



Magazine

GO INTO NATURE

Its beauty can be found in the valley and on the mountains

DISCOVER THE VARIETY

You've always got the choice between action and tranquillity

ENJOY THE FREEDOM

The Ötztal offers open spaces in abundance

Ötztal.
Tirol at its Best.



AQUA DOME

TIROL THERME
LÄNGENFELD

HOTEL | THERME | SPA

△ ≈ ⊕
LIFT YOUR SPIRIT

www.aqua-dome.at

Ein Resort der:

VAMED
VITALITY
WORLD

the
relaxing
way
of life



Dear guests,

we stick to it: Everything that makes a healthy togetherness of visitors, inhabitants and employees possible, is our priority. We from the Ötztal magazine contribute with inspiration and information about unique, relaxing, adventurous and safe summer holidays in our valley.

For the summer of 2022, our magazine presents the whole variety of open spaces and free spaces in the Ötztal. You can find them alone, or with friends and family, inside historic houses and sustainably managed huts. Or outside on the sun terraces or adventure playgrounds, up on the peaks and glaciers and down in the villages, on short and long-distance hiking trails, by the water and in the forest.

We will show you the best way to explore our open spaces car-free. We open the door to encounters with the Ötztal people who work with passion and expertise in and for the Ötztal. We will tell you how and where you can best participate in trends such as wild swimming, culinary journeys or experience the renaissance of camping in the Ötztal.

The most fantastic and extensive of all our open spaces is of course the nature in the Ötztal Alps. More than ever, the last few years have shown how great and unshakable the enthusiasm and loyalty of our regular guests is. We, together with all hosts in the Ötztal thank you for this.

We warmly welcome old and new visitors and invite everyone to join us on a new and exciting journey of exploration through our beautiful valley with our magazine.

Sincerely,
your editorial team



Feeling on Top of the World – The Ötztal mountains evoke emotions & bring back memories



Enjoying Climate Protection
Sustainability at the Erlanger Hütte



32
See you at the Lake
Swimming for the brave

Imprint

Publisher: Ötztal Tourismus, 6450 Sölden
Concept/contents: media von mersi Redaktionsbüro, Wien
Concept/layout: NORDEN Werbeagentur, Innsbruck, www.norden.co
Editorial office: Isolde v. Mersi, Carmen Fender, Yvonne Auer
Creative Director: Julian Sprengel
Picture editorial: Yvonne Auer, NORDEN Werbeagentur
Cover picture: Family hike to the Langtalereckhütte with view towards Gurgl. Roman Huber
Translation: Irene Wieser
Proofreading: Martin Johler

Picture credits: © Ötztal Tourismus – B. Ritschel, E. Schmid, R. Huber, J. Steiner, Long-Nong Huang, E. Holzknecht, G. Muschalla, C. Bayer, U. Grinzinger, H. Leiter, U. Wilhelm, M. Geisler, I. Nösig, J. Schmücking, A. Klocker, E. Hessenberger, A. Steinmüller, H. Zak, M. Burtscher, G. Durner, M. Kottrester, A. Lohmann, J. Kreulitsch, E. Lorenzi, L. Ennemoser, R. Wyhlidal, F. Oss, Y. Gaderer, J. Kreulitsch, Satellite Creative House, © Liftgesellschaft Obergurgl-Hochgurgl – S. Lohmann © Bergbahnen Sölden – Obermoser+Partner Architekten zt GmbH, © Heimatmuseum Längenfeld, © Turmmuseum Oetz, © adobe.stock.com
The author pictures were provided by courtesy of the respective authors.

Illustrations: © Ötztal Tourismus – NORDEN Werbeagentur/L. Günther

Number of copies: 25000 D/EN
Print: Buchdruckerei Lustenau
Disclosure according to § 15 Media Act: 100% owner and publisher is Ötztal Tourismus, 6450 Sölden, T +43 57200, info@oetztal.com, Director Mag. Oliver Schwarz



Contents

Mountaineering

12 Feeling on top of the world

23 Point of view: views

Hiking

16 Dawdle, don't haste

18 Take to your heels

22 Point of view: insights

Nature

20 The nutcracker

21 Flora's flakes

Health

24 A clean affair

Country Life

26 Free on all lines

28 Enjoying climate protection

30 Freedom & necessity

Water

32 See you at the lake!

34 The great amazement

Adventures

35 Get up high

Family

36 Playground or sunbathing lawn?

40 Ready, steady, go!

Ötztal People

38 Elective affinities

50 This is my valley

Cycling

42 Enthusiasm on two wheels

Culinary Delights

46 Miraculous elderberries

52 Tastes like home

Culture

49 Ötzi unites us all

53 Finale: typical Ötztal

54 End of the valley: traditional hut

Miscellaneous

01 Editorial

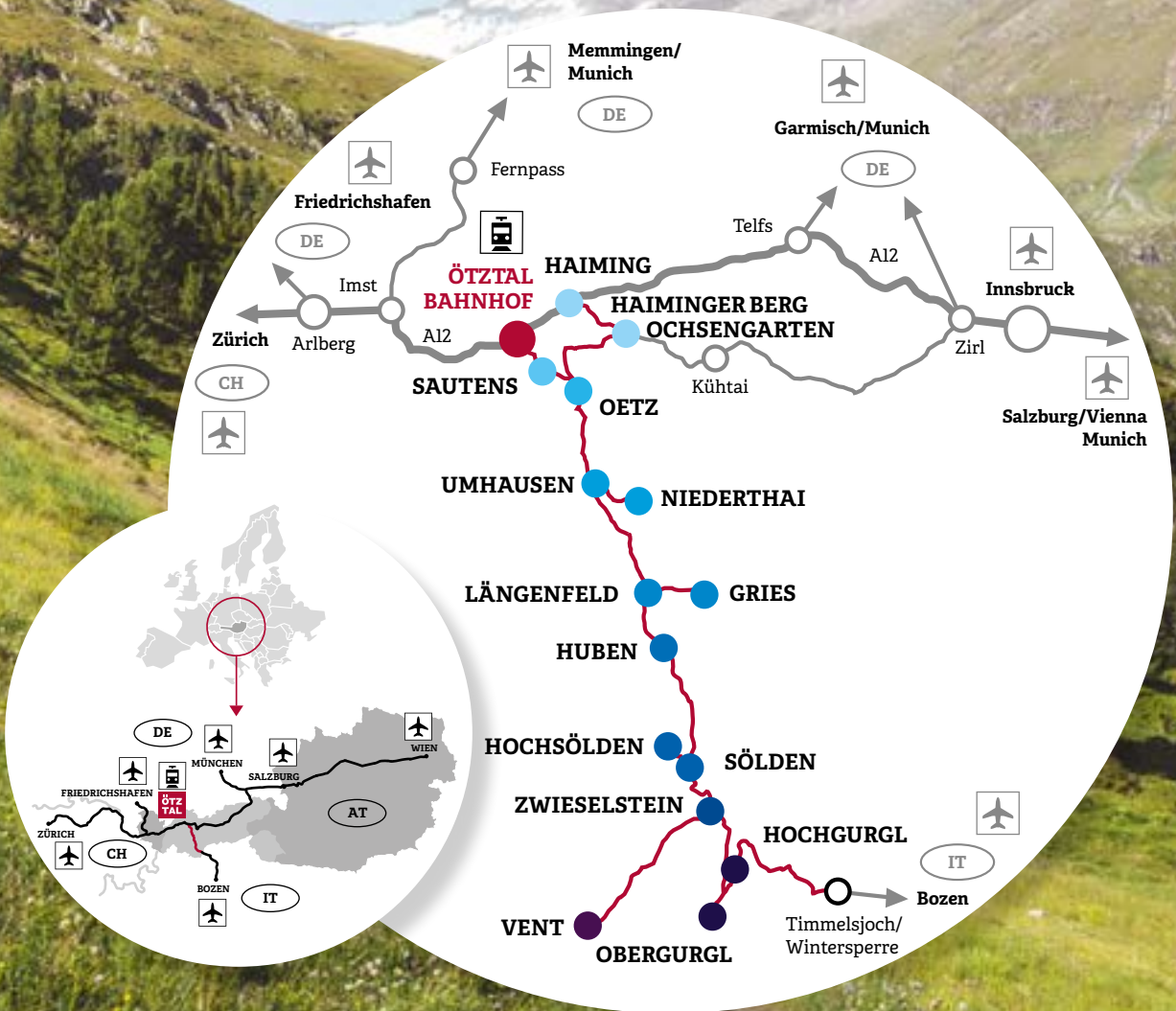
02 Contents & imprint

04 Ötztal flash

06 Impressions

51 Ötztal puzzle – prize quiz!

Ötztal Flash



Ötztal & i-Oetztal – Mobile App



The Ötztal in the Social Network

Facebook, Instagram and YouTube take you virtually into the Ötztal. We are constantly expanding our communication via social media.

ÖTZ
TAL

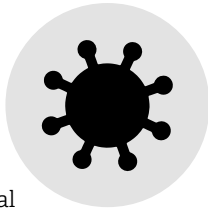
SÖLDEN

GURGL

The Ötztal and Covid-19

In addition to the Corona measures imposed by the authorities, the Ötztal Tourismus will continue its own taskforce also in 2022 and provide additional protective measures to react to the current situation in the valley in a flexible and targeted way. Always up-to-date:

www.oetztal.com/covid-19-safety-measures



Fit on the bike

A new mountain bike course is right along the Ötztal Cycle Way, near the centre of Umhausen. Balance bike, old-school hardtail bike or electric bike – the 2500 m²-large training area opens up possibilities for all ages and skill levels.

www.oetztal.com/bike



Archaeology in the tower

The finding of Ötzi the Iceman marks the start of high-alpine archaeology. New impetus was given to the research of the Ötztal Valley, which has been inhabited and hiked through for thousands of years. The many finds from the valley are now presented in public with the new exhibition in the Tower Museum.

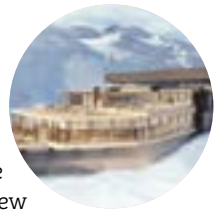
www.oetztalermuseen.at



Fine food at the Gaislachkogel

FALCON is the name of the latest highlight of the Bergbahnen Sölden at the Gaislachkogel middle-station. On the ground floor guests are welcomed in a new market restaurant offering classic dishes and modern food trends. The preparation of the meals can be watched live in the show kitchen. In the upper floor there is a serviced restaurant offering regional and sustainable dishes. The focus of the wine menu lies on fine wines from Austrian winegrowers.

www.das-falcon.at



Prize for the Ötztal museums

Every year, the Austrian Museum Prize is awarded to one of the 780 museums in the country. In 2021 the jury unanimously voted for the Ötztal museums. In their explanatory statement they praised the exemplary "connection between historic and contemporary collections, research and communication across many facets". The Ötztal museums presented themselves as a "place belonging to the people living in the Ötztal and everyone interested in the valley". In keeping with the honour, the Lehn Local Heritage Museum shines in fresh splendour, completely renewed after 40 years.

www.oetztalermuseen.at



Motorcycle Museum 2.0

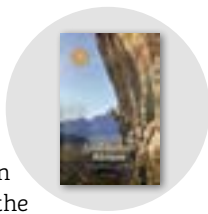
After the fire in 2021, the initiators Alban and Attila Scheiber had their TOP Mountain Motorcycle Museum rebuilt. The exhibition space with 4500 m² has more than doubled. 450 motorcycles from all eras can be admired. In the 4D cinema visitors can experience headwind, engine sound and cornering position when driving along a Tyrolean pass road. In addition to permanent and special exhibitions, insights into the work of motorcycle pioneers, into the history of racing and in Austria's vintage care scene are given.

www.crosspoint.tirol



Passion rock climbing

In his new book called "Leidenschaft Klettern", the Ötztal mountain guide and skiing instructor Ferdl Plörer tells, in ten chapters, of the key moments in his life in the mountains and in the steep rock faces. The illustrated book is available in the branches and the online shop of the Tyrolia publishing house based in Innsbruck, and also in some sports shops in the Ötztal.



