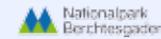




VIA ALPINA AND RUPERTI TRAIL

THE LONG DISTANCE HIKING LOOP THROUGH 5 NATIONAL PARKS AND 3 COUNTRIES



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The masculine form always includes the feminine form in the text.

Innsbruck, 2008

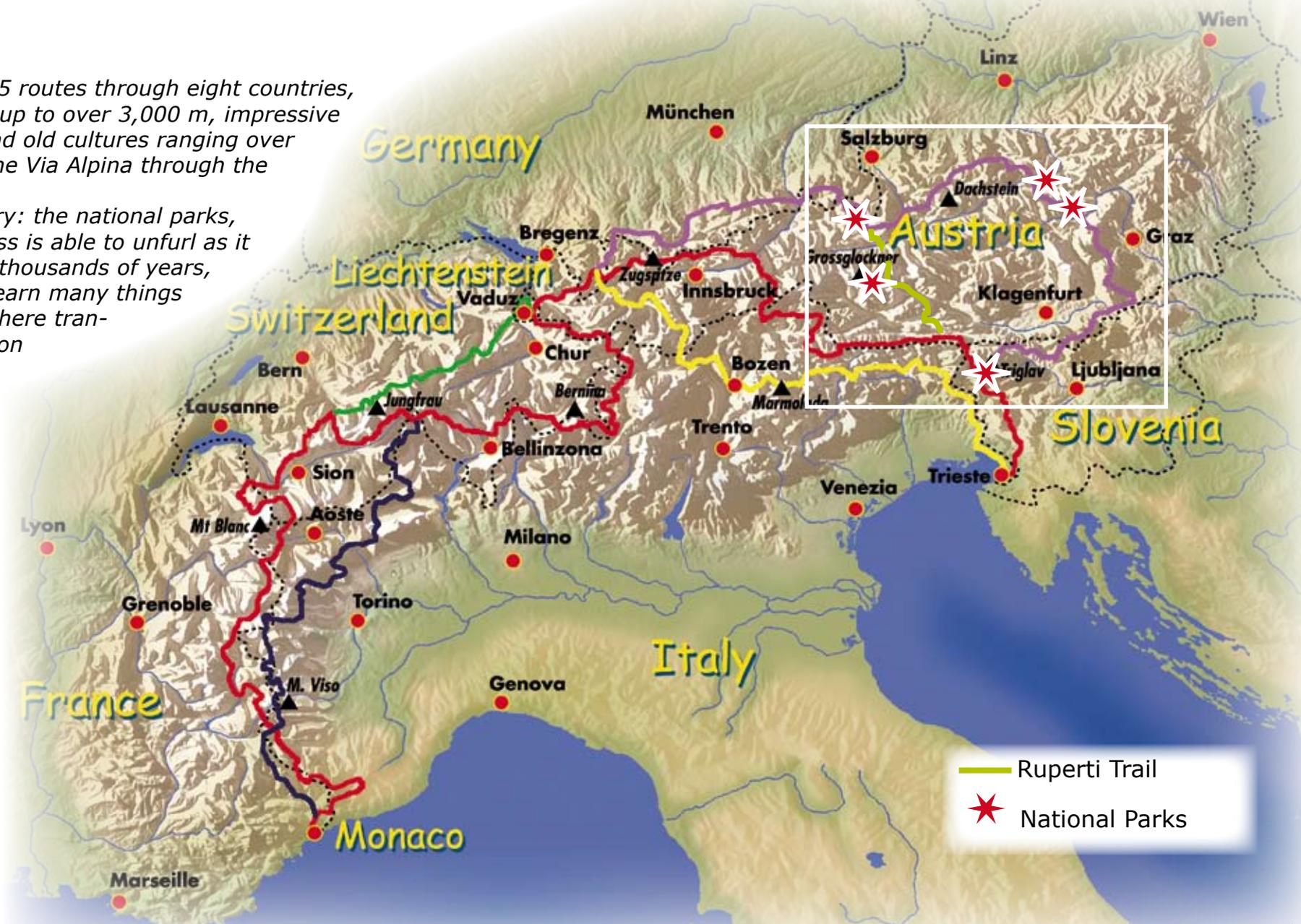
Via Alpina and Rupert Trail

The long distance hiking loop through 5 national parks and 3 countries

5,000 km of trails, 5 routes through eight countries, from 0 m sea level up to over 3,000 m, impressive scenes of nature and old cultures ranging over centuries – along the Via Alpina through the Alps.

Simply extraordinary: the national parks, where the wilderness is able to unfurl as it has been doing for thousands of years, where people can learn many things from nature, and where tranquillity and relaxation are the highest priority.

This long-distance hiking trail connects five national parks and three countries along the Purple Trail of Via Alpina and the Austrian long-distance hiking trail no. 10 – the Rupert Trail. A very special journey through the heart of the Alps.



Via Alpina and its Philosophy

Via Alpina started in 2000 as an Interreg IIIB Alpine Space project. The concept of an international, transalpine trail stems from an initiative by the Grande Traversée des Alpes – a French association for tourism development. The idea was to find a route through the Alps connecting existing trails and paths and leading you through nearly all mountain ranges: an expedition taking you through the diversity of nature and cultures in a unique region.

In eight Alpine countries (Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, France and Monaco), different private and public institutions cooperated on the implementation of this unique project.

The result is admirable: five routes, divided into 342 daily stages, over 5,000 km of trails. The fact that no new trail needed to be established is amazing. The close net of hiking trails, which are primarily maintained and marked by local Alpine associations and tourism organizations, as well as numerous mountain refuges, offer optimal conditions for a hiking holiday that is filled with adventure, enjoyment, impressions of nature and new acquaintances.

However the Via Alpina philosophy is not only hiking – although this type of travelling indeed is the most suitable to convey its message. Human perception is not adjusted to quick mobility and many impressions re-

main completely suppressed in this fast-paced age.

Walking, however, allows you to be a lot more aware of your surroundings and of small details. Walking allows you to not only become aware of the beauty and uniqueness of a larger, inter-connected area of Alpine nature and culture, but it also raises awareness that this is a very vulnerable area to exploitation and maltreatment. Its animal and plant habitats are being pushed to the edges. Via Alpina would like to bring the valuable treasures of old cultures and traditions to your attention: ancient knowledge about the conditions of the landscape, its potential dangers, and the close in-

teraction of animal and humans, dependent upon the season, all make up this very diverse habitat.

Hiking does not require a lot of technological aids, is environmentally-friendly, peaceful – a kind of tourism, which responds to the conditions of the landscape, and not the other way around.

Those who get started on the trail, and “let themselves go” for a few days, will be able to feel and appreciate this “Spirit of Via Alpina”.



Koča na Prevalu - Slo.



View of the Niederjochferner - A.



The village, Saorge - F.



Church at

VIA ALPINA AND THE ALPINE CONVENTION

Due to its special objectives and philosophy, Via Alpina was recognised as one of the first official implementation projects of the Alpine convention in February 2005. The Alpine convention is an international treaty of the Alpine states and the European Community. Within the framework of this treaty, the objectives for the protection and the development of the Alpine area are formulated. The treaty came into effect in 1995, and consists of eight thematic protocols:

Spatial planning and sustainable development, Mountain economy, Conservation of nature and the countryside, Mountain forests,

Tourism, Soil conservation, Energy and Transport as well as Population and culture, which is still in planning.

The objectives of Via Alpina can be found in nearly all protocols, but they are especially pronounced in the tourism protocol.

Extract from: Article 6 "Orientation of Touristic Development" (BGBl. Nr. 230/2002):

"1. The contractual parties integrate the issues of nature conservation and landscape care in tourism aid. They agree to promote only projects that have a low impact on both landscape and environment as far as possible.

2. The contractual parties initiate a sustainable policy which encourages the competitive ability of nature-oriented tourism in the Alpine region and thus makes an important contribution to the socio-economic development of the Alpine region. (...)"

The Alpine convention is not the only important partner of Via Alpina. Other organizations are involved, such as the Alpine Associations, which are not only responsible for

trail maintenance, sign-posting and marking, but also for other initiatives directly on and around Via Alpina. Individual municipalities and tourist boards also offer packages, sometimes custom-made for Via Alpina. Innkeepers and restaurateurs play a special role too, as they will happily provide information about Via Alpina as well as further trail stages.

Linking together different initiatives in the alpine area is becoming increasingly interesting for the further development of Via Alpina's targets. From here, applicable symbioses ensue.

FIVE NATIONAL PARKS ALONG A STRING OF PEARLS

This great, long-distance hiking trail through the national parks of eastern Via Alpina provides us a concrete example. The national park regions play a substantial role in research, conservation, and environmental education. At the same time, national parks represent a largely unaffected nature, a cultivated land-

scape that is old yet full of tradition, and a huge selection of biodiversity of interest to many guests.

So why not connect the two – hiking and national parks, astonishment and learning, switching of and relaxing?

Even if all national parks pursue the same goals and have the same missions, the five national parks that are presented here are so unique that they are able to offer something for everyone: from the sunny slopes of the Triglav National Park to the thunderous Enns in the Gesäuse National Park, via the "Water Palace" in the Kalkalpen National Park to the steep cliffs of the Berchtesgaden National Park, and up again to the high-alpine glacier world of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

They all have one thing in common: the Via Alpina and the Ruperti Trail connect them like pearls on a necklace – to a national park loop trail, whereby the national park regions are an ideal entry or exit to a hike spanning several days.



at Dientmannsdorf - A.



Madone de Fenestre - F.



Wendelstein, with its spectacular view - D.



Impressive Carnic range - A.

www.via-alpina.org www.alpconv.org

The Idea of the National Park Loop Trail

An idea is born!

In the spring of 2006, representatives from the national parks of Berchtesgaden, Kalkalpen, Gesäuse and Triglav and the national coordinating office for Via Alpina met in Molln, Upper Austria. The cornerstone of the national park loop trail was laid.

There are many trails in Slovenia, Austria, and Germany, but none of these take you through four different national parks. This is one of the special characteristics of the so-called Purple Trail of Via Alpina, from the Triglav National Park up over the Gesäuse, the Kalkalpen, all the way to Berchtesgaden.

In addition, the municipality of Ramsau, located in the national park region of Berchtesgaden, has had an

active partnership with the municipality of Bohinj, situated in the national park region of Triglav, for many years. So the idea of connecting the Purple Trail of Via Alpina via the Ruperti Trail (a practically direct connection from Berchtesgaden, towards the south, to the Naßfeld) with the Red Trail, to close the circle and include Austria's largest national park, the Hohe Tauern National Park was conceived.

Hence **the long-distance hiking loop winding through five national parks and three countries** was born. The trail consists of a total of **60 daily stages**, 41 along the Purple Trail, 14 along the Ruperti Trail, and five along the Red Trail of Via Alpina. All routes are well-

marked and offer enough possibilities for accommodation in the many mountain huts and valley inns.

All five national parks have always been involved – especially in the area of scientific work – in an active exchange. In recent years, increasing value has been placed on offering visitors the chance to sustainably access the beauty and wilderness of the national park regions. At the same time, the national park regions stand for ancient culture and rural tradition spanning centuries, which have considerably shaped the landscape. For the sustainable conservation of our mountain world, it is essential to depict the gathered knowledge in such a well-prepared

and suitable way, so that visitors will also be able to easily comprehend the information. If people understand it, they are also prepared to actively protect it.

All five national parks have extensive programmes, offer exhibitions and tours, and invite visitors to play interactive games at the national park information centres.

All five regions are easily accessible by public transport, what is of particular importance when walking long-distances. Whether you select only one national park, hike from one to the other, or if you decide to tackle the entire loop trail, it is guaranteed to be something special.



6

Carriage ride in the village, Studor - Slo.



Signposts in the Mieminger Mountains - A.



Mittergalm at Hochkönig - A.



View

The History of Long-Distance Hiking

HISTORICAL REFLECTION

A brief historical view of hiking is seemingly appropriate before further discussing this complex issue. Our ancestors were already undertaking long and difficult marches (due to lack of other alternatives) in order to go about their daily routine. Many paths were created by settlers, warriors, craftsmen, smugglers, traders, shepherds, and pilgrims, whereby the latter visited holy sites and sanctuaries (Rome, Santiago, Mariazell), so they also "hiked".

THE DEVELOPERS

The construction of mountain huts as well as the creation of alpine paths advanced rapidly once the Alps started being developed, and this is especially down to the German and Austrian Alpine Association. As early as 1912, Josef MORIGGL, Secretary of the Alpine Association, began to hike from "hut to hut". He hiked along the "Karawanken Höhenweg" as well as the "Pinzgauer Spazier-

gang", which nowadays belong to the "Südalpenweg 03" (Via Alpina, Red and Purple Trails) as well as the "Zentralalpenweg 02". However, other Alpine associations have also created paths and trails in the mountains, especially the Austrian Tourist Club (ÖTK) and the tourism association of "Die Naturfreunde" (Friends of Nature, TVN).

WHAT IS A LONG-DISTANCE TRAIL, WHAT IS A CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIL?

According to the definitions provided by a "general plan" (Fundamentals of Planning for the Development of 10 Austrian Long-Distance Trails), a long-distance trail is at least 300 km long and touches on three provinces or states. A cross-country trail is at least 500 km long and covers three European countries.

LONG-DISTANCE TRAILS IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND SLOVENIA

In **Germany**, long-distance hiking belongs almost exclusively to the domain of the German Mountain and Hiking Associations e.V. and a few of

its largest regional organizations, with an enormous network of long-distance and main hiking trails. Of the existing European cross-country trails (depicted as E 1 to E 11), nine cut through the Federal Republic of Germany, whereby on the section from Ruhpolding to Pfronten, the Purple Trail of the Via Alpina is accompanied for long stretches by the Pre-Alpine long-distance trail 04 (E4, - also known as the „Maximilian Trail“).

