



Ost-Tirol

Hiking in Austria's Hohe Tauern
July 1-13, 2017

BOOK TODAY!

Call 800.556.7896

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Tucked into the flank of Austria’s highest mountain chain—the Hohe Tauern—are two delightful valleys: the Virgental and the Defereggental. When Austria surrendered the South Tirol to Italy in the aftermath of World War One, the East Tirol was left geographically isolated from the North Tirol by a narrow strip of land—Salzburg and the Italian South Tirol. This small isolated region retains its alpine traditions and is a popular destination, summer and winter, for hikers and those who enjoy majestic mountain scenery.

Heading south from Munich or Salzburg and through the Felbertauern Tunnel, you arrive in the heart of the Nationalpark Hohe Tauern. The 130 km-long Hohe Tauern range is the highest in Austria and includes the famous 12,028 ft. Grossglockner. Near the small town of Matrei, the Virgental and the Defereggental valleys jut westward. Both valleys offer superb hiking for those who want a challenge as well as those who want to explore the mountains and streams at a more leisurely pace.



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Hinterbichl Virgental

DAILY ITINERARY

JULY 1

Individual departures from the United States.

JULY 2

Arrive at Munich Airport this morning and transfer by private bus to your home for the next five nights, Hinterbichl in the Virgental Valley of Austria's Ost Tirol.

JULY 3 - 6: THE VIRGENTAL

The collection of rustic buildings and a historic mill at Isltzeralm in Hinterbichl comprise the last settlement in the upper Virgental. Your welcoming and attentive hosts at the well-situated Gasthof Isltzer continue a 400-year family tradition of innkeeping in the valley. Trails lead from the hotel's front door to the high peaks or along the close-by Isel River.

Isltzer Mill



HIKES IN THE VIRGENTAL

The Virgen Valley begins high on the southern flank of the Hohe Tauern. Dozens of trails climb the steep sides of the valley while other, gentler ones follow the course of the river. Every day we offer a choice of a demanding hike and a less arduous walk.

- Follow the river past thundering Umbal Falls toward Ochsner Hut, where you may stop and enjoy morning coffee, or continue above treeline to the park boundary at the Clara Hut for a lunch of traditional Austrian alpine fare.
- Taxis take us up to the Wetterkreuz Hut where we begin our hike along the Lasörlinggruppe Ridge and enjoy spectacular views of the high peaks to the north and south. Set out for the Zupalsee Hut and, if you like, continue on to the Merchenalm Hut before returning to the Wetterkreuz Hut for a taxi transfer back to the hotel.
- Choose between a challenging hike up to the Neue Nilljochhütte or a fascinating walk along the Isel River from Hinterbichl to Prägraten and the town of Virgen. The Neue Nilljochhütte hike begins with

a steep climb past Stations of the Cross created by mountain artisans before reaching high mountain pastures and the hut, where scenic views and refreshments compete.

- Travel deep into the Maurer Valley and climb to the Essener-Rotstock Hut and then on to the nearby mountain tarn, the Simonysee, just below the glaciers descending from the ridge above. Or choose to hike only as far as the Ochsner Hut to enjoy your picnic lunch. On the return down the Maurer Valley, all can stop for apple streudel at Jausenstation Stoanalm before continuing on to the Gasthof Islitzer.

JULY 7: LIENZ EXCURSION



Lienz



Aguntum

Today we leave the Virgental. But first, enjoy a day in Lienz, the administrative center of the Ost Tirol, stopping at Aguntum, one of the best Roman archeological sites in Austria and where archaeologists are still at work, for a guided tour of the museum and the site's extensive ruins and current excavations.

Continue to the heart of Lienz for a brief walking tour. After time to explore the town's charming shops and for lunch on your own al fresco in the central plaza, we transfer to St. Veit in the Defereggental, our home for the next five nights.

JULY 8- 11: THE DEFEREGGENTAL

The small village of St. Veit in Defereggental sits on a shelf high above the valley. We will stay at another exceptional family-owned hotel, the Alpengasthof

Pichler. The Defereggental is parallel to and just south of the Virgental, with the Hoch Pustertal the next valley to the south. At the Defereggental's westernmost end, it adjoins Italy's South Tirol whose farmers still have summer pasture rights in the high meadows on the Austrian side.



St Veit

HIKES IN THE DEFEREGGENTAL

While the valley has many similarities to the neighboring Virgental, you will notice a different feel, as St. Veit and its neighboring villages perched high above the valley floor allow more expansive and open views southward to the ridgelines in the far distance. Again, each day you can select the style of walk that you desire, or simply enjoy a day exploring the village or relaxing in the hotel's delightful gardens.