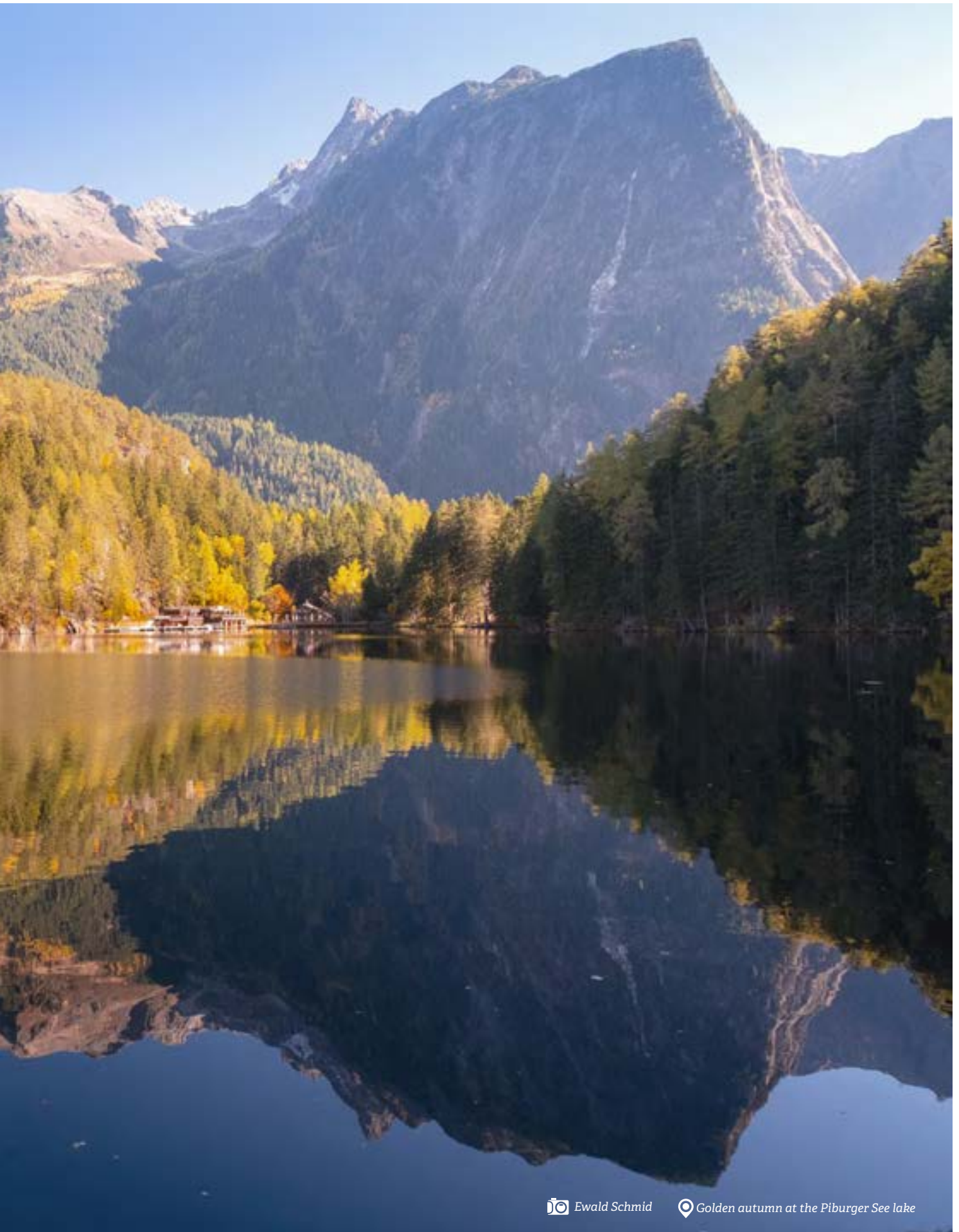
Ötztal websites

www.oetztal.com

www.soelden.com

www.gurgl.com













Feeling ON TOP OF THE WORLD



📍 The summit cross at the Gamskogel

Local mountains shape the panorama of villages and towns. Locals celebrate secular and religious festivals on them, utilize them for pasture farming and agriculture, sports and leisure.

Our author and photographer introduces his personal Ötztal local mountains. To him they are more than workplaces: they are places of encounter and remembrance, of dreaming and deep feelings of being at home.



📍 Gamskogel ascent



Gamskogel
2813 m

Over the Längenfeld valley basin lie clouds of mist. The Ötztaler Ache river flows quietly out of the valley. As so often before, I stop briefly to take in the wide meadows and the high mountains towering above them. Here, at this striking bend of the Ötztaler Ache river, one can see the 2813 m-high Gamskogel mountain for the first time. Majestically and mighty it towers above the valley. Even as children we roamed the steep slopes to pick cranberries and mushrooms (mostly chanterelles).

Magic mountain of the childhood

How many times have I been on this summit? Sometimes with my good friend and mountain companion Andi from Längenfeld, but often alone. Almost always with my camera, and always for myself too, for my soul and my heart. When I look deep down into the Ötztal from the Gamskogel summit, I can also see the small pension called "Elsa" opposite the church. This is where my life in the Ötztal started 50 years ago. We children romped about and played in the village and at the river, on the Brand mountain and near the Pestkapelle chapel. And even back then I knew that some of these seemingly unreachable high and wild summits would become my local mountains.

Definition of a local mountain

Most people associate these mountains with fond memories and, with them, often deep feelings. I also climb "my" local mountains again and again, which means that at some point I will know every path and every metre of the ascent.

Of course I am familiar with the panorama, I know the surrounding summits by name and often associate with them memories that have shaped my life. But it is not just my knowledge of the area that makes me feel almost at home on the local mountains. It is also the people who considerably contribute to this. Sometimes it's a good friend like Andi, then again it is the landlords like Victoria and Martin from the Brunnenkogelhaus hut, with whom a close relationship has developed over the years.

But there are days when I need and enjoy the solitude on my local mountains. The silence grounds and inspires me at the same time. My mind gets calmer and clearer, I can look at things more freely and objectively. I have made some of the most important decisions in my life on my local mountains.

Magic darkness

September 2021. The darkness of a moonless night lies over the Ötztal. As discussed, Martin Gstrein, landlord of the Brunnenkogelhütte, knocks on the window. Curiously, I leave the guest parlour, and wearing only socks on my feet I walk across the cold rocks to the terrace, where I see the silhouette of Martin standing behind his tripod. It takes a few minutes for my eyes to adjust to the darkness. Very cautiously I approach Martin's telescope, every shock could change the tiny image selection. Through the eyepiece I can see Saturn encircled by its magnificent rings. Reverently, I look into a different world, a world that shines in spite of the darkness.

The perfect ensemble

The next morning, I sit at "my" cairn before the first twilight. Large, massive and visible from afar, it stands on the top of the six-kilometre-long ridge that runs from the Brunnenkogel south-eastwards to the Timmelsjoch. The delicate light brings the even gneiss blocks to life. Wrapped up in my warm down jacket, I enjoy the clear morning. The Brunnenkogelhaus is in an exposed position only a few hundred metres to the north-west. Shortly before sunrise, Martin steps out onto the terrace and looks over to me.

For 15 years now, for several months each summer, he and his wife Victoria have been living as hosts at the Brunnenkogelhaus at 2738 m. They stay high above Sölden, where they run a small farm and an apartment house. Far away from the hustle and bustle in the valley, spoiled by the grandiose landscape and the unique light conditions, we have grown together over the years on our shared local mountain. Suddenly and powerfully I'm overwhelmed by this familiar feeling, this incomparable mixture of friendship, security, home, memories and passionately lived present, which can only be experienced on local mountains and huts.


From yesterday into today

A little bit later I sit on the terrace of the hut. My gaze wanders over the Vent valley. Far in the back I discover the Wilde Mannle summit (3023 m), impressively towered over by the Weißkugel and the Wildspitze summits. In the last few weeks I have stood on this relatively small three-thousand metre peak, which nevertheless offers excellent views, twice. In mid-August, I took my 13-year old nephew Finn up there. From the "Wilde Mannle" mountain station, a small path led us through the slopes to the first rocks. Well-marked, the path meandered through steep craggy slopes. It was only in the last few metres that the slope flattened. We reached the summit cross across a summit plateau littered with stone slabs. When I saw his shining eyes after the obligatory "Berg Heil" (salute to the mountains) I felt taken back to September 1977. Back then I myself, at the same age, was up there for the first time.

Welcome and good-bye

Nostalgic dreams accompany the descent from the Wilde Mannle. Suddenly I remember and realize that there are actually only four mountains in the Ötztal that I climb so often that I can refer to them as home mountains. There is the Wildgrat high above the Erlanger Hütte with the uniquely beautiful Wettersee lake nearby, the Gamskogel above Längenfeld, the peaceful Brunnenkogel above the lively village of Sölden and the small but beautiful Wilde Mannle above the mountaineers' village of Vent. My nephew and I take the swinging chairlift down into the village. Another idea related to the home mountains arises: it is not the mass of the tours that nourishes us, but their quality.



 The Brunnenkogelhaus (2,738 m)



 **BERNDRITSCHTEL**

For decades, the Ötztal has been the favourite tour and photo destination of the renowned author and photographer.



More mountain blogs of the author at
www.oetztal.com/magazine

”

*It is not the mass
of tours that nourishes us,
but their quality.*

“



Dawdle, don't haste

If you take your time, suddenly you will have more time. This paradox can be experienced on the circular hike into the Grastal valley near Niederthai. A self-experiment with a learning effect.



When it comes to hiking, I'm definitely a summit type. "The journey is the reward" - is not exactly my slogan. I need a goal. And most of the time this is a summit. This remains so today. It is still dark, when I rush up from Niederthai towards Brand, a vantage point above the pristine Grastal valley.

Slow down the pace

After all, I want to experience daybreak there. And for that I have to hurry. Leisure stress has replaced yesterday's stress at work. But when morning dawns, it becomes clear: I will have to do without sunrise at the Brand – a thick blanket of high fog covers the summits. Time and performance pressure are gone. I slow down the pace and immediately I feel liberated.

Most astonishing: With every slower step, I pay more attention to the small attractions along the wayside: the croaking nutcracker, the aromatic scent of the stone pines, the beard-like lichen on the branches of quaint larch trees. Below, there is a knee-high sea of alpine roses – more abundance of pink than ever seen in a little girl's room.

Learning to be patient

From Brand I continue to climb along the Grastal high-altitude trail to the Mahd plane. This small plateau with a summit hump got its name because it was mowed by scathe until the early 1950s. There too: no view. Now patience is called for. That's what we've unlearned in our everyday lives: The Internet connection is excruciatingly slow? We nervously drum with our fingertips onto our desks. A three-minute wait at the bus stop? Not possible without a glance at our smartphones. If I want to catch a view from this Mahd plateau, I will have to wait – however long it may take. And so I watch the clouds move along, see the flowers grow and stare into space. And see: It feels quite good! Suddenly I have more time than tasks. Most of the time it is the other way round.

Dawdle consciously

A while later, I'm rewarded for my patience. The sun blinks shyly through a cloud window. Magically, a fantastic panorama is shelled from the foggy white, only an arms-length removed from kitsch: The majestic 3000 m-peaks of the Geigenkamm ridge on the other side of the Ötztal. From the Mahdebene plateau I climb downhill into the Grastal valley. Meanwhile the sky has

turned blue. Usually I would have stormed another summit in such a situation. Not today, after my pleasant break in the fog on the plateau, I don't fancy performance pressure. I don't want to be hassled by the hunt for new goals anymore, but simply enjoy what is spread before me: a beautiful resting spot in a blooming valley, accompanied by the soundtrack of cow bells ringing and gurgling brooks. I want to slow down and not to haste, stay rather than walk. Like playing children: Peacefully and without time pressure they drift and live in the moment. At some stage we adults replace this by a bad conscience. Because we think that we have to be efficient at all times.

Winning time


But today I'm lazing around, ignoring all the other peaks around! At some point I will return to Niederthai through the Grastal valley – with two insights in my luggage. Firstly, there were no more hours in the day than usual. But I dealt with them more calmly. Slow motion and less ambition created unimagined freedom. And second, there is only one medicine to cure time shortage: simply take your time.




 **UWE GRINZINGER**

The mountain photographer and journalist collects conquered summits. Now that he is getting older he has learned to do without one or the other summit and to enjoy the day lavishly.



 Brand at sunrise

 The Brand is one of his favourite spots in Niederthai. More information at www.oetztal.com/favorite-places

Hiking tips for the Ötztal at www.oetztal.com/hiking

Info

The hiking programme of the Ötztal Nature Park includes guided circular hikes as well as others, such as the one from Niederthai into the Grastal valley.

www.naturpark-oetztal.at

 Uwe Grinzinger

Take to your heels

If you hike long distances, you will discover landscapes and cultural spaces step-by-step. You will not only get closer to your goal, but also to yourself.



Long-distance hiking trails in the Ötztal

12 The Ötztaler Urweg trail (182 km) circles the Ötztal in 12 stages. It leads from village to village and follows easy to intermediately difficult trails that are mostly in lower or moderately high altitudes.

E5 The European Long-Distance Hiking Trail E5 (3200 km) leads from the French Atlantic coast across the Alps to Venice. The high-alpine highlight leads from the Braunschweiger Hütte past Zwieselstein in the Ötztal across the Timmelsjoch into the Passeiertal valley in the Italian Tirol.

22 The Ötztal Trek (246 km) orbits the Ötztal in 22 stages. It leads from hut to hut on partly difficult paths for experienced climbers, mostly in high-alpine terrain.

A long-distance hiking brochure, stage plans for all long-distance trails (incl. GPS-tracks), packing lists for long-distance hikers, accommodations and videos can be found at www.oetztal.com/long-distance-hiking-tours



A high-pitched whistle suddenly pulls me out of my daydreams. Between gentian and arnica, a marmot is appalled about me. I'm on the Ötztal Trek, a fantastic, high-alpine long-distance hiking trail along which one can circle the Ötztal valley in 22 days. More specifically: I am on the long stage from the almost Caribbean-like turquoise Hauersee lake to the Rüsselsheimer Hütte. But in my thoughts I'm far far away.

In long-distance hiking mode

This is probably due to the long-distance hiking mode – a state of inner peace and quiet amazement that only sets in after a few days of being on the road. Then you live in the moment and don't care about yesterday or tomorrow. At some point one even has difficulties remembering what day of the week it is. One is completely absorbed in hiking, follows the regular rhythm of the feet. In this semi-meditative flow, when I'm on autopilot so to speak, I always have my best ideas. Without even thinking about things consciously. Obviously not only the feet are marching on long-distance hiking trails such as the Ötztal Trek, the spirit is also wandering unnoticed. Being in the long-distance hiking mode also means to move in one's own rhythm, unlike in our stressful everyday lives. You walk as fast as you want to. And not as fast as you have to. You take a break when you want to. Not when your schedule says you may. You eat when you are hungry. And not just because it happens to be a lunch break. In short: if you stay outdoors (!) for a long time, you win freedom.

