



bregenzerwald

Media Information Summer 2024

Bregenzerwald Tourismus GmbH

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**VOR
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Information & Service

The contents of this compilation were collected at the beginning of 2024 and any changes made known to us have been integrated since then. The contents are based on our own research and information provided by the partners.

Press text online

You can download the entire text online at www.bregenzerwald.at/en/media .

Photos online

You can find a selection of matching photos – to be used in a touristic context and only in conjunction with a report about the Bregenzerwald – at www.bregenzerwald.at/en/media .

Social Media



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Available brochures

- The **Bregenzerwald Travel Magazine** appears twice a year – once in the summer and once in the winter – with around 50 pages of edited stories and reports. Regional and international authors report on people in and from the Bregenzerwald and about those things which give them pleasure and joy. Only printed in German.
The 'Reisemagazin Bregenzerwald' is available online at www.bregenzerwald.at/en/stories-about-the-region. The website is also home to some of the magazine stories in English.
- The **Bregenzerwald Travel Guide** is published at the same time as the Travel Magazine every six months (winter and summer). The summer edition contains useful information about hiking and other leisure activities, from cultural institutions and events through to architecture and craftsmanship, right through to wellness offers.

Research trips

Would you like to see the Bregenzerwald for yourself? Please feel free to contact Simone Gridling.

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Bregenzerwald, Vorarlberg

The Bregenzerwald is located in the most westerly part of Austria, in the state of Vorarlberg. A neighbour of Germany, close to Lake Constance, Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

The Bregenzerwald is ideal for those who appreciate cultivated hospitality, manageable variety, imaginative architecture, and cuisine to spend their holidays. It's the place where enjoyable exercise in changing natural landscapes may be combined with other activities that are inspiring and a treat to engage in.

Creative enthusiasm

A good 32,000 people live in 23 villages in the Bregenzerwald. The residents of the Bregenzerwald have always paid special attention to how they shape the area in which they live. The villages look remarkably attractive. They stand out for their exciting combinations of old and new (wooden) architecture. Agriculture and alpine farming play a major role, both in terms of the economy and in how the landscape has been developed. The three-stage management of the pastures (valley – seasonally settled alpine pastures (the 'Vorsäß') - high alps) constitutes an important factor in the preservation and management of the cultivated landscape. This special type of cultivation – practised for centuries – has been placed on the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage in Austria. The innovative tradesmen who have come together to form the Werkraum Bregenzerwald are widely known. The association was recently included in the 'UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices for Intangible Cultural Heritage'.

TIP: The 12 'Umgang Bregenzerwald' routes, all of which are village tours (more about them on Page 9) provide insights into the Bregenzerwald residents' skill in how they shape their surroundings and the special aspects associated with the cultivated landscapes.

The successful, courageous blend of tradition and modernity is clearly presented by the **architecture and craftsmanship**. Both disciplines are closely interwoven and are a symbol of that which the locals of the Bregenzerwald are experts in: appreciation of art, of beauty, the creation of pleasure, both sophisticated and practical. This interplay is both visible and perceptible in many places:

- In the accommodation: many of the hotels, guest houses, holiday apartments and farms combine the old with the new, or have been newly and very sensitively built in recent years. The new, light-flooded wellness refuges with a view of nature are particularly charming.
- The cooking in the multi-award winning restaurants and inns uses regional products which enjoy a creative interpretation. The Bregenzerwald locals are true masters in the art of cheese production, especially of 'alpine- and mountain cheese'. The KäseStrasse Bregenzerwald, with its multitude of informative and pleasurable stations, is dedicated to cheese culture.
- The classical and the modern merge in the cultural programme, with the surrounding countryside playing its part. The highlight every year is the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg. The Werkraum Haus in Andelsbuch sees itself as a showcase for innovative craftsmanship and design in the Bregenzerwald. FAQ Bregenzerwald, the festival with a forum character, displays potentials for having a good time.

The gentle cultivated landscape and the alpine mountains are an invitation to **get moving**. The many hiking trails make it possible for visitors to explore nature. Themed routes tell stories about the region and even surprise with artistic productions. There are many mountainbike

trails to discover, as well as several cycle routes and passes for road bikers. Climbers are able to practice on via ferratas and in climbing gardens. The forest rope courses are great for testing balancing skills and swinging through the air. Paragliders will appreciate the good thermals on the Niedere and Diedamskopf mountains. Outdoor providers accompany adventurers and nature lovers on special paths. Attractive programmes that are organised in most places throughout the summer offer insights into the Bregenzerwald's living culture. Many of the programmes have been tailored to families.

The **Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal** is your "ticket" to various mountain experiences. It is your unlimited ticket to take the cable car to the top as often as you like, is valid for environmentally-friendly rides on the public buses, and is your permit to refreshing, relaxing times in the outdoor swimming pools. The Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal is available to all visitors for free who spend at least three nights in one of the 28 partner municipalities between 1 May and 31 October 2024. The card is valid from the day of arrival to the day of departure.

www.bregenzerwald.at/en/guest-card

The woods in the forest

Around 1,000 years ago, the region now known as the Bregenzerwald was largely covered with trees. That's also probably how the Bregenzerwald – Bregenz Forest – came to its name. Today, around 40% of the Bregenzerwald is forest. The forests are very important to the region and its cultivated landscape and show how sustainability is actually being lived in the region. It has been a priority for generations of forest owners to exercise far-sightedness in the management of their resources. Forest health and climate-resilience has currently become increasingly important.

The forest shapes the landscape and makes the changing seasons apparent. Many trees come into bloom in spring and provide shade and protect from the heat in summer. Then they display a wide range of different colours during the autumn before presenting their romantic side in the snow-covered winter landscapes. People take pleasure from forests throughout the year. Forests are a benefit to health, are the habitat for many species of plants and animals and protect villages from avalanches, landslides and floods. They act like air-conditioning systems and constitute the source of the raw materials that architects and craftspeople are able to employ so skilfully. Forests are also a source of many a culinary delicacy.

Specifics of the Bregenzerwald's forests

All forests in the Bregenzerwald are held in (small-scale) private ownership. They're not the property of the government or large landowners as is usually the case in other states in Austria. The predominant species of tree are spruce, beech and silver fir. Silver fir makes up to 80% of the forests in the northern Bregenzerwald.

Careful observers will notice how different the forests look depending on where they're located.

- Bog forests are typical for such places in the northern Bregenzerwald as Langen, Sulzberg, Krumbach and Sibratsgöll as well as the Bödele. These are characterised by shrubby growths, birch and **mountain pine**, which often grow upright there. These are usually found more in France and Switzerland but, in Austria, they're only encountered in Vorarlberg.
- The valley of the Bregenzerache and its side valleys, e.g. the Argenschlucht near Au and the Mellental near Mellau, are characterised by **gorge forests**. Sycamore, ash, mountain elm, yew and silver fir grow predominantly in places where the air is characterised by high humidity.
- **Alpine forests**, which extend up to altitudes of around 1,900 metres, consist mainly of spruce. High-altitude mountain trees, such as larch and Swiss stone pine, hardly grow in the Bregenzerwald. They're too sensitive to snow.
- **Beech forests** thrive in a special geological zone that's to be found in the area between Andelsbuch and Mellau, which is indicated by the name of 'Andelsbuch' ('Buche' being the German for 'beech').
- **Sycamore** grows in many places. Particularly beautiful specimens are to be found on alpine pastures in the Mellental valley near Mellau where they provide shade for the cows. In the past, alpine herders used to stuff the leaves from these trees into their bed covers.

