

Winter Activities Away from the Slopes

Skiing remains the most popular activity among holidaymakers visiting the Alps in winter, no doubt. But why not mix things up with some alternative sporty activities in between days on the slopes? Rent a kayak or paddleboard and explore Austria's snow-covered landscapes from the water, join a tour with huskies, alpacas, or donkeys, find your inner Zen while practicing mountain yoga, or take a break from downhill skiing with a leisurely walk or snowshoe hike through winter scenery.

Outdoor activities in nature are great for both body and mind and make winter holidays attractive even for those who are not fit enough or not keen on hitting the slopes.

Have a look at our suggestions for a balanced winter below – as part of a classic skiing escape or enjoyed on their own!

Snowshoeing, winter walking and hiking

Walks and hikes through snow-covered landscapes are great ways to experience Austria's wintery landscapes first-hand and leave all the stress of everyday life behind. Many trails are suitable for all ages and skill levels, making these outdoor adventures accessible to a wide range of visitors. And, unless they choose snowshoeing, most holidaymakers don't need any special equipment beyond sturdy boots and warm clothes either.

While walking and hiking is possible in all winter regions, some are especially known for their extensive network of trails and beautiful tours. [Zillertal](#) (over 460 km of winter hiking trails!), and the [Arlberg](#) region feature everything from family-friendly walks to multi-day hiking adventures, while [Kitzbühel](#) offers both and guided star gazing hikes in February on top. Vorarlberg's [Bregenzer Forest](#) and the Hohe Tauern National Park in [Carinthia](#) and [Salzkammergut](#) are popular with snowshoeing fans.

Winter and ice climbing

Winter and ice climbing are other activities becoming more and more popular in Austria. And it's not just experienced mountain climbers wanting to extend the season beyond the warmer months. Adventurous holidaymakers in the ski regions are increasingly curious to try it.

[St. Anton am Arlberg](#) has an 850 km long winter climbing trail at Rendl, which is considered one of the most beautiful ones in Tirol. Always wanted to climb up a frozen waterfall? In the [Ötztal](#) region even beginners can give ice axe and crampons a go together with a local mountain guide. Tirol's [Kauertal](#) awaits experienced climbers with several routes and

waterfalls, the highest being a whooping 160 metres high. The [Silvretta-Bielerhöhe in Montafon](#), Vorarlberg, with its ice climbing garden is another favourite.

Winter SUP, canoeing and kayaking

Who says you can only paddle in the summer? With the right equipment, think dry suits, waterproof gloves, and neoprene boots, navigating your boat or board around the Austrian lakes and rivers is equally enjoyable in the colder months. Just imagine the unique and unusual views of the snow-covered landscapes right from the water!

Winter paddling, especially SUP, is best suited for those who have already gained some experience in the summer. After all, you'll want to minimise the risk of falling into the ice-cold water. That being said, some winter resorts do offer paddling courses for beginner. Check out [winter kayaking in the Kitzbühel Alps](#) for workshops and guided tours (all skill levels), rent your board at Carinthia's [Lake Weissensee](#), or, if you are looking for something extra special, head to the Hintertux Glacier in Zillertal where you can [stand up paddle – or swim! – in an ice cave](#).

Snow biking, fat biking & ski kiting

Bikers don't have to take a break either when the snow falls. Winter sports hubs such as [Obertauern](#), [Altausee](#) and [Flachau](#) offer guided snow biking and fat biking tours, where participants explore their surroundings on bikes with extra-wide tyres. In Obertauern, you can also rent [ski bikes](#), which look like bikes but, as the name suggests, have skis clipped on instead of tyres.

Even more adventurous holidaymakers can also try snow kiting, where you stand on your skis or snowboard while a kite - and the wind - pull you across snow-covered terrain. [Obertauern](#), [Zell am See-Kaprun](#) and [Lake Achensee](#) are among the favourites of those in the know.

Animal experiences in the snow

Feel the fluffy fur of alpacas, play with dogs in the snow, admire the wintery landscapes from a horse-drawn carriage, or head on a winter hike together with donkeys. Animal experiences are a great way to enjoy winter both away from the slopes and the crowds.

At Husky farms – such as [Toni's husky camp](#) in Brandnertal (Vorarlberg) – guests can learn how to navigate a dog sled, while they are invited to head on llama trekking tours in [Saalbach-Hinterglemm](#) or [Seefeld](#). Innsbruck has [alpaca adventures](#) included in their Welcome Card (available at hotels). And for those who prefer to sit down and relax in a horse-drawn carriage, [St. Johann in Tirol](#), [Zillertal](#), [Kitzbühel](#) or [Saalbach Hinterglemm](#) are just a few of many options.

Winter yoga

Long gone are the times when yoga was considered an indoor and summer activity! [Zell am See](#) offers free open-air yoga classes throughout the winter, while [Schladming](#) in the Dachstein region has workshops especially designed with skiers in mind. [St. Anton am Arlberg](#), home to the popular annual [Mountain Yoga Festival](#) in September, now offers yoga classes all-year round, including in winter. And Vorarlberg's Kleinwalsertal has its own [yoga hotel](#) operating throughout the cold months.