

Sustainable Holidays in Austria: Best Practice Regions

With the impacts of climate change more evident every day, sustainability is an increasingly important factor for travellers when choosing a holiday destination. Austria was one of the first countries to actively embark on the sustainability path and is now considered one of the most sustainable holiday destinations in the world. Home to 695 peaks over 3,000 metres, eight national parks, more than 25,000 lakes, and forests covering nearly 48% of its land, Austrians take great pride in protecting their natural treasures for future generations.

Austria's holiday regions are committed to protecting these landscapes by introducing sustainability initiatives. Water or solar power are used to run everything from hotels to cable cars, restaurants, and spas. E-bikes and electric cars are also seeing an increase in popularity. And while eco-friendly seasonal cooking has always been popular in Austria, more and more restaurants are now switching to organic ingredients. Holiday guests can enjoy a car-free stay thanks to Austria's extensive railway (more than 5,000 km) and free use of public transport included in many guest cards across the country.

Here are five holiday regions that take sustainability efforts to the next level.

Zell am See-Kaprun: An award-winning sustainable destination

Surrounded by mountains, a glacier, and a lake, [Zell am See-Kaprun](#) is a natural paradise. The region has committed itself to eleven climate goals, while also encouraging local businesses to adopt more eco-friendly practices.

- In autumn 2025, Zell am See-Kaprun was awarded the [Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism Destinations](#), Austria's most established environmental label in tourism. It acknowledges the region's long-standing commitment to sustainability – from environmentally friendly mobility and energy efficiency to social responsibility and regional value creation.
- Thanks to its [high mountain reservoirs](#), the region saves over half a million tons of CO2 every year. The two local mountain railway companies, [Schmittenhöhebahn AG](#) and [Gletscherbahnen Kaprun AG](#), operate exclusively with electricity from 100% renewable energy sources.
- Guests are encouraged to [arrive by train](#) with connections available from all major Austrian cities as well as the neighbouring Germany and Switzerland.
- Both the [Zell am See – Kaprun Summer Card](#) and the [Pinzgau Mobility Card](#) include free train and bus travel throughout the region.

St. Anton am Arlberg: A holiday resort running on green electricity

Alternative energy generation, sensible waste disposal and more – [St. Anton am Arlberg](#) is determined to protect its landscapes and clean mountain air. Check out some of their sustainability projects.

- In spring 2021, St. Anton am Arlberg officially became a [“KLAR! Model region”](#) (climate change adaptation model region). These regions aim to minimise the consequences of climate change by committing to sustainability measures.
- Since 2006, St. Anton has been self-sufficient in terms of electricity supply. The storage lake for the [Kartell power plant](#) holds around 8 million m³ water and supplies roughly 33 million kw/h of electricity per year.
- St. Anton also operates a biomass heating plant with wood chips, designed for up to 80 residential units. A solar system is used to heat up the water.

Innsbruck: An eco-friendly city (and mountain) destination

Tirol's capital awaits guests with the perfect mix of stunning outdoors and urban amenities. And to make the deal even sweeter, it's one of the most eco-friendly cities in Austria, too. Due to its size and setting, guests can explore everything from sights to summits car-free.

- By 2050, Innsbruck aims to halve its energy consumption and increase the share of renewable energy sources by 30% (TIROL 2050, 2016). This is equivalent to a phase-out of fossil fuels.
- The [Innsbruck Welcome Card](#) includes free use of public transport in the city and region as well as cable cars up the mountains, allowing visitors to go exploring in an environmentally-friendly way.
- 23% of Innsbruck's population travel by bike instead of by car all year round. Guests are invited to follow their lead and make use of the [600 rental bikes at 50 different locations](#) throughout the city.
- In contrast to the general travel trend, visitors to Innsbruck tend to stay for a longer period instead of making several mini trips, which significantly reduces the travellers' ecological footprints

Seefeld in Tirol: An outdoor playground protecting its natural beauty

[Seefeld](#), on a beautiful high plateau (1,200 m) and part of the Karwendel Nature Park, Austria's largest nature reserve, was the first region to be awarded the [Austrian Ecolabel for Tourist Destinations](#) in 2023, a recognised certificate aiming to make sustainability action tangible and measurable.

- Seefeld has converted over 3,000 m² of lawn into flower meadows, and actively [protects its natural forests](#). It has also set an example of making commercial forests

more eco-friendly while increasing their biodiversity so they can better adapt to climate change.

- Eight representatives from nature parks, the tourism association and hospitality businesses are working on a [five and ten year measurement plan](#) with a sustainability expert and organise workshops and trainings for the industry.
- Seefeld is easy to reach by train and guests staying for at least one night can use public transport for free throughout the region with [their quest card](#).
- The [“Real plateau product” line](#) highlights local producers. In 2022, the region also implemented the [“Plateau breakfast”](#) label recognising regional breakfast options.

Every spring, the tourism association calls for a [#CleanUpPlateau Challenge](#), with volunteers rewarded with restaurant vouchers.

Wilder Kaiser Region: An outdoor and sustainable foodie paradise

The region [Wilder Kaiser](#) in Tirol has dedicated its [Strategy 2028](#) to sustainability and increasing quality of life through sustainable tourism in the area. The strategy consists of different fields of action, including those mentioned below.

- Reduction of CO2 emissions by fostering intra-regional traffic through [extensive on-site mobility](#), introduction of inner-city reduced traffic, and cooperation with the Austrian Railways to support arrival by train, providing travellers with [free shuttles to their accommodation](#).
- Free of charge local public transport with the [Wilder Kaiser GuestCard](#) (included with an overnight stay at most hotels and guest houses).
- The [NatureTrip app](#) helps plan any leisure activities in the region by public transport.
- The [Project “Marketplace”](#) highlights the diversity and quality of regional products and connects consumers and producers.

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