- Choose to climb a high peak, or instead explore the life and culture of the high pasturelands on the mountain shelf. The Donnerstein looms high above St. Veit to the north, and our intrepid hikers will first hike up to Speikboden before gaining Donnerstein's summit for fabulous views. Others can follow the interesting Leben und Kulturweg am Steilhang (Life and Culture Cliff Path) past mountain farms down to the Schwarzach River and then along the river's right bank to St. Veit.
- The mountain pasture at Jagdhausalm is one of the highest in Austria and is famous for its old stone houses, barns, and tiny chapel. The well-maintained trail follows the river into the high valley where farmers still harvest hay for winter feed.

- Trek along the *Alpenblumen-Lehrweg* (Alpine Flowers Path) up to the Seespitzhutte and then even higher to Oberseeitsee. Taxis take you to the Trojer Almbach stream above St. Jakob to follow a long traverse rich with mountain flowers. At the Seespitzhutte the path climbs to Oberseeitsee. Return via a lower trail to the awaiting taxis to St. Veit.
- Or you can choose to follow the *Wassererlebnisweg* (Water Adventure Path) from St Jakob, where you will visit the National Park Museum before hiking past the ruins of the Trojer Mill and a forest of old Swiss Pine to the small village of Maria Hilf. After a visit to the House of Waters exhibit, cross over the Schwarzach River to the Stallebach Waterfall. Continue along varied trails and sites to St. Jakob and the bus back to St. Veit.
- High above St. Veit is the Gritzer Hörndle peak. We will travel a short distance by taxi to Gritzer Alm and begin the walk via Seiternegge to the Gritzer Seen, a small lake beneath the peak. Adventurous hikers can continue up to the peak itself at 2,631m before descending to the parking area and the return to St. Veit for our farewell celebration.

JULY 12: MUNICH

Transfer to the Eurostars Grand Central Hotel in the center of Munich with time, if you so choose, to visit the Globetrotter, one of the world's largest outdoor sports stores. Then celebrate with a traditional, Bavarian farewell dinner in the Augustinergarten.

JULY 13

Individual departures.

HOTELS



Gasthof Islitzer in Hinterbichl is a charming old mountain inn. The rooms, all en suite, are comfortably furnished and many offer views of the forests and valley nearby. The attractive dining

room adjoins the cozy Gaststube, while the terrace overlooks the historic mill and mill stream. Some of our group may stay just across the road at another family hotel, the Conny, but enjoy dinner with your fellow hikers at Gasthof Islitzer. Islitzer is the last village at the end of the valley with shops not far away in Prägraten.



Alpengasthof Pichler sits on the edge of the shelf overlooking the Deferegggen Valley. Situated across from the church, with its traditional alpine graveyard and next to the town hall and fire station,

the hotel is the center of village activity. Again the en suite rooms are nicely furnished in traditional alpine style. The two dining rooms and terrace overlook the well-tended garden.



Munich's **Eurostars Grand Central Hotel** is centrally situated just a few blocks from the Hauptbahnhof. A modern hotel with excellent rooms, a good restaurant and bar, it is especially convenient as it is

just steps away from the Augustinergarten where, if the weather permits, we dine under the stars.

EACH DAY ON THE TRAIL

The **Hohe Tauern** hiking program is moderately challenging for the fit hiker. Most days there will be two hiking options, allowing hikers to choose a more or less challenging itinerary. Participants will be on the trail for about 5-7 hours each day, including breaks and lunch stops. The paths and trails along the valleys are mostly wide and well maintained, but on the steeper trails leading to higher elevations hikers can expect to encounter some moderately steep ascents and descents, and at times, narrow rocky paths. There is little to no exposure (steep, unprotected drop offs) on any day's hike.

The higher elevations are generally unforested with little protection from the elements. Thus, sturdy boots and protection from the sun or adequate raingear, and protection from possible cold, windy, and wet weather are essential.

Each day we'll hike 5-10 miles, depending upon the option chosen, with elevation gains/losses of 100-3000 feet.

LODGING AND MEALS

Traditional alpine *Gasthäuser* are part of the delight of hiking in Austria. Each hotel offers a full breakfast buffet and lighter fare of cereals, fruits, and yogurt are, of course, available. Packed trail lunches are provided when necessary and are included in the tour price. Your dinners each night offer an appetizer, a choice of two entrees, and dessert.

