

"Tirol Talks": Safety will be the focal point of every summer holiday

At the end of last week, the Austrian federal government announced its first steps towards the reopening of gastronomy, hotels, culture and sports - under strict conditions. This means that summer tourism will slowly but surely be possible again from May onwards. Businesses in Tirol have prepared extensively for this new start – and the demand for holidays and pulling power of the province fills politicians and industry representatives with optimism. As part of the digital talk series “Tirol Talks”, tourism experts will unveil their preparations and perspectives for summer holidays and discuss them together with the international press.

"With the announcement of the initial roadmap to reopening, there is now a perspective for the industries and sectors concerned, for whom it is impossible to just open up overnight, and for the people, who have no greater desire than for life to return to normal", emphasises Tirol's Governor, Günther Platter.

Safety has utmost priority

In any case, Tirol is well prepared for tourism to resume. "Safety must be the focal point of every stay in Tirol. The foremost expectation of every guest is to be able to spend a safe holiday in our province, says Platter, who is convinced the industry will prove that Tirol is one of the safest and healthiest holiday destinations. With this in mind, the time was also used to analyse developments and improve tourism strategies, which will be presented in June. In principle, Tirol does not have to reinvent tourism, but adaptations will be made where necessary in order to develop quality and increase value.

As responsible hosts, the businesses and tourism associations have developed comprehensive safety and hygiene concepts, appointed their own COVID officers, created online platforms with information on safe holidays, and implemented digital registration tools if needed. Moreover, the province offers both its guests and employees an unparalleled Covid testing system, so no one needs to worry about the availability of a test, while great strides are being made in vaccinating the nation. "Tourism businesses have prepared meticulously for the new start, the holiday region of Tirol is ready", Platter explains.

The desire to travel is greater than ever

"After the difficult months of the pandemic and complete loss of the winter season, our aim is to get straight back on track for success. In this context, it is extremely positive that current studies highlight the great appeal of the Tirol brand", explains Platter. According to a survey on summer potential, every second German holidaymaker planning to travel to Austria, wants to come to Tirol. Current surveys also show the desire to travel is undiminished, or even greater than before. Forty

seven percent of potential holidaymakers from Austria and sixty percent from Germany are planning to take a longer trip of more than five days as soon as they can. Moreover, Tirol is considered a most desirable holiday destination, especially by Germans, as a study published a few days ago by the Innsbruck-based IMARK Institute clearly demonstrates.

Sharp rise in interest for holidays in Tirol

“Interest in Tirol is currently on the rise, and with the announced roadmap, concrete enquiries are coming in again”, confirms Florian Phleps, Managing Director of the Tirol Tourist Board. Tirol offers perfect conditions, especially when it comes to enjoying active recreation in Alpine nature. The clever combination of the regions’ special characteristics, with nature-oriented and sustainable-holiday offers, is turning into a formula for success. Tirol has enormous potential in this area, Phleps reiterates.

A survey of the mood in the tourism regions across Tirol also confirms a more optimistic outlook is gradually spreading throughout the province. “Our tourism associations rate the attraction of Tirol as a holiday destination - especially when it comes to important markets such as Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands - as very strong or strong”, says Phleps.

“For guests this summer, safety and hygiene measures will continue to be decisive when choosing a destination”, Phleps adds. The Tirol Tourist Board is therefore focusing on high quality information for both guests and hosts, by creating two new websites, www.welcome.tirol and www.sichere-gastfreundschaft.tirol. Over the next few weeks, these pages will be filled with information for the coming summer, as soon as specific regulations are announced.

What will 2021/22 summer and ski holidays look like?

“Tirol is the ideal place to visit due to its vast amount of outdoor activities – from walking and climbing to swimming, mountain biking and cycling. However, 2021/22 summer and ski holidays will still have Covid regulations”, says Phleps. He continues, “guests must adhere to the two-metre social distancing rules, will be tested when they go into a restaurant, café, hotel etc. – unless they have a negative Covid test that is less than 48 hours old or hold a vaccination passport – and the hospitality sector has gone above and beyond to make holidays safe for visitors. In terms of ski, obviously après ski has changed – but that’s only a small part of the ski holiday; it’s a great opportunity to highlight the many other activities possible”. Holger Gassler, Head of Marketing for the Austrian Tirol Tourist Board, adds, “generally, from 19 May, the regulations for entry to Austria (for countries within the EU) are as follows: visitors from countries rated green or orange have free entry, visitors from countries rated red have to show a negative test, be vaccinated or have recovered from Covid-19, and visitors from countries rated dark red have to show a negative test, be vaccinated or have recovered from Covid-19, plus quarantine for five days. Security for guests is paramount”.

Tirol's holiday hosts look forward to welcoming their guests

Across the province, Tirol's holiday hosts are looking forward to reopening and welcoming their guests again, many of whom have been spending their holidays here for years.

This is also the case for Elisabeth Gürtler, who garnered international repute through the "Sacher" brand, and offers spa holidays combined with mountain experiences at the five-star resort, 'Astoria' in the Olympiaregion Seefeld. Gürtler says: "The safety of our guests and employees is our top priority, because this is a fundamental requirement when choosing a destination for a holiday and ensures a carefree time and sustainable relaxation in our hotel".

And Maria Steindl from the 'Untervirt' gourmet hotel can hardly wait to pamper her guests again. The Untervirt long since veered away from the well-trodden tourist trail. Steindl says: "Our stance is not standard, but excellence. The fun challenge is to combine what has grown historically with the future. For example, we want to show that contemporary food culture and tradition are not a contradiction in terms".

Sustainability as a new value

Ambros Gasser, managing director of ASI-Reisen, is also interested in new values. Sustainability, regional added value, and minimised CO2 emissions are the parameters according to which Gasser has not only aligned his globally offered active and adventure tours, but also shaped the ASI Nest, the new company headquarters near Innsbruck. "We orient our business activities strongly towards the 17 goals for sustainability on an economic, ecological and social level, as formulated by the United Nations. I think it is good and important for these values to be incorporated into the strategic direction of tourism in Tirol", Gasser states.

Photos of the "Tirol Talks" event series are available for download at <http://www.presse.tirol.at>.

8.643 Zeichen

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With its 34 regional associations, **Tirol** is one of the leading holiday destinations in the Alps. Tirolean tourism is characterised by almost 200 years of history and various pioneering achievements. Summer and winter guests appreciate the unique experience, high quality of service and infrastructure as well as the internationally recognised Tirolean hospitality. Tirol Werbung GmbH (Tirol Tourist Board) is based in Innsbruck and is the tourism marketing organisation for the region, working towards the main objective of positioning Tirol as the most desirable destination in the Alpine world.

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