Feature: continuous cover forests and sustainability

The Bregenzerwald is characterised by its many areas where continuous cover forests grow. This is special because only around 2% of the wooded areas in Austria are managed as continuous cover forests. Such forests have a primeval look about them. Old and young trees grow together apparently at random. Mainly silver fir, spruce and beech in the Bregenzerwald. But they're carefully managed forests where different species, sizes and ages of tree are allowed to grow. The forest managers' task is to occasionally but regularly fell large old individual trees to allow

young trees to grow back in the wells of light created in this way. That means that they don't have to invest effort and money into planting young trees. Continuous cover forests rejuvenate themselves through a process of 'natural regeneration'. The creation of such forests is considered the high art of forestry management because it takes profound knowledge and lots of experience to do the right thing there.

Areas with continuous cover forests play a very important role in the preservation of biodiversity. They're also significantly more resilient where the effects of climate change are concerned. Woods with continuous cover forestry are better able to cope with the harmful effects caused by, for instance, drought and storms and such pests as fungi and bark beetles, than forests consisting primarily of one species of tree.

Out and about in the forests

Visitors see the forest primarily as a place for recreation. They're habitats for both plants and animals at the same time. That's why visitors to the forests are always asked to treat them with respect. People should only visit forests during the day to ensure that animals are given the peace and the plants the protection that they need. 'Forest rules' also include keeping dogs on their leads and sticking to marked trails when hiking and snow-shoeing.

Hiking, cycling, mountain biking and trips into the forest are the best way to take in the beneficial effects of the forest. Guided herb, moor and forest walks that provide insights into what makes the forests so special are available at several municipalities. Rangers also take people into the forests of the Nagelfluhkette Nature Park in the northern Bregenzerwald to share their knowledge throughout the year. A forest theme trail is located on the Rotenberg between Lingenau and Hittisau. Forest ropes courses are popular destinations, as are moor spas. Programmes that focus on forest bathing take advantage of the beneficial effects of the forest. The Bregenzerwald's forests also boast fitness and barefoot trails as well as Kneipp water-treading pools. And the Baumhaus Sulzberg (tree house) even allows visitors to spend their nights at the edge of the forest.

Wood as a feel-good factor

Forests in the Bregenzerwald play an additional important role. The wood from the different trees represents a consistent, renewable and ecological source of raw material that contributes greatly to how value is created in the region. The wood keeps sawmills in business – there's a sawmill in almost every municipality. Architects plan and design buildings made of wood while skilled workers use it to make furniture and accessories, including shoes and clogs that are known locally as 'Hölzlar'. More wood grows in the Bregenzerwald than is used.

It's possible for visitors to experience how good structures that have been built with wood and rooms that have been furnished with wooden furniture feel in many accommodations, inns and restaurants. That's where it's possible for visitors to also enjoy delicacies from the forest, from mushrooms to berries and herbs to meat from deer and stag.

More information about the forest, forest trails and experiences in the Bregenzerwald forests is available at www.bregenzerwald.at/en/thema/experiencing-forests/

The joy of creating

Objects that have been beautifully designed and that possess meaning have for centuries been held in high regard in the Bregenzerwald, as the new Baroque Architecture Museum in Au demonstrates. The Bregenzerwald is today famous for its contemporary (timber) architecture and innovative craftsmanship. Buildings, exhibitions in the Werkraum Haus in Andelsbuch and the 12 themed 'Umgang Bregenzerwald' routes in the region constitute tangible evidence of the design skills to be found there.

Werkraum Haus: a showcase for craftsmanship

In 2013, the Werkraum Haus opened in Andelsbuch, a town known for its traditional craftsmanship. Its architect is Peter Zumthor, from Switzerland – an internationally renowned architect with close ties to craftsmanship. He met and came to appreciate the Bregenzerwald craftsmen in the Werkraum during the construction of the Kunsthaus Bregenz. Since then, many craftsmen from the Bregenzerwald have been working for the maestro from Switzerland. Peter Zumthor's design for the Werkraum Haus is founded on two basic ideas: on the one hand, the building serves as a meeting place. On the other hand, it is a major showcase for the culture of craftsmanship and design in the Bregenzerwald. This idea finds expression in a protruding roof made from wood and a façade made from glass. There is no distinction between inside and outside – the landscape flows through the building. The Werkraum Haus displays pieces by craftspeople who are members of the Werkraum and holds changing special exhibitions. In December 2016, the Werkraum Bregenzerwald became one of three destinations in Austria to be included in the 'UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage'. / www.werkraum.at

Craftsmanship and the Bregenzerwald Werkraum

The close, productive interplay between architecture and craftsmanship enjoys a long tradition in the Bregenzerwald. Many of the architects come from families of craftsmen, or are themselves trained craftsmen. This has a stimulating effect on the cooperation. Joiners, carpenters, smiths, stove fitters and painters are not simply the 'skivvies' – they are specialised partners in the development of the best solution. Parallel to the new architecture, an independent, design-orientated craftsmanship scene has developed in the Bregenzerwald, whose works are popular both at home and abroad.

Around 100 of the most innovative craftsmen – from joiners to textile designers – have joined forces in the Werkraum Bregenzerwald. As a platform, the Werkraum organises exhibitions, competitions and lectures, and is dedicated to research. Seit 2016 besteht die Werkraumschule, eine Kooperation mit den Bezauer Wirtschaftsschulen. The pioneering school model is intended to help secure young talent for the skilled trades. / www.werkraum.at

Bregenzerwälder Handwerksausstellung (Crafts and Trades Exhibition)

The Bregenzerwald crafts and trades exhibition is staged every five years and presents insights into regional craftsmanship while inviting visitors to see and experience new and great quality work. The trades and crafts sector will be showcasing its work in two halls at the Dornbirn Autumn Fair from 4 to 8 September of this year. Experts from many disciplines and tourism professionals are going to be represented on an area of more than 3,000 square metres. An accompanying culinary programme has also been put in place. / www.handwerksausstellung.at

Archiv der Formen

The Online-Archiv der Formen (Online Archive of Forms) presents all the award-winning work pieces shown at the exhibitions to date that were produced by Bregenzerwald craftsmen in collaboration with designers for Handwerk + Form. / www.werkraum.at and

Contemporary architecture

Glass and wood are the building materials favoured by contemporary architects. Wood has always been used as a building material in the Bregenzerwald, since it grows in abundance in the forests. And so architects and craftsmen in the Bregenzerwald have acquired exceptional skills in dealing with wood. Then as now, they go to great lengths to ensure that the wood is cut at the right sign, and to leave it to dry out slowly in order to then process it in accordance with its true nature. The sun and the rain give the façades their colour over the years. The natural wooden appearance and soft wax bestow furniture with its very own character.