It seems strange that the option of creating long-distance hiking trails in **Austria** was not considered for quite a long time, despite many suggestions being made. With the creation of the "Nordwaldkammweg" (Dreisesselberg - Nebelstein - Mandelstein, following the ridge trail which had been created in 1908) in 1960, and the internationally famous "Nord-Süd-Weitwanderweg 05" in 1970, however, hikers finally began looking towards Austria.

The "Rupertiweg 10" or Ruperti Trail 10 (also known as E 10), which connects the Purple and Red trails of the Via Alpina, puts the focus of

visitors on to the national park regions (Berchtesgaden, Gesäuse, Kalkalpen, Triglav), which border the Purple Trail, together with the Hohe Tauern National Park.

By the way: apart from the eastern Austrian, Grenzlandweg 07, the Via Alpina touches on all nine long-distance trails in Austria.

In **Slovenia** there is a large number of main hiking trails in the Julian and Kamniker-Savinjer Alps, Karawanken, and in the Bachern mountain range. Besides the Red and Purple trails of Via Alpina, the cross-country trails E 6 ("Ciglar Trail" - from the Drau to the Adria), E 7 ("Naprudnik Trail" - from Isonzo to the Mur) and the "Slovenian Mountain Transverse No. 1" (from Koper to Maribor) are particularly notable.

Finally it should be mentioned that "long-distance hiking" allows you to become acquainted with a country and its people, and the endurance training is beneficial to your health.



View from Geigelstein - D.



Jalovec from Sleme - Slo.



Long-worn hiking boots



View from Nebelhorn - D.

www.via-alpina.org www.alpenverein.at/weitwanderer

The Purple Trail of Via Alpina



The Purple trail of Via Alpina takes you through 66 daily stages from Slovenia and across eastern Austria through Carinthia, Styria, Upper Austria and Salzburg, and touches on five Austrian long-distance hiking trails. Via the Steinerne Meer you reach Berchtesgaden, where the route continues on several stages of the "Maximiliansweg" through Bavaria into the Allgäu.

The Purple Trail begins in the **Triglav National Park**, at the heart of the Julian Alps.

Due to the special climate conditions, many endemic species are able to prosper here. The route from the Red Trail of Via Alpina forks at this point, and leads hikers north-east through the grand Vrata Valley. The next massif – the Karawanken – lies

ahead. Along the Austrian border, you will be able to enjoy the wonderful, panoramic views of Carinthia and the Gorenjska region. Soon you are in the third-largest massif of Slovenia, the Kamniker-Savinjer Alps, the Steiner Alps. A short excursion to the Storžič (2.132 m) rewards you with a fantastic view, and is definitely worth the trouble. Via the village of Jezersko you finally reach the Austrian border at the Seebergsattel. Via the small village of Trögern with its lovely old church, you reach the Eisenkapplerhütte after a steep ascent.

Refreshed and invigorated the following day, you should definitely make the effort to take an excursion to the Hochobir (2.139 m), which offers you an impressive,

panoramic view of the Klagenfurt basin and the Triglav in the south-west.

Now comes the crossing of the Petzen to Bleiburg and further on to Lavamünd. Soon, you will have reached the border to Styria, stayed in the lovely hamlet of Soboth, and descended towards Eibiswald – the hiking centre of eastern Austria.

In the last few offshoots of the "Schilcher" wine region, you will be able to relax before making the long trek along the Koralm – exactly on the border between the provinces of Carinthia and Styria.

In the summer months you will find Lipizzaner horses, the world-renowned white horses of the Span-

ish Riding School in Vienna, grazing along the pastures near the "Gab-erl". The horses are primarily bred in Lipica, Slovenia, which is also a stage on the Via Alpina.

Via the Steinplan you continue to Knittelfeld, hike over the Tremmelberg mountain, with its high, wooden watch tower, and continue towards Seckau which is famous for its Benedictine Abbey and its secondary school.

Trekking past the picturesque lake of Ingering and over the Kettentörl, you reach Trieben and subsequently, Admont. Admont is the gate to the **Gesäuse National Park**. Those who have already been there, know exactly why Admont was given this name. A mighty gate guards the entrance to the national



Triglav in the clouds.



„Die Kramerin“ chapel on the Koralm.



The summit cross at Hochobir.



The Widdersberg

park, where the Enns (river) has made its bed between Haindlmauer and Himbeerstein.

Over the Haller Mauern and through the "Dr. Vogelgesang – Klamm", the second-longest, accessible rocky gorge in Austria, you will reach Spital am Pyhrn, in the **Kalkalpen Region National Park**. An excursion into Austria's densest forests and most water-abundant national park will guarantee you an unforgettable experience. If you are lucky you might see the white-backed woodpecker or the Apollo butterfly.

From Spital am Pyhrn, you will enter the Tote Gebirge (Dead mountains), a massive limestone mountain range. Over the Wurzeralm and the Zellerhütte you reach the small villages of Vorderstoder and Hinterstoder, and then the Prielschutzhaus. Through the Klinser canyon the trail continues over the core part of the Tote Gebirge. Bring a lot of water with you because the rainwater seeps very quickly into the gaps, cirques, and dolines of this sparse, mountainous landscape. However,

as the site of the Pühringerhütte demonstrates, the Tote Gebirge is anything but dead. Actually, the opposite is quite true as the landscape is diverse and is home to a wide variety of mountain flowers.

From the Albert-Appel-Haus over the "Karl-Stöger-Steig", past the Loser mountain and the Sandlingalm, you reach the world heritage village of Bad Goisern, and via the Goisererhütte Gosau on the idyllic Lake Gosau. Over the Gosaukamm, face-to-face with the Großen Bischofsmütze and the Dachstein massif, the Via Alpina follows the trail to Lungötz and the southern edge of the Tennengebirge (mountain range) to Werfenweng and Werfen, where the Hohenwerfen Castle looks over the Salzach.

Now at the foot of the impressive Hochkönig massif, accompanied by numerous small open mountain huts, you are invited to take a break and try the area's typical products. Continue to Hinterthal and Maria Alm. After a steep ascent to the Riemannhaus which offers a wonderful view, you will cross the border

to Germany at the Steinernen Meer (Stony Sea), and enter the **Berchtesgaden National Park** with its beautiful Königssee.

Take another excursion to Austria, via the Neue Traunsteinerhütte and the Reiter Alm to Unken, before continuing to the Chiemgau and from there, over two mountains, the Hochfelln and the Hochgern, which offers the most spectacular views, to Marquartstein. Over the Kampenwand, with a small stop at the Prienerhütte, you reach Sachrang, and via the Spitzsteinhaus, Austria. After a visit to the location of the Passion Festival in Erl, you continue over the Zollhaus-bridge to Oberaudorf, past the Brunnstein, the big Traithen and the Rotwand to Lake Spitzing, and over the Risserkogel to Kreuth. After the last stage in the Mangfallgebirge (mountain range), you reach Lenggries. From there you continue along the foothills of the Bavarian Alps, over the Benediktenwand and the Herzogstand to Eschenlohe, and over the Wank in the Olympic city of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. North of Garmisch, past Lake Pfleger and

out along the Elmaubach Valley, you reach Linderhof in the Graswang Valley, where you can spend a royal night in the Castle Hotel before continuing on your journey over the isolated Ammergebirge (mountain range) in the tourist centres of Schwangau and Füssen with their world-renowned, fairy-tale palaces of Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau. If that is not enough, you can also visit Germany's highest castle ruins, Falkenstein Castle, before you reach Pfronten. From there you cross the Tannheim Mountains into Austria's Tannheim Valley. Soon, however, you ascend the Allgäuer Alps and follow the "Jubiläumssteig" to the Prinz-Luitpold-Haus, where you come across the Red Trail of Via Alpina. For a short while you hike along this trail before you turn to the north and hike past the Edmund-Probst-Haus, down to Oberstdorf. At this point the Purple Trail, the third trail in the alliance along with the Yellow and Red Trails, reaches the important crossroad in Allgäu.

www.via-alpina.org



ergalmen at Hochkönig.



The Klinser gorge in the Toten Gebirge .



Working the hay at the village of Sorica.



View over the Lech at Füssen.

The Ruperti Trail – Long-Distance Hiking Trail and connecting route

The Ruperti Trail

The Austrian long-distance hiking trail no. 10 takes you, in 25 daily stages, some 560 km, from the Bärenstein in Upper Austria to Carinthia's Naßfeld.

From Berchtesgaden towards the south, the trail is the connecting route between the Purple Trail and the Naßfeld on the Red Trail of Via Alpina.

FROM THE BÖHMERWALD TO THE DANUBE AND TO THE HAUSRUCK

From the Bärenstein in Mühlviertel, the Ruperti Trail follows the Falkensteiner Path via Aigen and Schlägl to Peilstein, and further over the Ameisberg mountain towards Oberkappel. At this point, you can hike an al-



ternative trail (110A), partially utilizing the Donau-Höhen loop trail through Neustift im

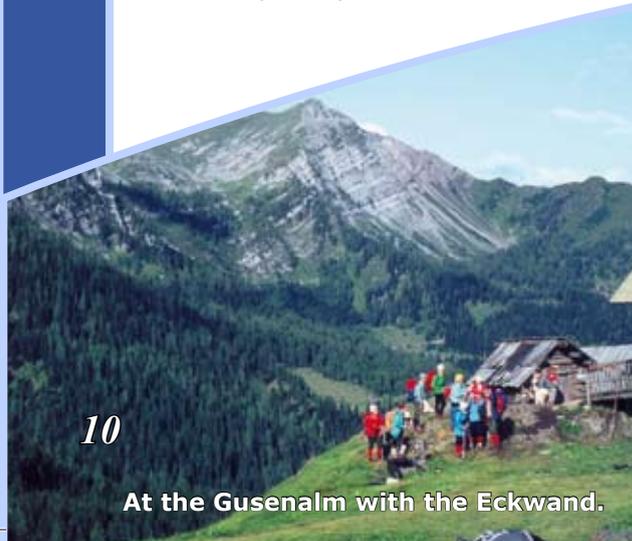
Mühlkreis and Rannamühl to Niederrana in the Donautal (Danube Valley). It continues through Hörzinger Forest towards Andorf. From here, the trail continued to Zell an der Pram and Riedau, also taking you through the idyllic Pram Forest to Haag am Hausruck. Via the Luisenhöhe and the Haminger Höhe, the trail takes you through a total of five stages to the Feitzinger Höhe at the heart of the Hausruck.

FROM THE HAUSRUCK VIA THE KOBERNAUSSER FOREST TO SALZACH

From the Feitzinger Höhe, you will first arrive at the Steiglbergwarte (a look-out point) in the Kobernausser Forest, and come along via the Frauschereck, to Maria Schmoln and Mattighofen.

The trail continues along through Eggelsberg to Ibm, at the edge of Ibmer Moor, to Dorfbm and Holzöster, on the banks of the lake of the same name. Before you reach Ostermiething, you pass through the villages of Ortholling and Gumpling. (The alternative section "Inn-Salzach-Uferweg" joins the main trail in Os-

termiething). Then, the trail continues towards Falchgau, to the Salzach and via Wildshut – where you will soon reach the Salzburg – Upper Austrian border – to Oberndorf near Salzburg and Nußdorf am Haunsberg. The next target is the Haunsberg itself, and along the hiking trail you pass Lake Ragginger, Maria Plain, the Gaisberg and the urban area of Salzburg. At the latest in Maria Plain, you will have decided whether to take the "Gaisbergroute" and Glasenbach or head for visit the festival city of Salzburg and then go towards the Pfleger Bridge.

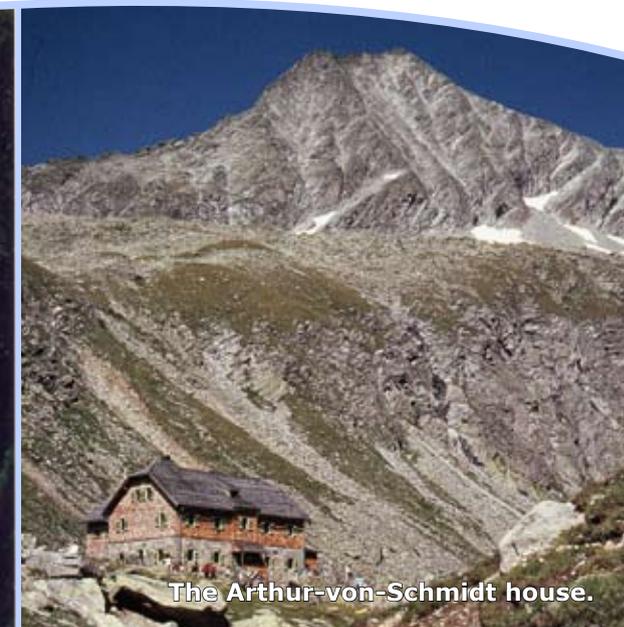


10

At the Gusenalm with the Eckwand.



The thunderous Kitzlochravine.



The Arthur-von-Schmidt house.



In Dösen Valle

THROUGH THE SALZBURG KALKALPEN TO THE PINZGAU AS WELL AS THROUGH THE RAURISER AND GASTEIN VALLEY TO THE HOHEN TAUERN

This section runs from Salzburg, or Glasenbach, to reach Glanegg via the Pflerger bridge and over the Reitsteig the Zeppezauer-Haus below the Salzburg Hochthron. Over this, you will hike the Mittagscharte as well as the Berchtesgaden Hochthron, and finally, the Stöhrhaus. Berchtesgaden and Königssee are reached via Maria Gern.

From here the Ruperti Trail is identical with the Via Alpina for a short while: you cross the Königssee by boat, and over the ascent through the Saugasse to the Kärlingerhaus at Lake Funten (Funtensee). Subsequently you cross the extended plateau of the Steinernen Meer (Stony Sea) to the Riemannhaus and finally, down towards Maria Alm.

