring Salzburgland.

Ashley Gibbins

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Out and about in Austria's Alpine region

By Ashley Gibbins



When planning a summer trip to the city Salzburg, we were invited to spend some time in the Alpine countryside surrounding the city.

Salzburg itself is rightly known for stunning UNESCO World Heritage architecture and the musical influence that stems from it being the birthplace of one Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Less well known, except to the Austrians and Germans who have long realised and relished the chance to visit, is the wider state of Salzburg or *Salzburgerland*.

This is an area of equally stunning natural beauty.

Getting out and about and as often as possible



The one thing that epitomises the Alpine regions of Europe, winter, spring or summer, is the eagerness with which visitors get out and about.

It really is a case of early to bed, early to rise, a sturdy, wholesome breakfast and off we go.

The routine is *Salzburgerland* is no different, with the weather in the late spring and summer being particularly convivial to outdoor pursuits.

And *Salzburgerland* is known for its biking and hiking in as strenuous or as leisurely a fashion as required.

Saalbach-Hinterglemm



Saalbach-Hinterglemm are two adjoining, and very attractive, valley villages that provide the base for excursions up into the region's hills and mountains.

Each village has a cluster of hotels and apartments, bars and restaurants and a supermarket for essential provisions.

Play the joker



The Saalbach-Hinterglemm JOKER CARD, which cannot be purchased, is provided by participating hotels.

It is available for the duration of a stay between May and October and provides unlimited use of the mountain gondolas (cable cars) and the Hiking Bus, that runs between Vorderglemm and Lengau.

There is also free participation in the weekly guided walks by the area's guides.

The card also offers free or discounted entrance to a range of area attractions.

Up, up and away

There are six cable car (gondola) systems that go up into the mountains during spring, with more opening during the winter season.



Making the journey on these will be young families and retired couples, cross country and touring bikers, downhill mountain riders and those crazy freeriders.

Of these, it's the freeriders who stay up the mountains for the shortest of time.

Geared up in full face helmets and neck, breast, elbow and shin guards, these thrill seekers hurtle off down the specially constructed rough terrain slalom tracks, which include sharp turns, jumps, rock features and a variety of other obstacles.



Not that I tried it, but there's little chance to admire the view during the 15 or so minutes it takes from top to bottom.

Downhill mountain riding involves cycling on particularly steep, rocky trails, and like free riding, is undertaken on heavier bikes with very strong rear suspension and thick knobbed tires.

The guys doing this are also kitted in protective gear.

Cross-country biking, while still active, is likely to be a half-day or day trip.



Trips can be planned to accommodate the abilities of the participants - and the wish to stop on route to admire the view or take in a beer.

And then there will be those relying on their two feet



The hill walkers on a sturdy days trek or the elderly couples and young families looking to stroll back down the mountain via the more gently winding paths.

All, apart from the downhill racers will have the time to embrace the fresh mountain air and staggeringly beautiful scenery that visitors share with the mountain cows, sheep and horses.

Baumzipfelweg



And then there's Baumzipfelweg at the end of the Glemmtal valley, which is an Alpine theme park of sorts.

Parking some 2km away, one can walk through the flower strewn meadows and sloping woodlands to Baumzipfelweg - or take the 'Noddy train' that takes the same route.



The reward is the highest tree top walk in Europe, which is reached via the Golden Gate Bridge in the Alps, a suspension bridge crossing the valley at a height of over 40 metres.



The tree top route itself is a larch wood construction of stairways, walkways and viewing platforms.



There is also an extensive zip lining course, a children's play area, hillside walking paths and an excellent restaurant.

www.baumzipfelweg.at

A place to stay : the Hotel Conrad



The twin villages of Saalbach-Hinterglemm provide a whole cluster of three and four star hotels and apartments.

Of these we stayed at - and can certainly recommend - the three star Hotel Conrad in Hinterglemm.

A bikers hotel

During the spring and summer months the hotel is hugely popular as a bikers hotel, which gives the place a real friendly buzz even for those who, like us, are looking to walk the region.

During the winter it's skiers who flock to the Conrad.

There is also a lockable bike garage and workshop and daily laundry service.

Conrad guests get a 10% discount at the, across the road, *Bike'nSoul* cycle store, where visitors can get expert advice and the hire of cycles and safety gear.