The new buildings are plain, occasionally even bordering on the provocative, with an amazing wealth of spatial and functional qualities. The high demands made on the aesthetics go hand-in-hand with those made on energy efficiency and sustainability. Renewable energy is used on a wide scale for heating and hot water: solar cells and photovoltaic equipment are visible on many houses. Geothermal heat and wood are also used for these purposes. The ecologically valuable and practical building materials as well as the conscious use of energy have a pleasant effect on the indoor climate, for example.

Since the new buildings are based on old building traditions, an exciting dialogue emerges. Private houses and hotels alike built according to modern construction principles abound in all towns.

TIP: 'Bregenzerwald Umgang' –12 village walks

The way people in the Bregenzerwald deal with their environment is the subject of specially marked paths through the villages of the region. Take these paths and, by observing selected objects, experience how people here have shaped their lives, and continue to shape them. The 'Bregenzerwald Umgang' walks communicate the villages' typical visual style through the ages. They can be discovered in the landscape, on houses, public buildings and commercial buildings as well as on everyday objects. Each of the 'Umgang Bregenzerwald' walks takes you between 1.5 and 4 hours. On each walk, around 10 information columns draw attention to a building, to the special features of the cultural landscape, to artisanal or ecological details, to facets of artistic, culinary or touristic works. Details of the objects are described in an accompanying folder. Furthermore, a book on the subject containing the background histories to the way of life in the Bregenzerwald is available. The information media are available from any one of the tourist information offices and from Bregenzerwald Tourismus.

Guided tours on the 'Design Trails' are held at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays in German between 3 May and 28 October 2022. Each trip focuses on a different village. Please see www.bregenzerwald.at/en/bregenzerwald-umgang for the details and the precise itineraries.

Architecture in Sulzberg

There are several architectural treasures to be found in Sulzberg and the part of the village known as Thal in northern Bregenzerwald: from the Empire-style church, designed by Alois Negrelli, planner of the Suez Canal, to the installation '1740 Ichs' (1740 I's), made up of locks of hair, that adorns the village hall. Two circuit paths lead to 21 selected buildings and works of art, most of which were designed by prestigious architects. The brochure 'Wege zur Baukultur' (Paths to Architecture) relates interesting stories about the structures and artworks along the paths: about the time in which the objects were created, what aspects were particularly important to the people for whom they were built and their architects, how historic structures can be sensitively preserved while new ones are created. / www.sulzberg.at

TIP: BUS:Stop Krumbach celebrates its 10th anniversary

Since May 2014, seven new bus stops are adorning the area around Krumbach. At the invitation of the association Kultur Krumbach, renowned architects have redesigned the seven bus stops. The artists involved were: Alexander Brodsky (Russia), Rintala Eggertsson Architects (Norway), Architecten de Vylder Vinck Taillieu (Belgium), Ensemble Studio Antón García-Abril (Spain), Smiljan Radic (Chile), Sou Fujimoto (Japan) and Wang Shu (China). Each and every firm of architects had a Vorarlberg partner from the field of architecture/craftsmanship at its side to offer support and advice. The entire project was financed by private sponsors, and the architects' payment is a holiday in the Bregenzerwald.

The project was awarded the 2014 Staatspreis for PR (State Prize Public Relations) as well as a special award at the 'Staatspreis für Architektur' (State Prize for Architecture) for, as the jury stated, 'A charming and successful example of the combination of architecture, art and the work of everyday building.' / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/thema/architecture/bus-stop-krumbach/

TIP: Georunde Rindberg

This trail makes the power of nature visible and tangible at its thirteen stations: the circular route leads to the Parzelle Rindberg, where clear evidence is to be seen of the shifting of the mountain slopes that occurred a few years ago. One example is the 'leaning Felber's building' on the trail. The former holiday home slipped 18 metres downhill during the landslide but didn't suffer any significant damage. The property that constitutes a succinct expression of the forces of nature is open to visitors and is home to the 'Gewaltige Natur' ('Mighty Nature') exhibition that focuses on the Nagelfluhkette Nature Park. The landslide is also the subject of artistically designed installations for which the designers were awarded the Austrian State Prize for Design in 2017. The route was extended in autumn 2019 by five more stations. One is the carefully renovated and stabilised Wendelinkapelle (chapel). The landslide pushed it around 40 metres down the valley. It's open to visitors again now and its leaning position bears witness to the event. Hikers are able to sit on sloping chairs in front of the little church and take in the magnificent view. / www.bewegtenatur.at

Baroque Master Builder Museum in Au

Master builders, stucco plasterers and craftspeople from the Bregenzerwald built around 800 baroque buildings in southern Germany, Switzerland and Alsace during the 17th and 18th centuries. Mostly churches and monasteries – but also castles, palaces and town houses. Many of these master builders and craftsmen hailed from Au, where a guild of craftsmen had established itself.

The new Baroque Master Builder Museum in Au-Schopperrau has been dedicated to the masters of that period and their remarkable achievements. The museum is being created in the former curate's house in Au-Rehmen. A famous portrait and miniature artist of the time lived in this building after it was built in 1780. It later fell into the possession of the curacy and thus provided the respective curate – the parish priest – a place to live. The work is being carried out by craftspeople from the trades guild in Au. / www.barockbaumeister.at

Sacred buildings

Churches and chapels also offer interesting perspectives on history and culture.

- The **church in Damüls**, for example, is a jewel in terms of cultural history. Particularly impressive are the wall frescoes (15th cent.) of this alpine church, which depict a biblia pauperum, or pauper's bible.
- Originally Gothic, in the 18th century the **church in Au** was renovated in baroque style and enlarged. Au is interesting from the standpoint of architectural history because an important guild of baroque master builders developed there from around 1650. Some of the most famous churches and chapels in the area around Lake Constance were built by members of that guild. There was not enough money to build a structure as ostentatious as those in the town where the

guild was born, though. Only one descendant of the famous master-builder Moosbrugger family contributed to the church in Au's baroque ornamentation. It was Wendelin Moosbrugger who created the altarpiece 'The Good Shepherd'. Extensive renovation was done on the church in 2008.

