

THE WORLD MOUNTAIN AND TRAIL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023 WILL TAKE PLACE IN INNSBRUCK AND STUBAI, IN THE AUSTRIAN TIROL

The World Mountain and Trail Running Championships 2023 (WMTRC 2023) have been awarded to Innsbruck and Stubai in the Austrian Tirol. The official start of the WMTRC 2023 were presented at a press conference on 13 September 2022 in Innsbruck. The Championships will take place from 6-10 June 2023 in Innsbruck and Stubai, making the Tirol the international centre for the mountain and trail running community. The press conference held at Villa Blanka in Innsbruck drew a great deal of interest from the local media.

The organising community, Innsbruck-Stubai, was able to assert itself against strong international competition to win the bid to host the WMTRC 2023 in Tirol. The International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU), the International Trail Running Association (ITRA), and the World Mountain Running Association (WMRA) under the coordination of World Athletics justified the award for the Tirolean regions due to their excellent reputation as leading Alpine sports destinations, the professionalism of the application documents submitted, and the proven experience in managing major events.

Alessio Punzi, Head of Running and Mass Participation of World Athletics (WA) on the award of the WMTRC 2023 to Innsbruck-Stubai says: *“The selection process was not easy, as all four international applicants met the needed requirements. In the end, however, we and our colleagues from the IAU, ITRA and WMRA were convinced by the unique mountain landscape of Tirol, the special combination of urbanity and alpinism as well as the great know-how in the disciplines of mountain running and trail running”.*

Alexander Pittl, the founder of the Innsbruck-based "Laufwerkstatt" and initiator of the "Innsbruck Alpine Trailrun Festival" (largest running event in Austria and third largest within Germany, Austria and Switzerland) is in charge of implementing the World Championships both technically and organisationally. Pittl is considered a pioneer in mountain and trail running in Tirol and provided information about planned routes and distances. He says: *"We will expect around 1,400 active athletes from at least 60 nations, who will be competing for the 16 titles and medals to be awarded – men and women, individual and team. There will be a total of four runs along beautiful routes, including a “Vertical” in Stubai, a short trail over 40 km, and a long trail over 80 km, as well as the classic race as*

a spectacular 'up-and-down' race in Innsbruck. The exact routes are currently being worked out”.

Tirol's Deputy Governor, Josef Geisler, was delighted the WMTRC 2023 had been awarded to Tirol, saying: *“The staging of this major event will further strengthen Tirol's international profile and position as the leading sports region in the Alps. Mountain running and trail running are particularly environmentally friendly outdoor sports in harmony with nature, which stand for the sustainable development of tourism in our country”.*

Innsbruck's Sports Councillor Elisabeth Mayr agrees. She says: *“With this major sporting event, Innsbruck can present itself as a 'city in the mountains'. We don't have to expand or rebuild anything, we show what it is: a city in the heart of Europe, embedded in a unique mountain world”.*

Karin Seiler, Managing Director of Tirol Tourist Board, is also convinced of the added value that the hosting of the World Championships brings to Tirol. She says: *“From a tourism perspective, and above all from a brand perspective, mountain sports in Tirol are part of our DNA. The mountain is firmly anchored in the Tirol brand, so the Mountain and Trail Running World Championships fit in perfectly”.*

Ideal conditions in the Innsbruck and Stubai region

The hosting regions offer perfect conditions for the different disciplines. The Tirolean capital of Innsbruck is ideal with its unique combination of event infrastructure and hotels in the immediate vicinity of the mountains. On the other hand, Stubai scores with its first-class hotels and spectacular natural landscape.

The World Championships will bring together the elite of trail and mountain runners from all over the world in Tirol, who will run through some of the most beautiful landscapes in Europe. Athletes such as Kristin Berglund, Ida-Sophie Hegemann, and Florian Grasel are excited about their possible participation, saying: *“Even if it gets very sweaty, we are really looking forward to experiencing the freedom and closeness to nature of our sport in the exciting atmosphere of the World Championships!”*

According to Mario Gerber, chairman of the Innsbruck Tourist Board, the planned running routes in and around Innsbruck will offer numerous sporting and visual highlights for athletes and spectators. He says: *“One route leads through the picturesque old town of Innsbruck and then climbs steeply over numerous meters to the “Höll” at the Hoetting quarter. There will be beautiful sporting pictures from our Alpine-urban state capital out into the world”.*

Spectacular routes are being worked out in Stubai too, according to the chairman of the Stubai Tourist Association, Adrian Siller, who was also at the press conference.

Please find some more information here: www.innsbruck-stubai2023.com

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Tirol with its 34 regions is one of the leading tourist destinations in the Alps. Tourism in Tirol dates back almost 200 years and has been at the forefront of many innovations. Guests in both summer and winter appreciate the unique landscape, the high standard of service and infrastructure, and the traditionally warm welcome that has made Tirol famous throughout the world. Based in the regional capital Innsbruck, Tirol Werbung is the tourism marketing organisation for Tirol. Its main task is to position Tirol as the number one holiday destination in the Alps.