

The toughest temptation since trail running began

Four courses around Innsbruck and in the Stubai Valley will form the venues for the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships, to be held here from 6 to 10 June 2023. There will be 1,600 visitors from 70 nations as guests, with 1,300 of them competing for the title of world champion. For these athletes, however, it is not just the trails that pose a real challenge.

Along the four routes are also numerous rest and refreshment stops in the form of traditional huts and wonderful mountain inns that the runners will have to pass. The temptation to stop, rest and delight in the sunny terraces while savouring the wide range of Tyrolean delicacies on offer is enormous: a series of tempting traps that the athletes will have to overcome as they seek to produce their best times – certainly not an easy task.

The acid test: sweet temptations

The refreshment stops along the routes are tempting in many ways: the toughest challenge for mountain and trail runners will be the culinary delights, which are omnipresent. The test is not to yield when the prospect of a bowl of hot soup, served for example with cheese dumplings or frittatas, is close at hand. Willpower is vital to resist the aroma of juicy roast meat together with gravy and sauerkraut. And, should the odour of the sweet shredded pancakes known as *Kaiserschmarren* waft towards you, it's best to be able to disconnect your sense of smell!

Places that encourage you to slow down

The locations of the huts and mountain inns in the breathtaking Tyrolean landscape will also encourage athletes to slow down. It is not only as you race past that they tempt you to spend time there, enjoying the surroundings with every single one of your senses.

These include the terraces of the Alpengasthof Rauschbrunnen, the Umbrüggler Alm and the Höttinger Alm, all of which offer sweeping views of Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol; there are enchanting forest clearings such as those at the rustic Autenalm, the Milderaunalm, the Brandstatt Alm and the Auffang Alm in the Stubai Valley; and lush alpine meadows around the Muttereralm and Schlickeralm, where cows, sheep and goats all graze. There are places to rest awhile with views of the imposing peaks of the Kalkkögel range – the North Tyrolean Dolomites – that runners have to try and ignore: on the Innsbruck side there are the Kemater Alm, the Adolf Pichler Hut and the Hoadl Haus, while on the Stubai side are the Kreuzjoch Panoramic Restaurant and the Sennjoch Hut. The same goes for the vantage points at the Starkenburger Hut that offer far-reaching views of the white glacier fields, or of the Stubai and Inn valleys, as is the case at the Elfer Panoramic Restaurant and the Elfer Hut.

Resisting temptation until after the race

Incidentally, the Elfer Hut is the only station in all four races where participants in the Vertical Uphill discipline – i.e. a pure mountain run – can treat themselves to tasty Tyrolean delicacies immediately after crossing the finish line.

For all others, it is crucial to maintain their stamina, willpower and resilience until the very end. If you want to run fast and become a world champion in mountain or trail running, you not only have to master the courses, but also be able to resist the allure of the dozens of tempting refreshment stops in Innsbruck and the Stubai Valley – at least until the race is over.

Because then there are these seventeen mountain inns and huts and many more besides – where the dumplings, roasts, cakes and pancakes all taste twice as good once the work is done.