- The pictures of the apostles in the **church in Schwarzenberg** are impressive pieces: they were painted in 1757 by Angelika Kauffmann, then only 16 years old, a 'star' in her own time and now considered to have been one of the great female painters of the classicism.
- The face of Sir Winston Churchill surprises those looking up at the ceiling fresco of the **church in Hittisau**: in 1941 the painter Waldemar Kolmsberger immortalized the then prime minister of the United Kingdom in the procession of the damned.
- The parish **church in Lingenau** was awarded the Pilgram Prize in 2012 for its imaginative renovation. A 280-year-old olive tree is a new element to the church interior. A small watercourse rises from its roots, symbolising the River Jordan. The new altar is made up from 12 stone blocks from the region.
- **The Alp Niedere chapel** above Andelsbuch has quite a modern look. The clean-lined wooden structure was designed by the famous Vorarlberg architects Cukrowicz Nachbauer. In 2009 the chapel was honoured with the Client's Award of Österreichische Zentralvereinigung der Architekten, Austria's national association of architects.
- **Salgenreute Chapel** opened in Krumbach in 2016. The stone and timber building with its pointed roof and shingle façade was designed by Bernardo Bader, an architect who hails from Vorarlberg. He won the 'Chicago Athenaeum – The International Architecture Award 2017', the Piranesi Award 2017, the Austrian Bauherrenpreis 2017, the best architects award 18, a 'Honourable Mention' at the International Prize for Sustainable Architecture 2019 for this work as well as the European Prize for Architecture Philippe Rotthier 2021.
- **Wirmboden Chapel** in Schnepfau has also been the beneficiary of several accolades: the '2A Europe Architecture Award 2017', the AIT Award 2018 in the newcomers' category as well as the Architekturpreis Farbe Struktur Oberfläche 2018 (Architecture Award Colour Structure Surface 2018) – second out of three awarded prizes. Architects Innauer Matt planned this chapel that was realized in timber and concrete.

Erlebnisbaumhaus Sulzberg (Tree House)

The Baldauf family has created a very special place to live in Sulzberg, near the Oberköhler moor baths: a timber tree house with 50 square metres of living space, kitchen, shower and WC. 'Rüster', as elm wood is called in the Bregenzerwald, was the material used to realise the structure. The ceilings, walls and floors have been finished in rough sawn timber, the furniture in oiled wood.

The entire family was involved in the building work, which took about one and a half years. They put in around 3,500 hours of work themselves. Mr Baldauf, master carpenter and journeyman carpenter, and his son were responsible for the woodwork and interior design. The steel structure was realised by the eldest son, who is a qualified metal engineer. The plans were drawn up by architect Georg Bechter from Hittisau. All other building work was carried out by trades based in Bregenzerwald.

A barbecue area has been set up at the foot of the tree house, which conceals itself next to a large birch tree. / www.erlebnisbaumhaus.com

Responsibility for the environment

The careful use of available resources enjoys high standing in Vorarlberg and the Bregenzerwald. In many places, biomass power stations provide hot water and warm interiors.

Renewable energy

Hydropower is the most important source of energy in Vorarlberg. The illwerke vkw operate numerous hydroelectric power stations with various outputs. 5 of which are on the river Bregenzerache in Bregenzerwald. The power station in Andelsbuch is of architectural interest and can be visited in guided tours. Erected in 1908, the art nouveau structure was one of the largest and most technologically advanced powers stations in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Many producers from the whole of Vorarlberg supply electricity produced from renewable energy to the Ökostrom GmbH, a subsidiary of illwerke vkw. In addition to hydropower, biomass and the sun are used as energy sources. Biomass power stations heat rooms and the water of many of the 23 villages. The hotels are also connected to the network. These biomass heating plants generate energy from wood, which is produced as wood processing waste, as it were, in the Bregenzerwald. Energy-saving measures and a further extension of hydroelectric power aim to ensure that Vorarlberg is energy autonomous by 2050.

For the good of sustainability

The municipal biomass heating plants are also complemented by many privately run biomass heating plants such as those operated by the Gesundhotel Bad Reuthe, Wellnesshotel Warther Hof in Warth, Almhotel Hochhäderich in Riefensberg and Hotel Am Holand in Au. The Gesundhotel Bad Reuthe, for instance, needed 200,000 litres of heating oil per year until it installed its own heating plant. That's now been completely replaced by biomass.

The village of **Damüls** is indicative of how committed the people in the Bregenzerwald are to the modern way of heat generation. Around 95% of all private dwellings and hotel establishments in the catchment area of the biomass power station heat using biomass. **Au-Schoppernau** offers guided tours of the local biomass power plant as part of its weekly programme.

Certified buildings: hotels, apartments and a museum

Several hotels and apartment buildings in the Bregenzerwald have successfully navigated the certification process for the **Austrian Ecolabel** and are doing their utmost to make their operations as environmentally friendly as they possibly can. The following are proud recipients of the Austrian Ecolabel: AlpHus Apartments in Warth, Hotel Jägeralpe in Warth, Karin Beer Apartments in Schoppernau, Hotel Gasthof Krone in Hittisau, Hotel Gasthof Adler & Apartments in Schoppernau and the Frauenmuseum Hittisau (Women's Museum). The range that's available at Biohotel Schwanen in Bizau is **certified organic**. Known for its 'Wilde Weiber' ('Wild Women') natural cuisine, the venue has also been awarded the Biohotels **Climate Positive Hotel** prize.

Charging stations for electric cars

The number of charging stations for electric cars is growing constantly. They can be found at tourist offices, hotels and the valley station of the Diedamskopfbahn cable car in Schoppernau and the one in Bezau.

Saving and protecting

The northern section of Bregenzerwald, known locally as 'Vorderwald', is one of Austria's climate and energy model regions. The eight communities have joined up to establish the **'Energy region of the Vorderwald'** and are dedicated to a future-compliant climate and energy

policy. Their topics include energy efficiency, the promotion and the use of renewable sources of energy, the promotion of energy-conscious operations and environmentally friendly mobility.

Six communities are **e5 communities**: Andelsbuch, Bezau, Doren, Egg, Hittisau, Krumbach, Langenegg and Sulzberg. They are particularly engaged in energy efficiency and climate protection, with Langenegg taking on the role as trailblazer. The community has already received several awards for its activities. Langenegg visualises its commitment in the form of an artistically designed 'Energy Trail' and 'Energy Portals'.

Soft spot for culture

Art and culture have always been highly respected in the Bregenzerwald. The most important festival is the Schubertiade, which is usually held in the picturesque village of Schwarzenberg. All kinds of concerts are held at special venues in the valley and on the mountain. The Werkraum Haus in Andelsbuch sees itself as a showcase for innovative craftsmanship. Several museums deal with topics from the past and the present.

Schwarzenberg in Schubertiade

The most celebrated series of events in the Bregenzerwald's cultural calendar is the internationally renowned Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg. In its unique way, the rural atmosphere in the Bregenzerwald harmonises with the music of Schubert and his contemporaries. This year's Schubertiade Schwarzenberg will be hosting around 40 events between 15 and 23 June, as well as between 24 August and 1 September 2024, including chamber concerts, song recital evenings and piano concerts. This year, once again, excellent soloists and ensembles are scheduled to perform in the Angelika Kauffmann Hall, the windows of which offer a fantastic view over the meadows and mountains of Bregenzerwald. /

www.schubertiade.at

Individual: Bregenzerwald Tourism offers package deals for guests of the Schubertiade. They include accommodation and three concert tickets of your choice, per person. /

www.bregenzerwald.at/en/schubertiadebregenzerwald

From the Bregenzerwald to the Bregenz Festival

How about combining a stay in the countryside with a spot of urban culture? No sooner said than done in the Bregenzerwald!

