



Tyrol

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Why Go?

There's no place like Tyrol for the 'wow, I'm in Austria' feeling. Nowhere else in the country is the downhill skiing as exhilarating, the après ski as pumping, the wooden chalets as chocolate box, the food heartier. Whether you're schussing down the legendary slopes of Kitzbühel, cycling the Zillertal or hiking in the Alps with a big blue sky overhead – the scenery here makes you glad to be alive.

Alps aside, it's the locals that make Tyrol unique. Down-to-earth, notoriously proud and a touch rebellious, Tyroleans embrace both tradition and innovation. Welcome to a place where snowboarders brag about awesome descents under the low beams of a medieval tavern; where *Dirndls* and *Lederhosen* have street cred; and where *Volksmusik* (folk music) features on club playlists. Like its famous eagle, Tyrol will lift you high with its free spirit, party-loving soul and boundless natural beauty.

Best Places to Eat

- » Paznaunerstube (p328)
- » Chez Nico (p303)
- » Hosteria (p319)
- » Batzenhäusl (p321)
- » Museum Restaurant (p332)

Best Places to Stay

- » Altes Thönihaus (p331)
- » Auracher Löchl (p321)
- » Nepomuks (p302)
- » Enzianhof (p312)
- » Nature Resort Ötztal (p323)

When to Go

Tyrol goes outdoors in summer with rafting on the Inn River, and paragliding and high-altitude hiking in the Alps. July and August are festival season in Innsbruck, while the Zillertal rocks to accordion-driven folk music. In winter Tyrol is like a snow-globe scene – all fairy-tale Christmas markets, snowbound villages and world-class skiing. Wildflowers carpet mountainsides in spring, a tranquil season. The golden silence of autumn, when the cows descend from the high pastures, can be beautiful too.

Legendary Skiing

Tyrol is powdery perfection. Even the tiniest speck of an alpine village has its own ski school and lift, so the question is not *if* but *how* you ski. **Kitzbühel** (p317) for purists and its world-class Hahnenkamm, **Mayrhofen** (p313) for its fantastic free-ride terrain and knee-trembling Harakiri, **St Anton am Arlberg** (p329) for glorious off-piste and après-ski...so many illustrious names, so many expectations. And Tyrol lives up to them all. Beyond downhill, you'll also find Olympic-level cross-country tracks in **Seefeld** (p309) and year-round skiing at **Stubai** (p309) and **Hintertux** (p313) glaciers.

Once you've got the destination sorted, you can start planning. Visit www.tirol.at for special ski packages, guide information, snow reports and the low-down on Tyrol's 110 ski resorts and 193 ski schools.

APRÈS-SKI ACTION

Singing oompah-pah in your salopettes, grooving to Europop in your ski boots, rounds of Jägermeister bombs, dancing polar bears – it's just another slopeside afternoon in Tyrol. Nowhere in Europe throws a better après-ski party. Save some energy and euros and remember what goes up, must come down – it's amazing how a few shots can ruin your snowplough!

The unrivalled après-ski king is, of course, **St Anton am Arlberg** (p332), where barns like Mooserwirt and Heustadl whip throngs into a frenzy with beer and live music. Rivals to the crown include wild child **Ischgl** (p328), dubbed the Ibiza of the Alps, with its go-go dancing bars, top DJs and clubs like Pacha. The pubs and igloo bars in **Mayrhofen** (p316) are buoyed by party-loving boarders, particularly during the Snowbombing festival in April.

Top Five Adrenalin Thrills

- » Pinballing down Innsbruck's **Olympic bob run** (p301) at speeds of up to 100km/h – one minute of sheer madness
- » Catapulting into the void on the **Harakiri** (p313), Austria's steepest piste with a 78% gradient
- » Feeling your stomach drop as you nosedive off the 192m-high **Europabrücke** (p300) bridge, one of Europe's scariest bungee jumps
- » Throwing yourself down a waterfall (canyoning) or along a foaming river (rafting) in **Landeck** (p326)
- » Bombing downhill on your mountain bike on the **Nordkette Singletrail** (p300), with Innsbruck but a blur beneath you

BEST HIKE

Tyrol's rugged peaks and valleys become fantastic walking country in summer. A classic alpine day hike is the **Zillertal Circuit** (p315), starting at the jewel-coloured Schlegeis Reservoir near Ginzling.

Tastes of Tyrol

- » Aromatic *Schlegeis-Speck* ham, cured at 1800m, from Metzgerei Kröll (p314) in Mayrhofen
- » Apple and plum schnapps from the orchards of Stanz (p327)
- » Flavoursome Tilsiter, Bergkäse and Graukäse cheese from Sennerei Zillertal (p314) in Mayrhofen

What a View!

- » Innsbruck's skyline and the Nordkette range from **Bergisel** (p299) ski jump
- » The Tyrolean and Bavarian Alps from 2962m **Zugspitze** (p325), Germany's highest peak
- » Glacial panoramas from the 3250m sundeck at **Hintertux Glacier** (p313)

Resources

- » Tyrol.com (www.tirol.at) Activities, accommodation, transport and weather.
- » Verkehrsverbund Tirol (www.vvt.at) Timetables and tickets.