While the Via Alpina extends eastwards from Maria Alm to the Hochkönig, the Ruperti Trail leads

to the Hundstein and down again into the Salzachtal (Salzach Valley) to Taxenbach. From here the trail leads you through the wildly romantic Kitzlochklamm into the beautiful Rauris Valley and over the Seebachscharte to Bad Hofgastein, a renowned health resort. Further on to Lake Bockhart, then up to Mallnitz Tauern (Hagener Hütte, 2.448 m) on the main Alpine ridge, and finally down to Mallnitz, the national park community of Hohe Tauern. From Mallnitz, the trail goes up to the Arthur-von-Schmidt Haus at Lake Dösner (Dösner See).

FROM THE HOHEN TAUERN TO THE REISSECKGROUP, INTO DRAUTAL (DRAU VALLEY) AND OVER THE GAILTALER TO THE CARNIC ALPS

Via the demanding Reißbeck trail, you will continue across the Seeschartl until you reach the Pfaffenberger Lakes and the Mooshütte, as well as the Reißbeckhütte.

Via the Roßalmscharte you finally reach St. Paul and the district capital Spittal an der Drau. From the beautiful yet nippy Lake Weißen (Weißen-

see), you reach Hermagor and finally Naßfeld, a small village at the foot of the Carnic Alps, which is the end of the Ruperti Trail as well as a stage location of Via Alpina Red Route. (A detailed description can be found on page 33).

Along the Red Trail of Via Alpina to the starting point

You can reach the Triglav National Park again from Naßfeld via the Wurzenpaß in five days.

You follow the trail of Via Alpina's Red Route (*longest Via Alpina Route from Trieste to Monaco, 161 daily stages*) in the reverse direction: from Naßfeld, you scale the Garnitztörl between Gartnerkofel and the Garnitzberg, from where you can enjoy a spectacular view of the Hohe Tauern in good weather. The trail continues over the Garnitzenalm and the northern slopes of the Kronalpe, briefly through Italian territory, to the Egger Alm. Hike past the lovely Lake

Egger until you reach the Dellacher Alm, Görtschacher Alm, and finally, the Feistritzer Alm. Over the mountain pastures, Maria Schnee, and over the Achomitzer Alm, you will find a magnificent, panoramic view of the western Julian Alps and the Dobratsch. Afterwards the path runs through a majestic forested area, down to Thörl-Maglern and over the Wurzenpaß to Slovenia and the Dom v Tamarju (hut). Hike up the Tamar Tal (Tamar Valley), and you reach the Tičarjev dom na Vršiču (hut), and finally, the village, Trenta, where the information centre of the Triglav National Park is situated.

Further information on Ruperti Trail and all other long-distance hiking trails in Austria:

OeAV-Sektion Weitwanderer

Thaliastrasse 159/3/16
A-1160 Wien

Tel.: +43 (0)1 493 84 08

weitwanderer@sektion.alpenverein.at
www.alpenverein.at/weitwanderer

www.alpenverein.at/weitwanderer



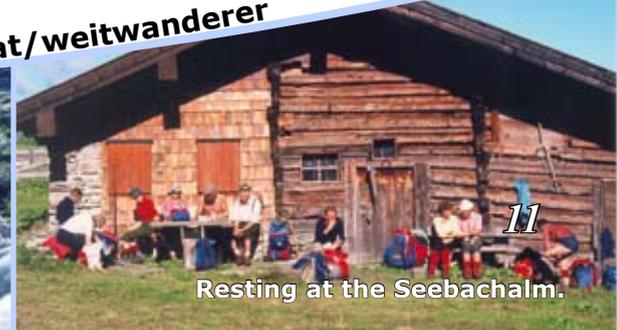
Valley – View of Säuleck.



Gorgeous flowers at the side of the path.



Hiking group at Steinernen Meer.



Resting at the Seebachalm.

National Parks – Their Tasks and Targets

National parks are responsible for protecting areas of outstanding natural beauty, areas which are made up of unique animal and plant worlds, rare and endangered species, as well as all the diverse wonders of nature. This conservation status is meant to prevent technical expansion and economic exploitation, as well as to secure a high degree of natural and dynamic development. Humans are not locked out but, instead, invited to participate as quiet, careful observers of this development.

National Parks are based on four pillars: nature conservation, research, education and recreation.

Nature conservation

From an ecological point of view, national parks – there are a few thousands, worldwide – are an important area of retreat for the plant and animal kingdoms. They are ecosystems which are able to develop freely and which have as little human interference as possible. In the core areas of national parks, wilderness is given space again, and humans learn to let nature simply be nature. In other areas, where humans have carefully and effectively lived and worked with nature for centuries, this tradition should be continued: such as on the mountain pastures. An extremely large abun-

dance of different plant and animal types can be found, in particular on extensively farmed mountain meadows.

Research

National parks are outdoor laboratories. National parks are of considerable importance in the field of scientific research: where else can you observe natural processes without any human interference? Where else is nature given priority, and where else is such economic utilization, especially in the areas of hunting and forestry, relinquished? For these reasons, national

parks offer the ideal requirements for scientific research in new fields. Current issues, such as the effects of climate change, can sometimes be observed differently in natural areas when compared to landscapes that are heavily utilized economically. National parks can supply important clues to understanding the circumstances of this phenomena, and thus have an effect far beyond their borders.

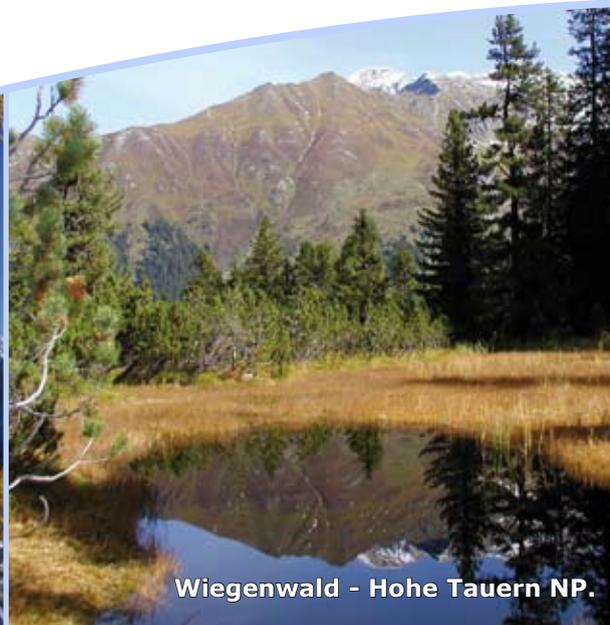
Education

Another important task of national parks is to provide knowledge about the interconnection found in nature as well as to educate peo-



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The Škrlatica group - Triglav NP.



Wiegenwald - Hohe Tauern NP.



Enns with the Hochtorgroup - Gesäuse NP.



Hintergebirge

ple on these issues. Perceptions in themselves do not help if they are limited only to the experts. It is important to build up different areas of knowledge, and to target different groups. The spectrum ranges from kindergarten and grammar school offers all the way to adult education and specialized excursions aimed at experts. The reasons behind this educative efforts of the national park can be found in the following quote: "You are only able to love what you know, and you are only able to protect, what you love". Based on this, the passing on of knowledge leads to a higher acceptance of the conservation areas.

Recreation

Almost a contradiction to nature conservation, but nevertheless, ensuring the recreational function of the protected landscapes is just as important a task. Guests are invited to actively move

around in the national parks, using all of their senses. They should relax and recuperate. To avoid conflict with conservation goals, however, well thought out visitors management is important: where does the recreation for people have priority? Where is the development of fauna and flora of particular importance? In our modern, technological world, areas without climbing aids and comfortable infrastructure are becoming an increasingly desired and valued alternative.

Economic Aspects

National parks today are independent holiday destinations, and represent a rare economic commodity. The direct benefits to tourism and the economy should nevertheless be stronger on the borders of the protected areas as well as in the hinterland of the protected areas. A large part of the economic value creation (food, drink, sleep, and the means for establishing the necessary in-

frastructure) have already been implemented around the national park regions. Due to their variety of offers, national parks provide big opportunities in tourism and in the economy for the surrounding regions. These opportunities are more obvious in some regions than in others. One thing, however, should be obvious: the offers in the protected areas – from theme hikes to school trips and scientific research teams – tempt many into the national park regions.

The individual entrepreneurial spirit is required as well as the cooperation of many in order to obtain economic advantages for a region. The national parks provide the ideal requirements!

What does IUCN actually mean?

„International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources“

It is an international organisation with the aim to raise the awareness for the protection of nature and species, in order to allow a sustainable and careful use of resources. The organisation is mainly known for the publication of the „Red Lists“ of endangered species and the categorisation of protected areas.

There are six categories, from Ia and b – wilderness area – to VI – resource reserves. National Parks fall under category II. These are protected areas managed mainly for the protection of ecosystems and for recreation purposes.

www.nationalparks.or.at www.bfn.de www.tnp.si



gebirge - Kalkalpen NP.



At the summit of Črna prst- Triglav NP.



At Reißeck - Hohe Tauern NP.



The Königssee - Berchtesgaden NP.



Triglav National Park

On the sunny side of the Alps!

The National Park Triglav lies in the north-western part of Slovenia, on the border with neighbouring Italy and not too far from the Austrian border. It encompasses almost the entire Slovenian part of the Julian Alps, meaning the eastern Julian Alps and a small part of the western Julian Alps. The Triglav National Park is named after the Triglav (2,864 m), the highest mountain in Slovenia and a national icon, which represents the last important mountain peak of the south-eastern Alps. With its magnificent shape and its great height, with which it amply towers over neighbouring summits, the Triglav is justly the sovereign ruler of the Julian Alps, a true king. The Triglav Mountains are small enough to be nice and friendly, but at

the same time, tall enough for nature to display its true power.

As a typical alpine national park, the Triglav National Park cooperates within the Network of Alpine protected areas. Since its founding in 1906, and the first protected area which was established in 1924, Triglav is one of the European national parks with the longest tradition. Its task is above all, to protect and conserve the unique nature of the Julian Alps, whereby it also carries out specialist, educational and research tasks.

CHARACTERISTICS

Pointed limestone mountain ridges of the Julian Alps, ranging over 2,000 metres in height, are characteristics of the Triglav National Park. Towards the north, craggy and impressive cliffs, ranging over hundreds of metres in height, stretch out. In the southern part, however, the area is a bit flatter. In the west, the Dolomite prevails, which is why the summits are more sharp, distinctive, and bold, with deep slopes over green valleys. In a geological aspect, the national park makes its most important impression with its one and a half thousand metre thick "Dachsteinkalk" (limestone -

Obertrias), and by its nearly one thousand metre thick layer of Cord-evol limestone. Strongly fissured and glacier-formed valleys lie on all sides of the Triglav, which is located in the middle of the mountain range. Its aesthetically-pleasing shape is formed by boulders, forests, and clear bodies of water, which make up the backdrop of this high mountain range. It is the source of two of Slovenia's most important rivers, the Sava and the Soča.

There is not much surface water in the national park. The high mountain karst forms numerous waterways and lakes in the insides of the mountains, whereby the water surfaces again through the characteristic karst springs. Nevertheless



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Lake Bohinj at Studor.



The Soča gorge.



The information centre „Trenta Haus“.



The Konjščica

you will also find groups of glacial curves which form lakes where the limestone layers are less porous. The Julian Alps provide an important source of drinking water which additionally highlights the importance of its conservation.

The valleys are covered with abundant forests, which grow on the northern side of the national park up to 1,900 m, and on the southern side up to 1,600 m. Forests are a distinguishing element in the national park landscape, as two thirds of its surface are forested. The nature found in the national park is very diverse, colourful and vibrant. Many of the plants and animals symbolize the alpine world, such as edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*), chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) and the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*).

An alpine cultivated landscape is typical with its farmed fields, meadows, mountain meadows and grazing land, as well as valley settlements and mountain pastures. These elements contrast with the Mediterranean cultural land-

scape, which highlights the boulders and rocks, in the southern part of the national park. This makes the appearance of identical landscape elements change substantially. As a mirror image of a thousand-years, in harmony with nature, the inhabitants of the Julian Alps and their lifestyle has been interwoven with the nature of the Julian Alps. It has become an inseparable part, which is the base location of the common cultural heritage of the national park today.

The meeting of alpine and Mediterranean influences can also be observed in the weather and in its features. The harsh climate in the northern part of the national park is a result of the influences from the central European mountain and continental climate. On the other hand, in the Soča valley, the climate is noticeably milder due to the Mediterranean influence. The average summer temperatures lie between 19.6 °C in the valleys of Tolmin, where the lowest point of the Triglav National Park can be found, and 5.6 °C in the high mountain range (Kredar-

ica, 2,515 m) below the Triglav. The average winter temperatures lie between 0.7 °C and -8.8 °C. The annu-

al average precipitation rate is more than 1,500 mm. There are between 120 and 145 rainy days per year.

Information:

National park administration and information centre

Triglavska roža, SI-4260 Bled

Tel.: +386 (0)457 80 200

triglavski-narodni-park@tnp.gov.si

www.tnp.si

„Top 12“ in the area of Tourism and Alpinism

1. Lake Bohinj with the Church of St. Johannes.
2. Savica waterfalls, the source of Sava Bohinjka River.
3. Brown cliff (Vogel), look-out point, ski area and starting point for mountain tours.
4. Pokljuka with hikes in the forest, high moors, and the surrounding mountains at all times of year.
5. The Triglav (2,864 m).
6. Valley of the Triglav Lakes (Valley of the Seven Lakes).
7. Vrata Valley with the Peričnik waterfall and the northern face of the Triglav.
8. Vršič mountain pass, look-out point and starting point for mountain tours.
9. Trenta, especially the Soča source, the memorial for Dr. Julius Kugy, the Mlinarica gorge, the botanical alpine garden named Juliana and the Trenta house („Dom Trenta“), information centre of the Triglav National Park.
10. Mangart pass and Mangart-Sattel.
11. Lake Krn and the mountain massif named Krn (2,244 m).
12. The riverbed of Tolminka, commemoration church in Javorca and the village of Čadrg.

www.tnp.si



Soča mountain pasture.