The art of reduction

Hiking for days or weeks reduces life to the essentials: set off, hike, arrive. And all over again the next day. Our life is suddenly manageable again. We do fewer things, but we do them consciously. And finally one thing after the other: Walking. Eating. Sleeping. Then nothing. When you go long-distance hiking, you can finally feel real hunger, real thirst and real tiredness, which comes from physical exertion – and not from staring at computer screens. And you are grateful for the little things that you usually take for granted: a warming ray of sunshine, helpful marking, a simple meal, a comfortable bed – that's all it takes to be happy. After all, it means "quality of life", not "quantity of life", right?

Backing off

Long-distance hiking got its name possibly from the fact that one distances oneself from things. Not only spatially, but also spiritually. Deadlines, milestones and tax forms lose their importance step-by-step. They are only worth a calm shrug of the shoulders. If you spend several days on high-altitude trails above the valley, you will literally stand above things. Here too along the Ötztal Trek: Since the first overnight at the Erlanger Hütte at the cobalt-blue Wettersee lake, I've always been above 2000 m of altitude. This cuts the connections to everyday life.


Moving closer

If you hike through an area for several days, you will also get closer to nature. If

you spend your nights at mountain huts, you can experience sunsets from the first row and with plenty of space for your feet. And when one-day excursionists are still stuck in traffic jams, you're already on tour. If you start every day from huts at high altitude, you can conquer several 3000 m-peaks on your way without much extra efforts. This morning for example I climbed the Luibiskogel. I didn't get much performance points though, because the rocks were not only shaky, but also covered with white frost. An ibex watched me – I swear it was amused. We both knew who of us was the king of surefootedness.

Hiking and changing

Tomorrow I will walk the stage to the Braunschweiger Hütte. For how long will I follow the Ötztal Trek? I don't know yet. This much I can say: In the long-distance hiking mode, the spirit and the mood change enormously. It cannot be a coincidence that "hiking" (German: wandern) and "changing" (German: wandeln) are close in the dictionaries.

 Learn more about long-distance hiking in the Ötztal in the blog of the author at www.oetztal.com/magazine



”
Being in the
long-distance-hiking
mode also means to
move in one's own
rhythm, unlike
in our stressful
everyday lives.
“

The nutcracker

✍ Isolde v. Mersi

The stone pine forests of Obergurgl and Vent, but also the sparse stands of trees above the tree line, are home to a highly intelligent corvid.



📍 The stone pine jay

Eurasian nutcracker is the official name of this corvid. Regionally it is also referred to as nut jay or nut raven. In the Alps it is best known as the stone pine jay, because it lives all year round in the high-altitude stone pine forests. In Tirol it is also onomatopoeically called “Zirbengratsche” – because of its characteristic hoarse, croaking call that it uses in case of danger, and which is also understood by other high-mountain animals as a warning. In contrast to other songbirds, the male and female stone pine jay do not differ in their plumage. They live in a pair or small family groups and together build the nest for the offspring, high up in the pine tree tops, very close to the tree trunk. The parents take turns breeding, and then as a team they feed the three to four young birds. Stone pine jays are local animals, they keep their territory throughout their entire life, which last a maximum of 15 years in freedom. The young birds settle in the vicinity of their place of birth.

Superfood for the superbrain

In the summer, the stone pine jays also eat berries, fruits or insects. Their favourite food is of course the seeds from the stone pine cones, which we wrongly call stone pine nuts or kernels. As a precaution, the birds collect huge amounts of them for the barren winter in the high mountains. With their powerful beaks they chisel the scales away from the cone, pick out the nuts and store up to 100 seeds in their craw. Within a radius of 12 to 15 km, every bird sets up countless stores for the winter, 10000 to 14000 hiding spots are created in this way every year. The most fascinating thing: The clever birds find 80 to 90% of their food depots – even under a metre-thick blanket of snow, through which they dig a sloping tunnel.

The feathered forester

The stone pine jay was bad-mouthed and hunted as a robber well into the 20th century. It was said that his obsession with collecting was to blame for the disappearance of the stone pine forests in the Alps. The hunt was only stopped in 1961 when scientific studies showed: It is the bird that ensures the continued existence of the stone pine forests through regeneration and spreading - humans who overexploit the very slow-growing stone pine forests turned out to be the real pest.

Flora's flakes

They grow in wet meadows, in bogs and moors and near ponds or lakes in the high-alpine area. In the mountain summer, the cotton grass with its whiny white heads is to the delight of every hiker.

✍ Isolde v. Mersi



Seed head of cotton grass

Viewed from a distance, the white flakes look like flowers. But it is the fruit clusters that draw attention with their long white hair. The actual bloom of cotton grass in spring is unspectacular, hardly noticeable. Of the many types of cotton grass, the narrow-leaved cotton grass, the hare's-tail cotton grass and the white cotton grass, can be more or less frequently found in the Ötztal. For us laypeople, the differences are difficult to see. What we, as hikers in particular, should know: All types of cotton grass are warning plants and point us to places where we could sink into the mud far beyond the edge of our mountain boots, unless we avoid them.

Oh-so-sensitive plants in our ecosystem

The cotton grass helps to shape the alpine landscape. With its long, subterranean red-brown tillers, they promote the silting of waters. Thus cotton grass is also a symbol for the emergence and running dry of waters in the mountains. As a native in nutrient-low wetlands, cotton grass and its habitat are very sensitive to interferences in its ecosystem. As all members of the sedge family, they are sensitive to fertilization and de-watering, measures taken to enable a more intensive agricultural use. It is native to wet fields that are mown only once a year.

Healthy and useful

People who lived near bogs or swamps used the plant as a medicinal remedy in ancient times. Cotton grass contains bitter substances and tannic acid and is effective against diarrhoea and for gaining strength. Our ancestors were also resourceful when it came to using the woolly seed hair for household purposes. They used it to weave candle wicks, which were often used as stuffing material for pillows on the mountain pastures. Cotton grass balls are not suitable as a substitute for real wool. But it doesn't matter here - in the Ötztal and other Alpine valleys, the real wool of mountain sheep is not in short supply.



Insights

✍ Isolde v. Mersi 📍 Gurglertal



Deep views into the wilderness

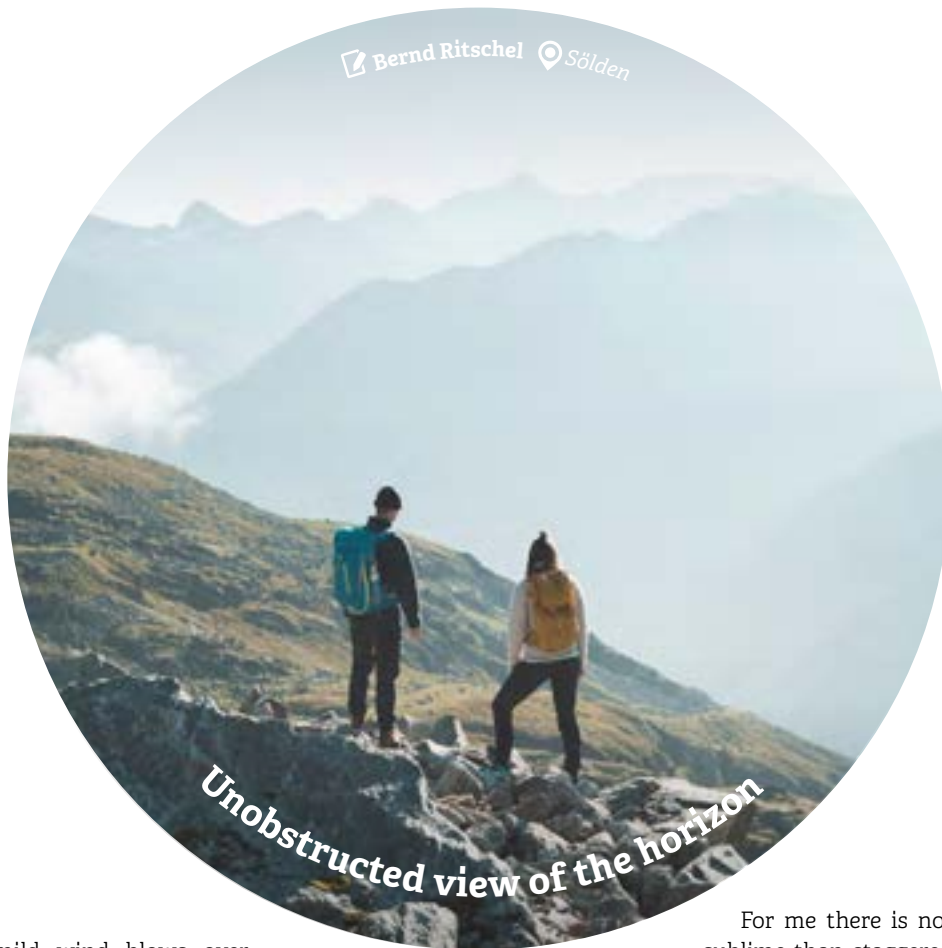
Each time I drive into the Ötztal, I involuntarily think: "What a total work of nature!" At the very top the white of the glaciers or the grey of the rock peaks, below the forest green in many shades, in the valley the carpets of meadows with colours changing with the season. Of these three areas, the forest area is my comfort zone. High-altitude hiking is not for me – I can't stand the blazing sun on my head for many hours. Down in the valley there is too much hustle and bustle for me. So off to the woods!

It is not just the pleasant coolness that appeals to me in this wonderful open space of nature. There are also the harmonious colours: In summer the innumerable nuances of green of the trees, bushes, ferns, mosses or other soil plants; in the autumn its flaming ascents of yellow and red. Wonderful are the scents that the forest exudes, sometimes tart, then sweet, musty or fresh. I even love the taste of the forest, the taste of wood sorrel and herbs, of berries or mushrooms. All taken together, they are more reviving and strengthening than any smoothie.

The forests are a magical theatre for my soul. On some rainy days, as if drawn by magic, delicate swaths float between the trees. "No doubt!", whispers my imagination. "They are the veils of the misty women." I am most enchanted by the play of light and shadow between the trees, particularly moving are the rays of sunshine which shine like heavenly headlights into the twilight in the dense forests. The glittering effects when stepping out of the forest in a sun-flooded clearing are also fascinating. Or the shores of the Piburger See lake or the Winkelbergsee lake, where sun and wind in a duet turn the lake surface into seductively glistening fairy mirrors.

The forest is the home of silence. It is never breathless. A branch creaks, there is a rustling in the bushes. The chuckling of a brook. The background noise of the wind in the treetops is always there. When I listen to it, everyday life and worries dissolve. And I feel completely free.

Views



A mild wind blows over the autumn grass. When I open my eyes, all I see is blue sky and a few fair-weather clouds. After my afternoon nap next to the Nederbach brook, I feel recharged. I shoulder my rucksack and stroll through the mountaineering village of Vent. On both sides of the Vent valley, steep slopes lead up to the rocky peaks and glaciers. I happily climb higher in the shade of the thick pine forest. Yes, I can see the beauty of this "primeval forest" up to the Mutsbichl, and yet, when I arrive at the top, I am delighted about the panoramic view of the surrounding peaks that opens up.

As Reinhard Mey sang so movingly: "...freedom must be limitless above the clouds." Of course, I rarely experience this freedom above the clouds, but very often high above the valleys and forests. Narrow becomes wide. A few metres of "space" in front of my feet turns into many kilometres of distant vision for my eyes. I have experienced clear autumn days on the Ötztal peaks with a view reaching as far as the Dolomites and the Bernina.

For me there is nothing more sublime than staggered mountain ranges in autumn. They only slowly disappear into the haze at a distance of over 100 km. In front of my eyes and in my imagination, pictures then emerge, abstract sections of an endlessly wide landscape. With my telephoto lens they are condensed to a picture to which nothing can be added and nothing taken away. They are compressed memories, I only experience them in this way in the open spaces in the high mountains. After a short rest, I leave the Mutsbichl and, lost in thought, walk over to the long-dilapidated Ramolam hut. I sit down on the grass on a meadow ridge, drink a few sips of water and look into the Nedertal valley towards the Martin-Busch-Hütte. The flat summit roof of the Similaun rises into the deep blue sky above the Marzellkamm ridge. Maybe I'll climb a little higher to see more peaks. One thing becomes clear to me up here: My life is a single gift of freedom, and the mountains give me the space for it.

A CLEAN AFFAIR

If you come to Gurgl, you can experience a fine vacation in in the mountains. And by the way, you also treat your body to a rejuvenation process and one or the other natural “pill of happiness”.

✍ Christian Schreiber



Gurgl is good for you. What sounds like an advertising slogan, however, has been scientifically proven. Gurgl is located at almost 2000 ft. With every step we hike up, our mood increases and on the other hand, the strain from environmental toxins decreases. “High-altitude air is clean and free of allergens and pollutants,” explains Professor Dr. Norbert Reider, doctor at the Medical University of Innsbruck.

Accordingly, the changed oxygen content literally challenges the body and brings the cardiovascular system in top form. Swiss scientists have shown that the risk of heart attacks in mountaineers who regularly hike beyond the 1000 Meter mark drops by 22 percent. The clean mountain air ensures that the lungs are better supplied with blood and that the body can absorb the oxygen better. The organism shifts up a gear, produces more red blood cells and the blood flow improves, whereby the cells are again supplied with fresh oxygen. The result is rapid cell renewal. This is a lot of medical information, but it can be easily summarized: The altitude challenges our body. It tries to adapt to the new conditions and becomes more powerful. Many athletes who come to Gurgl especially for altitude training use this effect. Motto: Train on the top to achieve top performance below.

”

Mood and serenity increase significantly, negative feelings such as lack of energy and fear decrease significantly.

“



Hiking is a stress killer

At the same time, hiking in the (high) mountains makes you happy. Everyone knows the feeling of liberation after having conquered a summit or a rock face. There's a slight tingling in the tummy. You sit down, take a deep breath and enjoy the view. This feeling of happiness has now also been scientifically confirmed.

