

THE QUIET SIDE OF WINTER IN TIROL

While many winter visitors to Tirol are drawn by the region's world-class ski resorts, more and more come in search of peace and quiet. Those keen to experience winter at a slower pace will still find places where the action, adventure and adrenaline seem a million miles away. Here, far from the ski pistes and cable cars, our region in the Heart of the Alps shows itself from its quieter, gentler side: snow-covered forests, clean winter air, absolute silence. The perfect place to get away from it all and enjoy the majesty of the mountains.

Believe it or not, there is more to Tirol than skiing. Far from the finely groomed pistes and state-of-the-art cable cars lies a world where time seems to have stood still – forests, mountains, lakes and meadows where the only sound to be heard is the crunch-crunch-crunch of snow underfoot. Where the cold alpine air tickles your nose and the sun gazes down from a cobalt blue sky. Winter visitors to Tirol keen to experience our region at a slower pace will find plenty of options. Activities include cross-country skiing, a gentle and relaxing sport which invites you to explore the landscape, and the family favourite tobogganing. Here are five ideas on how to spend a great winter holiday in Tirol with not a ski lift or cable car in sight.

Kartitsch in East Tirol: Austria's First Winter Walking Village

In 2018 the small village of Kartitsch in East Tirol was named Austria's first official Winter Walking Village. Located in the Gailtal Valley, one of the most beautiful high valleys in the Alps, this pretty village with its many traditional farmsteads dotted across the mountain is home to nine signposted winter walking routes kept in excellent condition throughout the year. Kartitsch's high altitude means walkers can enjoy fabulous views of the surrounding peaks – from the Lienz Dolomites to the Carnic Alps all the way over the border to Italy – with little or no uphill hiking involved. There are also a number of hotels and guesthouses which are certified winter walking accommodation providers. They are specialists when it comes to winter walking and offer extra services you will not find elsewhere – for example

providing walkers with a rucksack, hiking poles and an insulated sitting mat for when you want to stop for a break on a bench or tree trunk without getting cold.

www.osttirol.com

For information on Tirol's top 15 hiking regions please visit <https://www.tyrol.com/winter-walking>

Vorderhornbach in the Lechtal Valley: Fun and Adventure for All Ages

Located at the start of the Hornbachtal Valley, the village of Vorderhornbach enjoys a quiet and idyllic location at the foot of the Allgäu Alps, away from the main north-south transit route through Tirol. It forms part of the Natura 2000 Zone in the Lech Valley Nature Park, a protected area of outstanding natural beauty dominated by the rushing waters of the Lech, one of the last remaining wild rivers in Tirol. During the winter months families can enjoy walks such as the Vorderhornbach Loop, which takes around 1 hour to complete and is also suitable for buggies. We also recommend a walk up to the Jausenstation Wase hut in Bach (1 hour) followed by a toboggan ride back down. Don't forget to plan a little extra time to enjoy the hearty local food served at the hut.

www.lechtal.at

Navis in the Wipptal Valley: Unforgettable Ski Touring Adventures

The Wipptal Valley south of Innsbruck is the perfect place for outdoor enthusiasts keen to experience the mountains of Tirol in winter. The valley itself stretches for 70 kilometres all the way to the Austrian-Italian border on the Brenner Pass. On each side lie mighty peaks forming part of the Tux, Zillertal and Stubai Alps. There are also several smaller side valleys branching off the Wipptal Valley, home to quiet and remote villages. This area attracts fans of ski touring keen to do without lifts and cable cars and instead explore the mountains on foot. One of the most popular ski touring adventures in the valley is known as the Wipptal Valley Ski Crossing. As the name suggests, it crosses the valley from one side to the other in six stages, each of which has between 800 and 1,200 vertical metres of climbing on skis – just right for those new to the sport and those who like to take things at a slower pace and enjoy the landscape. Last but certainly not least, check out the Snow and Schnapps Triathlon held each Wednesday at the end of the Navistal Valley, one of the side valleys branching off the Wipptal Valley. Again, the name gives you a clue as to what you can expect – a mini triathlon comprising snowshoe walking, tobogganing and, of course, a few glasses of local schnapps accompanied by traditional food from the region.

www.wipptal.at

For more information on ski touring in Tirol please visit <https://www.tyrol.com/ski-touring>

Villgratental Valley in East Tirol: Explore the Valley on Snowshoes or Skis

The Villgratental Valley in East Tirol is one of the most idyllic and untouched mountain areas anywhere in the Alps. It is this back-to-nature vibe that attracts many ski touring and showshoeing fans to this remote valley near the Italian border. When it comes to ski touring there are no fewer than 40 routes to choose from, some of which begin in the valley and top out high in the mountains at almost 3,000 metres above sea level. There are even some ski touring routes which start right outside the local hotels and guesthouses. A perennial favourite is the tour to the top of the Roter Kinkele mountain. On the way up you will find a hut (Kamelisenalm) with a charming chapel, while the views from the top are magnificent. Fans of snowshoe hiking can take on the walk to Gumriaul, where much of the route leads along the border between Austria and Italy.

www.osttirol.com

For more information on snowshoe hiking in Tirol please visit <https://www.tyrol.com/snowshoeing>

Grän in the Tannheimer Tal Valley: A Haven For Cross-Country Skiers

With 140 kilometres of well-maintained cross-country skiing trails, the Tannheimer Tal Valley is a paradise for fans of this traditional alpine sport. The valley has been recognised as one of Tirol's leading places for cross-country skiing and has been awarded the Cross-Country Skiing Quality Seal by the regional government. The village of Grän is the highest of the villages within the Tannheimer Tal Valley and an excellent starting point for all manner of snow-based adventures. We recommend exploring the cross-country skiing trail over the frozen Haldensee lake as well as the 19-kilometre-long circular trail taking in Grän, Nesselwängle and, again, the frozen Haldensee lake. Winter walkers will enjoy the trail along the shore of the Haldensee lake – and can even head out onto the ice when conditions are safe. After all that fresh mountain air, you will be pleased to know that the Tannheimer Tal Valley is home to a number of excellent spa hotels such as the four-star superior Der Engel in Grän and the Hotel Jungbrunn in Tannheim.

www.tannheimertal.com

For a list of all ten regions in Tirol awarded the Cross-Country Skiing Quality Seal please visit www.tyrol.com/cross-country-skiing

For more information on winter activities in Tirol away from the ski pistes please visit www.tyrol.com/winter-holidays

The latest information on travelling to Tirol and Covid-19 restrictions in the region can be found at www.welcome.tirol

4.096 Zeichen Autorenkürzel

With 8.8 million international arrivals from more than 50 countries around the globe, some 38.5 million guest room nights in the year 2019-2020 and 34 local tourist boards, **Tirol** ranks as one of the leading tourist destinations in the European Alps. Tirol's 200-year-old tourism history is marked by visionary and intriguing characters. Summer and winter, visitors to Tirol appreciate unique outdoor experiences, a high level of personal services and superb tourist facilities, along with legendary and bespoke hospitality. The **Tirol Werbung GmbH** (Tirol Tourist Board) is the official tourism office for the Province of Tirol and has its headquarters in Innsbruck. The Tirol Tourist Board aims to position Tirol as the most popular playground in the Alpine world.

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