Narcissus at the Dovška Baba.



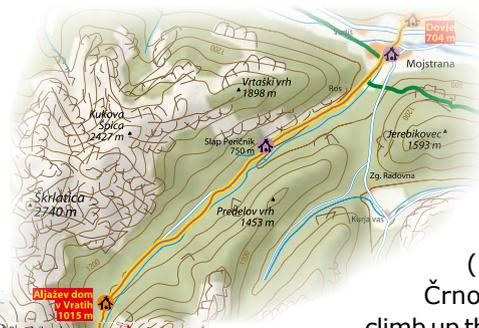
View from Triglav.



The Sava fountain at Podkoren.

Trough the hart of Triglav National Park

From Bled, you reach Lake Bohinj, which is an ideal starting point



for the Via Alpina hike through the Triglav National Park. From here you can hike via the Koča pri Savici (hut), past the small Črno Lake, and directly climb up the Koča pri Triglavskih Jerzerih (hut) to 1,685 m.

STAGE R12 KOČA PRI TRIGLAVSKIH JERZERIH - TRŽAŠKA KOČA NA DOLIČU

Hiking time approx. 3h

Right behind the cabin you walk past Lake Močivec. Below the wall of the Tičarice, you climb up to the plateau-like landscape at the foot of the scree. Hiking along an easy and gently rising

path, you can admire the surroundings that are filled with alpine flowers and increasingly rare larches. You will recognize the high Veliko Špičje (2,398 m) directly in front of you, to which a path branches in the upper valley. This way you will reach the former grazing area of Pri Utah, below the bulging face of the Kopicica's (2,190 m) summit, which is on your right hand.

At the crossroads, continue hiking up the valley, towards the north. Below the eastern slopes and a bit above the valley, you continue climbing until you can see a large expanse of water. This is Lake Veliko (1,831 m), the largest of Triglav's seven lakes. At certain points, the

lake is up to 15 m deep, and due to its typical form, it is also known as Ledvička ("Little Kidney"). Above the lake the trail continues over broad scree. Continue through the valley, where the trail ascends over a distinctive barrier in the valley, and subsequently turn to the northeast. Through a completely bare and grey world, you will reach a small body of water called Lake Zeleno (Green Lake, 1,988 m). The lake is named after the green algae growing on its floor. The trail through the valley of the Triglav lakes ends here. The trail on the left leads you to the Zasavska koča na Prehodavcih (hut) (2,071 m). You take the trail on the right, and climb up to the dip, which falls



INFORMATION

KOČA PRI TRIGLAVSKIH JERZERIH

Informacijska pisarna
Ukanc 149
SI-4265 Bohinjsko jezero
Mobile: +386 (0)406 20 783
info.pdljmatica@siol.net

ALJAŽEV DOM V VRATIH

Triglavska cesta 89
SI-4281 Mojstrana
Tel.: +386 (0)458 951 00

TRŽAŠKA KOČA NA DOLIČU

Planinsko društvo Radovljica
Gorenjska cesta 31
SI-4240 Radovljica
Tel.: +386 (0)457 440 69
Mobile: +386 (0)50 614 780

PLANINSKA ZVEZA SLOVENIJE

Alpenverein Slowenien
Dvoržakova 9, SI-1000 Ljubljana
Tel.: +368 (0)143 456 80
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from the edge of the Hribarice. In serpentines, climb over the edge, and you reach the saddle between the Popovec on the left and the Vršaki on the right. You are at the edge of the Hribarice, a broad, quite flat and rocky plateau. To your right the trail from Zelnarica joins this trail. Cross the plateau which has only sparse vegetation, towards the east, and you come closer to the starkly distinctive, rocky peak of the Mišeljski konec. Below the Mišeljski konec, you reach the saddle of Čez hribarice (2,358 m) which is located between the Kanjavec and the Mišeljski konec. This is the highest point of the stage. Over a steep scree, you will climb down the upper end of the Velska Valley. At the crossroads, keep to the left and follow the gently inclining path until you reach the Dolič Pass (2,164 m). Directly in front of you is the Tržaška koča na Doliču (hut) (2,151 m), the end of this stage.

STAGE A1 TRŽAŠKA KOČA NA DOLIČU - ALJAŽEV DOM V VRATIH

Hiking time approx. 4h

Up until the crossroads below the Luknja, the 13th stage of the Red Trail is simultaneously the 1st stage of the Purple Trail. At first the trail takes you along a broad mule path, which was created along the former border by the Italian army after the First World War. You start at the signposts and hike in the direction of Luknja and the Zadnjice Valley. Soon a very difficult trail branches off to the right in the direction of the Triglav (2,864 m). The ascent up the highest mountain in Slovenia is reserved only for experienced, sure-footed climbers who are not afraid of heights.

At the junction below the Tržaška koča na Doliču, you begin the gentle descent down to the Zadnjice Valley, along a flat, winding path. South of the broad Zelenica plateau, you can observe the corrugated cliffs of the northern Kanjavec. Bare slopes are gradually replaced by dwarf pines and rare larches. The path zigzags around the rocky Skok

mountain until it reaches the Korita. The Korita is a deep gorge, which on one side drops down to the Zadnjice valley and on the other, extends up to the Luknja saddle (1,758 m). The gorge is impassable, and therefore the route continues on the mule track above the Korita. In serpentines, climb up the steep mountain slope. Doing so, you will have conquered an altitude difference of 250 metres! After 1 h 30 min, you will have reached the grassy Luknja saddle, providing you with a splendid view of the Vrata valley. From the Luknja pass, descend down a narrow rocky valley and over the scree. Across the trail on the right, you will see the high northern face of the Triglav. Between the grass and the continuously thicker forests, you continue your journey through the valley. A well-trodden path leads you past a monument, to the Bistrica, a mountain stream, where the path from the Triglav to the Prague extends. At the junction, you can refresh yourself with clear drinking water. However, during the dry summer months the stream often disappears. Through the

forest, descend into the Vrata valley, past the memorial for fallen partisan mountaineers until you reach the Aljažev dom v Vratih (hut) in 20 minutes.

STAGE A2 ALJAŽEV DOM V VRATIH - DOVJE

Hiking time approx. 2h 30min

You leave the high mountain range and hike through the grand Vrata valley, which is surrounded by two-thousand-metre high mountains. A large part of this trail takes you on an asphalt road through forests, leading from the Aljažev house, through the valley to the Peričnik waterfall. The waterfall, which is separated into two parts falls 52 m in the lower part alone. At the end of the valley you leave the Triglav National Park. From Dovje, you have the possibility of travelling to Podkoren or to Villach via Jesenice, from where it is easy to reach Admont, the next national park community at the Purple Trail. Or you decide to hike over the Karawanken and the Koralm to Admont (22 daily stages).

BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK Nationalpark Berchtesgaden

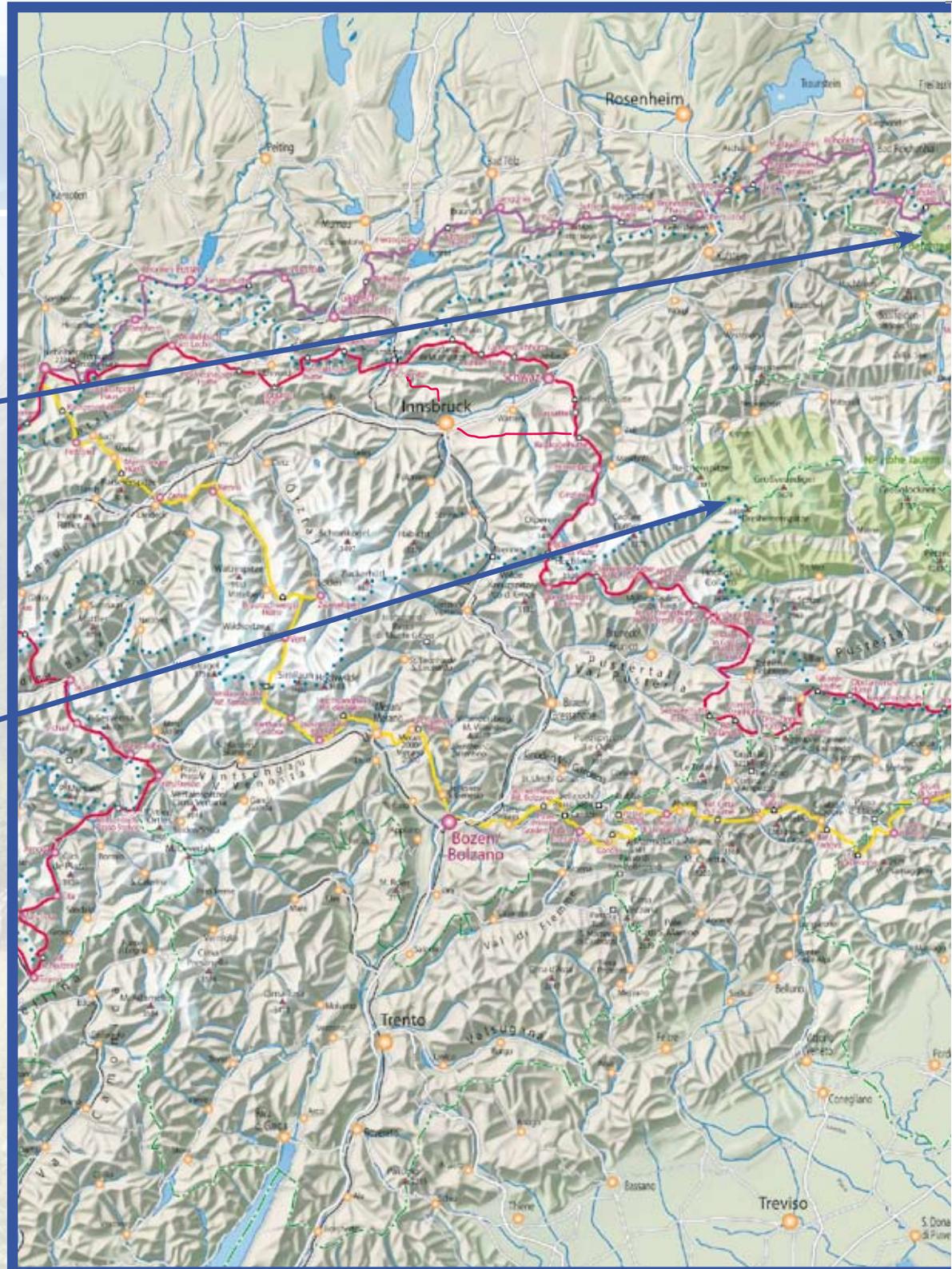
"On a single day through all climate zones, from moderate to polar, along the longest vertical in Germany!"

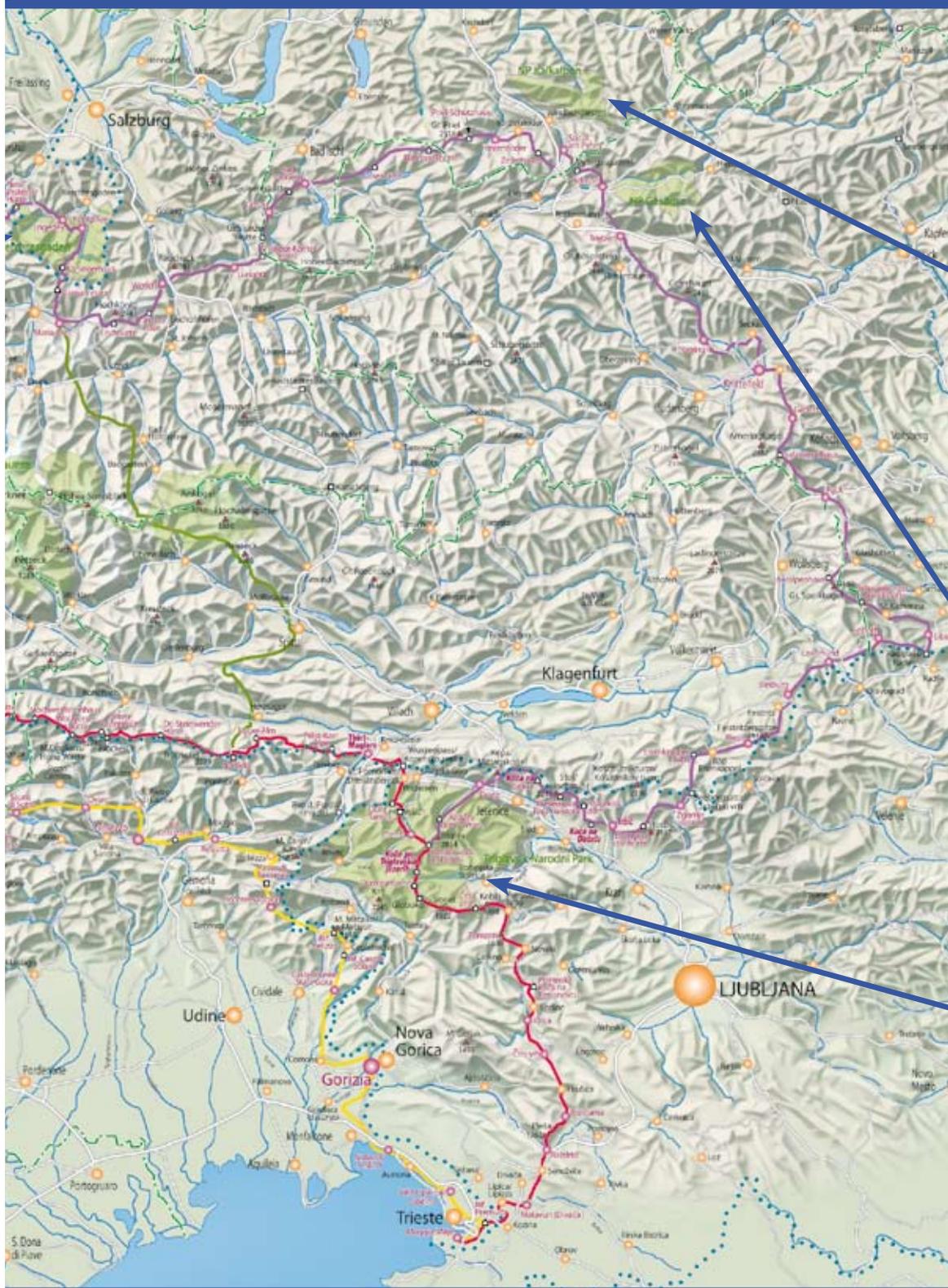
- Location: in south-eastern Bavaria, on the border to Austria
- Founding year: 1978
- Surface area: 210 km²
- Highest point: Watzmann at 2,713 m
- Special features: Height amplitude of 2,110 m
- IUCN category: II

HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK Nationalpark Hohe Tauern

"From the highest mountain in Austria over the meteorological divide and water divide through the second largest national park in Europe!"

