

12 Facts About Winter in Austria

Austria has long been one of the world's leading winter destinations, attracting millions of visitors each year with its top-notch pistes, charming alpine villages and cosy mountain huts. But Austria's winter appeal extends far beyond skiing. From 400 resorts to choose from, winter hiking, Christmas markets and a record breaking toboggan run, Austria offers an impressive variety of experiences for every type of traveller.

And then, there's the 'Lebensgefühl', the unique Austrian attitude to life felt in all the small moments, be it the joy when hitting your first piste of the year or when sharing a large portion of Kaiserschmarren with friends or family at a hut afterwards. It's a feeling that's hard to explain but that will never leave you once you've experienced it first-hand.

The following 12 facts showcase the scale, diversity and innovation that continue to make Austria a winter holiday favourite.

1. Austria has 400 ski resorts

Skiers heading to Austria can choose from 400 winter resorts, ranging from smaller family regions such as [St. Johann in Tirol](#) or the [Holiday Region Tirol West](#) to XXL resorts for those keen to hit a different piste every day of their stay. The [Arlberg region](#), connecting St. Anton am Arlberg, Lech-Zürs, Warth-Schröcken and Stuben, is Austria's largest connected ski region – and one of the world's top five. It features 300 km of pistes, 85 cable cars and lifts, and more than 200 km of powder runs. With over 80 ski resorts, Tirol ranks first among Austria's provinces in terms of resort numbers. The ski season typically starts in November and runs up until early May in the highest altitude resorts.

2. There are over 2,500 cable cars and lifts

The quicker you get up the mountain, the more time you'll have to spend on the slopes. Luckily, Austria's winter hotspots all have excellent ski lift and cable car networks. There are over 2,500 cable cars and lifts across the Austrian Alps. Tirol is the frontrunner with [more than 1,200 lifts](#), nearly half of Austria's total network.

3. Skiers can hit more than 23,000 hectares of slopes

Skiers and snowboarders are spoiled for choice: 23,700 hectares of slopes are just waiting to be explored. The [Arlberg region](#) alone has 300 km of pistes. Other resorts with XXL slope networks include [SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser-Brixental](#) (275 km) and [Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn](#) (275 km).

4. Austria has seven glacier ski areas

You can ski on seven glaciers in Austria. The highest one is the Pitztal Glacier at 3,440 m, followed by the [Hintertux Glacier](#) (3,250 m), Sölden ([Tiefenbach](#) and [Rettenbach Glacier](#), 3,249-3,350 m), [Stubai Glacier](#) (3,212 m), [Mölltal Glacier](#) (3,122 m), [Kaunertal Glacier](#) (3,108 m) and [Kitzsteinhorn](#) (3,029 m). The [Hintertux Glacier](#) is the only one offering all-year skiing.

5. 18,000 professional ski instructors teach in Austria

It all starts with a ski course – and Austria has no shortage in that department. There are 707 ski schools and 18,000 ski instructors teaching over a million guests every winter, from total beginners to experienced skiers looking to master the latest styles and techniques. Austria's ski instructor training is widely regarded as one of the most demanding and comprehensive in the world, so guests can be confident to be in good hands.

6. Over 75% of the slopes can be artificially snowed

Long gone are the days when unpredictable winter conditions could disrupt a ski holiday. These days, [over three quarters of Austria's pistes can be artificially snowed](#), meaning snow is guaranteed at most winter resorts throughout the season. 90% of the power needed to produce artificial snow comes from renewable sources. One of the pioneers in terms of sustainability is SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser Brixental, where [snowmaking machines are 100% powered by green electricity](#), using reservoirs on the mountain, solar energy, photovoltaic systems, a hydroelectric power plants and air heat pumps.

7. Winter hiking has become a national sport

Skiing is fun, no doubt. But more and more winter sports fans are adding extra activities to their schedule, while non-skiers might plan their first ever winter holiday around alternative offers. Winter hiking ranks among the most popular activities in Austria. The alpine regions maintain thousands of winter trails, making the country one of Europe's leading destinations for snow-covered walks and hikes. Some of the most popular destinations for winter hikes include [Zillertal](#) (460 km of trails), [Schladming-Dachstein](#) (300 km) and [Montafon](#) (290 km).

8. Austria is home to the longest flood-lit toboggan run in the world

The Wildkogel Arena Neukirchen & Bramberg in SalzburgerLand is a bucketlist spot for tobogganing fans. Its Wildkogel run is 14 km long and open day and night, making it [the longest flood-lit toboggan run in the world](#). It stretches from the Wildkogel down to Bramberg and holds the International Toboggan Run Seal of Quality in double gold.

9. It's a feast for your taste buds

Austria has roughly 1,000 mountain huts and lodges open throughout the winter, dishing up all the hearty classics from Schnitzel to Gröstl and Kaiserschmarren – the perfect lunchbreak pit stop when out and about in the snow. There are around 700 huts in Tirol alone, more than anywhere else in Austria, but SalzburgerLand has the highest density. The Hochkönig region prides itself as having [more vegan- and vegetarian-friendly huts than any other Austrian ski resort](#). But huts are just half the story: Austria also has [101 Michelin-starred restaurants](#), with many of them in winter sports resorts. [St. Anton and Lech-Zürs am Arlberg](#), [Ischgl](#) and [Kitzbühel](#) are among the frontrunners.

10. There are tons of events throughout winter

Austria's winter resorts are famous not just for skiing, but equally for major music festivals, downhill races, and après-ski events that attract visitors from around the world. Some of the best knowns include the [Hahnenkamm Races in Kitzbühel](#) and the [Nightrace Schladming](#) on the sporty side and the [Top of the Mountain Concerts in Ischgl](#) (previous headliners include Robbie William, Elton John and Rita Ora), [Snowbombing in Mayrhofen](#), Zillertal (everyone from Liam Gallagher to The Prodigy has played here) and the [Electric Mountain Festival](#) in Sölden.

11. Austria has hundreds of Christmas markets

No trip to Austria from late November to late December would be complete without exploring the famous Christmas markets. In Austria, every major town or village has its very own Christmas markets, including many popular winter sports destinations. Being the capital, [Vienna alone has more than 20 markets](#), and they're right in front of world-famous sights such as Schönbrunn Palace. While markets traditionally used to close on 24 December, more and more are now stretching the season until the end of the year, giving guests an extra week to stock up on traditional sweets and crafts.

12. The winter season exceeds 70 million overnight stays a year

Austria reached 157.29 million overnight stays in 2025 in total according to [Statistics Austria](#), with roughly 71 million during the winter months (November to April). In other words: Nearly half of all tourism overnight stays occur in winter. Downhill skiing is still the main draw for holidaymakers arriving during the colder months, but alternative activities such as winter hiking, ski touring or – during December – Christmas markets are gaining importance by the year.