

**Modern, but always in touch with tradition
Centuries of tradition, but firmly wedded to life in the modern world**

Hall-Wattens - Be aware of one's roots, never forget them, never overlay them or discard them, but never look backwards or be old-fashioned. This is a fine balancing act that the Hall-Wattens region has cleverly managed to sustain. Tyrolean through and through, modern and open-minded, the eleven villages and towns that make up the region get the mix right. The local population are steeped in tradition and religiosity, yet broad-minded and progressive and very keen to let visitors join in.

With its modern sports facilities, four-star hotels and und guesthouses, countless shops and smart restaurants, the discerning visitor to the Hall-Wattens regions has simply everything the heart could desire. If you want time out, need to find yourself and want inspiration for fresh ideas, you can head up to a mountaintop and clear out your head. Or, what would more congenial and less sweat-inducing would be to cast aside your everyday worries and cares by walking the Path of Contemplation from Absam to Gnadental. This romantic trail takes about an hour with easy altitude gains of around 120m through dense forest. 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. Each station is designed in such a way that it directs the walker's gaze away from life's daily grind and towards matters of lesser significance, to what we do understand. For 50 minutes, the stimuli along the way seek to direct our attention towards our inner happiness and away from life's questions and doubts, towards our hopes and away from day-to-day anxieties.

Many walkers follow the centuries-old pilgrims' tradition of taking the "Way of St James" as a means of achieving inner peace and harmony. One particularly varied section on this well-known path runs through the Hall-Wattens region. Those in search of spiritual serenity must walk for a total of 17 kilometres through four villages and the medieval town of Terfens as far as Thaur. In Gnadental it passes the beautifully-situated St Martin monastery, a Gothic building dating from 1445 and formerly a hermitage. The basilica in Absam (1420), some five-and-a-half kilometres further on, houses the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary. Now a place of pilgrimage, many wayfarers make a halt here to enjoy a few moments of quiet reflection. With its maze of narrow, picturesque alleys and impressive town houses, the historic core of Hall, also dating from the 14th century, creates an impressive ensemble. In the oldest settlement in the central

Inn valley, the crib village of Thaur, walkers can view the Romedi chapel dedicated to St Peter und St Paul.

Many devout believers come to the basilica in Absam to pay homage to the image of the Virgin Mary. Exhibited in one of the side altars is a picture of Mary, which on 17th January 1797 appeared on the parlour window of a farmhouse as a young girl sat working on her embroidery. A lot of effort went into finding out what lay behind the image. In fact so scientific investigation could explain away this apparent miracle. On the insistence of the villagers, the miraculous image of the Virgin was eventually moved to a side altar in the parish church. Since that day, this village above Hall in Tirol has been an important place of pilgrimage and the faithful flock here from far afield. For many pilgrims, "Maria Absam" is a place of solace and hope. On several occasions during the 19th century, members of the Austrian imperial family came here on a pilgrimage to pay their respects to the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary.

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, Gnadewald, 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 guesthouses, cosy pubs and superb restaurants powerfully reflect the region's special character.

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