- Location: Hohe Tauern between the springs of Isel, Möll, Mur and Salzach; Provinces: Salzburg, Carinthia and Tyrol
- Founding year: 1981
- Surface area: 1,800 km²
- Highest point: Großglockner at 3,798 m (highest mountain in Austria)
- Special features: Glacier; broad parts still untouched by humans
- IUCN category: II





KALKALPEN NATIONAL PARK



"The wilderness in an ocean of forest and the moated castle of Europe!"

- **Location:** in southern Upper Austria between the rivers of Steyr and Enns, encompasses the Sensen mountain range and the Reichraminger Hintergebirge (mountains)
- **Founding year:** 1997
- **Surface area:** 208 km²
- **Highest point:** Hoher Nock at 1,963 m
- **Special features:** 30 different forest communities and 800 springs
- **IUCN-Category:** II

GESÄUSE NATIONAL PARK



"The last, unregulated river kilometres of the Enns rushes through the Gesäuse"

- **Location:** in the west of the bend of the Enns in upper Styria, between Hieflau and Admont
- **Founding year:** 2002
- **Surface area:** 110 km²
- **Highest point:** Hochtorn at 2,370 m
- **Special features:** craggy Gesäuse mountains and gorge-like valley of the Enns
- **IUCN-Category:** II

TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK



"The meeting of alpine and Mediterranean nature and culture!"

- **Location:** in north-western Slovenia, on the border to Italy and Austria in the Julian Alps
- **Founding year:** 1981
- **Surface area:** 808 km²
- **Highest point:** Triglav at 2,864 m
- **Special features:** numerous endemic species, such as the Zois' bell flower (*Campanula zoysii*), or the Soča trout
- **IUCN-Category:** II

Welcome to the alpine region of Gesäuse National Park!

A national park, a nature park, and a monastery with an international reputation in the immediate proximity: this is only possible in "Gesäuse"! Expansive surfaces, framed by distinctive rock formations interchange with narrow valleys and create the perfect environment for an unforgettable holiday. The offers at "Gesäuse" are varied and diverse, and can best be described by the following motto **Experience Nature – Experience Culture!**

EXPERIENCE NATURE

- On hikes, some for all the family, through the Gesäuse National Park or tank up with energy at the nature park in Styria's Eisenwurzen.

- On secured fixed rope routes, follow the legend of Gesäuse.
- Learn to understand nature at Gesäuse National Park, with activities from summer and winter programme.
- Track geology during GeoLine excursions.
- Taste the water on the rivers of Enns and Salza, be it in a raft or in canoe.

EXPERIENCE CULTURE

- Experience the largest monastery library in the world as well as the unique museum landscape at the Benedictine monastery of Admont.

- Enjoy the culinary delights and numerous inns and taverns – our tip: try the "Xeis red deer"!

THE GESÄUSE NATIONAL PARK

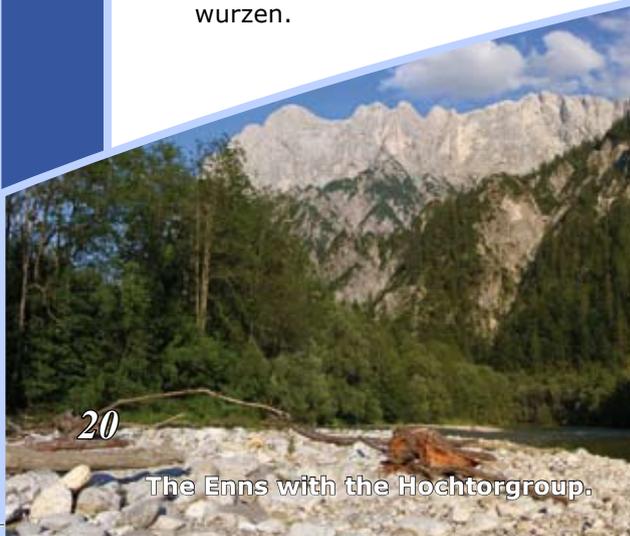
Variety distinguishes the youngest national park in Austria. It is more than 11,000 ha. (110 km²) in size, and was founded on October 26, 2002. Large difference in altitude, diverse steep locations and expositions, as well as a bedrock of limestone and greywacke, enable a wide range of biodiversity. Where else can you see alluvial forests

and chamois at the same time? The rare "Zierliche Federnelke" (delicate feathered pink) and an until now undiscovered species of stone flies are part of the botanical treasures.

VISITOR FACILITIES AT THE GESÄUSE NATIONAL PARK

Weidendom and Lettmair Au

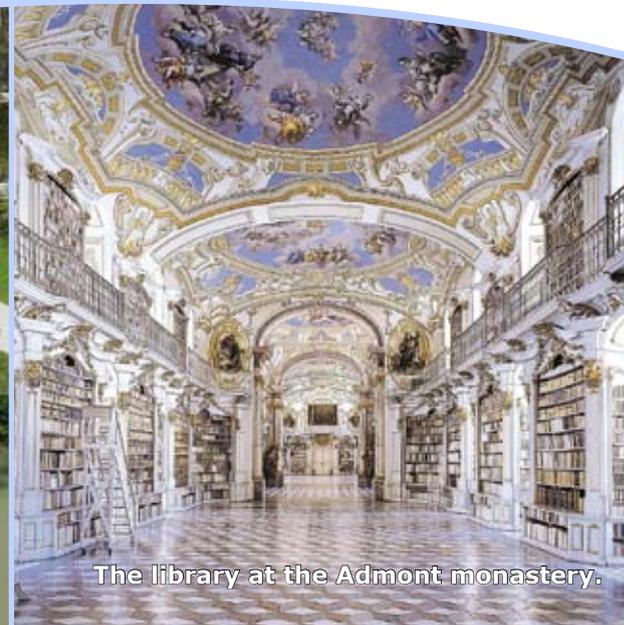
The Weidendom (the "willow cathedral") is the largest living construction in the Alps, and provides the scientific research workshop with dignified surroundings. It is a "building" made of living osier stakes. With modern technology, the programme at Weidendom



The Enns with the Hochtorgroup.



Weidendom and Lettmair Au.



The library at the Admont monastery.



Interactive nature

guides you through the microcosm of life in water.

The Weidendom is the starting point for the Au adventure trail in the Lettmair Au. This leads you along an elegant footbridge construction, over the alluvial forest, and the backwaters of the Enns. Due to the raised position, the observer gets unknowing insight into the increasingly rare habitat of the alluvial forest.

National park pavilion Gstatterboden with an interactive geology exhibition

The architectonic, innovative national park pavilion in Gstatterboden has an information stand, a restaurant and catering business, as well as a modern, interactive geological exhibition.

The creation of the Gesäuse mountains is explained in eight stages, whereby you need to manually operate each stage. Mountains have to be unfolded, ice age glaciers

crossed, and a virtual climbing tour must be conquered. A virtual flight over the Gesäuse National Park and its surroundings concludes the exhibition.

Location of visitor facilities

The Weidendom, the Lettmair Au and the national park pavilion are located directly on the Gesäuse national road, and can be easily reached by public transport.

Information:

Nationalpark Gesäuse

Tel.: +43 (0)3613 211 60 20
 info@nationalpark.co.at
 www.nationalpark.co.at
 or

Alpenregion Nationalpark Gesäuse

Tel.: +43 (0)3613 211 60 10
 info@alpenregion.cc
 www.alpenregion.cc

both situated at

Infobüro Admont

Hauptstraße 35
 A-8911 Admont

Tip!

2 NATIONAL PARKS - 1 TRAIL

Hike along the "VIA ALPINA" from Admont in the alpine region Gesäuse National Park to Spital am Pyhrn, on the edge of the Kalkalpen National Park, with luggage transport.

Services:

- 4 x accommodation/breakfast
- Entry to Admont Monastery museum
- 24 hour ticket Styria Public transport network
- Entry to geology exhibition at the national park pavilion
- Entry to research workshop at Weidendom
- Luggage transport Admont – Spital am Pyhrn
- Entry to Dr. Vogelgesang gorge
- Bowling evening
- Entry to panoramic indoor swimming pool at Spital am Pyhrn *
- Scheduled public transit bus Spital am Pyhrn - Wurzeralm – Windischgarsten *
- Funicular railway Wurzeralm *
- Wurzer Natural Adventure World – themed loop trail *
- Chair lift Wurbauerkogel Windischgarsten *
- Entry to Kalkalpen National Park panoramic tower with the "Faszination Fels" (Fascinating Rocks) exhibition*

** Entry with the "Pyhrn-Priel AktivCard", which you receive free of charge with your overnight stay!*

You can find the detailed programme with the exact route description, price information and a „Via Alpina“ hiking ticket at the information office in Admont or the one in Spital am Pyhrn.

www.nationalpark.co.at



National park exhibition.



National park pavilion in Gstatterboden.



Mountain tour with a view of the Hochtorgroupe.



Thundering Enns at flood.



Kalkalpen National Park

The heart is wild!

Deep gorges, ridges, karst caves and innumerable fountains are hidden at the Kalkalpen National Park. Wilderness has been expanding here for more than ten years. While new trails are being built in other mountains, landscapes furnished with cabins and forests equipped with new wood trails, tranquillity has returned to Kalkalpen National Park. The largest, enclosed woodlands in Austria are situated here, and it would need further trails in order to penetrate the national park. This woodland is similar to the broad forest expanses of Canada. In the pristine forests, trees are able to grow, get old and die; just like nature intended. Mountain pastures and meadows are colourful islands in the sea of forests. You can hike

for hours through the forest without ever meeting a single person. Instead you can find all kinds of animals and plants that you will rarely see elsewhere. Lynxes, alpine longicorns, capercaillies, black grouses, hazel hens, red deer, and chamois have made this region their home. With a bit of luck you can observe golden eagles, peregrine falcons or black storks on their majestic flights. Thirty different forest communities exist in the Kalkalpen National Park. In this environment, thousands of flowering plants, moss and ferns thrive, including a number of treasures that have become rare elsewhere: pyramidenorchis and lady's slipper, mountain avens and orchids, stone roses and Globularia.

In the 20 mountain pasture regions, you will also find "peterg'stamm" (Aurikel), gentians and alpine roses. 1.500 different types of butterflies have been found, and the "Höhlenlaufkäfer" (a kind of beetle) - "Arctaphaenops muellneri" is unique in the world. In the just recently discovered giant Klara cave the largest stalagmite in Austria was found. Hikers who want to experience wilderness are in the right place in the Kalkalpen region. They can hike optimally marked hiking, biking and theme trails of mountain summits with great views, introspective mountain pastures, and colourful meadows of flowers.

WATER DETERMINES THE LANDSCAPE

You will find over 800 springs in the Kalkalpen National Park. The numerous, nature-orientated brooks and rivers in the region bring a colourful multitude of insects, amphibians, fish and birds.

Large and small natural wonders are formed by this element of moisture: the kilometre-long conglomerate gorge of Steyr which is mostly still left in its natural state between Frauenstein and Grünburg, (intermittent) karst springs such as the "Teufelskirche" which originates near St. Pankraz under a free-standing rock bridge, or the source of the Pießling in Roßleithen, the largest



Sun rise at Engerdinkar.



Jörglgraben in the Hintergebirge.



The imposing golden eagle.



Balcony trail a

and most impressive karst spring in Upper Austria.

One of the most beautiful water wonders is the ravine world in the Reichraminger Hintergebirge (mountain range). Its heart is the "Große Schlucht" (Large Ravine), an epigenetic breakthrough: an unhurried stream buried itself in softer layers of soil; as soon as it reached harder rocks, it had to stay with its selected route. Thus, it milled a 200 metre deep, "ravine arch" into the dolomite rocks – an obstacle which the woodcutters once had to cross on dizzyingly high wooden bridges.

THE EISENSTRASSE (IRON ROAD)

The Eisenstraße runs around the Kalkalpen National Park. Along this road you find many signs of a great past. Through the centuries, iron from the streams and rivers of Kalkalpen National Park region was turned into sickles, scythes, blades or knives.

You can still see the former prosperity which the iron trade brought to the

blacksmiths and hammer mill owners, at the stately hammer mill homes, the iron and wheat stores and the richly adorned fronts of the cities and the markets. Jew's harp shops, feitel manufacturers, nailers or scythe shops invite you for a visit.

FIRST PORT OF CALL ARE THE THREE NATIONAL PARK VISITOR'S CENTRES

At the **national park centre in Molln**, an adventure exhibition informs you about the mysterious and hidden world of water. Play stations, films and reliefs provide you with insight into the wildest landscapes in Austria.

At the **national park Panoramatum at the adventure mountain Wurbauerkogel in Windischgarsten**, the exhibition "Faszination Fels" (Fascinating Rocks) informs you about everything extraordinary, special and exceptional regarding the plant and animal world situated above the forest borders. At the rocky cinema, you

will be able to see unique pictures of golden eagles and wallcreepers, as well as the craggy mountain world of the Kalkalpen. From the crystal-like glass tower, you can admire the mountain world of the Kalkalpen National Park region with more than 21 two-thousand-metre high mountains.