The Bregenz Festival will be presenting the opera 'Der Freischütz' by Carl Maria von Weber on the floating stage in 2024 (17 July to 18 August). The program also includes other operas, orchestral concerts and the 'Music and Poetry' chamber-music cycle. /

Custom-made: Bregenzerwald Tourismus, in cooperation with various hotels, has arranged packages for visitors who wish to attend the Bregenz Festival. They include one to three nights' accommodation with half board, the festival ticket and transport to and from Bregenz. /

www.bregenzerwald.at/en/the-bregenz-festival

FAQ Bregenzerwald – potentials for a good time

FAQ Bregenzerwald is a series of events to be held for the seventh time between 12 and 15 September 2024. The forum with a festival character brings up issues pertaining to current topics. The agenda includes lectures and discussions in unusual places, concerts held at breath-taking locations, hikes, readings and extra-special culinary experiences. / www.faq-bregenzerwald.com

Bezau Beatz Festival

The 2024 Bezau Beatz music festival will be taking place from 8 and 11 August 2024. The main stage is located in the Wälderbähnle-Remise, the accompanying program is to be staged at special and surprising locations in and around Bezau. As in previous years, the festival organizers will be producing a colorful, sophisticated and entertaining program that extends beyond the mainstream for people with open ears and open minds. Bezau Beatz brings music and musicians from across the world to the village. / www.bezaubeatz.at

Klassik Krumbach

It's possible to experience young top international musicians in Krumbach who thrill audiences with their passion and joy of performing from 5 to 7 July 2024. The artists sometimes burst out

of the classical framework with playful ease to focus on improvisation and crossover. They become creative where the village, its moorland or even the architecture inspire them. Visitors will be able to hear wonderful music with incredible virtuosity: on the village square, in the parish hall, in the church, in the fields and meadows. / www.klassik-krumbach.at

‘Walser im Wald’ summer music

For the 13th time, Damüls will present the summer music series ‘Walser im Wald’ (‘Walsers in the Woods’). The motto of the musical summer series in the mountain village is ‘from classical to rock’. The concerts will be held in the evening from the beginning of June to the end of August, the entry is free. / www.damuels.at

:alpenarte – Klassik neu erleben

The young :alpenarte festival provides a stage for young, highly talented musicians from across the world. The organizers are hoping that this music festival in Schwarzenberg will encourage dialogue between artists and audiences. Concerts, workshops, music education and dialogues will be on the programme from 10 to 13 October 2024. / www.alpenarte.at

Klang & Raum (Sound and Space)

‘Old instruments. New places’ – that’s the motto for a new series of concerts being staged by four musicians from Hittisau. Klang & Raum (Sound and Space) is where styles of performing from the past meet places of historical interest and the varied craftsmanship that the Bregenzerwald is famous for. The ensemble has already appeared at workshops and in a chapel. The event will be taking place at the Zimmerei Nenning carpentry workshop in Hittisau on 23 March 2024. ‘Saving and renewing’ is the motto for the concert that will be taking place at the Juppenwerkstatt Riefensberg (workshop for traditional dress) on 5 May 2024. / www.klangundraum.at

bahnhof in Andelsbuch

Culture makes a regular stop at the “bahnhof”, the converted K&K Andelsbuch station on the closed Wälderbahn line. More than 40 events are staged here every year: concerts, recitals, presentations, discussions, fairytale hours and exhibitions. The kulturverein bahnhof wants to bring culture from across the world to the Bregenzerwald and to use the bahnhof to show what types of culture thrive there. / www.bahnhof.cc

Werkraum Haus

It was a big event for the Bregenzerwald when the Werkraum Haus opened in Andelsbuch in 2013. People were particularly happy to win architect Peter Zumthor from Switzerland to design the building. Peter Zumthor had become acquainted with several trades- and craftspeople from the Bregenzerwald and learned to appreciate them while working on the construction of the Kunsthaus Bregenz in the 1990s. A group of innovative trades- and craftspeople founded the Werkraum Bregenzerwald in 1999. That was quickly followed by the idea that they should build a place of their own. The Werkraum Bregenzerwald is today home to around 100 trades- and craftspeople. The Werkraum Haus in Andelsbuch sees itself as a showcase for the culture of design and craftsmanship and presents changing exhibitions throughout the year. The ‘Please touch’ exhibition, where visitors will be able to experience the trades and crafts up close, will be open until 31 August 2024. / www.werkraum.at

Angelika Kauffmann Museum Schwarzenberg

The Angelika Kauffmann Museum Schwarzenberg, bearer of the Austrian Museums’ Seal of Quality, is a historical building dating back from the 16th century featuring modern exhibition

rooms. Its exhibitions are devoted to presenting the various perspectives of the work of the famous classicist painter Angelika Kauffmann, who had close family ties with Schwarzenberg. 'In Szene gesetzt' ('Set in scene') is a new show that will be running from 7 May to 5 November 2023 and that is dedicated to the reception, exhibition and collection history of Angelika Kauffmann. How styles of presentation and habits of viewing have changed over time are questions that visitors may explore on the basis of original works, historical exhibition photographs and archive material. The museum will be taking the opportunity presented by the 'salon angelika' series to also showcase contemporary art by Bregenzerwald artist Sarah Bechter from 10 March to 16 April 2023. The Heimatmuseum (Local History Museum), which documents the living and everyday culture of the 19th century, has found a home in the former residential part of the more-than- 450-year-old Bregenzerwälderhaus. / www.angelika-kauffmann.com

Frauenmuseum Hittisau

The only museum to be dedicated to women in Austria is simultaneously the only museum of its kind in the world that is located in a rural region of the Bregenzerwald. Changing exhibitions are dedicated to women-specific subjects that range from cultural, social and art to architectural history. The museum has won many awards, including the Österreichischer Museumspreis (Austrian Museum Award) and a Special Commendation in the European Museum of the Year Award 2020.

'BlitzBlank!' ('Spring Cleaning'), the summer exhibition ending on 27 October 2024, will be dedicated to our extra-clean world. The show discusses aspects of cleaning and cleanliness. In doing so, it asks questions relating to role models and gender attributions, economics and migration, ecology and sustainability, religion and spirituality.

The museum is open from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. from Tuesdays to Sundays. /

www.frauenmuseum.at

Juppenwerkstatt Riefensberg

The making of the Bregenzerwald traditional dress for women and its wearing was included in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2021. Visitors to the Juppenwerkstatt Riefensberg can find out how the elegant national costume worn by the ladies of the Bregenzerwald is made. A very special technique is used to make up to 500 pleats in the black dress, for example. The building – an old farmhouse with a glass façade covering three storeys – is also worth a visit for its architectural value. The Juppenwerkstatt is open between 1 May and 31 October 2024. / www.juppenwerkstatt.at

Franz Michael Felder Museum in Schopponau

Franz Michael Felder (1839 – 1869) was a farmer, writer and social reformer and is one of the most historically significant personalities from the Bregenzerwald. The exhibition is an exploration of his life and works. / www.au-schopponau.at

Vorarlberger FIS Skimuseum

Vorarlberg's FIS Skimuseum Damüls is a small museum that focuses on local history and winter sports and that has found its home in Damüls' former clergy house. The museum was certified by the FIS in 2017 and is thus Vorarlberg's only FIS ski museum. Exhibits, mainly collected by Christian Lingenhölle from Bregenz, provide insights into the region's more than 100 years of skiing history. Besides historic skis, the museum's exhibits include equipment and a colourful selection of memorabilia.