In a research project, the Paracelsus Medical Private University Salzburg, the University of Innsbruck and the Austrian Alpine Association have found that a hike of just three hours has a positive effect on the psyche. Mood and serenity increase significantly, negative feelings, such as lack of energy and fear, decrease significantly. The scientists have also observed this in athletes on the treadmill, albeit to a much lesser extent. Hiking also works like a stress killer.

The researchers have shown that cortisol levels drop when we climb a mountain top. Another positive effect: Sports activities in the mountains do not seem so strenuous to people because the (beautiful) surroundings while hiking in the mountains distracts from the effort. And there is really an abundance of enchanting nature in Gurgl: high peaks, mighty glaciers, colourful mountain meadows, wonderful forests. Now it is clear to everyone: Gurgl is good for you.

THEY WANT POLLEN

Thanks to its (high-altitude) location, Gurgl is a special place for scientists. The University of Innsbruck has installed an Alpine Research Centre with – among others – foci on glaciers and sports medicine. A rather exotic discipline is also represented in Gurgl: pollen research.

Laurent Marquer, Sandra Kistl and Werner Kofler are pooling data in order to make predictions for allergy sufferers. To do this, they have to collect pollen that birch, alder and grasses swirl through the environment.

How does that happen? With a pollen trap that contains a small drum. There is an adhesive strip attached to it, to which even small particles from the air adhere to. Once a week someone from the trio sets off to Obergurgl and the other six locations in Tirol to change the drums. "In the laboratory we then see which pollen concentration was in the air," explains Sandra Kistl.

Of course, that's always a look back. But this knowledge, coupled with current weather forecasts, allows the trio of researchers to make weekly forecasts.

Of course, the pollen load depends on the season and the weather. To put it simply: Less pollen when it rains than when there is sunshine. Sandra Kistl: "At high altitudes the allergenic load is lower over the whole pollen season because the diversity of the pollen relevant for allergy sufferers is lower." Logical conclusion: Gurgl is also good for (pollen) allergy sufferers.



Free on all lines

Good for the climate and good for recreation: If you decide to spend a car-free holiday in the Ötztal, you can enjoy intelligent train, bus, lift and taxi connections.

Arriving relaxed

Thanks to its location along the Arlbergbahn train route, the Ötztal train station has been traditionally an international stop for express and long-distance trains. Getting there from the Austrian capital of Vienna takes less than five hours. If you get on a direct train in Berlin, you can enjoy the first views of the Ötztal mountains after an 8-hour ride on an ICE. And from Zurich an ideal connection brings you there in three hours. For longer distances, it is recommended to take the Austrian Railways' night trains. You can hop on your train in the evening in Hamburg or Düsseldorf

and start your holiday on the next day in Innsbruck – without time loss, without traffic jams and top fit for the adventures in the Ötztal.

Making good progress

Life without a car is only feasible in urban and densely populated areas? The Ötztal, the longest Tyrolean side valley (65 km), provides evidence to the contrary. On the main line between Ötztal-Bahnhof and Gurgl, the buses of the traditional Ötztaler and ÖBB Postbus AG run every half hour. This offer makes it easier to do without one's own vehicle. Both for guests who want a relaxing holiday, as well as for locals on

their way to work or daily errands. In the summer of 2021, the number of passengers between the district capital Imst and Obergurgl increased by almost 10 percent.

Flexible offers

The change from individual transport to modern solutions is advancing. The basis for this is the Mobility Strategy 2030. It provides for the development of measures that motivate people to board trains, buses or other means of transport. Modern luggage trailers for the buses from the train station into the valley provide for increased convenience. You can also travel luggage-free and

have your suitcases sent to your accommodation before the start of your holiday, and have it picked up when you depart.

Tailored bike routes

One of the most beautiful ways to explore the valley is the Ötztal Cycle Way. It connects the village on a route stretching over 50 kilometres. Even for many locals, exploring the valley on two wheels reveals completely new perspectives. Those who prefer to cover the entire route in stages, can take the buses as a companion. All are equipped with convenient self-service bicycle trailers. There are bike bus stops



that guarantee safe loading and unloading. You can also use a QR-code to check whether the next bus has sufficient space for your bicycle. The transport is free of charge.

Getting up high

Covering 1700 meters of altitude gain in just 12 minutes? Such a fabulous time is impossible even for top athletes. But with the modern mountain railways this is possible for everyone. For example, the Gaislachkogelbahn in Sölden transports hikers, bikers and mountain enthusiasts from the centre of the village to the mountain station at an altitude of 3040 m. Whether you want to visit the 007 ELEMENTS James Bond

World, enjoy culinary delights at the ice Q, Austria's highest-located toque-awarded restaurant, or want to embark on action-packed trail adventures at the BIKE REPUBLIC SÖLDEN: The adventure mountain of Sölden offers many facets.

A ride with the Acherkogelbahn in Oetz reveals a true paradise for families. With the gondola you can conquer 1200 m of altitude gain effortlessly. In the area of the mountain station, the WIDIVERSUM play park motivates the offspring to move and to discover the alpine nature. Those who want to enjoy panoramic views will get their money's worth on a gondola ride up the Hohe Mut mountain. This vantage mountain high above Gurgl attracts with cinemascope views of the glaciers and 3000 meter-peaks. The Kirchenkarbahn in Hochgurgl is a new addition to

”
The change from individual transport to modern solutions is advancing.
“

the category “floating and being amazed”. The viewing platform at the mountain station there makes views to the Dolomites possible. In the mountaineers' village of Vent, the chairlifts support you on your way towards the summits. If you

want to conquer the Wildspitze, with 3768 m the highest mountain in North Tirol, you can save 700 meter in altitude gain by enjoying technical support. It is easy to change from the bus to the lift, since there is almost always a bus stop near the valley stations.

Alternative ways to the pasture huts



There are convenient solutions even for spots that cannot be reached by bus liners or lifts: The hiking buses and hut taxis make the beauty of remote spots accessible to all. After all, not all people are mobile or fit to ride an electric bike. This also enables persons with health issues, or families, to enjoy pasture life. Among the most popular offers is the hiking bus into the Windachtal valley near Sölden. An attraction is the ride up and down the pastures in Längenfeld and Umhausen.

Ticket for free rides on all lines

The Ötztal Inside Summer Card is the ticket of choice. If you stay at one of approx. 350 partner businesses it is included. It includes the unlimited use of all public transport in the Ötztal (bus liners, hiking and hut taxis) as well as uphill and downhill lift rides with the summer lifts daily.

www.oetztal.com/summercard



MARKUS GEISLER

The native of Längenfeld works in a communication agency in Imst and is passionately dedicated to the many facets of the Ötztal.


Enjoying climate protection

Sustainability – what is that besides a fancy catchphrase? And what does it mean to manage a refuge at 2541 m above sea level in a sustainable and climate-friendly way? Answers using the example of the Erlanger hut in the northern Geigenkamm.



 The Wettersee lake



 Home-baked bread

Running a hut in the high mountains is a strenuous affair. Or in the pithy words of the long-time hut tenant Christian Rimml: “Zach isch’s scho!” (It is tough!) – albeit undoubtedly not as tough as it was in the 1930s, when the Erlangen section of the German Alpine Club built the refuge of the same name.

Christian Rimml, born in St. Leonhard im Pitztal in 1979, is a trained chef. In 2008 he voluntarily and gladly exchanged the demanding and strenuous work as a sous-chef and later head chef in 4-star hotels, for the challenge of 17-hour days at the Erlanger Hütte. It was a matter of course for Christian and his family to run the hut in a sustainable, resource-friendly and therefore climate-friendly manner, at a time when these buzzwords were not yet the pressing need of the time for all.

Complex logistics

The Wettersee lake next to the hut delivers electricity and drinking water – “I don’t want to operate a diesel generator,” says Christian. “And everything we buy, from potatoes to meat, is from our own farm in the Pitztal valley or bought from the local farmers here.” Provisions and fresh food are delivered by air.

This concession to modern technical possibilities is logistically necessary, the strict Tirolean laws for helicopter flights allow this much convenience. At the beginning of the season in June alone, the helicopter flies heavily loaded up to the northern Geigenkamm up to 15 times. Mountaineers who have taken the trouble of a five-hour ascent from Umhausen or Tumpfen finally arrive at the Erlanger Hütte with a more than righteous need for calories, in other words: powerful hunger and thirst.

Kitchen with quality seal

The tenant’s demanding cooking philosophy has earned the hut the membership in the “This is how the mountains taste” circle; about 120 Alpine Club huts are part of it. On the one hand, this seal of approval focuses on the high quality of regionally produced food. Above all, however, it is a matter of pointing out the fundamental value of Alpine agriculture, which tends to be endangered. Agriculture in the mountains is only possible on a very small scale, so it is not overly profitable. Without this type of management, the natural and cultural space that locals and guests appreciate equally would not be preserved. In addition: Small farm producers, usually family businesses, inevitably stand for quality instead of quantity and short distances to the consumer; this applies equally to chic star-awarded restaurants and rustic mountain huts in the high mountains. This is the only way to make climate protection enjoyable.

Certified environmental protection

Since 1996, the Erlanger Hütte, has had the Tirolean "Doing Business with Nature" environmental seal. It has to be renewed every few years. Measures taken include wastewater treatment and the correct functioning of the fully biological sewage treatment plant. Constant structural adjustments to the current wastewater standards are also part of it. The "Environmental Seal of the Alpine Clubs", which the Erlanger Hütte has also had for more than 20 years, focuses on waste avoidance. For the Rimml family this means that they don't offer butter and jam packed in portions. "We make the jams ourselves and fill them in glass", says Rimml. The bread at the hut is home-baked by Christian's wife Anita by the way.

”

***The Wettersee lake
next to the hut
delivers drinking water
and electricity.***

“

What is luxury?

Hiking and mountaineering are booming. The experienced hut host observes two opposing trends: "The guests are becoming more and more demanding and want more luxury on the mountain – a WiFi failure or not being able to shower daily is a minor disaster for many." On the other hand: "More and more young people are attracted by the mountains. And interestingly, it's the young ones who don't need luxury. One often thinks that they can no longer do without a mobile phone because they grew up with it. But in fact, those who say: 'Fu**...the mobile!' are really happy when they don't have to be online." Even after almost a quarter of a century, "being a hut host is still my dream job," says Christian Rimml emphatically.



📍 The Erlanger Hütte (2541 ft)



📍 Landlord Christian Rimml



✍️ IRENE HEISZ

The journalist, author and presenter from Innsbruck loves the good life in the valley and the exhilarating feeling of freedom high up in the mountains.

Alpine pastures magnetically attract tourists in the summer. In the 20th century, when postcards were still being written, they were among the most common motifs. To this day, alpine pastures represent an ideal in our imagination: the image of mountain and organic farming and a traditional way of producing things. The pictures with idyllic huts and happy herds don't tell of the crisis in agriculture in the 20th century, the strenuous work of running them and the forced changes.

Old pasture order

In 1986 there were 68 pasture huts in the Ötztal, today 52 of them are still serviced. 100 years ago, most pasture huts were milk pastures, where butter and cheese were produced. The people in the Ötztal lived in a strictly regulated society then.

Each person had their place, their tasks, which in turn were clearly defined in terms of time. Those who were allowed to spend the summer months on the pasture, escaped this strict social control for some time.

It was hardly possible to monitor the shepherds and herdsmen, and where alpine pastures were close together, the people there often had social evenings.

Of shepherds and dairymen

Shepherds, for example, had very long working days, but overall less work than the people in the valley. On the other hand, their living conditions were extremely meagre: Food, clothing and accommodation were primitive over the centuries.

A traveller wrote in 1830: "The dirt and uncleanness of the pasture people is repelling. They wear a single shirt all summer and are proud [...] to display the most disgusting dirt as proof of their vigorous activities in the Alps. They protect themselves against vermin with the smoke of the alpine hut." – The dirtier, the more hard working: This was the message at the end of the pasture season. On the dairy farms, where cows were milked and the milk processed, there was no doubt about the hard work of the people working there. Their work was clearly recognizably by butter sticks and cheese wheels.

Freedom & necessity

Cozy huts, fantastic landscapes, far away from the hustle and bustle in the valley. The alpine pastures are a place of longing for holidaymakers who are looking for a distance from everyday life. But the ideas of idyll and freedom only apply to a limited extent - in the past as well as today.

Their working days started at 4:00 a.m. – on some huts already at 3:00 or 2:00 a.m., when the cattle were spending the night in distant places. The days lasted until 9:00 p.m. until the evening milking was completed.

Parties at the huts

In the back of the Ötztal, the highlight of the pasture summer was the "Sennel-ar". On Assumption Day, on 15 August, families came together on the alpine pastures to celebrate.

The main dish of the festive meal was the Ötztal holidays dish called "Nui-Schmalz" (new lard) and greasy donuts were also a must. Apart from the "Sennel-ar", the fare for the pasture people was very monotonous and meagre – only sometimes the menu was improved by meat that ran in front of a rifle in the mountains. High above Sölden on the Kleble Alm hut, the festive ritual from the old days is celebrated on Assumption Day to this day.

Massive structural change

Today many huts that are difficult to reach are no longer serviced and numerous pastures are no longer used. The ways of servicing huts has changed considerably. The number of cattle has decreased and many alpine pastures are now only grazed by sheep. In return, gas-

tronomy has become a factor that reflects the change away from agriculture and towards tourism on many alpine pastures.