At the **national park visitor's centre in Ennstal in Reichraming**, you can gain interesting insights into the forest wilderness of the Kalkalpen National Park. You can learn about bush drums in the forest, the forest apartments, the wood eaters, and the return of forest wilderness in the Kalkalpen National Park.

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Eat well and sleep well in the Kalkalpen National Park Region

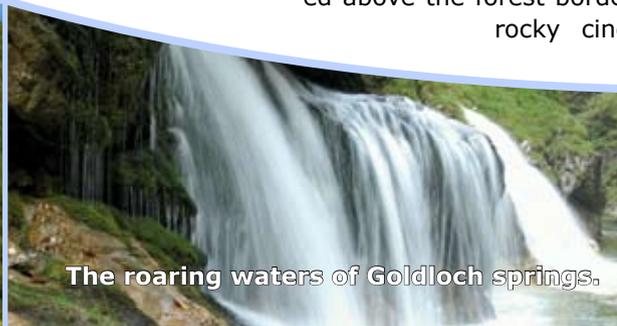
31 quality-inspected hotels and guest houses are situated in the Kalkalpen National Park region. From farms for children to cosy bed-and-breakfasts, as well as guesthouses and the National Park Hotel Villa Sonnwend in Windischgarsten provide you with a broad selection of places to stay. Attractive hiking packages, shared adventure programmes, taxis which take you from town to town; the cooperation with the Kalkalpen National Park and with mountain guides ensures an adventuresome, safe and relaxing hiking holiday.

www.wanderspezialisten.at

www.nationalparkregion.com www.kalkalpen.at



Trail at the Sensengebirge.



The roaring waters of Goldloch springs.

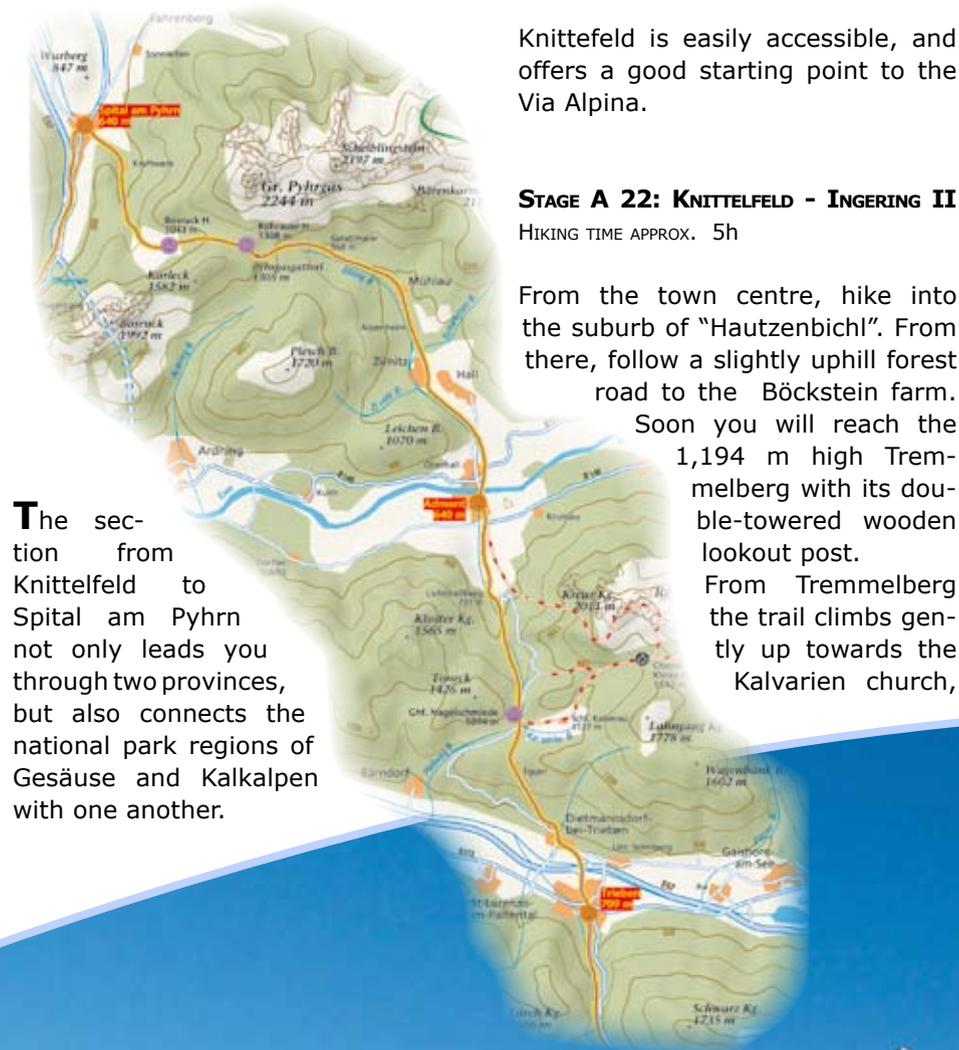


Forest wilderness at the national park.



Winter landscape at Engerdinkar.

On foot through two national park regions



The section from Knittelfeld to Spital am Pyhrn not only leads you through two provinces, but also connects the national park regions of Gesäuse and Kalkalpen with one another.

Knittelfeld is easily accessible, and offers a good starting point to the Via Alpina.

STAGE A 22: KNITTELFELD - INGERING II

HIKING TIME APPROX. 5h

From the town centre, hike into the suburb of "Hautzenbichl". From there, follow a slightly uphill forest road to the Bockstein farm.

Soon you will reach the 1,194 m high Tremmelberg with its double-towered wooden lookout post.

From Tremmelberg the trail climbs gently up towards the Kalvarien church,

and onto the pilgrimage trail down to Seckau with the Benedictine Abbey. The road leads you through a small forest, down into the Gradenbach valley, where you cross the road to the stone mill at the "Moar" grange (810 m). Towards the west you continue up a slightly inclined road along the village street, until you reach a small chapel at the "Weigand" grange. Turn left into a forest trail which you follow until just before the "Kielbrein" grange. At this point you will be able to enjoy a superb view of the villages of Bischofffeld and Ingering II with its Wasserberg Palace. Branching to the left again, you walk through a cool forest trail down to the former "Braunwirt" Tavern (785 m) and the

rural road, in the direction of Schatzenberg, until you reach the village of Ingering II.

STAGE A 23: INGERING II - TRIEBEN

Hiking time approx. 9h 30min (shortcut possible by bus, from Braun Tavern.)

From Ingering II, follow the forest road to the Ingering valley, where the 02 Zentralalpenweg (Central Alpine Trail) joins the 08 Eisenwurzenweg. At the Prater bridge, keep to the right until you reach the Reicherhube grange. Along the roadway and the Ingering river, you continue slightly upwards until you arrive at Lake Ingering which lies at an altitude of 1,221 m. The trail continues along the right bank of the lake. Further on, the trail becomes narrower and steeper. The

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numerous larches swerve around dwarf pines and bilberries. Only one track leads up to the Kettentörl at 1,864 m, whereby the last stretch is quite steep.

From Kettentörl, the trail continues down into the Ketten valley and via the Kettentalalm onto a forest trail in the Hinteren Trieben valley. At this point, the 02 and the 08 tracks split: the 02 continues on the forest trail to the south, along the Mödring stream to Mödringalm, and finally, to Triebener Törl. The Via Alpina, on the other hand, follows the 08 out of the Trieben valley to the Braun Tavern. From the tavern it is possible to travel to Trieben by bus, in order to shorten this long stage.

STAGE A 24: TRIEBEN - ADMONT

Hiking time approx. 3h 20min

Up to the village of Dietmannsdorf the Via Alpina follows the 08 trail on the main road and crosses the Murtal motorway. Keep to the right past the beautiful small church, and follow the street up, which soon opens into a forest trail.

Stay on this

trail until you reach the settlement of Obersonnberg. After a short ascent over pastures you arrive at the roadway near the farm "Egger", and in an easy uphill climb, you reach the "Kaiserau" main road. The broad path to Nagelschmiede Tavern cannot be missed. Right behind the tavern, left of the street, you will find a track that leads you slightly up the Lichtmess stream. Finally, you arrive at a forest trail which takes you to Kaiserau main road again. Soon you will reach the place-name sign for Admont, which marks the village not only as an European village but also a national park community. Continue hiking easily through the district called "Paradies" until you reach the centre of Admont.

A visit to the national park house in Admont, as well as to the monastery with the largest library in the world is definitely worth your while.

STAGE A 25: ADMONT - SPITAL AM

PYHRN

Hiking time approx. 5h 30min

In Admont, follow the main street in the direction of "Hall". Right after the bridge, turn right and cross the

Essling stream. Follow the course of the stream along this beautiful forest trail northwards. The Via Alpina leads you on the salt trail through the forest to a small salt inhalation centre. At the point where the salt trail opens up to the road, keep to the right and then turn left, shortly afterwards. Passing the "Alpenheim", the Via Alpina continues to the power station in Mühlau. At the parking lot, the Via Alpina turns to the left and follows the forest trail. Here you can take one last look at Hall, Admont and the mountains of Gesäuse. Continue through the forest until you reach the "Pyhrgasgatterl", the provincial border between Styria and Upper Austria. On a gently rolling trail, follow the track to the Rohrauerhaus, which is very idyllic and located at the foot of the Großen Pyhrgas.

From the Rohrauerhaus continue down the forest trail in the direction of the Bosruckhütte. A steep track provides a shortcut and within approx. 30-45 minutes you will have reached the popular lodge. Shortly after this, there is a worthwhile alternative through the "Dr. Vogelgesang" ravine. It is the second long-

est ravine in Austria. At the power station of Spital am Pyhrn, the trail from the ravine joins up with the roadway from the Bosruckhütte. It is a leisurely hike to the town centre of Spital am Pyhrn.

Kalkalpen National Park is in the direct proximity of Spital am Pyhrn. By bus or by train (both depart from the train station), you can easily reach Windischgarten, in order to visit the Kalkalpen National Park – the park with the most forest and the most water in Austria, as well as to experience its extensive information programme.

Both from Spital am Pyhrn as well as from Windischgarten, you have excellent train connections to Selzthal or Kirchdorf an der Krems. Or you can continue on the Via Alpina to the next national park, the Berchtesgaden National Park (15 daily stages).

OESTERREICHISCHER ALPENVEREIN

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Experience nature at all times of year!

Nature is always in season – even in Germany’s sole alpine national park. The independent development of animals and plants are, naturally, a top priority in the conservation area around the Watzmann and the Königssee. But this is not all: visitors can gain unique experiences in the wilderness, and become acquainted with the big and small secrets of the golden eagle, woodchucks and co.

The Berchtesgaden National Park is located in the south-eastern part of Bavaria, and borders on the Austrian province of Salzburg. It covers an area of around 210 square kilometres, and is exclusively public property. In 2008 the national park will celebrate its 30th

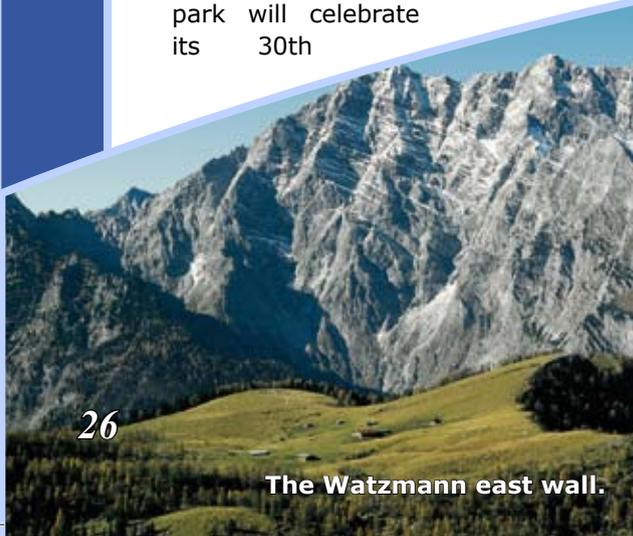
birthday. However, the history of nature conservation in this region goes back further: After the establishment of the “Vereins zum Schutze und zur Pflege von Alpenpflanzen” (association for the protection and care of alpine plants) in 1900, a special area for plants was established, and in 1921 it was designated the Königssee nature reserve. In 1978, the dream of many nature lovers and nature conservationists came true: the Berchtesgaden National Park was finally created. The primary objective is to protect nature and conserve it in its original state, according to the motto: let nature be nature. That, however, is not all: research, environmental

education, recreation and monument maintenance are likewise all the tasks of the conserved area.

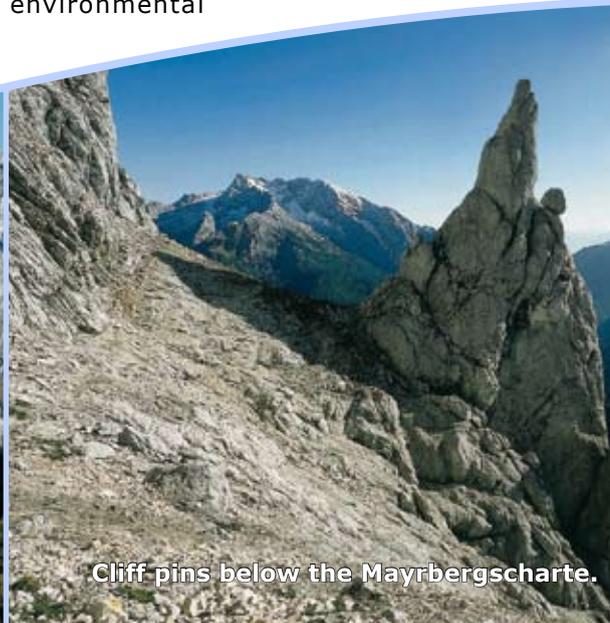
In order to keep pollution for flora and fauna as low as possible, recreation on foot is the main focus. Around 230 kilometres of hiking trails and alpine tracks encompass Berchtesgaden National Park: from the Reiteralp via the Hochkalter, Steinernes Meer (Stony Sea) and the Watzmann, to the Funtenseetauern and the Hohen Göll. There is something for everybody here, regardless of whether you are an ambitious mountain climber, leisurely hiker, or a family with children. Numerous open mountain huts at the edge of the trail invite you to

take a break, and offer big and small refreshments with typical products. This is how Berchtesgaden National Park tastes like!