TOUR COSTS

Price based on double occupancy	\$4,975
Additional for single occupancy	\$180

HIKE LEADERS



Joe Carper has led hikers for 30 years on treks through US national parks, along the Milford Track in New Zealand and on numerous hikes throughout Europe and the Alps. Joe has enjoyed

some of the classic Alpine adventures, including the Tour of Mont Blanc, the Monte Rosa circuit, the Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt, much of the GR5 in France, treks through the Dolomites and the Bernese Oberland, and the Coast to Coast trail across England. This past season, he explored some of the trails connecting the “white villages” of the Moors in southern Andalucia, Spain. For 15 years, Joe oversaw membership programming and later retail and business operations for the Smithsonian. More recently, he served as Director of Operations for the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston where he managed educational programming and the Club's extensive lodge and mountain hut operations in New Hampshire's White Mountains. He and his wife reside in Newburyport, MA.



Dave Parry proves that there is no cure for the itch to hike amongst the Alps. For more than 35 years, he has hiked somewhere in the long Alpine chain with a group of dedicated hikers. Memorable hikes

include from Chamonix to Zermatt; Italy's Dolomites; the Iceman's grave at the top of the Alps, as well as his first trek from Lenk to Locarno. Formerly President of Academic Travel Abroad, Dave now serves ATA as Chairman and consultant. Before that, he was a college

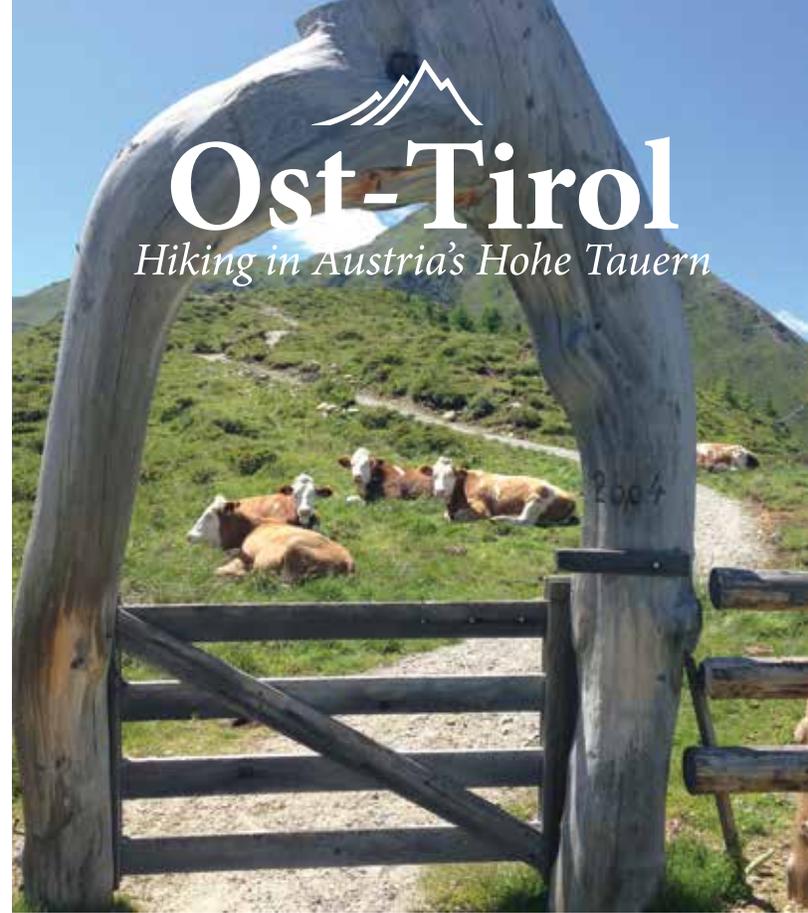
professor, university administrator, and congressional staff member. Besides travel, his other passions include reading history, Willa Cather's novels, riding trains, spending time with his granddaughter and grandson and of course, travel.



Caroline Ogden finds herself at home hiking throughout the Alps as well as in her own red-rock backyard – the Rocky Mountains and Colorado. A longtime member of the Academic

Travel family, where she coordinated and designed cultural travel programs worldwide, Caroline has a special fondness for Austria from Vienna to its remote mountain villages.

When not at home hiking, cycling, or yoga-ing, Caroline is leading tours on Switzerland's Glacier Express into Italy, navigating groups through Cuba, Yellowstone and Northern Ireland. Her fluency in German and love of Strudels will enhance our appreciation of the Ost Tirol, Prosit!