The Innerbergalm in Längenfeld is an example. For the past 15 years the Holzknecht family from Unterried has run the hut and the guesthouse, which was added in 1982. Franz-Josef Holzknecht's passion for the Innerbergalm runs in his blood, his grandfather Siegfried was an "alp master", in other words: chairman of the pasture community. Franz-Josef started herding work at the age of eight and has been involved in alpine farming ever since. Yet it is not easy to find personnel for the work on the pastures. Franz-Josef also started shepherding only because no one else wanted to. As for the future, his hopes are dwindling: Most shepherds can't take it for long. They get homesick and can't take a life without the Internet.





📍 Haymaking on steep slopes



📍 Kleble Alm today

”
***The dirtier, the more
hard-working:
This was the message
at the end of the
pasture season.***

“

📍 Kleble Alm yesterday



📄 **EDITH HESSENBERGER**

The ethnologist and geographer heads the Ötztal Museums. She also researches and publishes as a free cultural scientist on the history of pasture farming and alpinism.



📍 The Holzknecht family



📍 Pasture cheese

SEE YOU AT THE LAKE!

Mountain lakes are the jewels of the Alps. Quite mundane, they are resting places before the final stretch to reach the summit, hiking destinations and, yes, swimming pools too!

Wild swimming is the trendy name for the primal experience of swimming in alpine waters. Our author presents three Ötztal high mountain lakes for intrepid wild swimmers.

The approximately 90 Ötztal mountain lakes, like most of their kind, were created by glaciers that are retreating. There is something divine in the attraction of mountain lakes that extends beyond the surface of the water. Swimming in them is completely different from bathing in well-tempered pools or lakes. It borders on a spiritual, almost evolutionary experience, as we emerged from the water as single-celled organisms ages ago. By the way, there is another ecological sport with a meditative effect that people who are sensitive to the cold can also practice on the shores of a mountain lake: "Platteln". In doing so, stones that are as flat as possible are thrown with all strength into the lake at a flat angle, so that they jump over the water, drawing rings in the water.

➤ More information about mountain lakes for wild swimmers can be found in the author's blog at www.oetztal.com/magazine

All the element of water offers can be found at www.oetztal.com/waterfun-wellness



📍 The author in the Brizzisee



 The Schwarzsee lake

The Schwarzsee lake (2790 m)

Emperor Maximilian I. had a char species named "Schwarzreiter" placed in this lake in Sölden. The limnologist Robert Hehenwarter believes that these fish gave the lake its name. After all, they were already considered being culinary specialties in the Middle Ages. Hehenwarter: "Big head, not much at the back. The cheek that is coveted by fish lovers is bigger than that of the brook trout in the valley!" The Schwarzsee lake is almost always ice-free in summer and reaches temperatures between eight and ten degrees Celsius. The base is around three times as large as the surface of the water, overgrown with algae and plants. These - and with them the fish - survive and thrive at this altitude only because the Schwarzsee lake has a good view of the bottom even at great depths and because the solar radiation here is around 150% stronger than at the sea. The Schwarzsee lake is ideal for swimming. A few meters from the bank it becomes abruptly deep. A few strokes in the prickling-cold water are all that's needed to revive all the senses. Recently a jetty has been built and there are several benches to enjoy a break. The 3000 m-peaks of the Schwarzkogel, the Seekogel and the Rotkogel mountains form the mountain backdrop. The Rotkogelhütte is a perfect base for lake hikers and bikers.

The Nadersee lake (2436 m)

The meltwater on the south side of Sölden's local mountain, the 3160m-high Naderkogel, provides the Nadersee lake with water. It is located on the Gurgl lake plateau, together with the Soomsee lake, the Itlsee lake and the Gurglersee lake. If you climb from the Lenzen Alm (1915 m) the 500 m of altitude gain up to the lake, you can wonderfully relax on the velvety moss cushions along the banks – sometimes together with sheep and goats. The sky and the clouds are mirrored in the lake. With a little luck you will spot chamois and even ibexes in the steep rock faces of the Naderkogel. Looking down from the summit, the Nadersee lake has the shape of a slender heart and is embedded in a small hollow. You can always find a windless rest spot there. Swimming in the eight to ten degrees Celsius cold water is as refreshing as it is a sight for sore eyes. North-eastwards one swims towards the Wassertal glacier, which spreads out in front of the Seelenkögel and the Eisseekögele. At the opposite side of the valley one sees how the Timmelsjoch panorama road winds its way around the Kirchenkarkogel into the Timmeltal valley.

The Brizzi- or Samoarsee lake (2930 m)

The Samoarsee lake got its second name from the landscape painter Karl Brizzi. At its shore, one of Brizzi's most famous works, a panorama of the summit of the Kreuzspitze (3455 m), was painted. He got the order to paint it from the "glacier priest" and alpine pioneer Franz Senn in 1868. The lake lies picturesquely half-way between the Martin Busch Hütte (2501 m) and the summit, embedded in a backdrop of the Similaun, Fineil- und Mutmal summits. Yes, here too, close to the three-thousand-metre line, swimming in the ice-cold mountain water is revitalizing. A break at the shore of the lake is a wonderful experience. In the even water surface of the Brizzisee lake, the mountains seem to stand on their heads. If there is only a little wind, the mirrored panorama disappears in miniature waves. High-up bearded vultures majestically and silently soar the air like paper planes.

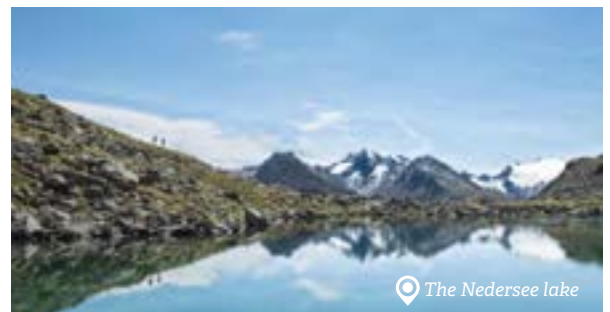


ERNST LORENZI

He grew up photographing, but has remained young at heart. As organiser and initiator of events such as the Ötztal Cycle Marathon, the Red Bull Siberia Extreme, Hannibal, and Red Bull Paperwings, he and his team have set milestones. Far-travelled, yet rooted in Sölden.

TIPS

You should always enter unfamiliar waters with particular caution, never with a plunge - there can be stones, objects and shoals hidden under the surface of the water. The water temperature of high mountain lakes rarely climbs above 10-15 degrees Celsius, so it is particularly important to slowly adjust the body temperature to the cold water. Mountain lakes have particularly pure water of the best quality. So that it stays that way: As a rule, only use sunscreen after swimming in the lake, if all you'll do is sunbathing. And don't make any noise - the wild animals and fish need the rest even more than you do!



 The Nadersee lake



The great amazement

Tirol's largest waterfall is a must-see. Its roaring water, the veil of fine spray mist, and the imposing rock levels are fascinating. They are the epitome of forces of nature but also of natural beauty.

 **Edith Hessenberger**

The natural monument of the Stuibenfall waterfall has been to the delight of hikers and onlookers, but also artists for around 200 years. In different ways they've tried to capture the waterfall's power and beauty in colours. The Oetz Tower Museums displays the most beautiful and interesting representations of the Stuibenfall waterfall in its exhibition. The perspectives and styles have changed over the decades, but at the core, these works unite the great amazement at the imposing natural spectacle.

The exhibition goes even further and takes up burning questions such as if nature e.g. in the shape of water, should be used for the generation of electricity without restrictions? Questions relating to the marketing of nature and its deformation in the context of tourism are also dealt with: What is allowed? Where are the limits of construction and making nature accessible?

Route to the waterfall

Today the Stuibenfall waterfall can be reached safely and easily via steel stairs. An accident led to the decision to choose this solid structural measure. But the result caused great criticism right from the start: The steel stairs put the waterfall in the shade, the implementation of the stairs was not aesthetic and destroyed the natural monument.

Today more people than ever make the pilgrimage to the Stuibenfall waterfall and marvel at it – from the steel staircase, but also from the via ferrata that passes next

to it, or from the platform above the waterfall. For most visitors, these offers are a great way to experience the Stuibenfall waterfall up close.

What would the painters have said, who captured the imposing natural monument in the middle of the lovely forest landscape with so much devotion on a canvas?

➤ *More information on the natural monument of the Stuibenfall waterfall*

www.umhausen.com/urkraft-en


➤ *More information on the exhibition*

www.oetztalermuseen.at

The Stuibenfall waterfall

A small cultural history of a natural monument

Over many years of work, Walter Falkner from Ötztal has meticulously collected artistic and cultural-historical information about the Stuibenfall waterfall and its significance for the people. He shares these treasures as part of the new special exhibition on the 4th and 5th floors of the Oetz Tower Museum. His exhibition catalogue of the same name was published as volume 4 of the "Ötztaler Museen Schriften".


 Via Ferrata at the Lehner waterfall

GET UP HIGH

19 climbing crags, approx. 750 routes and 8 via ferratas: Between Haiming and Gurgl there are many ways up.

 Eleonora Sternfeld

The Ötztal has a rock climbing competence which has grown over decades. This is mainly thanks to the Tirolean alpinist Reinhard Schiestl († 1995), who started to install climbing routes in the Ötztal in the 1980s. The difficult Reinhard Schiestl via ferrata in the Burgsteinwand face near Längenfeld was built in remembrance of the pioneer.

Vertical variety

A via ferrata is secured by steel ropes and iron pins all the way up. The path is marked and artificial holds and steps are installed. A crag is a climbing area on natural rock faces, where there are routes at different levels of difficulty. The walls feature bolts and other security devices to enable sports climbers to secure themselves. Climbing parks are great for getting a taste of the sport. The AREA 47 at the entrance of the valley offers a climbing facility at a 27 m-high pillar of the Achbrücke bridge featuring routes at all levels of difficulty. In Oetz, beginners can exercise at the 10 m-high Feelfree climbing tower and in Sautens there is a nature high-ropes course for families.


Between granite & lime


At the valley entrance near Haiming, there are some exciting limestone areas, such as the Geierwand face with via ferrata and crag which can be climbed on all year. A village further in Sautens, the gneiss of the Rammelstein, offers some easier routes. Further into the valley, solid rock dominates. A granite-like formation of mica, sla-

te and gneiss can be found up to the end of the valley. In addition to the Engelswand rock face in Tumpen and the Niederthai crag, Längenfeld is a further highlight: with the Auplatte crag as well as the ones in Nösslach and Oberried.

Climbing at the water

The boulder wall hanging over the lake in the AREA 47 is great fun – you can safely let yourself fall into the water. Climbing next to quiet waters is also attractive. At the western shore of the Piburger See lake an exercise via ferrata which is ideal for children and beginners, has been set up in 2020. Where the Stuibenfall waterfall and the Lehner waterfall ragingly make their way downhill, you can climb up to spectacular heights. The Stuibenfall waterfall via ferrata is suitable for fit, sure-footed adventurers from 9 years of age who have a good head for heights and are at least 1,40 meter tall. The via ferrata at the Lehner waterfall is one of Tirol's most beautiful via ferratas. In Sölden's crag in Moos and in particular in Obergurgl, there are fantastic climbing opportunities at the end of the valley. The Schwärzenkamm and Zirbenmoos via ferratas offer views of the glacier, the forest and gorges. What more could one ask for? Certified mountain guides for routes near waterfalls, means: Better safe than sorry!

 More information at
www.oetztal.com/climbing
www.climbers-paradise.com


 Niederthai crag

Playground or sunning lawn?

Not all families are the same. Some want action, adventures and adrenaline. Others prefer rest and relaxation. Everyone will find their terrain in the Ötztal valley.



✎ CHRISTIAN SCHREIBER

The freelance alpine journalist from the Allgäu has a family that loves action, climbs summits and likes to race on bikes. The latest findings in the Ötztal: relaxing activities can also be great fun.



The chilled-out family

"Are you Ötzi?", asks the girl and Elias smirks. No, he is a guide in the Ötzi Village and has nothing to do with the Iceman, who was found in the mountains here. But he is an expert in making fire using Stone Age methods, explaining how clothes can be made from Juncus, leather and sheepskin rugs and putting parents and children in a good mood. The Ötzi Village is an ideal starting point for a day out for a chilled-out family, who want to enjoy mountain air, but not climb summits. If he at least lived here in the village? This question too is negated by Elias.

It would be rather tedious to paddle across the pond in a dugout canoe and then hunt fish with an antiquated harpoon. The only change in his everyday struggle for survival would be the nearby Bird of Prey Park. When it comes to hunting, Elias could learn a lot from the golden eagles and snow owls that soar low over the heads of the spectators. Moreover, Elias and his family could undertake a relaxing excursion into the mountains of Hochoetz.

Up with the gondola and into the WIDIVERSUM Hochoetz, an outdoor playground for the young and old, since one can also watch parents drumming onto milk cans or balancing across slacklines. Ötzi would have loved such a chilled-out excursion.



Culture tip: www.oetzi-dorf.at

Bad weather alternative: www.aqua-dome.at

Family adventure: www.oetz.com/widiversum

02



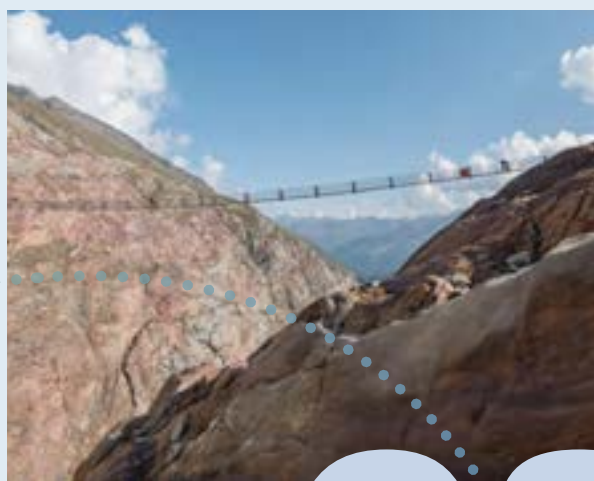
The action-loving family

Downhills. The spectacle is reminiscent of skiing: rent a bike, take a gondola uphill and race down the mountain on blue, red and black marked trails. Parents and children need perseverance, a dose of courage and a touch of instinct. This is what you learn in a riding technique course with the guides Katharina and Linda, who take families by the hand.