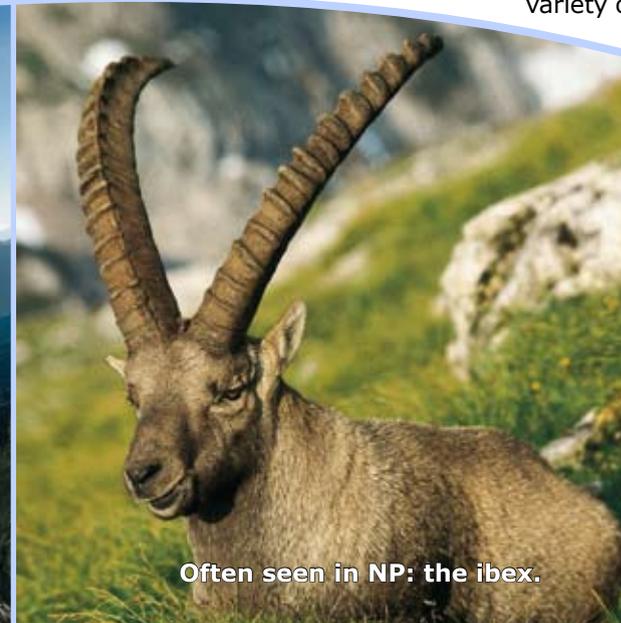
The national park is filled with a remarkable diversity of different species. You may come across deer, red deer, chamois, ibexes, woodchucks, arctic hares, grouses, as well as the “King of the Skies”, the golden eagle. The majestic bird of prey plays a special role, and is the centre of interest for many visitors. In Klausbach valley there are three adventure trails where you can find information about the “King of the Skies”. In the national park there are five breeding pairs; in the entire alpine area there are an estimated 1,300 pairs. The variety of flora is also



The Watzmann east wall.



Cliff pins below the Mayrbergscharte.



Often seen in NP: the ibex.



amazing: apart from alpine roses, snow roses, and gentians, there are also very rare plants such as the Swiss mannschild, lady's slipper, and the Pyrenees "Drachenmaul".

A special geological feature is the Wimbach valley – one of three main valleys in the national park. It is situated between the massifs of Watzmann and Hochkalter, and is of unique beauty: the deeply cut Wimbach ravine, high rising steep faces on both sides, as well as the up to 300 metres thick flow of detritus – so-called "Gries" – are the distinctive elements of this grand mountain world. The Königssee is world famous, and is situated in the König valley with the St. Bartholomä's peninsula. The Königssee is one of the cleanest lakes in Germany. Since 1909 only environmentally-friendly electric boats have been using the lake. The characteristically green colour comes from the limestone, which has dissolved in the water, and been broken down by the sunlight that shines into

the lake. The Klausbach valley is the third main valley in the national park. It is around seven kilometres long, and stretches from Lake Hinter to the Hirschbichl Pass – the border with neighbouring Austria. In the Klausbach valley, an "Alm Erlebnisbus" (mountain pasture adventure bus) is operated during the summer months, and comfortably transports hikers and friends of nature to and from the national park.

Around 1,5 million guests visit the national park each year. This large interest confirms its extraordinary attractions: for locals, holiday-goers, people searching for rest and recovery, researchers, mountain athletes, families, children and friends of nature of any age. The whole year round, the national park offers its guests a colourful programme: from horse-carriage rides in winter to bat hikes, grill evenings around the camp fire and guided tours in the valley of the eagle. The hiking brochures are available in the Berchtesgaden national park house as well as in the tourist information centres in the surrounding villages. More infor-

mation is available at the address: www.nationalpark-berchtesgaden.de.

In 2011, Berchtesgaden will be gaining another attraction: the "Haus der Berge" (house of mountains) – a centre for environmental information and education at the heart of Berchtesgaden. Apart from a diverse exhibition area and a large outdoor adventure area, the emphasis is on environmental education for young and old.

Natural experiences at all times of year: welcome to Berchtesgaden National Park. We are looking forward to your visit!

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Projects in Berchtesgaden National Park

Berchtesgaden National Park takes part in numerous national and international projects. Some are solely carried out by the national park, others are carried out together with universities and agencies, other nature conservation areas or project partnerships. At the moment experts are working on climate change projects, research on bats, moths and small butterflies and a forest development plan. In addition, experts are working on projects such as ALPENCOM (Alp Environmental Communication) or HABITALP (Alpine Habitat Diversity). In this way the national park is contributing to the understanding of connections and the protection of other regions.

www.nationalpark-berchtesgaden.de



View of Königssee.



Children's group at the Hintersee information stand.



Magnificent colours of the alpine rose.



Kärlingerhaus at Funtensee.

Via the Steinerne Meer (Stony Sea) to the Königssee

An imposing Via Alpina section is waiting for you: on the stages A 39 – 41, over the sparse “Stony Sea”, to the beautiful, crystal-clear Königssee, into which the eastern face of the Watzmann dives vertically.

Starting point of the tour is Maria Alm. You can travel comfortably to Saalfelden by train, and take the postbus to the idyllic village with Salzburg’s highest church tower.

STAGE A 39: MARIA ALM - RIEMANNHAUS

Hiking time approx. 4h 30min

Follow the Griess stream from Maria Alm to the “Griessbachwinkel”. On the asphalt road, the trail continues slightly upwards, with the Stony Sea in front of

you. At the fork in the road, keep to the left and follow the signposts in the direction of the Riemannhaus. After hiking a lengthy part, you will reach the upper parking lot and a barrier. This is where the nature conservation area of Kalkhochalpen begins. The vegetation becomes increasingly lighter, and there is a view of the Breithorn to your left, and the marvellous Sommerstein to your right.

Continue over the “Sandten”, where the trail becomes increasingly steep. To your left, a path forks to the “Fürstenbrünnl” and to the “Bilgerirast”, a spring where you can re-fill your water bottles.

At the bottom end of the goods cable lift a very steep ascent to the

Riemannhaus begins. Numerous stone steps and wire ropes aid you in your ascent, which is partially exposed. Once you have passed the “Ramseidner Scharte”, however, you are practically right at the foot of the Sommerstein, also known as the “Eule” (owl) because its caves appear like big eyes.

The Sommerstein is a popular climbing mountain, whereby the route difficulty ranges between 8 and 9. From the back of the Riemannhaus (2,177 m), you can easily climb up the Sommerstein in about 20 minutes. The view is magnificent: on the one side the green forests of Maria Alm, the Saalfelden basin and Zell am See stretch out, and on the other side: the wasteland of the stony high plateau.

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An excursion to the Schönfeldspitze, with its large wooden cross that is well known beyond the borders of Salzburg, is definitely worth your while. The ascent over the Schönegg and the Wurmkopf is fabulous, but you have to be sure-footed and not afraid of heights. Shortly below the summit of Schönfeldspitze, there is a very exposed and therefore difficult part to conquer, but the view is absolutely magnificent.

STAGE 40: RIEMANNHAUS - KÄRLINGERHAUS

Hiking time approx. 2h 30min

The trail from the Riemannhaus to the Kärlingerhaus is the shortest crossing over the Stony Sea to Berchtesgaden. The trail is prominent with red-white-red markings. With snow and fog, however, it can sometimes be difficult to find your way. After a light climb, you soon reach the highest point of the stage at the "Salzburger Kreuz", at 2,135 m. From here you have a great view of the

Rotwandl (2,231 m), which gets its name from its distinctly red colour: it is red jura limestone.

Soon you reach the "Schwarze Lacke", a small waterhole to the right of the trail. After the long march across the treeless terrain, there is a dense forest area at the Stony Sea. At a height of 1,787 m you cross the border from Austria to Germany and at the same time the border with the Berchtesgaden National Park. Through the forest you reach Lake Funten (Funtensee). Along the bank, you will soon reach the Kärlingerhaus (1,630 m).

STAGE A 41: KÄRLINGERHAUS - KÖNIGSSEE

Hiking time approx. 4h

The descent from the Kärlingerhaus to St. Bartholomä via the "Saugasse" is a well-built, well-marked and popular trail. At the first fork in the road, keep to the right in the direction of the "Ofenloch". At the waterhole of the dilapidated Oberlahner Alm, you are able to enjoy a small break. The next fork in the road goes left onto the trail no.

421 with its difficult ascent to the Siegeretplatte (you must be sure-footed and have no fear of heights), and subsequently the descent into the Wimbach valley. After St. Bartholomä you have to continue onward on trail no. 412, in the direction of Saugasse. Shortly thereafter you will notice 36 narrow, jagged hairpin bends which descend down the Saugasse. At the end, there is a distinctive, rather crudely carved crucifix, bearing the name "Foaster Herrgott".

A very lovely stretch follows through sparse, untouched beech wood, which leads you past a lodge, the Schrainbach Holzstube - a wooden cabin used to serve as a refuge for woodcutters. Shortly before the end of the descent you cross the Schrain stream, and after another sharp bend, you will see a thundering waterfall. Finally you reach the alluvial fans of St. Bartholomä, cross another distinguishing debris cone, and return to civilisation with its taverns, boat moorings, and the church.

All of this lies at the foot of the impressive, nearly 2,000 m high Watzmann east wall, the high-

est rock cliff in the eastern Alps. It was first climbed in 1881 by Johan GRILL Sr. The baroque church in St. Bartholomä was inaugurated on 25.08.1134, making it the oldest church in the Berchtesgaden region. Possibilities for accommodation are reserved only for climbers of the Watzmann east wall in a lodge of the DAV (the German Alpine association), rest stops can be found in the restaurant and fish-smokehouse.

With a boat you can easily cross the Königssee and reach the village of Königssee.

Busses regularly run to Berchtesgaden, where there are good train connections.

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Hohe Tauern National Park

Exciting in so many ways!

With 1,800 km² of surface area, the Hohe Tauern National Park is the largest nature conservation area in the Alps. It is one of the most awesome landscapes on earth, and is a Noah's Ark for thousands of animals and plants. In May, there are colourful spring flowers waving in lush green meadows, providing a unique contrast to the summits (over 100 three-thousand metre peaks), which are still deeply blanketed in snow. During the hot summer months, an unbelievable life force emanates from the Hohe Tauern. The mountain meadows are a unique, dazzling sea of flowers, with innumerable butterflies. The ravens perform adventurous flight demonstration. The majestic golden eagle glides

over thundering mountain streams; busy woodchucks can be seen when hiking in the national park. The beautiful colours of the forests and the unique view entices many hikers to come in the autumn in order to observe nature preparing for the upcoming winter.

Another special feature is the cultivated landscape of the region. Humans, who have been living here for centuries, live in harmony with the nature of the landscape all the way up the mountain valleys. Therefore you can still see many open cabins and lodges, and enjoy traditional treats of the region.

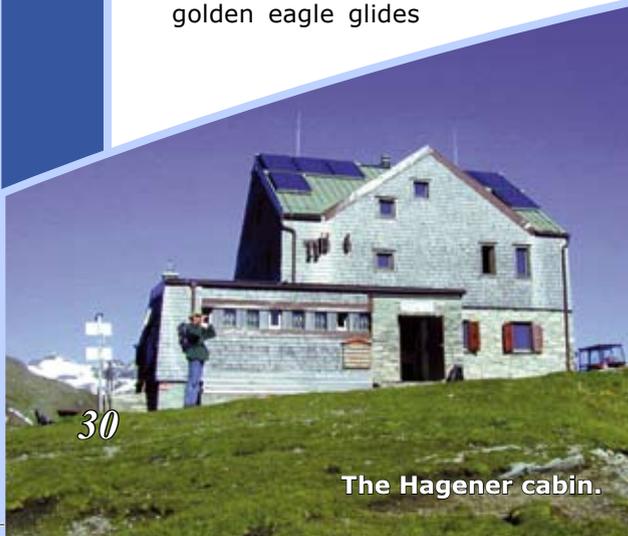
25 YEARS OF HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK

25 years ago, a law passed by the provincial government of Carinthia established the Carinthian part of the Hohe Tauern National Park. Salzburg and Tyrol followed suit. At the time, a lot of pioneer work was necessary – Hohe Tauern was not a completely untouched and unsettled region, but an area that had grown, in both natural and cultivated landscapes, for centuries.

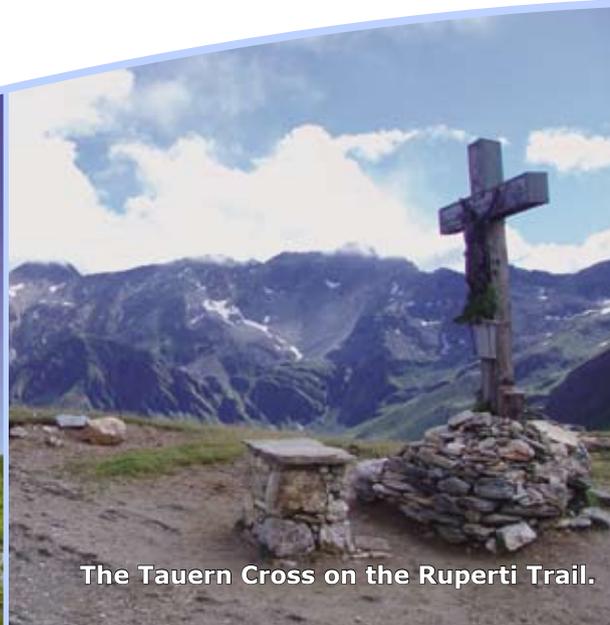
Conflicts between conservation and exploitation of nature were pre-determined.