From March 2024, a special exhibition on the second floor will be focusing on '100 years of Kästle' and telling the story of Vorarlberg's famous ski brand.

The Pfarrhof is open on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 2 to 5 p.m. / www.damuels.at

The 'Wälderbähnle'

The 'Wälderbähnle' is a carefully maintained nostalgic railway which runs between train station Schwarzenberg and Bezau. The train, pulled by historical diesel or steam engines, runs on weekends between 18 May and 12 October 2024, also on Wednesdays between 17 July and 11 September. / www.waelderbaehnle.at

Other museums

- The **Heimatmuseum Alberschwende** (Local History Museum) comprises two locations and examines the rural way of life and how homes in the Bregenzerwald looked during the 18th and 19th centuries. One of the main topics focuses on the processes employed to produce 'linen from flax'. The 'Mesmers Stall' satellite venue, located next to the church, emerged from an extensive agricultural collection. The 'Wäldar ka nüd jedar sin' exhibition – 'Not everyone can be a native of the Bregenzerwald' – can be seen there. It deals with the question of whether Alberschwende belongs to the Bregenzerwald or not and presents historical map material. That way, visitors will be able find the answer, at least in a territorial sense.
- **Hittisauer Lebensbilder** from the 19th century: the exhibition in the basement of the Ritter von Bergmann hall shows the lives and work of five unusual personalities from the 19th century who lived in Hittisau.
- The **Egg Museum**, next to the church, is the oldest valley community museum in Vorarlberg. It was founded in 1904 and re-opened in 1988. 'wehrhafte wälder wiebôr – mythen um die weiße juppe' exhibition – ('feisty forest women – myths about the white traditional dress') is an exhibition that deals with the battle at Roten Egg, which is said to have taken place during the Thirty Years' War. The legend still shapes how women from the Bregenzerwald see themselves to this day and has contributed to how women there identify. The Verein Egg Museum also presents special exhibitions with accompanying programmes every year in addition to the permanent exhibition. / www.eggmuseum.at
- **Heimatmuseum Schwarzenberg** (Museum of Local History) The former residential section of the more than 450-year-old Bregenzerwald house has become home to the Heimatmuseum (Local History Museum), which documents the culture of living and everyday life during the 19th century. / www.angelika-kauffmann.com
- The **Alpmuseum 'uf m Tannberg'** in the former alpine dairy hut in Batzen, 1,570 meters above sea level near Warth-Schröcken, gives an impression of what life in the Alps used to be like, and shows the cultural history of the Walsers.
- The amount of skiing talent in Warth-Schröcken am Arlberg is impressive. Although Warth boasts only 175 inhabitants, the municipality is home to three Olympic skiers: Johannes Strolz, who shone in Beijing in 2022 with two gold medals and a 'silver', his father Hubert Strolz, gold and silver medal winner in Calgary in 1988, and Wiltrud Drexel, who won the bronze medal in Sapporo in 1972. The village is celebrating its stars of skiing with an exhibition entitled: '**Dorf der Olympiasieger**' ('Village of Olympic Champions'). / www.warth-schroecken.at/de/sommer/ausstellung-warther-skigschichte

Preference for all things tasteful

Bregenzerwald is also able to look back on a long tradition of treating its guests to special delicacies. Be it with down-to-earth dishes or inventive ones based on modern regional cuisine. Cheese specialities, especially the aromatic alpine and mountain cheeses, are typical of the region. And people have also recently started to grow vegetables on a micro-structured basis. Those who like to combine exercise and regional delights will really enjoy the available culinary hikes and bike trips.

With nature. For the good of nature.

Agriculture in the Bregenzerwald forms the backbone for the maintenance and the upkeep of the cultivated landscape. The basis of this – and what makes it special – is the three-layer cultivation of the fields, which has been practiced for centuries. Once the snow has melted, the cattle graze on the valley pastures. Then they go up to the mountain pasture, a kind of half-way station, then up to the high mountain pastures in mid-summer, and back down to the barn in stages. The advantage of this 'nomadism' is, in addition to maintaining the cultivated landscape, the optimum use of the fields.

Moreover, the alpine pastures, with their many herbs, offer the healthiest possible diets for dairy cows. This makes for particularly delicious, aromatic milk – the perfect base for the tasty Bregenzerwald alpine cheese. Safeguarding the future of closely-structured farming – a farmer has an average of 29 cows – is important for many branches in the Bregenzerwald.

Hence, cooperation between the farming community, tourism and commerce is accordingly close. Initiatives such as the **KäseStrasse Bregenzerwald** make a valuable contribution towards this. There is a great awareness of using high-quality foods made on the farms. Equally great is the range of products: from excellent cheeses to delicious yoghurts, meat and bacon specialities, through to schnapps, and cosmetics made from whey and mare's milk.

In the spring of 2011, the three-layer cultivation method in Bregenzerwald was inscribed in the Austrian national **UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage**.

Cheese specialities

The **Bregenzerwald alpine- and mountaincheese** – a tasty hard cheese whose flavour intensifies the longer it matures – is the showpiece of all the cheeses. The cheese is produced in 15 village dairies and, in the summer months, on around 65 alpine pastures. Only silage-free milk ('Heumilch') is used in the dairies, a rare commodity within the EU, since only around three percent of the milk produced here is silage-free. The local specialities include unpasteurised-milk Emmenthal, camemberts, small cheeses made from cow's, sheep's and goat's milk, as well as Bachensteiner, a fine red, semi-soft cheese.

Practically unknown outside of Vorarlberg is the so-called 'Alpzieger' made from whey, which owes its typical green colour to over 40 different herbs.

TIP: Many of the Alpine huts can be reached via hiking trails, and in some cases along mountain bike routes. Some of the Alpine huts also offer hospitality, with Alpine breakfasts and samples of their milk and cheese products.

Bregenzerwald rarities

Whey is produced during the cheese-making process, and people in the Bregenzerwald region use it to make a number of rarities:

- Crowds quickly begin to form when Bregenzerwald alpine dairies start making '**Seagen**' (also called 'dairy soup'). The discreetly yellowish soup with protein flakes looks a bit unusual but tastes pleasantly sweet and is wholesome in every respect. Whey soup is also great for

fasting days because it removes water from the system. 'Seagen' is regularly available, for example, at the 'Rehmar Sennhus' in Au as well as at the Sennerei Langenegg (dairy) on Mondays and Fridays during winter.