And the hotel provides guests with the Joker card with the discounts and incentives that this offers.

Although one is unlikely to spend much time in them, the rooms and apartments are clean, very comfortable and all bikers and snow sports fans will want.

The first thing one appreciates about the Conrad is the welcome from owner Evi Hasenauer and her team, who take really good care of their guests and their cycles.

This includes energy bars, GPS and daily guided cycle tours and private tuition and tours.



The spa



Equally welcoming is the hotels wellness spa, which includes steam room, sauna and relaxation area.

The spa is open between 3 and 7 each afternoon.

Winter in Salzburgerland



Salzburgerland is well known for its skiing and other winter sports.

The region is a part of the Kitzbüheler Alpen.

A three piste network consisting of Saalbach, Hinterglemm and Leogang is located in the municipality.



The highest point is Spielberghorn (2,044 m) in the north and Hochkogel (2,249 m) in the south.

A bar-b-que in the mountains

On arriving at hotel Conrad we were told the welcome barbecue at the hotel's alpine mountain cabin would be taking place in an hour, so after quickly unpacking we were given a lift to the lodge *writes Ann Mealor*



The weather was superb and the location and scenery that came with it were stunning. Leafy mountain tops with swathes of green where the ski slopes run white in winter.

Beautiful blue skies with picture perfect cotton wool clouds.

The alpine lodge had a relaxing garden area with tables, benches, sun loungers, a heated outdoor swimming pool and a rock pool filled with fish.

Fluffy brown, free range hens also wandered around, quietly clucking, scratching at the grass and making nests for themselves in the sun.

The food, all prepared and cooked on site, was barbecued to perfection.

Tangy ribs, peppery beef steak, spicy sausages, blackened catfish, baked potatoes, grilled cheese, a selection of salads, dressings, fried courgettes, onions and peppers and garlic bread.

Nothing was burnt- it was all juicy and flavoursome and the alpine setting made the experience all the more delightful.

The hoard of hungry cyclists who had been out for the day devoured everything and then got on their bikes for the last leg of their journey home.

Ashley and I decided to walk off our meal by heading back down the mountain on foot and so finished off the dining experience with a generous helping of spectacular scenery.

Eating at Hotel Conrad

Meals at the Hotel Conrad deserve special mention as they were all so good *writes Ann Mealor*.

The hotel punches above its three star weight when it comes to cuisine thanks to Marcel, the owner's son.

Breakfasts are healthy and hearty and will fuel the hungriest of biker or hiker for the day ahead. Fresh fruit, yoghurt, muesli, crusty breads, cheese, cold meats, creamy scrambled eggs and crispy streaky bacon.



The evening meal is a help yourself salad bar where everything is fresh and crisp, a range of salad dressings and olive oils and freshly baked baguettes.

Following the salad comes the soup, tasty even in hot weather, and the main course.

Diners are given a choice of two each day, a meat and vegetarian option- both are delicious and well presented as are the desserts, which are interesting and not too heavy, just right after three courses. A particular favourite was the baked apple with cinnamon foam.

Flickering candles on the tables help to create the welcoming and comfortable atmosphere that is Hotel Conrad, or should I say comrade?

www.hotel-conrad.at

Skiing from Saalbach-Hinterglemm



Skiing from Saalbach-Hinterglemm can be found on both sides of the valley.

The runs on the north side of the valley (south-facing side) tend to be preferred by visitors due to their sunny weather.

The pistes on the south side of the valley (north-facing side) are normally in the shade, so have better snow cover, particularly in late season, as well as more trees.

Much of the off piste skiing is found on the north side, where thigh-deep, untouched powder can be found only metres from many of the pistes.



Saalbach-Hinterglemm has 6 and 8-man chairlifts with heated seats and retractable covers for use in bad weather.

Getting there

Visitors will usually fly into Salzburg AT Wolfgang A Mozart airport, which is one of those delightfully small and efficient airports that get you in and out in no time at all.

It is then about 75 minutes drive from Salzburg, with this trip being highly enjoyable in its own right.

More information

www.salzburgerland.com
www.saalbach.or.at

A snapshot of Salzburgerland



AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



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The International Travel Writers Alliance
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The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

Ashley Gibbins is Chief Executive of the International Travel Writers Alliance and Managing Editor of AllWays traveller.

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