



TRIP DOSSIER

AUSTRIA



'The Mountains and Lakes Track'

From £495 per person (land only)

(seasonal variants)

Single Supplement: From £55

Daily from May through to October

Grade: B

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Introduction

Austria is renowned for its superb hiking routes, beautiful and varied scenery, equable climate and stunning floral displays with the Salzkammergut area being at the heart of its alpine region. The Salzkammergut area, just east of Salzburg, is situated in the most beautiful heart of Austria and is a natural playground for walkers of all abilities. The entire area has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its rich green Alps, impressive rock faces plunging straight into the numerous crystal clear lakes and of course not forgetting the Dachstein Glacier beneath the towering Dachstein (2995m). Cable cars offer easy access to the high pastures so you can enjoy being immersed in the mountain scenery without overly exerting yourself on any challenging ascents. Salzkammergut has been a centre of European culture for thousands of years with centuries-old pilgrimage routes leading to charmingly traditional (as opposed to overly commercialised) towns such as Bad Ischl, St Wolfgang and Hallstatt, all offering a wide range of leisure activities, entertainment, culture and superb gastronomy!

This superb itinerary leads you between various traditional Salzkammergut towns, over high mountain passes and down to the panoramic lakeshore scenery this area is so renowned for. Longer days are interspersed with more relaxing lakeside walking that can be foreshortened if necessary using the excellent public transport system. But why 'bus it' when you can wander to your heart's content over hills that are alive with the sound of happy walkers!

Highlights:

- Start and end at the traditional spa town of Bad Ischl, renowned for its cultural entertainment and architecture.
- Witness the rare fauna on the Moosbach moors, the Dachstein Glacier and view the Watzmann (the highest mountain in Germany).
- Soak in the stunning lake scenery from Wolfgangsee to Hallstatter See.
- Visit the enchanting towns of St Wolfgang, Bad Goisern and Bad Aussee.
- Enjoy the challenge of traversing the peaks, away from the busier lower level routes, and the satisfaction of arriving on foot!

About the Country

History and Geography Austria is predominantly a mountainous country and is nearly 84,000km in area. It is bordered by eight countries! Many mountain areas are developed, there are trains, cable cars and other means of transportation. Austrian mountains are famous for climbing, skiing, snowboarding, biking, hiking and other recreational activities. After centuries of political instability Austria is now part of the EU and is a Federal Republic. Innsbruck is renowned as a cultural centre with numerous art treasures and many historic structures often bequeathed by the Hapsburg family – the Golden Roof, the Black Men bronze statues, the Imperial Court Palace and Ambras Castle. Salzburg is also nearby. This UNESCO world heritage site is also Mozart's birthplace and is home to a magnificent cathedral and the elegant Getreidegasse street.

Climate North of the Alps, the climate is almost continental, but the area still receives a lot of precipitation from the Atlantic ocean; south of the Alps, the climate is more Mediterranean. July and August are usually dry and hot (30°C). Autumn is dry but cooler than summer and can be the best time to go to the mountains.

Language German although English and French are widely understood.

A Typical Day on Trek

Routine As this trip is self-guided it is up to you whether you start early or have a little lie-in. We do however advise that it is good to start reasonably early in order to maximise the time available during the day and to cover a fair amount of ground allowing for inclement weather.

Trekking conditions Summer in the Alps is usually warm and dry. You can expect to be walking in shorts and T-shirts. Saying this, rain is possible (so waterproofs are essential), and you will need a warmer set of clothes for the evenings. Underfoot it is generally dry. You follow tracks and paths most

of the time, some of which are the old packhorse routes that linked the villages before the roads came through.

What you need to provide There is a full list of clothing and equipment at the end of this document..

Ecological considerations *We believe that we are one of the most ecologically aware tour operators. We ask for your full consideration and co-operation concerning all ecological matters, especially in the disposal of rubbish. Luckily the Austrians are a very clean and organised nation and litter along the paths is not a big problem. If you have any suggestions for improvements please inform us at Walks Worldwide on your return. It is with the tourists, the locals and the tour operators' co-operation that we can ensure that our tours are as eco-friendly as possible.*

Itinerary

Please be aware that although we will do our best to adhere to this itinerary occasionally events out of our control may prevent us from following the exact schedule. Please be assured that the clients' best interests will be foremost in any changes that may occur. A degree of flexibility is essential in travelling on such holidays!