- The '**Zeogorro**' (also 'Ziger') has nothing to do with goats, which are 'Ziegen' in German. In fact, it's also made from whey, which is boiled to extract the protein, which is skimmed off, mixed with herbs and seasoned. The green spread is full of flavour. It can be enjoyed with bread, for example, or with boiled potatoes. Ziger is related to ricotta. But, unlike the Italian cheese, Ziger is fat-free.
- Whey that has been separated from the protein consists mainly of lactose, which is caramelised by boiling and reducing the liquid. The result, a brown sweet-tasting mass, is called 'Sig' or 'Gsig' in the Bregenzerwald and is also known as '**Wälder Schokolade**' (Bregenzerwald Chocolate). 'Sig' is shaped into small loaves or balls and is available from several stores in the Bregenzerwald. It can also be found on the menus of restaurants and inns in the form of refined 'Sigparfait' and other delicious desserts.

TIP: Culinary Hikes

Step by step, from course to course: this is the motto under which Bregenzerwald Tourismus is offering a variety of culinary hikes that are available to book as day packages. All hikes take participants through selected beautiful landscapes and include breakfast, lunch and dessert with regional specialties. The dishes are served in three mountain inns or restaurants.

The rambles involve between 4 and 5 ½ hours of walking. The packages, which include the lift ride up the mountain, start at €52 per person/ €72. Holders of the Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal are entitled to discounts. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/culinary-hikes-in-the-bregenzerwald

Custom-made: Culinary Cycling – On the trail of Bregenzerwald's architecture –

The one-day excursion takes (e-)mountain bikers on a round trip through the villages of Mellau, Andelsbuch, Reuthe, Bizau and Schnepfau. Many amazing examples of old and new timber architecture will be encountered along the way. Breakfast, lunch and a sweet finish as well as the exact description of the 36.1-kilometre-long route are included. The actual cycling time is around three hours, there are 458 metres of altitude to master. The package, which costs €55 is available to book from 4 May to 27 October 2024. / www.bregenzerwald.at/kulinarisch-radfahren

Custom-made: culinary cycling on the trail of architecture in the Bregenzerwald

The latest and physically active (e-)mountain-bike trip is a visual and culinary treat. It takes cyclists from breakfast in Lingenau through the beautifully situated alpine settlement area of Schetteregg. Lunch awaits in Sibratsgfall. This small village is located at an altitude of 930 metres in the Nagelfluhkette Nature Park and is, geologically speaking, on the move. The trip then returns through a typical forest with continuous cover to Lingenau for dessert. Breakfast, lunch and a sweet finish as well as a description of the 34-kilometre-long route are included. A cycling time of around four hours is to be expected. Not to forget an altitude difference of 838 metres. The one-day package, which costs € 53, is available to book between 1 June and 20 October 2024. / www.bregenzerwald.at/package/kulinarisch-radfahren-lingenau

The Bregenzerwald KäseStrasse (Cheese Route)

The KäseStrasse isn't a street or a road in the usual sense: it is a union of experts from various disciplines. Throughout the whole year, the members – including alpine dairies, cheese restaurants, and farms selling their produce directly from the farm – organise events, invite people to tasting sessions, and initiate the uninitiated into the secrets of cheese production. In addition to restaurants and alpine dairies, stations along the KäseStrasse include: the modern

cheese cellar in Lingenau, where several thousand blocks of alpine cheese are left to mature, the cheese house in Andelsbuch, open seven days a week selling the entire range of cheeses and delicacies from the Bregenzerwald, the alpine dairy school in Egg, where visitors can learn to make their own cream cheese in a short course. A lot of Bregenzerwald restaurants are members of the KäseStrasse and, hence, authorised 'cheese restaurants' with an appropriate menu on offer. Most cheese restaurants serve up their delicacies in the setting of typical Bregenzerwald buildings – in cosy rooms with a view of wooden-shingle façades.

At Family Metzler's farm in Egg there is a large display pen with cows and goats. At the cheese-making school next door, visitors can learn to make their own cream cheese in a short course. Family Metzler also uses whey to create personal care and cosmetic products. Highlights of the season are the 'Alpabtrieb', when the herdsmen drive their cattle down from their mountain pastures, and the cheese market in Schwarzenberg in mid-September. / www.kaesestrasse.at

Damüls delicacy tour

Several innkeepers in Damüls and Faschina will be treating hiking fans to special culinary delights on 15 June 2024. The route takes in selected locations with beautiful views. / www.damuels.at

Herbst.Genuss.Zeit

The regions Bregenzerwald, Kleinwalsertal, Klostertal and Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal will be staging the Genusswochen (Culinary Weeks) from September to October 2024. The programme includes tastings, special menus and other culinary events. / www.kaesestrasse.at

Award-winning restaurants

The following restaurants and guesthouses have received awards from Gault Millau:

- In Bizau: Biohotel Schwanen
- In Hittisau: Hotel Gasthof Krone, Wälder Stuba 1840 and Ernele in the Hotel Schiff
- In Krumbach: Restaurant s'Schulhus and Gasthof Adler
- In Langenegg: Hotel Krone
- In Schwarzenberg: Hotel Gasthof Hirschen, Gasthof Adler and Gasthaus Alte Mühle
- In Au: Gasthaus Löwen
- In Damüls: Hotel Damülser Hof and Hotel Alpenstern
- In Warth: Bibers in the Berghotel Biberkopf

TIP: Every Friday: the market in Bezau

'Unique, unparalleled' – that is the way the organisers describe this market, held on Bezau village square once a week, every Friday morning, between early June and late October. The range is 'unique'. Bakers, alpine dairy farmers, butchers, gardeners and florists from the region offer their wares on market stalls especially designed by craftspeople from the Bregenzerwald. The high-quality products have been freshly harvested, prepared especially for the market or are only available on Fridays. / www.bezau-bregenzerwald.com

Moor restaurateurs, Krumbach

Since the village of Krumbach opened up its moors with a hiking path, three moor restaurants have been dedicating their establishments to the serving of culinary delights from the moors. Plants, berries and herbs from the moors pep up food – and even drinks! / www.krumbach.at

Sonntagsgasthaus (The Sunday restaurant)

The Adler in Großdorf is only open on Sundays. Fans of cooking – amateur cooks and professional chefs from near and far – prepare their favourite dishes and serve up a three-course meal. Home-made bread and cake made according to the best-kept family recipes are

par for the course at the Adler. Selected specialities from Italy – the second home of host Irma Renner – are also on the menu. / www.adler-grossdorf.at

Frau Kaufmann cooks and sells delicious specialities

Regional and seasonal specialities prepared according to old recipes with contemporary tweaks are the subject of a series of cooking classes offered by Karin Kaufmann. Ms Kaufmann has transformed the lovingly renovated traditional Gasthaus Engel in Egg into a cookery school. Multiple classes are available in any given month. Ms Kaufmann offers selected delicacies and treats from her own kitchen as well as kitchen utensils that she worked with Bregenzerwald craftsmen to design. There is also an online shop accessible from her website. / www.fraukaufmann.at

Suggestions for exploring nature

Do you like to go up high, or do you prefer a leisurely walk along panorama routes? Hikers can explore the Bregenzerwald from different perspectives, by the way, is also an extremely pleasant way to spend some time. Some hiking paths have stories to tell, about alpine transhumance, geological features, historical events and the people who lived there. The **Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal**, which is available to all visitors for free, is your 'admission ticket' to all mountain experiences. The card is issued to all guests who stay three or more nights in one of the 28 participating municipalities.