Or rather: by the handlebars, because the balance exercises include a game in which participants grab the neighbours' grip and stabilize each other. "Now you've got a taste of blood," says Linda. Eventually the first trail: Start, steep. Banks, cool. Watch out, step. Gravel, speed. Hump, bravo. Below: Mothers who are slightly nervous and children who are cheering. If you want to unwind afterwards, you have to ride uphill again. With the Gaislachkoglbahn lift, where the action hero himself introduces himself: "My name is Bond, James Bond." 007 ELEMENTS, the cinematic exhibition dedicated to the world's most famous agent is not just a bad weather alternative.

In sunshine too, it is worth following the moments filled with action that Daniel Craig experienced in the Ötztal when he was filming "Spectre". Perfect for action-loving families.

BIKE REPUBLIC SÖLDEN: www.bikerepublic.soelden.com
Bond-Experience (8+ years): www.007elements.soelden.com
Even more action: www.area47.at



The Summiteers

Lisa is the youngest. No longer so small that one could overlook her, but now she has actually disappeared. Fog has settled over the Picard bridge at the Gurgler Ferner glacier and swallowed the eight-year-old. It takes a few seconds, then Lisa shows up again. As a mountaineering family, you have to be prepared for everything, defy the weather and hiking blues. But everyone knows from experience that there is always a reward in the end. That can be the magnificent view from the summit, but also the Kaiserschmarrn (shredded pancakes with sugar and raisins) on the hut. We never thought that it would be fog. The children are thrilled. Into nowhere, out of nowhere. Anyone who starts in Gurgl, sleeps at the Ramolhaus and ends up doing one of the imposing 3000-metre peaks, definitely belongs to the category of summiteers' families. The summit is not a must though.

Mountaineering families will find fascinating destinations in the Ötztal that will certainly be challenging but also real adventures. Fancy a selection? The 300-year-old trees in the stone pine forest, the place where the world famous glacier mummy named Ötzi was discovered, or the spectacular Piccard bridge. A real family of summiteers won't need a bad-weather alternative. In sunshine there'd be no fog and Lisa would have to do without her chance to disappear into nowhere.

More information at
www.vent.at
www.gurgl.com

Elective affinities

Ever since pastor Franz Senn made the beauty of the Ötztal Alps accessible to everyone through paths and huts in the 19th century, ever since the first "strangers" came to spend the summers there, hospitality has been cultivated in the Ötztal. The proportion of regular guests is exceptionally high. Anyone who has been here with their parents as a child usually also returns as an adult.

The bond between locals and visitors is strengthened through regular guest get-togethers. Embedded in a colourful programme, long-time visitors are honoured in a festive ceremony. As an expression of strong solidarity, a 450 m-long iron chain has been running up the slope in Längenfeld on the rock along the old Burgsteiner Strasse since 2004. There are plaques engraved with the names of all regular guests fixed to it.

"The links are symbolic of the strong solidarity between us and our guests", says Ewald Schmid, the inventor of the chain and former director of the tourist board in Längenfeld.

Connections across generations

Until the start of the pandemic, regular guests were invited to Oetz every four years, and tourism professionals and hosts regularly visited the main place of origin of their guests.

Around 700 regular guests followed the invitation to Oetz in 2019", reports Christoph Rauch, destination manager of the first section of the Ötztal. "We offered hikes and guided tours, evenings at the Piburger See lake and in the large festival tent."

Hospitality. In the Ötztal, the flexible term is not just an empty phrase. Entries in guest books testify to this. Or the Facebook entry of the Ötztal museums: "Time for a little tourism nostalgia: memories of a vacation in Oberurgl 1974. We would like to thank the Karthaus family in Düsseldorf, who regularly share their Ötztal holiday memories of the last decades."



Caroline and Gerhard Pirpamer-Moser



Johannes Grüner



Waltraud & Anton Haid, sons Philipp (left) and Tobias (right)

Heart and soul are the “software”

In order to make it as comfortable as possible for the “strangers”, water was brought into the rooms for warm bathtubs in the former post office. “Today we understand hospitality as meeting guests on eye level”, says Philipp Haid, who runs the Posthotel Kassl ****Superior with its historic façade and completely renovated inside, together with his brother Tobias. The way to the people’s hearts leads through their stomach – Philipp’s sister Alex and the kitchen team remember their regional roots, and resort to regional recipes, where every part of the animals from head to toes is used. The Posthotel Kassl invites regular visitors to a special regulars’ week. Hospitality runs in the brothers’ blood, they must have inherited it from their parents Waltraud and Anton Haid. Still today, the senior managers work in the background.

The ****Hotel Bergwelt in Längenfeld is also a family-run business. The manager of the house, Johannes Grüner, also has a large share of regular guests. “Our software” are our heart and soul that we put in running our hotel. Employee or guest – everyone is part of the family”. Particularly in the evening there is no way around Johannes:

“We all sit in the bar area. We like to ask our guests to join us and ask them how their day was. This way an interaction is automatically created.” The regular guests today are different from the ones of his parents’ generation: “They are more independent and want to spend their days this way, without guided hikes or a big programme.”

Home-away-from-home

The Pirpamer-Moser three-generations-family that runs the ****Natur- und Alpinhotel Post in Vent, also likes to be close to their guests. “The well-being of our guests is directly related to the environment, the mountains, the nature”, says Caroline Moser, who runs the hotel together with her husband Gerhard. “We often hear that guests feel like they have a home-away-from-home here”.

The previous generation, Caroline’s parents Adolf and Luis Pirpamer, significantly contributed to this. Many regulars climbed their first 3000 m-peak with the hotel’s legendary gendary mountain guide. Tours are still offered today – in the winter with snowshoes. “The Alpinclub Similaun, which belongs to the hotel, also offers the opportunity to explore nature together with others.” The secret of the many repeaters: “Our own honest passion makes it easy for us to our guests to the paradise we live in.”



✎ DAGMAR GEHM

The Hamburg journalist and sporty globetrotter is a long-standing fan of the Ötztal and a regular guest herself.

Ready, steady, go!



Outdoor living is getting increasingly popular. Campers want to be in nature, yet still have their own four walls. In the Ötztal the big freedom can be enjoyed on pitches including warmth and connection to the family.



Martha Kneisl is six years old when she entertains guests for the first time. Still a tiny tot, she flits across her father's meadow and runs errands for holiday-makers. Long before the term camping became socially acceptable, guests had set up their tents where today "Camping Sölden" accommodates holidaymakers. That was never planned.

In the heart of Sölden

In the years when the border pass between Italy and Austria was opened and the Timmelsjoch High Alpine Road was built, soldiers came to Sölden. "That was in 1962," recalls Martha's son Lukas Kneisl, who now runs the campsite. "My grandfather Alois left his meadow to soldiers who were stationed as border guards at the Timmelsjoch." A little

later a Dutch guest came to Sölden, saw the tents - and asked whether he could stay at the campsite. "That gave my family the idea of building a campsite." What was improvised and began with a spartan sanitary building, is now a spacious area with a large wellness area, which is particularly popular in winter. The special thing about it is the location: in the heart of Sölden and yet close to nature on the banks of the Ötztaler Ache, the roar of which can always be heard by the camping guests. The water and the surrounding peaks can be seen from every pitch: The campsite is laid out like a terrace. And hikers, cyclists or skiers only need a few steps from the pitch into the action: into nature, up to the mountains.

Up close and personal

In Umhausen, a piece of paper is the key to the perfect location. Before guests park their mobile homes in the "Ötztal-Arena Umhausen", they are given a map. "Every guest should get an idea and choose their own pitch," say Rainer and Birgit Krismer, who opened their campsite in 1987. Even if it is very busy, they stick to this ritual. Then the whole family helps to keep the business with 100 pitches going. "We stick together as a family - and our guests should feel that too," says Birgit Krismer. "Whoever comes to us becomes part of the family!" In the morning you can buy fresh rolls and coffee from the machine, in the evening Rainer Krismer cooks in his own restaurant. This is why holidaymakers keep returning – because of the personal atmosphere with the Krismer family, but also because of the location. Umhausen, situated in the middle of the Ötztal, is a fantastic starting point to explore



the valley. It is only a few minutes to the natural bathing lake in Umhausen, the Ötzi Village and the Birds of Prey Park and only half an hour to the Stuibenfall waterfall. A special feature is two wooden huts which guests without a tent or van can rent. To do this, Rainer and Birgit Krismer converted garden sheds: They insulated the wooden walls and lovingly furnished everything.



 **JASMIN KREULITSCH**

The freelance travel journalist Jasmin Kreulitsch lost her heart to the Ötztal years ago – every summer ever since, she has been looking for exciting stories in the valley.

Camping Ötztal Längenfeld

In a small forest at the edge of Längenfeld, the story of the "Camping Ötztal Längenfeld" starts with a snack station and campers. In 1957 the Auer family opened a guesthouse for excursionists. During the summer guests kept asking whether they could camp in the forest. These campers inspired the emergence of the campsite in 1959. At first it was only operated in the summer and featured only a small sanitary house. But the area has grown over the decades. "Today we have 190 pitches," says Sandro Auer proudly and points to the place, which is idyllically located between the edge of the forest, fields and meadows. The highlight is four Alpine lodges that stand on an area enclosed by hedges. Anyone who wants to experience the flair of a campsite but does not want to forego the quality of a hotel, can book here. "We only worked with local stone pine and fir wood and natural insulation materials," explains Sandro Auer. Just as much attention to detail has gone into the "Bergquell" sanitary building. Built in a modern alpine style, it offers eleven luxury wash cubicles with rain showers and washbasins, a lounge with a library and a flat



screen, a baby room and a washing-up room. Spa experiences can be enjoyed just a few minutes away: The Tirol Therme AQUA DOME is in the immediate vicinity. The snack station from yesteryear still exists, but has since been rebuilt. Today the "Infang" restaurant is not only popular with camping guests. "There are also many local Ötztal people who come to eat here."



More information at
www.oetztal.com/camping



More impressions from camping in the Ötztal at
www.oetztal.com/magazine




Enthusiasm on two wheels

It is the most beautiful way of getting around! That's what all of us cyclists agree on. We are many and becoming more and more – and we are also very different. Below you will find the best areas in the valley – for every type, just in case. And with plenty of extra tips to go with it.

All offers: www.oetztal.com/bike



 **SISSI PÄRSCH**

The journalist grew up in the Allgäu mountains and meanwhile lives in Munich. Often she can be found in the Alps. The Ötztal has become her second home, among other things because of its excellent opportunities for cycling.

RACING CYCLISTS

TERRAIN

Asphalt-covered roads.

TYPE

Only the tires of a racing cyclist are low profile. Otherwise style matters. Stylish dress, smooth calves, and a lightweight bicycle. Nothing should weigh down heavily to be able to gain the altitude metres easier.

TERRITORY

With the Ötztal Cycle Marathon, one of the classic events in road cycling has been hosted in the valley. And it has been for over 40 years now. The cycling classic attracts race cyclists, but the route itself is also a dream destination all through the season. By the way: Don't be surprised if you are overtaken swiftly

– the pros of the BORA-hansgrohe team also take part. The UCI team is an Ötztal partner and trains here regularly.

TIP

In addition to the Timmesljoch and the glacier road (where there is the highest spot in the Alps - that can be reached by bike on the Rettenbachferner), you should also add the beautiful Haimingerberg circuit at the entrance of the valley to your bucket list. From Oetz a constantly inclining road leads up to Ochsegarten and past the Sattelle where you can then race down to Haiming.



TOURING CYCLISTS

TERRAIN

As varied as possible!

TYPE

Luggage bags flank the rear wheel, the mood is relaxed. As a touring rider one is curious and wants to explore as much as possible – sometimes also off the cycle ways. Endurance, the spirit to enjoy and discover things is essential.

TERRITORY

If you cycle through the Ötztal, the longest side valley of the Inntal valley, along the 52 km-long cycle way, you can experience five climatic zones, numerous cultural and culinary highlights and one nature experience after the other.

TIP

Cyclists are hungry and this is good! In Oetz there is the Reaß'nhof farm near the cycle way – and in the farm shop you can acquire farmers' bread, smoked sausages, jams and a lot more. In Umhausen you can enjoy home-made ice cream in the Ötztalerei. Fresh fish is available in Längenfeld from the Gottsgut pond. Electric bikers can not only recharge their own batteries, but also the bike batteries: 3 charging stations are located along the route.



TOURING MOUNTAIN BIKERS

TERRAIN

Secluded forestry trails on beautiful pastures.

TYPE

Some may shake their heads, but touring mountain bikers enjoy the combination of sweat and pleasure. When you have fought your way up the altitude difference on the crisp trail, the snack afterwards tastes all the better.

TERRITORY

Definitely the many huts and pasture tours. More views and variants are almost impossible to find: Between an altitude of 200 m and 1200 m different challenges

await you. Your reward is dreamlike destinations and cheese dumplings or Kaiserschmarrn (shredded pancakes with raisins and sugar).

TIP

On the Three-Pastures-Tour including the Wurzburgalm, the Stabale Alm and Innerberg Alm hut you are spoiled for choice. Trail fans find three loops at different levels of difficulty at the Ötztaler Höhe Trail Centre.