Day 1. Fly from the airport of your choice into Salzburg (or Munich/Innsbruck) and transfer by private vehicle to the charming town of Bad Ischl. Bad Ischl is perfectly based to explore the villages, valleys and mountains, utilising the superb network of cable cars which start right from the village itself. The village is packed with cafes, restaurants and convivial bars and has a delightful atmosphere. And your hotel is the perfect base in the village! Emperor Franz Joseph I. and Empress Elisabeth were regular visitors to the spa town of Bad Ischl. Highly recommended is a visit to the Emperor's summer residence and a walk in the park. Allow about 1 hour for the visit. **Hotel, Bad Ischl, D**

Day 2. You begin your walk in the direction of the Kalvarienberg Church along Elisabethwaldweg until you reach Gasthof Pfandl. Follow the River Ischl and the Dammweg in the direction of Haiden / Strobl / Wirling. Continue to Gasthof Rega, on the Golfrundweg (in the forest), to the Branntweinhäusl. Ascend through the woods to Lake Schwarzensee. You then reach Moosbach – a truly wonderful highland moor, where you can spot rare flora & fauna. Go along the Valerieweg through the Burggrabenklamm (gorge); climb a wooden ladder up a rock face, secured using a steel rope, to an old retreat. You may also like to visit a place of pilgrimage called "Maria Klamm". Head towards Unterach and your hotel. En route it is possible to swim in Lake Schwarzensee – in the warm summer months, this idyllic & romantic lake, at an altitude of 715 metres, is warmed by the sun to a pleasant bathing temperature. A shorter route would be to follow Lake Attersee to Unterach or take the bus to Russbach which cuts the journey by about 7km (bus fare extra). There are several inns en route in which to enjoy a meal or drink. Distance about 17 km; walking time about 7 hours. Difference in altitude: 445m / 718m. **Hotel, Unterach, B,D**

Day 3. From your accommodation follow the Attersee Ostwanderweg, a winding road to Eisenau and on up to the Buchberghütte (1015m), between the two lakes of Mondsee & Attersee. In the height of summer there is a tavern here that provides welcome refreshment. Then continue in the direction of Scharfling. Walk along Karrenweg over the Scharfling Pass until you reach Batzenhäusl by the Lake Krottensee. Here you can enjoy a well earned rest. At Krottensee and Wolfgangsee you can take a dip. Then hike over Brunnwinkel to St. Gilgen where there is an interesting museum dedicated to musical instruments of the world. Walk along the lake promenade to Abersee and your hotel. A short-cut is possible by taking the bus from St Gilgen to Abersee (bus fare extra). From St. Gilgen to Abersee. Daily route - ca. 20km, 7 hours, difference in altitude 477 m / 1015 m. **Hotel, Abersee, B,D**

Day 4. Today you can enjoy the lake & mountain world of the Wolfgang area. Take a boat trip from Gschwendt to Strobl – then walk via the Zäpfensteig to Gasthof Mahdhäusl and between the mighty mountain peaks of the Sparber and Bleckwand to the Postalm. This is Europe's second largest high plateau and the largest alpine area (Alm) in Austria. Nature lovers will be astonished to see the variety of flora & fauna that the Postalm offers. Here you may have the chance of spotting deer or stag. Take a break in an original alpine hut or, a special culinary delight, try some alpine milk, alpine cheese and bacon from the alpine farmers. From the Wieslerhütte (refreshments available) descend to the valley along the Weissenbach stream and return to Strobl. Again there are various short cuts that can be made using local buses (fare extra). Daily route ca. 10 km, 3hours, difference in altitude 542/558m.

Alternatively you can take a 'day off'. Take the boat on Lake Wolfgang and enjoy a visit to St. Wolfgang and its church with the world famous Michael Pacher Altar. Also visit the White Horse Inn or take a journey on the cog-wheel-railway to the summit of the Schafberg (1760m) and enjoy the

magnificent panoramic views of the lakes & mountains of the Salzkammergut region. Return along the lake promenade via the Bürgl-Promenade to Strobl. This would take most of the day so please allow enough time to complete this and continue to Weissenbach. Please also allow enough time to purchase food and drink for the following day. **Hotel, Weissenbach, B,D**

Day 5. From Weissenbach take the path to Sulzaustube. Follow a good forestry road, then ascend the Bärenpfad. It is well-marked all the way and the highest point, the Bärenkogel, is at an altitude of 1,333 metres. There is a wonderful vantage point here with a bench inviting you to while away some time. The descent from Bärenkogel is sometimes very steep – it is helpful to have walking poles with you. Arrive in Goiserer Weissenbach and continue along the stream, past the famous Chorinskyklause. The historical Chorinsky Defile is 6.2 metres high & hewn from limestone without cement. From 1819 - 1850 it was used to transport the felled trees down into the valley. 16.500 m³ of water were dammed up with the felled trees. The gates were opened and within five minutes the water emptied and it washed the tree trunks downstream. Continue on your walk. Once in the valley head over the Traun-Brücke - bridge and along the Traunuferweg in the direction of Bad Goisern to your overnight accommodation. On arrival in Bad Goisern you can swim in the Parkbad Bad Goisern, an open-air pool open till 19.00.