NATIONAL PARK PIONEER, ALBERT WIRTH

The foundation stone for the conservation area was established by the wood industrialist, Albert WIRTH. He bought a 4,072 hectare large area on the Carinthian side of the Großglockner, and donated this area to the Austrian Alpine Association in 1918. There was one condition: the Alpine Association should establish a national park there. The background for this donation was clear: tourist and economical development in the Alps had already begun at the beginning of the last-century. Technological progress enabled projects which no one would have dared dream of before. The "Hochalpenstraße" (High Alpine



The Hagener cabin.



The Tauern Cross on the Ruperti Trail.



En-route in Dösen Valley.



Der F...

Road) of the Großglockner or the Kaprun power station are a testimony of this period.

A cable car to the Johannisberg was planned, and a parking lot for alpine tourists was supposed to be developed in the area of Gamsgrube. With his donation, WIRTH wanted to protect the Großglockner and Pasterze (the longest glacier in Austria and the eastern Alps) from such a mistreatment.

Dedicated individuals, nature conservationists and alpine associations demanded more protection for the glacier region of Hohe Tauern over the years. A "nature conservation park" was demanded, as was a Tauern park or national park – which were only known from the USA at the time.

THREE-PROVINCE AGREEMENT OF HEILIGENBLUT

In 1971, the provincial governments of Carinthia, Salzburg, and Tyrol signed the "Agreement of Heiligenblut" – a

three-province agreement - which stipulated the establishment of a national park in Hohe Tauern. Once again, there were power station and cable car projects which lie in weight on the cusp of the conservation area and which promised the region tourist development, prosperity, and jobs – but also the destruction of nature.

CARINTHIA IS A FORERUNNER

Although all three provinces were in agreement about the political convention of the "Heiligenblut Declaration", the legal basis for the establishment of a national park developed at different speeds. Carinthia took an important step in 1981, when it regulated the establishment of a national park on 186 square kilometres in the Schober and Glockner mountain ranges. This "solo attempt", however, was criticized because people feared that the base consensus of the Heiligenblut Declaration could be in danger. Salzburg followed in 1983, Tyrol enacted its national park law in 1991.

Today, pride prevails in possessing

one of the most valuable landscapes in Europe. However, 25 years ago, scepticism and rejection with which was met the planned conservation area, was immense: concerned land owners, mayors in the planned national park villages, hunters, farming communities – the committed proponents of the national park idea had to work very hard in order to convince the masses at innumerable meetings. The fear that the national park could lead to restrictions for hunters, farmers or climbers was very large.

IMPULSES FOR THE REGION

A breakthrough came when the national park activists took a message from Vienna to the Hohe Tauern: in 1982, the state provided subsidies for the national park region for the first time. From the beginning it was clear that a conservation area would also bring impulses for regional development. Model regions and projects were created, the first infrastructure projects were discussed. In 1983, the "Gletscherweg Pasterze" (glacier

hiking trail) was opened – and with it, an extensive information infrastructure for the visitors of the conservation area.

Today, the Hohe Tauern National Park (1,836 square meters) is the largest nature conservation area in the European Alps. A natural landscape, basically untouched in the core zone, providing with many rare animals and plants a secure habitat. A treasure, of which with many people are proud and which still need to be protected.

(quoted from: Nationalpark Hohe Tauern – Spring 2006 – 25 Jahre Nationalparks in Österreich (25 years of national parks in Austria), Claudia Lagler)

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er Reißbeck balcony trail.



Lake Dösen.

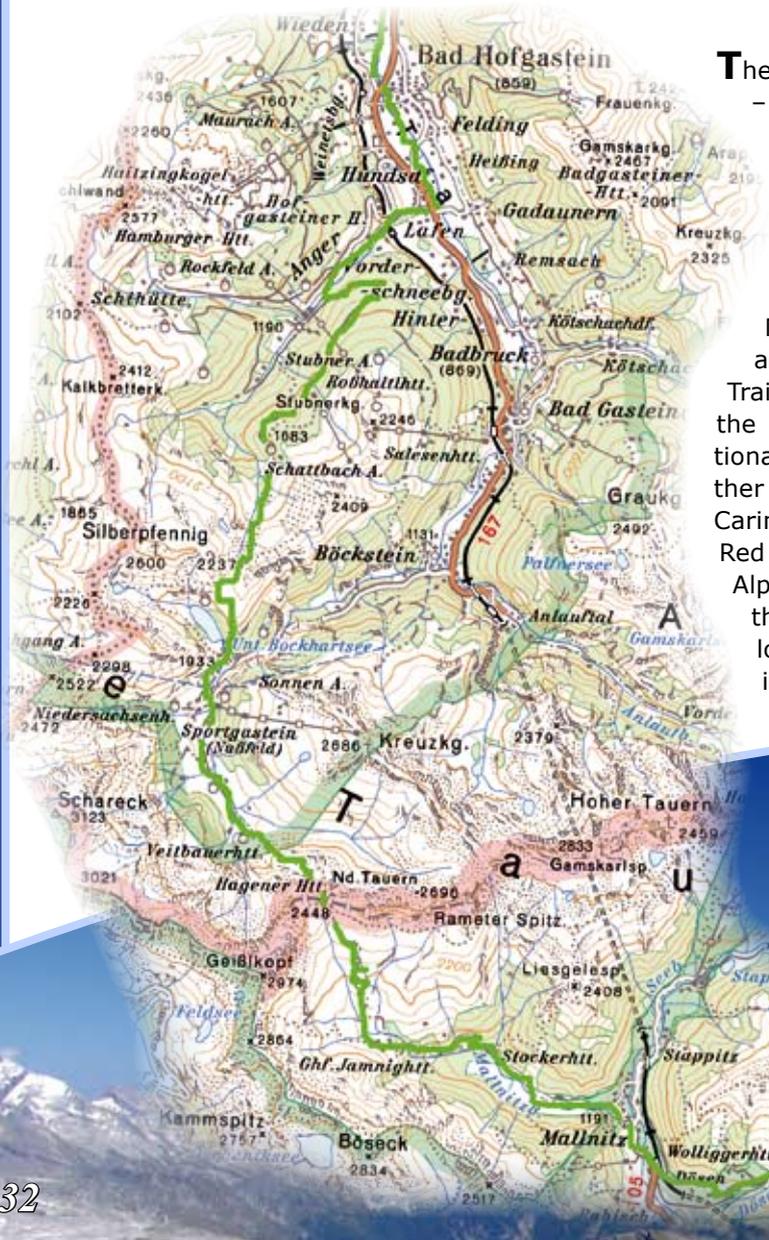


The Arthur-von-Schmidt house.



Golden autumn.

Over the Water and the Meteorological Divide to the South



The Rupert Trail – the Austrian long-distance hiking trail no. 10 – is an optimal connection from the Berchtesgaden National Park along the Purple Trail of Via Alpina to the Hohe Tauern National Park and further on to Naßfeld in Carinthia along the Red Trail of the Via Alpina. It completes the circle of the long-distance hiking trails.

FROM THE KÖNIGSSEE TO BAD HOFGASTEIN

From Berchtesgaden, the Königssee and St. Bartholomä, you climb – following the Purple Trail of Via Alpina in the reverse direction – up to the Kärlingerhaus and over the broad, sparse plateau of the Steinernen Meer (Stony Sea) to the Riemannshaus, from where you can enjoy a breath-taking view of the green Saalfelden basin all the way to Zell am See and the Kitzsteinhorn. After the descent to Maria Alm, exit the Via Alpina and follow the Rupert Trail southwards.

A long ascent leads you to the Statterhaus on the Hundstein, from

which the descent to Taxenbach follows. The Kitzloch ravine is also very interesting, through which the trail to the Rauriser valley and Rauris leads.

In order to reach the Gasteiner valley, a further ascent to the Seebachscharte is necessary, before you descend across the Biberalm and hike down to Bad Hofgastein. Bad Hofgastein is easily accessible by train from Schwarzach St. Veit. Mallnitz, on the other side of the Alpine main ridge, is also accessible by train. The car-train through the Tauern tunnel allows you to bring your private car.

INFORMATION

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BAD HOFGASTEIN – SPORTGASTEIN

Hiking time approx. 7h 30min

From Bad Hofgastein, the trail first runs parallel to the Gastein arch to Anger or Lafen, forks to the right from Anger valley train station, uses a small stretch of road, which leads past the Vorder- and Hinter-schneeberg. Soon it turns left, and continues in a winding trail on the north-western flank of the Stubnerkogel.

The trail continues to the Schattbachalm and over the Mahdleitental to the Miesbichlscharte, from which you descend to Lake Unteren Bockhart. *(In poor weather conditions, it is possible to stay at the Lake Bockhart cabin or the Viehauseralm overnight. Otherwise, you must follow the Naßfelder arch until you reach Böckstein or take the bus.)*

From the Bockhartseehütte, you climb down to Sportgastein (1,598m).

SPORTGASTEIN – HAGENER HÜTTE – MALLNITZ

Hiking time approx. 6h 30min

From Sportgastein you climb up the Naßfelder arch over the Naßfelderalm and the Hinter-naßfeldalm to the Veitbauerhütte (hut). The trail becomes increasingly steep and stony, and it is an 800 m ascent to the Hagener Hütte (2,488 m) on the Mallnitz Tauern, on the provincial borders of Salzburg – Carinthia in the Hohe Tauern National Park. From the Hagener Hütte, you have to turn down to the "Tauernkreuz" (cross), which was created in memory of an innkeeper who lost her life to a bolt of lightning. Further on, following the serpentines over the "Laschgwand", you reach the Jamnighütte Tavern. Here you reach the forest, and a few moments later, the winter bridge, where you stay to the right of the Mallnitz stream, and directly reach the national park centre called "BIOS".

FURTHER TO NASSFELD ON THE RED ROUTE OF VIA ALPINA

The final seven stages of the Ruperti Trail from Mallnitz towards the south are more challenging. In four hours, you hike uphill to the Arthur-von-Schmidt Haus which is located on the banks of the romantic Lake Dösner. The Reißbeck – balcony trail starts here. First, you go over the Seeschartl to the isolated Lake Pfaffenberger, and then through the boulders over the Kaponigtörl and Zwenbergtörl to the Mooshütte. Proceed across the RieKentörl and past the Reißbeck Lakes to the Reißbeckhütte.

Over the Roßalmscharte, you reach the Kohlmaierhütte (hut) and the roadways to St. Paul as well as the district capital of Spittal an der Drau. Afterwards, the Goldeck, with its magnificent view, is ascended and you walk through the Staff area as well as the Gajacher Alm to Techendorf. Here you reach Lake Weißen and cross the Naggl Alm to reach St. Lorenzen in the Gitsch valley, as well as Hermagor.

In order to reach the Sonnenalpe on the Naßfeld, you have to go via Möderndorf and the Kühweger Alm up to the Kühweger Törl and over the Watschiger Alm down to the Naßfeld Pass, the connection point to the Red Route of Via Alpina. In five daily stages from the Naßfeld, you will reach Trenta in the Triglav National Park, concluding your round trip after 60 days, through all five national parks in the three countries of Slovenia, Austria, and Germany.

(Text: Extract from: Käfer, F. (2007): Österreichischer Weitwanderweg Nr. 10 – Rupertiweg (Austrian Long-Distance Hiking Trail No. 10). Vom Böhmerwald zu den Karnischen Alpen (From the Bohmer Forest to the Carnic Alps). Austrian Alpine Association, section long-distance hikers (Hrsg.), Vienna.

All Via Alpina – stage descriptions can be found on the website www.via-alpina.org.

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Correct Behaviour in the Mountains

These rules were published by the „International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation“ (UIAA) and the „Verband Alpiner Vereine Österreichs“ (VAVÖ) for the protection of hikers and of nature.

- 1. The physical suitability and the mountain experience of all participants – young and old – must be checked before every tour. Mountain hiking often requires sure footedness and no fear of heights.**
- 2. Each mountain tour should be carefully planned by means of tour descriptions and maps. Also information from Alpine clubs and people with local knowledge, such as mountain guides and hut guardians, can be decidedly helpful.**
- 3. Appropriate equipment and clothing are necessary when mountain hiking: above all solid high shoes with anti-slip soles. Since the weather in the mountains often changes rapidly, protection from rain and cold is also very important.**
- 4. For reasons of safety, before starting, the route and destination of the tour, as well as the expected time of return should be communicated to the hut guardian or hotel owner, or to friends.**
- 5. The pace must be adapted to the weakest members of the group. Walk particularly slowly at the beginning of the tour. It is essential that you observe the other participants, in order to recognize signs of exhaustion in time.**
- 6. Do not leave marked paths. In order to avoid falls, maximum attention is also necessary on easy land. Be careful when crossing steep grass slopes, especially when it is wet. Crossing steep snow fields or glaciers is particularly dangerous.**
- 7. Be extremely careful to avoid dislodging stones which could fall and injure other mountain hikers. Areas with falling stones should be crossed as quickly as possible and without stopping one person at the time.**
- 8. If the weather changes, fog appears, the path becomes too difficult or is in a bad state, you should turn back. This is nothing to be ashamed of, rather a sign of being sensible.**
- 9. If there is an accident, stay calm. In many cases, it is possible to help yourselves. If this is not possible, try to call for help by means of mobile phone, shouting, light signalling or by waving large pieces of clothing. An injured person should normally be left in the place of the accident and must never be left alone.**
- 10. Mountains are there for everybody. It is a duty of every mountain hiker to help to maintain them and keep them clean. Bring back your waste with you to the valley, do not harm wildlife.**

International emergency call: 112

Source: UIAA/VAVÖ

