

**Summer in the heart of the Tyrol  
Unlimited opportunities for leisure activities and total  
relaxation in the Hall-Wattens region**

Hall-Wattens - Dad is taking advantage of historic mountain-climbing aids to reach the Karwendel's highest summit, mum is playing tennis in the grounds of a 4-star hotel and the children are paddling in the lake. Or else mum and dad are cycling at 2,000m, the children are horse-riding across the fields and meadows and then they all meet up in the evening in Hall's medieval town centre. Or alternatively the whole family are walking together through Europe's highest botanical garden and then sitting down together and enjoying cheese and ham dumplings in a typical Tyrolean mountain hut. Choose any of the above. The Hall-Wattens region in the heart of the Tyrol can offer unlimited leisure-time opportunities for the perfect summer day.

The Inn valley is wide and the mountains are within your grasp. With such a wide choice of activities and a picturesque backdrop, it's hard to resist the Hall-Wattens region as a place for holidaying, relaxation and enjoyment. But it won't be easy keeping sports enthusiasts in the valley. The magic of rugged rocks, steep walls and high mountains magically draw climbers into their spell. It could be Hall's house mountain, the 2,725-m Bettelwurf - or the 2,677-m Glungezer opposite - it doesn't take long for Alpine fever to take hold. The highest of the Karwendel peaks is also to be found in this region: the Birkkarspitze at 2,749m and first climbed in 1870 has a legendary status in the climbing world.

But it's not just the carabiner-laden mountaineers with a hankering for clean, high-altitude air, who draw strength from the lofty heights. Trekkers and hill-walkers can also find countless alternative routes to the top. For many years it has been a special feature of the region that the footpaths are properly maintained. Walkers can be sure they are on safe and secure paths through Alpine and high-Alpine terrain. Lifts can reduce the elevation gain required and shorten an otherwise lengthy, all-day hike to a leisurely, family-friendly walk at over 2,000m.

The Zirbenweg (or Stone Pine Path), for example, leads from the mountain station on the Patscherkofel, famed for its famous World Cup downhill, to the mountain station on the Glungezer. Cover this two-and-a-half-hour walk above the tree-line through Europe's highest botanical garden - with its collection of over 400 Alpine plants - and get the bonus of the stunning panoramic view over the Inn valley as far as the Karwendel range opposite.

This easy walk with height differentials of approx. 200m is also part of the newly-opened Adlerweg (or Eagles' Trail), which winds its way across the Tyrol in the shape of an eagle's

wingspan. Keen mountain climbers in the Hall-Wattens region may prefer the longer and more demanding version 280-km route that follows the wings of the bird of prey. If you're surefooted and have a good head for heights, then you can follow in the footsteps of "Geierwally" (an Austrian heroine who would abseil down to eagles' eyries) and climb over the Birkkarspitze, with the help of some historic mountain-climbing aids - some dating from the 14th century - from the Lafatscher Joch as far as the Hafelekar mountain station at 2,256m. If you count yourself as a "hardcore walker", then you could opt for sections of the long-distance trails or multi-day tours with overnight stops in mountain huts. The village of Absam, for example, is the largest in the Tyrol and it adjoins the municipality of Scharnitz on the border with Bavaria. For those who like to keep their walking boots on, one long tour follows a route via several Karwendel summits to just before the German border.

If you'd benefit from 50 minutes of quiet introspection, then take a stroll along the Path of Contemplation from Absam to Gnadental. The nine stations along the route address in different ways the Beatitudes; they provide an opportunity to escape the noise, the hustle and bustle, the haste and stress, to spend time reflecting and looking within. But you can also get on your bike and pedal onwards and upwards through dense forests to the mountaintops. With numerous mountain huts en route, you can maintain a balanced fluid intake, while appreciating the fantastic views down over the many metres of altitude gained. The picturesque countryside and the spectacular scenery of rocks, streams and gorges will divert attention from the perspiring brow.

If you are of the view that mountains, albeit beautiful to behold, are better from below, you can stay in the valley and still choose from a wide selection of sports and other outdoor activities. A cycle ride through fields and alongside the River Inn makes a great day out. Riding stables in the region give equine enthusiasts the chance to live the dream of galloping through the prairies - Tyrolean ones on this occasion - jumping across streams, over fallen trees and catching pine needles in their hair. Some may prefer a short hack, the less experienced a taster session. If you want to a John Wayne experience, one riding stables in Volders offers horse enthusiasts a rare and fascinating opportunity to try out western-style riding.

If the barometer is set fair, the perfect antidote to a temperature rising above 20°C is to dive into cool water. Two outdoor pools offer a constant water temperature of 26°C, coupled with a unique panoramic view of the surrounding mountains. Mini-golf courses, flumes, tennis and beach volleyball courts provide an alternative to aquatic activities. If you can bear cooler water temperatures, then go for a dip in one of the mountain streams or brave the romantic waterfall in Gnadental.

One unforgettable experience - on your own or in a group - is a paragliding or hang-gliding session with height differences of up to 1,300m. Hall's funpark with a reputation that goes way beyond Austria's borders is open to perfectly-balanced

skateboarders. Streetballers and speed-tennis players will find they too have plenty of room to let off steam here.

If you'd prefer to spend your day doing something a little less energetic, then seek out some of the many impressive sights testifying to the region's long and fascinating past. The medieval core of Hall in Tirol, the Baroque churches, castles, palaces, an old military cemetery in the middle of the forest, the Himmelreich Rhaetian settlement open-air museum with eight buildings dating from 4th to 8th century BC and abandoned mine workings are just a few of the many places of historic interest nearby.

Hall-Wattens has mastered the fine art of seduction like no other region in the Tyrol. Every year, the eleven towns and villages of Absam, Baumkirchen, Fritzens, Gnadental, Hall in Tirol, Mils, Thaur, Tulfes, Volders, Wattenberg and Wattens welcome visitors from all over the world. Breathtaking wonders of nature meet up with historic town centres and an unparalleled programme of cultural events. Valued traditions and idyllic villages coupled with a lively cosmopolitan atmosphere. And last but not least, ultra-modern hotels, delightful guest-houses, cosy pubs and superb restaurants powerfully reflect the region's special character.

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