Alternatively you can take the Post-bus to Bad Ischl and walk along the River Traun past the Katrin Cable Car Station to Lauffen and continue to Bad Goisern and your hotel. (bus fare extra.) Please note that there are NO inns for refreshment en route today. Daily route - ca. 19km, 8 hours, difference altitude 542 m / 1333 m. **Hotel, Bad Goisern, B,D**

Day 6. From your hotel walk along the Soleleitungsweg over the Gosauzwang to Hallstatt. The view of this idyllic village is bound to impress you – Hallstatt, is paradise in the Salzkammergut. Alexander von Humboldt named this pretty place, the most beautiful lakeside village in the world. Stroll through this wonderful village before continuing on your way along the waters edge to Hirschbrunn and Obertraun. In Obertraun turn right when you reach Winkl in the direction of Dachsteinhof, Brand and Reith till you reach the caves - Koppenbrüllerhöhle – in the shady valley of Koppental. Continue along the newly made track “Weg durch die Wildnis“ (‘path through the wilderness’) through the Koppentalwanderweg. This is a beautiful, if narrow, path through the romantic valley of Koppental with several signboards full of information about the natural features and the train track built in the 19th Century. Special attractions are the small suspension bridge over the River Koppen-Traun, the mighty avalanche ravines from which the Heights of Sarstein look down and the old train tunnel. In the hamlet of Sarstein head in the direction of the train station and continue into the centre of Bad Aussee and to your hotel. There are several places to stop for refreshment en route. If you want to spend the day in Hallstatt rather than walk you can spend the day here then take the boat from Hallstatt to Obertraun and then the train to Koppenbrüllerhöhle and on to Bad Aussee (boat and train fares extra). You can swim in the salt-water swimming pool at Bad Aussee on arrival which also has a sauna on site, open till late. The Kammerhof Museum in Bad Aussee is worth a visit showing the history of salt, the customs, traditions and folk music of the area and also caving. Visit the “Kaiserzimmer” or Emperor’s room with frescoes dating from 1442. Daily route - ca. 20km, 7 hours, difference altitude 502 m / 691 m. You have the possibility to take the train from Obertraun/Koppen to Bad Aussee. **Hotel, Bad Aussee, B,D**

Day 7. From Bad Aussee walk along the River Altausseeer Traun to the Erzherzog Johann Promenade, the Elisabeth Promenade and then the Klaus Maria Brandauer Promenade to Altaussee. Continue to the Seevilla to the Gasthof Blaa-Alm. Follow the track that goes downhill into the Rettenbachklamm valley. Continue through the ravine of the Rettenbachklamm and the Styrian-Upper Austrian county border with a steep descent to the Rettenbachalm. After 1 ½ hrs on a good forestry road you arrive back at Bad Ischl. Just before arriving into Bad Ischl, at the Gasthof Rettenbachmühle, a well-known restaurant for the locals, you will discover the gorge of the Rettenbach-Wildnis. The raging waters make for a good photo, especially after heavy rainfall or when the snows melts. A short cut is possible today by taking the Post Bus from Bad Aussee to Altaussee (fare extra). There are various inns en route you can stop at for refreshment. Daily route - ca. 20km, 8 hours, difference altitude 659 m / 894 m. **Hotel, Bad Ischl, B,D**

Day 8. Transfer back to the airport for your flight home. **B**

SALZBURG EXTENSIONS

Please enquire as to spending a few extra days in this beautiful Austrian town, based in a centrally located hotel. Highly recommended!



Practical Information

Passports and visas British Citizens do not need a visa, however they do need a valid passport.

Accommodation

**inns/hotels: All rooms are with shower/WC, TV and telephone.

Meals provided All breakfasts and dinners are included. Breakfasts are buffet style and dinners are three course meals (with three different choices) and usually hearty Austrian fare. You will either have time to buy your lunch to take with you for the day or you will be able to have lunch in a village or café. (they can usually provide sandwiches on request). Drinks are extra.

Local transport Transfers will be made by private taxi/bus to and from Salzburg airport (transfers from Munich and Innsbruck are also available). The public transport network is very efficient and it is easy to get around.

Baggage Your baggage is limited to about 20 kilos by most airlines. Please ensure that your baggage is clearly marked with your name, inside as well as outside, in case the labels get detached. We will be sending you a Walks Worldwide kitbag before departure which is ideal for the purpose.

Vaccinations and medical precautions No vaccinations are necessary for Austria and health problems in the area we visit are quite rare. The only "medical precaution" that you might like to take is a small first aid kit to cater for blisters, headaches, coughs, colds, etc. However it is always advisable to be up-to-date with your tetanus jabs. A high factor sun protection lotion is essential, as sunburn can be severe on hot days in thin mountain air. Water whilst on the trek is mostly from springs and is generally safe to drink.

