

Sustainability in Austria

Everyone is talking about sustainability right now. From energy awareness to regionality, waste prevention and conservation of resources – these factors play a role for many when on holiday too. Austria is following a future-orientated approach here. Its tourism thrives on its natural and cultural treasures as well as its hospitality. And to ensure that this is still the case in years to come, various initiatives are being pursued to promote sustainability – whether ecological, socio-cultural or economic. This approach also reflects the [sustainability strategy of the Austrian National Tourist Office](#). The overall vision is to establish an active and authentically lived sustainability along the entire value chain of the tourism industry, involving guests, employees, the local population and all other service providers and stakeholders.

To be perceived as a sustainable destination on an international and national level, it is essential to take action. Sustainability communication has to be intensified in order to position Austria even stronger as sustainable holiday destination. Targeting guests who are particularly sensitized to the issue is a key element when it comes to image and perception. Central communication elements include, on the one hand, the strengths of Austria as a holiday destination and, on the other hand, innovations of recent years that contribute to a digital and green transformation.

Natural and cultural spaces

There is a great desire for fresh water, forests, natural and cultural landscapes and a rich world of flora and fauna. Austria delivers when it comes to providing an intact environment.

Austria's natural treasures enjoy protection with around 16% of national territory being designated national parks, nature parks or Natura 2000 areas. There is also almost 13% of less strictly protected areas, meaning that 28.8% of Austria is protected.

Fresh, pure water is a wealth that Austria is particularly proud of too. Austria's water comes 100% from springs and groundwater in crystal clear quality. And various measures have been taken for decades to maintain the excellent bathing water quality of Austrian lakes. The EU bathing water report certifies that over 99% of Austria's lakes are of excellent or good water quality.

Green cities

Austria's cities score above all with freely accessible green spaces, the use of renewable energy, good air quality, excellent public transport and markets that offer regional produce.

Its excellent infrastructure, mountain spring water and health system make Vienna a particularly attractive city, as does its wide range of cultural activities, social security, political stability and low crime rate. What's more, part of the Donau-Auen National Park extends into the city region.

Other Austrian cities get top marks here too. The alpine city of Innsbruck radiates green with at least 28 trees for every inhabitant. Its city mountains, parks and green spaces make Salzburg a natural oasis alongside all the culture and history it has to offer.

Linz also stands for innovation and sustainability whilst Graz is known far beyond the borders as Austria's Capital of Delight.

Certifications

Austrian tourism practice shows that sustainability is anchored in the DNA of many establishments and destinations, even outside of certification. In the Austrian tourism landscape in particular there are already lots of local hosts and service providers that often intuitively do things right when it comes to sustainability. Nevertheless, certifications offer guests handy, defined guidance within the complex topic of sustainability and help hosts to continue to develop.

Austria currently has 253 accommodation establishments certified with the Austrian Ecolabel. And with gastronomy, huts, catering, conference and event locations, communal catering, cultural institutions and campsites, there are currently 504 certified companies.

Regionality and organic farming

Material treasures are just as worthy of protection as non-material heritage. Maintaining tradition makes a significant contribution to sustainability. Regional handicraft businesses have a special status in Austria and often welcome guests, reviving old, forgotten handicraft techniques and inspiring visitors. Austria's farms also supply a variety of regional products that are particularly valued by guests.

When it comes to organic farming, all eyes are on Austria. With almost 670,000 ha of organically farmed areas, 27% of all farms are organic, making Austria the European champion. This organic boom is largely based on state subsidies that organic farms receive.

Culinary delights

It is not only the high quality of regional specialities that attracts guests to Austria - it is also the longing for the original and genuine. And this becomes palpable when you watch people at work or help out yourself and get to know traditional crafts at close quarters: baking bread and brewing beer, making cheese or honey.

Regional products and culinary specialities are also reflected in the award-winning cuisine. The density of charismatic, creative top chefs in Austria is remarkable.

Mobility

Many destinations in Austria make it easy for their guests to get around without a car. In addition to a good connection to the international long-distance train network, a convenient infrastructure is provided for guests when it comes to local mobility in particular with hiking and valley buses, regional trains and other shared mobility solutions. Many municipalities also offer additional train station shuttles.

Guest cards

Overnight guests receive advantage cards from almost all provinces and regions in the summer months and can therefore enjoy numerous discounts. These guest cards provide offers across a variety of areas, including main attractions and sights, leisure activities and free or discounted use of public transport and cable cars.

The guest cards are an especially attractive bonus when it comes to family holidays and the many leisure activities inspire a varied programme.

Accessibility

Accessibility means: There are no obstacles - neither in buildings nor in rooms, neither in communication nor in information. Being free on holiday, doing and experiencing what you feel like, without restrictions, inclusive. The offers in Austria are prepared with a lot of commitment so that all people feel welcome.

Special equipment makes it easy for guests to use all facilities: barrier-free access to the rooms, the restaurant or the sun terrace. Coupled with barrier-free leisure activities in nature, a holiday in Austria is literally limitless.

Innovations for winter tourism

Austria's cable cars focus on sustainability and use environmentally friendly technologies. By using renewable energies such as wind and solar power, imposing peaks can be discovered in a climate-friendly way.

Austrian ski regions have also invested a lot of pioneering work, technology and know-how and have, for example, achieved gratifying successes in sustainable snowmaking technology. Snow production is successful in terms of the environment when it works efficiently and thus conserves resources, is based on the most modern standards and also takes into account the preparation of the slopes.

Plenty of information and tips about sustainable holidays in Austria can be found [on our website](#).