ELECTRIC-MOUNTAIN BIKERS

TERRAIN

Steep, long tours – no problem!

TYPE

Every man and every woman! Electric mountain bikes are great fun for everyone with a good riding technique to handle the motor-powered vehicle in the terrain.

TERRITORY

Off-road terrain is perfect for mountain bikers on electric bikes. Many steep climbs can be easily conquered supported by a motor. You get to the huts, into the side-valley or high up to the summits in a leisurely way.

TIP

The Bike & Hike-Tours are rewarding e-mountain bike destinations – for example the beautiful tour to the Brunnenbergalm above Sölden, from which you continue on foot to the prominently located Brunnenkogelhaus hut.



TRAIL-MOUNTAIN BIKERS

TERRAIN

Narrow paths.

TYPE

Uphill by transport, downhill as fast as it gets. Mountain bikers attracted by trails have bikes with wide tires and good suspension. Some circle across stones and roots. Others almost surf down the flowy trail with waves. No matter which style or skill level or age – once you are down you need one thing in particular: a shower for the bike (there are sufficient stations), tolerant hosts (no problem in the Ötztal) and good food (no lack there either).

TERRITORY

Clearly: The BIKE REPUBLIC SÖLDEN is now one of the most popular bike areas in the world. No wonder, with the 11 well-groomed lines and 18 nature trails at all levels of difficulty and the 3000 m -peaks in the backdrop.

TIP

If you have good stamina, you can tackle one of the three Long Lines. The extra-long routes connect different lines. On the Giggijoch Long Line, which starts at 2,666 m of altitude and has a length of 16 km down to the valley, you can enjoy plenty of flow feeling.



YOUNG BIKERS

TERRAIN

Any, as long as it is fun!

TYPE

There's a great diversity! From the two-year old balance bike rider to the 12-year old junior shredder. The important thing is that it doesn't get boring! Above all, this means that there are no long, agonizing climbs to conquer. Instead there are varied, hilly roads with some jumps and bends and the right dose of action.

TERRITORY

The skill area in Umhausen is the perfect place for learning to bike. There is a balance bike and children's trail with obstacles such as wa-

ves, seesaws, balance elements and exciting terrain. But of course the BIKE REPUBLIC SÖLDEN is also a huge playground for kids with its diverse range.

TIP

In the Ötztal bike schools children's courses are the absolute hit. The youngsters learn how to get away from one's parents real fast – and the bike handling taught there gives the kids a great deal of safety in everyday life at home.





MIRACULOUS

elderberries

Old proverbs and legends tell of the importance of the elderberry. In traditional folk medicine its flowers and berries have a fixed place in the medicine cabinet. The shrub also provides trendy food hunters with easy prey for home-made delicacies.

It grows at the edge of the forest and on hiking trails, at farms and near country houses: Wherever the soil is rich in nitrogen, the robust elderberry bush thrives. It grows up to between three and seven metres high and gets around a hundred years old. Alpine landscapes are hardly imaginable without elderberry bushes.

Neither are rural cultural landscapes. One has to take off one's hat to the elder, a farmers' rule demands. It shows great respect for this fertile plant, which has been considered the tree of life and death for centuries. According to old legends, the new-borns are shaken out of elder trees. In some places dead elder branches are stuck onto graves. If they thrive it is seen as a sign that the deceased has been well received in the hereafter. The name probably comes from the Old High German "holuntar". "hol" stands for hollow, "tar" for tree. This is a reference to its hollow, pith-filled branches. Legends and stories also associate elderberries with Mother Hulda.

One thing is certain: The elder is extremely fertile because it is harvested twice. In early summer it gives us its fragrant, delicate flowers. Almost every farmer's wife uses them to

prepare her elderly syrup or champagne and bake delicious "Hollerkiachl" doughnuts from it. Dried and mixed with meadowsweet and linden blossoms, the elder blossoms make a tea that is particularly effective against colds, fevers and headaches. As an inhalation, it is also helpful for frontal and sinus infections. Natural cosmeticians make elderflower oil for the care of sensitive, dry and irritated skin. After too much sun, it soothes the skin and moisturizes it.

Elderberry chutney, apple-elderberry punch, apple-elderberry confectionery: These are just a few of the delicacies that can be conjured up from elderberries in autumn. But be careful, the unripe berries and seeds of the ripe berries, as well as the leaves contain sambunigrin, a substance that can lead to stomach ache and diarrhoea. The berries must always be boiled or dried so that it disintegrates and becomes harmless.

We have picked the elderberry juice recipe from our rural recipe collection. It strengthens the immune system and has anti-inflammatory effects because of its high content of flavonoid.




 RECIPE

Elderberry juice

INGREDIENTS

1 kg elderberries
 1 l water
 500 g sugar
 1 tbsp. of cloves (whole)
 3 cinnamon sticks
 3–4 pieces of star anis
 1 organic orange

PREPARATION

Wash the elderberries and remove the stalk. Put the water with the spices and the sliced orange in a saucepan and let simmer for about 30 minutes. Mash the berries with a potato masher, add to the hot brew and let simmer

for 15 minutes. Let it stand for a couple of hours, then strain through a cloth and squeeze out firmly. Bring the juice to the boil. Fill sterilized bottles while hot and close immediately.

If you want to prepare for the cold season, it is best to drink a small glass of elderberry juice every day. Still caught a feverish cold? Heated juice, drunk as hot as possible, alleviates the suffering.

Juice made according to our recipe has a shelf life of six to eight months. By adding more sugar, the shelf life can be extended a little. Our addition of oranges gives the classic elderberry juice a creative touch – and an extra helping of vitamin C.



 ISOLDE V. MERSEI

The South Tirolean author of cookery books, magazine maker and journalist collects rural knowledge about nature, culture and the regional cuisine in the Ötztal and in the Alps.

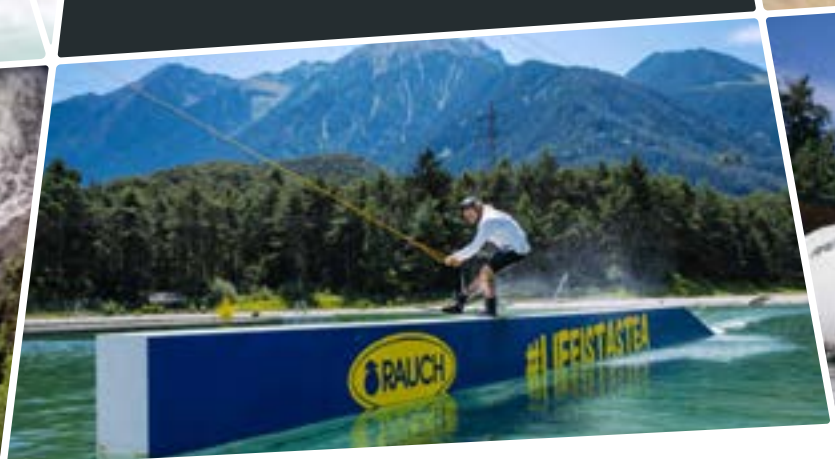


AREA47

THE ULTIMATE OUTDOOR
PLAYGROUND **ÖTZ
TAL** **SÖLDEN** TIROL



LET'S RAISE YOUR
HEARTBEAT,
BABY!



area47.at | #area47



Ötzi unites us all

✍ Isolde v. Mersi



The novel "Iceman Awakens" is the literary debut of the English teacher Sharon Krasny. For her research for the novel she also used the Ötztal Magazine. We spoke to the author about Ötzi and her work.

You live in North Virginia, far away from Austria, Tirol and the Ötztal Alps – when did you encounter the Iceman the first time?

I was fascinated when he was found because of all the questions that surrounded him. I read a lot about Ötzi and toyed with the idea of writing a story about him. But it wasn't until seven years later that I started this project seriously. I googled his tattoos to get inspiration. One hit showed Brad Pitt, who has the mummy with the quote "Absurdities de l' existence" tattooed to his forearm. That sentence of Ötzi's life being in vain and meaningless struck a deep chord in me. I believe he had a valuable life. He had family and dreams. He had someone he loved. He wanted to see life. He mattered. Wherever there is a story, a voice is asking to be heard and so Iceman Awakens was born.

What made him so interesting to choose him as the main character of your novel?

I deeply appreciate how this one person has challenged science and technology. He has pushed development so we can understand his secrets more. He has shown us not to underestimate those we believe ignorant and I find that very intriguing. One left for dead and insignificant has outlasted his murderers and become world famous. Ötzi's voice of the ancients links us together in how we are much more alike than different. He shows what it means to be human.

How did you manage the research concerning the scientific facts, the historical story and the geographic background of Ötzi's life?

I found videos of people's hiking trips and watched the terrain. I looked at maps and googled cities that are near the area. I studied the area's vegetation, the native

plants, birds and mammals by listening to numerous bird calls and ibex patterns for example. Two bowmen read my manuscript and helped me with Ötzi's archery. I did a lot of reading of scholarly articles and watched documentaries. As an expert, Professor Walter Leitner was my greatest resource, and my toughest critic too.

Do you intend to visit the Ötztal?

I had planned to go there for his 30th anniversary, but unfortunately Covid interrupted travel plans. But I plan to walk in his tracks as soon as possible.

You are currently writing a second novel about Ötzi's life. What feeds your imagination this time?

I started the story when Ötzi was 13 years old. The scientific literature known to me sees him as a holy man. To become that important a figure in a tribe in the Early Stone Age would have required a calling and a rite of passage. He needed a coming of age to understand the foundation of relationships and his humanity. That decision makes Book 2 harder because there are still roughly 33 years that I need to account for, and no one knows how those years were spent. One knows the weapon, one knows the place of the crime scene. His death looks more like a crime of passion than an accidental murder. In my writer's heart I know who did it. Now I just have to get there.



📍 Author Sharon Krasny

THIS IS MY VALLEY

Special people from the Ötztal answer our questionnaire to tell you about their home and their roots.

NENDA

The actress and rapper Nenda Neururer grew up in the Ötztal. She is 28 years old and studied acting in London after obtaining her school leaving certificate in Tirol. From spring 2022 she will play one of the leading roles in the series "The Rising" on Sky. In 2021 she caused a sensation in Austria with her first song "Mixed Feelings". In both the English and Tirolean languages, she wants to encourage children and young people with or without a visible migration background and show that they are not alone in being different.

I grew up here:

In Sautens.

I went to school here:

Because there is no upper secondary school in the Ötztal, I attended the arts branch of the upper secondary school in Telfs in the Inntal valley. There my music teachers recognized my creative talent and encouraged it.

What I did to become an artist:

After receiving my school-leaving certificate, I briefly studied chemistry and Russian at the University of Innsbruck, but soon I moved to England, where I attended a 3-year long training course at an acting school. Today I live in London. My work as an actress is going well. In the lockdown during the Corona crisis, I found my way back to music. And I want to continue with it, because it is lovely to create something yourself.

This is my biggest source of inspiration in the Ötztal:

My mother's kitchen. There, and with her I feel completely at home. She likes to cook and cooks well, also for my many friends. It's always great fun to enjoy a meal together with many others.

This is what annoys me again and again:

When I'm asked whether I speak German.

This is what a typical day in the Ötztal looks like for me:

Breakfast, chilling in the garden, taking pictures of the Acherkogel mountain, visiting my aunt, doing crosswords with my granddad.



There I feel really at home:

I have many nice memories, both of the Ötztal and of Innsbruck.

My favourite place:

At home on the balcony with views of the Acherkogel mountain, if the sun shines.

Here I meet my friends:

Where most of them live, in Innsbruck. Or, as mentioned above, in the kitchen of my mum.

Here I find my valley most exciting:

I like rock climbing at the Engelswand face in Tumpen. It is also a nice place for having a picnic with friends.

This is what the Ötztal smells like:

Crisp mountain air.

This is what the Ötztal nature and landscape mean to me:

I love it, I love roaming the forest on my own.

This is the main reason why I keep coming back to the Ötztal:

My mum (and her kitchen).

My favourite Ötztal/Tirolean dish:

As I'm going vegan, I don't have much choice. I love spinach spaetzle.

My favourite sentence/expression in Ötztal dialect:

Cöca Cöla.

Win

4

OVERNIGHTS

with half-board for
a family of
2 adults and 2 children
+

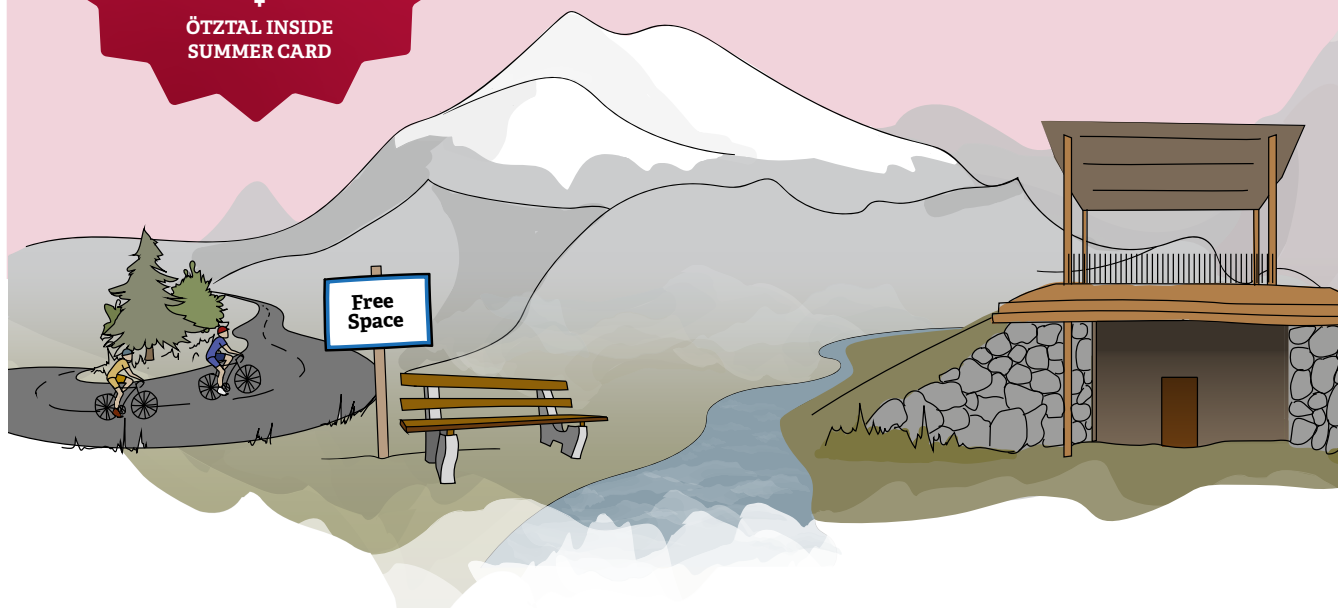
ÖTZTAL INSIDE
SUMMER CARD

The answer word consists of six letters and names a species of freedom-loving alpine animals.