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

SINGLE ROOMS

A limited number of single rooms are available at extra cost on a first-come, first-served basis, but availability cannot be guaranteed. Please understand that, in some hotels, single rooms are very small. The premium you pay is for privacy, not spaciousness.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

\$500 deposit upon application. Balance due upon receipt of invoice, 90 days before departure. Acceptable forms of payment for the deposit are personal check, wire transfer, Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. Final payment may be made by credit card, check or wire transfer. If final payment is not received by 60 days prior to departure, your space is subject to cancellation. If you are making a reservation within 90 days of the trip's departure, full payment will be required upon confirmation.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS

All cancellations must be submitted in writing (email or fax) to Academic Travel Abroad, Inc. (ATA). Per person cancellation fees are based on the date of the cancellation notice reaching ATA. More than 120 days prior to departure; refund of deposit less an administration fee of 50% of deposit. Cancellation between 119-91 days before departure: 100% of deposit is forfeited. Cancellation between 90-61 days, 50% of the tour price if forfeited. Cancellation within 60 days of departure: no refund. Cancellation on day of departure or after tour departs: no refund. No refund for unused portions of tour, including, but not limited to, missed meals, hotel nights and sightseeing. Cancellation of program by ATA: full refund. Reservations are not transferable without the explicit approval of ATA.

NOTE: ATA accepts no liability for any airline or train cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable airline or train ticket to the tour departure city or return.

INSURANCE

We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. We will send you a brochure from Travel Insurance Services, or you may obtain coverage through a company of your choice. All ATA trips include Emergency Evacuation Insurance as part of the trip price.

A NOTE ABOUT THE ITINERARY

While every effort will be made to carry out the program as planned, the nature of travel is unpredictable and we must be prepared for changes. The itinerary as described is subject to modification by ATA. Rest assured that, should any changes be needed, we commit to deliver an experience as outstanding as the one originally planned.

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

To enjoy your travels to the fullest, you should be in good physical and mental health. Any physical condition requiring special attention, diets, or treatment must be reported in writing when the reservation is made. We reserve the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a participant should such a person's health, mental condition, physical infirmity, or attitude jeopardize the operation of the travel program or the enjoyment of other participants. All health information is protected and treated as confidential.

RESPONSIBILITY

Academic Travel Abroad, Inc. (ATA), is a professional travel company, and acts only as an agent for the passenger with respect to all transportation, hotels, and all matters of reservations and trip operation. We and our agents accept no responsibility for loss, damage, injury, accident, delay or irregularity, expense or liability

caused by the defect of any vehicle or negligence or default of any independent contractors, their employees, agents, or representatives. Nor do we accept responsibility for losses or delays arising from sickness, pilferage, acts of terrorism, weather conditions or acts of God. All such losses or expenses shall be borne by the program participant. We reserve the right to cancel any trip prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. We likewise reserve the right to decline to accept or retain any trip participant at any time without being under any obligation to assign any reason therefore. In the event of the exercise of this right, we shall be under no liability to such person(s) except to refund such amount as our absolute discretion deems reasonable to attribute to the uncompleted portion of the trip. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that air, ship or train tickets when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and carrier concerned. The airlines and all other transportation companies involved in this trip are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time the passengers are not on board their plane or conveyances. All services are subject to the laws of the country in which they are rendered. The participant agrees on behalf of herself/himself, her/his dependents, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to abide by the above conditions and to release and hold harmless, Academic Travel Abroad, Inc., and any of their representatives from any and all liability for any delays, damage, loss, injury or death occurring in relation to this tour.

CALIFORNIA SELLER OF TRAVEL PROGRAM

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ATA is a participant in the California Seller of Travel program. California law requires that certain sellers of travel have a trust account or bond. ATA has a trust account. ATA is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Corporation.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

- Expert hike leaders
- All accommodations and meals as outlined in the itinerary
- All ground transportation within the itinerary unless otherwise indicated
- All sightseeing as specified in the itinerary
- Entrance fees
- Gratuities to porters, drivers, and guides
- Transfers to and from airports for those arriving or departing according to the designated itinerary
- Baggage handling for one checked piece and one carry on piece per person
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights, or other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure information about the destination and what to expect on the trip, including a suggested reading list

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare from your home to Munich, Germany and from Munich, Germany to your home
- Airport transfers and baggage handling for travelers arriving well before or after the planned group transfer or departing the trip before or after the planned group transfer
- Travel and trip cancellation insurance
- Passport, visa, airport departure and excess baggage fees
- Meals not specified in the itinerary; food and beverages not part of the included meals
- Personal items such as telephone, fax and internet charges, laundry, room service, alcoholic or other beverages not specified as included
- Gratuities for non-group services
- Expenses resulting from delays due to bad weather, road conditions, sickness, government action, and flight delays
- Expenses incurred in making individual travel arrangements in conjunction with the trip



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TO RESERVE TODAY

The quickest way to make a reservation is to call Academic Travel Abroad at 202-785-9000 or 1-800-556-7896. We accept VISA, MasterCard, and American Express credit cards. Early reservation is recommended to ensure your space on this program. You may also email us at travel@academic-travel.com.