Currency Euros. The exchange rate usually hovers around £1: €1.42. Please see www.xe.com. All major travellers' cheques and credit cards are accepted. Commission is not charged for changing cash or cheques, but shop around for the best rates (hotels usually have the worst rates). Tipping is rarely necessary as hotels, restaurants and bars are required by law to include a 15% service charge. Even taxi fares normally have a service charge included.

Electricity 220 volts AC, 50 Hz. As the socket outlets require continental plugs it is advisable to carry an adapter if you intend to bring any electrical items with British plugs.

Time Austria is one hour ahead of Greenwich Time (GMT+1). Daylight saving time starts in early spring and ends in late autumn.

Contact details It is not our policy to provide addresses and telephone numbers as, due to frequent changes in contact details, it is very difficult to provide an accurate list for all our tours. Your Final Joining Instructions, which you will receive 2 weeks prior to departure, will show any local contact details that are required for your tour. However we would be glad to provide you more details if you have a specific reason.

Mobile phones do work in Austria. If you have not used your mobile outside the UK before you will have to contact your operator to enable international calls. *Please ensure your phone is set for roaming if you are taking a mobile.* Please note that it is expensive to phone both to and out of a mobile when abroad. We do not however encourage mobile phone use whilst walking on any of our trips – out of courtesy to other clients please use your mobile phone discretely. If you do need to get in touch, or if anyone needs to get in touch with you, please contact the Walks Worldwide office (01524 242000) during office hours.

Tipping The usual courtesy tips can be left in restaurants as anywhere in Europe.

Things to buy Cheeses, irresistible chocolates, local handicrafts and sachertorte (if you can resist not eating it before you get home!).

Maps Local maps and general walking guides are available from Bad Ischl on arrival. If you want to purchase a map of the area ahead of time they are available at The Map Shop, 15 High Street, Upton-on-Severn, Worcs WR8 0HJ (Tel: 01684 593146) www.themapshop.co.uk or Stanfords at 12-14 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LP (Tel: 0207 836 1321) www.stanfords.co.uk.

Included in the price

- Transfers from Salzburg (preferred)/Munich/Innsbruck airports to/from Bad Ischl
- All accommodation.

- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Local assistance
- Maps and route notes
- Salzkammergut Visitors' card
- Welcome Schnapps
- Luggage Transfers
- Boat tickets on Day 4

Extra expenses

- Lunches
- Flights and taxes
- Travel Insurance.
- Drinks.
- Souvenirs and personal spending.
- Extra bus, train or boat ferries should short cuts be taken!

Flights Flights need to be arranged to either Salzburg (preferred airport with a transfer time of 55 minutes), Innsbruck (1 ¾ hours) or Munich (2 ½ hour). A number of airlines use regional airports. If you need assistance with booking flights we can help – an administration fee will be charged for this.

Clothing and Equipment Lists.

On trek you must not worry about how you look: comfort and protection against bad weather are of prime importance. Because mountain weather is so very variable, we recommend a number of thin layers rather than a few thick ones. Take old, well-worn clothes rather than rushing out to buy new ones, since they will probably get rough treatment on trek. We do not expect any really cold conditions, but please bear in mind that there might be chilly evenings and cooler conditions at high altitudes.

CLOTHING	NUMBER	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Walking boots	1 pair		Torch / spare batteries	
Casual shoes/sandals	1		Day pack	
Socks	3+		Camera, film & accessories	
Underwear	3+		A variety of plastic bags (Rucksacks are not waterproof)	
"T" shirts	3		Sunglasses	
Long trousers / skirt / trackies	1		Binoculars (optional)	
Short trousers	1		Washing & shaving kits	
Long sleeve shirt	1		Water Bottles 2 litres	
Light sweater / inner fleece layer	1		First aid kit, with blister protection	
Water / wind proof jacket	1		Walking Poles, (optional but recommended)	
Water/wind proof trousers	1			
Thermal underwear	Optional			
Sunhat and woolly hat	1			
Warm jacket / outer fleece layer	1			
Swimming costume	Optional			
Gloves	Optional			

*The following items are most useful and those **in bold type are essential***

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Moisturising cream		Insect repellent	
Safety pins / sewing kit		Universal travelling adapter	
Penknife (not in hand luggage)		Small mirror	
Sweets / favourite snacks for energy		Padlock for your kitbags	
Reading material / notebook diary		Loo paper for the trip	
Nail clippers / Scissors (not in hand luggage)		Suncream - lots of it!	
Cold water detergent		MONEY / Travellers cheques	
Spare glasses or contact lenses		PASSPORT	
Money belt/pouch		FLIGHT TICKETS	
Matches / lighter			
'Dry' handwash/sanitiser			