Online participation in the prize quiz is possible at www.oetztal.com/oetztal-quiz until 31 October 2022. At this address you can find the conditions of participation as well as the solution from 6 November 2022 onwards. The prize will be raffled among the

participants who have sent in the right solution. The winner will be informed online. The data privacy regulations of Ötztal Tourismus can be found at www.oetztal.com/data-privacy

 Irene Prugger



1. Free Space – Nature

The Ötztal Nature Park covers a network of different nature conservation areas in the Ötztal. It stretches from the bottom of the valley up into the high alpine area which has been formed by glaciers. What is the name of its highest point?

- A** Timmelsjoch
- G** Wildspitze
- H** Similaun

2. Free Space – Quiet Zone

1600 km of hiking trails, routes and paths criss-cross the Ötztal valley. They lead to approximately 100 pastures and mountain huts. Taking a break is an essential part of hiking. How many resting benches await leisure hikers and the idle in the Ötztal?

- Ö** approx. 1000
- Ü** approx. 1300
- Ä** approx. 1600

3. Free Space – Sports

The Ötztal Cycle Marathon is the most demanding cycling marathon in the Alps. With 238 km and 5500 m of altitude difference it leads across high passes: Oops, forgot one. What is the name of the fourth pass?

- L** Stilsfer Joch
- M** Jaufenpass
- N** Reschenpass

4. Free Space – Forest

In an old landslide area at the entrance of the Ötztal, one can still see the remains of lime kilns that were built in the 16th century. What is the name of this forest area?

- S** Sautner Forchet
- T** Haiminger Waldele
- U** Obergurgler Stone Pine Forest

5. Free Space – Art

The Ötztal idea workshop and international group of artists whose first actions took place in 1995, is named after a hamlet in Längenfeld. What is their name?

- O** Freistaat Denkstein
- E** Freistaat Burgstein
- A** Freistaat Kultstein

6. Free Space – Water

The Ötztaler Ache river flows 42 kilometres through the Ötztal to the Inn river in a spirited way. It emerges near Zwieselstein at the confluence of the Gurgler Ache river and the Venter Ache river. What does the world "Zwiesel" or "zwieseln" mean?

- S** running fast
- R** lively sputtering
- N** forking, splitting

Tastes Like Home

Apprentices gain valuable insights into the “Culinary Ambassador* of the Ötztal” project. The focus of the additional training lies on regionality and enjoyment.

✍ Markus Geisler



Das Central – Raphael Kuen

Which meat specialties does the Ötztal have to offer and what can be conjured up with them? What challenges does a fish farmer see himself confronted with, or what does a wine made from Haiminger grapes taste like? Since autumn 2019, the additional training for becoming a “culinary ambassador* in the Ötztal” has introduced interested young professionals into the world of local producers. Three one-week modules provide them with exciting insights and understanding of the challenges facing regional farmers. There is much more to the schedule than just knowing about the products. The practice-oriented units also deal with the correct processing and preparation, knowledge of the natural and cultural areas and current trends such as food hunting.

Added value for everyone

The young Sölden chef Christian Gritsch from the Alpengasthof Grüner was among the first graduates. The investment has paid off for him. “There was a lot that I wasn’t aware of before. I benefited most from the direct exchange with farmers and producers. Now I can understand their concerns better and consider them in my work in the kitchen”, he reports. Not only the “Culinary Ambassadors in the Ötztal” benefit from what’s been learned. Everyone involved does. From producers to restaurants to customers who value regional and sustainably prepared dishes. Christian Gritsch shows how it works in his training restaurant. Together with his chef de cuisine he was allowed to create a “Hoamat” menu (home menu), which has been very popular with guests and locals. He interprets his title as “Culinary Ambassador* in the Ötztal” as a mission: “I want and will try to bring the beauty and variety of our valley onto the plates. If more chefs see it that way, the Ötztal will experience a culinary boom.”



Alpengasthof Grüner –
Christian Geitsch

Phillip Stohner –
President of the Tirolean Chef Association
in the show kitchen



■ Typical Ötztal



Gurgler Hofkäserei cheese dairy, www.goaskas.at

What the producers and craftsman make with attention to details, can be brought back home – in the form of the most beautiful souvenirs from art, culture and cuisine.

📌 Jasmin Kreulitsch

For thousands of years, sheep have been driven onto the summer pastures in the Ötztal. The sheep wool centre in Umhausen has been processing the wool from the mountain sheep since 1938. Joachim Regensburger runs the family business that was originally dedicated to the cultivation and processing of flax. At the end of the 1950s, 50 tons of flax were still being grown in the Ötztal, but with the development of synthetic fibres, flax cultivation collapsed. Today everything revolves around wool and what is made from it.

Flax and wool

Not far away in the Doblander hand-weaving mill, Cilli Doblander and her son Klemens run a craft that has almost died out. Her uncle founded the company in the 1940s. Today she still sits at traditional wooden looms and transforms linen and wool into flecked carpets, blankets, tea towels and shawls.

Jochen Neururer learns from nature. In the soap factory in Umhausen he creates soaps, bath salts and candles from Ötztal ingredients using traditional soap-making processes. Natural raw materials and sustainable production are

particularly important to him: The company is CO₂-neutral and energy-autonomous.

Wood and cheese

Längenfeld is also about the Swiss stone pine. When you enter the Neuraüter wood carving workshop, a new world opens up. There is a spicy scent of wood in Josef Neuraüter's workshop, where he has been carving nativity figures, crucifixes, Madonnas and angels, but also mundane gifts and decorative items from stone pine, ash, oak, cherry, walnut or linden wood since 1993.

Obergurgl offers also culinary souvenirs. In 2018 Maria and Martin Grüner opened the Gurgler Hofkäserei cheese dairy. A unique goat cheese is made from raw milk. The magic ingredient is the milk: the 25 mountain goats only eat grass and herbs from the Obergurgl mountain meadows. The goat cheese creations are freshly prepared daily from 60 litres of milk and then rest behind the farm shop in the ripening room and rock cellar.



www.handweberei-oetztal.at



www.schafwollzentrum.tirol

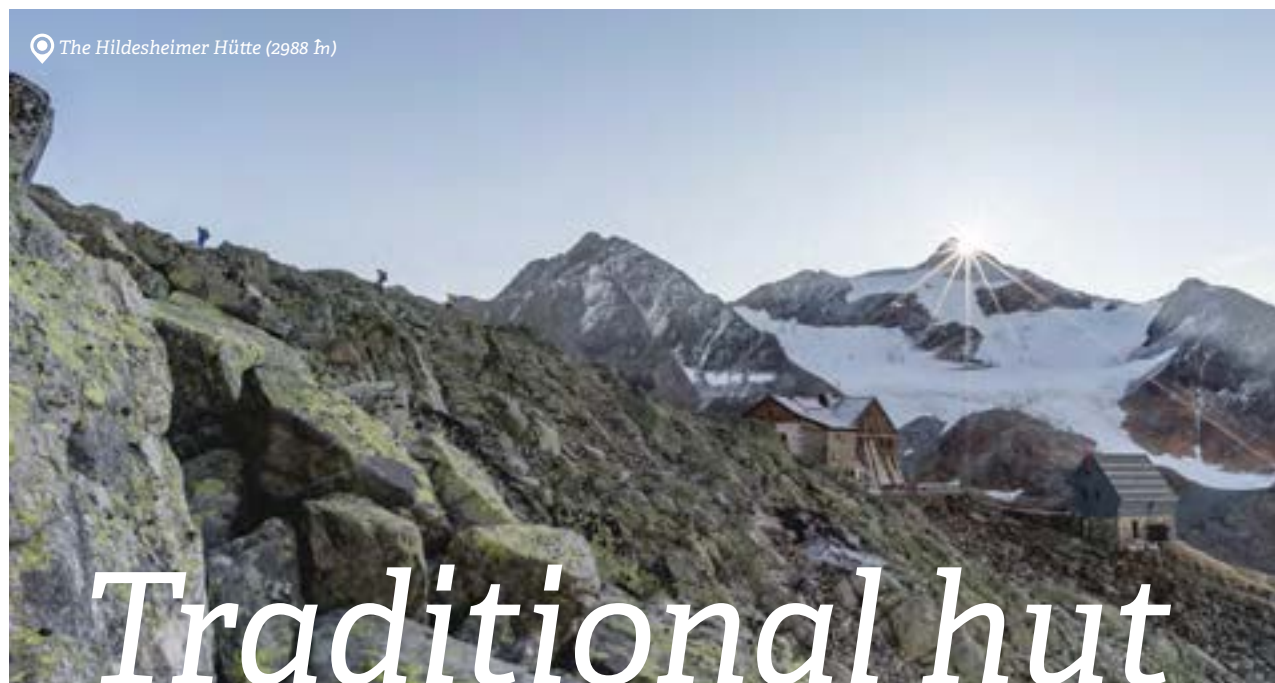


www.schnitzerei.com



www.alpincosmetics.tirol

📍 The Hildesheimer Hütte (2988 m)



Beautiful and at a particularly high altitude, well preserved, particularly old and under a conservation order. This all holds true for the Hildesheimer Hütte, which was built in 1896 by the Hildesheim section of the German Alpine Club and has been popular among hikers and mountaineers for 125 years now.



📍 Sölden, base between the Stubai Valley and the Ötztal Valley

✍️ Edith Hessenberger

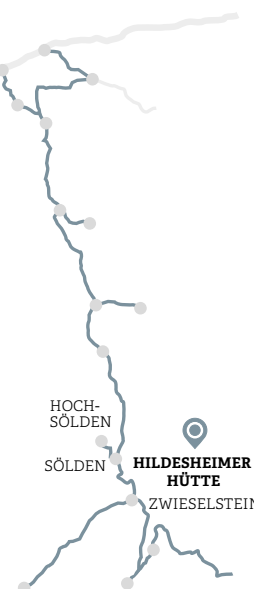
Located near the highest summits of the Stubai Alps at an altitude of 2988 m, the Hildesheimer Hütte was intended as an alpine connection of the Stubai Valley and the Ötztal Valley. An experienced man from the Ötztal was commissioned with the construction in 1895: Martin Scheiber from Obergurgl, who built four more refuges in the Ötztal. As wealthy, fine and educated as the bourgeois guests were at the turn of the century, as basic and simple was the infrastructure initially: one had to make do with a living room, a kitchen and five chambers.

Step-by-step to a preservation order

The Hildesheimer Hütte was expanded and improved a total of five times in the following decades. However, its unique character was retained and so the house was one of the first to be listed as a historical monument in 2016. Not only the external appearance of the hut contributed to this. The interiors are also particularly impressive, for example the harmonious staircase to the first floor from 1906, or the beautiful living room with carved window frames from the 1930s.

Hospitable and with good prospects

Over the past 30 years, the hut landlords and long-term tenants Elfriede and Gustl Fiegl from Sölden have contributed to the special comfort at the hut. They have run the hut with warm professionalism, often under extreme conditions. Due to its special location, the Hildesheimer Hütte opens up a unique natural space: Here the spectacular glaciers of the Stubai Alps, there the remote, beautiful Windach valley in the middle of the Ötztal Nature Park – and with a little luck you can see bearded vultures flying.



➡ More information at
www.oetztal.com/hiking



INSIDE

The Ötztal Inside Summer Card.

YOUR PREMIUM UPGRADE FOR EXCLUSIVE SUMMER BENEFITS.

- Mountain adventures with the summer lifts
- Public transport
- AQUA DOME – Tirol Therme Längenfeld
- AREA 47 – The outdoor highlight in the Ötztal
- Arts & culture – Ötztal museums
- Ötzi-Village & Ötztal Birds of Prey Park
- Hiking programme of the Ötztal Nature Park
- Nature Park House
- Swimming baths & lakes
- Leisure fun & family attractions
- Bike fun with your rental bike
- Top Mountain Motorcycle Museum

Available as Inclusive-Card in more than 350 businesses!

**WIN
4 OVERNIGHTS**

with half-board for
a family of
2 adults and 2 children

+
**ÖTZTAL INSIDE
SUMMER CARD**



ELEMENTS

007

A JAMES BOND CINEMATIC INSTALLATION

*„Unique James Bond cinematic installation built inside the summit
of the Gaislachkogel Mountain in Sölden.“*

GAISLACHKOGL 3.048M | SÖLDEN | 007ELEMENTS.COM

Ötztaler Gletscherbahn GmbH & Co KG | Dorfstrasse 115 | A-6450 Sölden | +43 5254 508