Lovely rambling

Rambling is experiencing a renaissance, in all age groups. Rambling at a leisurely or a fast pace stimulates body and soul. The quiet of the mountains, Mother Nature's play of colours and forms, the magnificent views – all these offer a welcome change to the hectic, loud pace of daily life for an increasing number of people. The Bregenzerwald has the best possible conditions for ramblers: 1.500 kilometres of uniformly sign-posted rambling paths and a selected range of thematic paths which relate the stories of the countryside and what makes it so special. Guided rambles are available for those wishing to explore the area in the company of an expert guide. The local programme on offer includes herb rambles, summit tours, rambles to alpine dairy farms, and trips to watch the sun set or rise.

TIP: The hiking map includes around 50 suggested hikes – from leisurely to challenging. The hiking map is available from Bregenzerwald Tourismus, from numerous establishments and from the local tourist information offices. Digital maps and detailed descriptions of the hiking paths are available at <https://sommertouren.bregenzerwald.at/en/tours/>.

Mountain experiences with the Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal

Cable cars and chair lifts go to several of the mountain summits. The view is reward enough for taking such a trip. The atmospheric events held on the mountains are also attractive: from the mountain breakfast through to trips to watch the sun set, concerts of all type through to meetings amongst musicians. The **Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal** is your "ticket" to various mountain experiences. It is your unlimited ticket to take the cable car to the top as often as you like, is valid for environmentally-friendly rides on the public buses, and is your permit to refreshing, relaxing times in the outdoor swimming pools. The Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal is available to all visitors for free who spend at least three nights in one of the 28 partner municipalities between 1 May and 31 October 2024. The card is valid from the day of arrival to the day of departure.

Custom-made: Long-distance hiking package – Accompanied only by a daypack, exploration-minded souls can hike for three to five days along a selection of lovely paths through Bregenzerwald while their baggage is transported in comfort from one hotel to the next. Two tours are available: The Architecture Path and The Cheese Path. The paths take you through medium altitudes and hikers in average form will have no problem. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/hiking-far-bregenzerwald/

Custom-made: Mountain trekking & peak climbing – Hike from one mountain hut to the next, enjoying the magnificent views. This package, designed for experienced mountain hikers, includes two nights' accommodation in mountain huts with breakfast or half board as well as a precise description of the route. Daily walking times range from four and a half to six hours. The package is available with advance booking from 23 June and 22 September 2024. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/alpine-hut-hikes

Custom-made: Hike from hut to hut - Nagelfluhkette Nature Park – The Nagelfluhkette Nature Park ranges in and around Hittisau to the border with Germany. It takes its name from the rock conglomerate that is typically found in the region. Fans of nature will be hiking through this exquisitely beautiful landscape for three days with two overnight stays in alpine huts. The walking times of 2.5 to 3.5 hours a day leave sufficient time to take in and enjoy the landscapes. The route is also moderately steep. It only climbs 785 metres uphill on the first day. The package is available to book from 3 June to 27 October 2024.

/ www.bregenzerwald.at/en/hike-from-hut-to-hut-nagelfluhkette-nature-park

Guided summit tours

Daring to try something new and climbing the highest peaks in the Bregenzerwald in the company of an expert: Au-Schoppernau and Warth-Schröcken are inviting guests with mountain experience and who enjoy hiking to do just that. A different 2000-metre peak is the destination every Friday. The tours take in the 2,649-metre-high Braunarlspitze – which is the highest mountain in the Bregenzerwald – among others that also include the Biberkopf and the Widderstein. Guests staying overnight in Au-Schoppernau or in Warth-Schröcken will be charged €35. The cost is €60 for all other participants. The tours are available to book at the Au-Schoppernau and Warth-Schröcken tourist offices.

TIP: Bike & Hike

The tourist offices at Au-Schoppernau and Warth-Schröcken are offering joint guided bike & hike tours. The trip to the 2,403-metre-high **Zitterklapfen** takes cyclists and their e-bikes to the Annalperau-Alpe at an altitude of 1,370 metres to start their challenging ascent to the summit from there.

The second trip is to the 2,412 metre high **Juppenspitze**. The e-bikers on this trip cycle from Schröcken by way the Auenfeldsattel to the Untere Gaisbühelalpe at an altitude of 1,777 metres to ascend the Juppenspitze from there. Once back down, the cyclists will return to Schröcken via Oberlech to Lech am Arlberg and via the old 'Bürstegg' Walser settlement. Participation costs €35 for guests staying overnight in Au-Schoppernau or in Warth-Schröcken, it's €60 for all others. The minimum number of participants is four. The tours are available to book at the Au-Schoppernau and Warth-Schröcken tourist offices.

TIP: Culinary Hikes

Step by step, from course to course: this is the motto under which Bregenzerwald Tourismus is offering a variety of culinary hikes that are available to book as day packages. All hikes take participants through selected beautiful landscapes and include breakfast, lunch and dessert with regional specialties. The dishes are served in three mountain inns or restaurants.

The rambles involve between 4 and 5 ½ hours of walking. The packages, which include the lift ride up the mountain, start at €52 per person/ €72. Holders of the Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal are entitled to discounts. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/culinary-hikes-in-the-bregenzerwald

On the trail of alpine culture

Unusual natural features, history or art: Bregenzerwald is also well known for its informative theme-based trails.

- The StandWOrtWeg in Doren plays with perspectives, teaches people to take a closer look and invites them to test their puzzle-solving skills. The comfortable walk takes around 1.5 hours. Game and puzzle stations are encountered and philosophical questions are raised along the way. Those intending to solve the puzzles in the folder will have to find the right perspective, which is actually also a tried-and-tested tool for other walks of life too. / www.doren.at/lesewanderweg

- It's possible to listen to traditional Bregenzerwald songs at the 10 stations along the music trail on the Brüggelekopf, the local mountain of Alberschwende in the Bregenzerwald. It's particularly charming to hear the melodies being played by choirs and music associations from Alberschwende right at the heart of nature. There are places to rest and enjoy the views as well. Berggasthof Brüggele is surrounded by a range of works of art. / www.musikwanderweg.at
- '**Goßarweag'** Bizau: the keeping and farming of goats was a major part of daily culture in Bizau for hundreds of years. The hike is a reminder of this cultural asset – 'Goßar' being goat in the local dialect. It is enlightening from both a historic and natural landscape point of view, as well as being a scenic delight. Five stations for touching, seeing, listening, feeling, guessing and climbing provide attractions for children. There are several options for joining/leaving the hike along the 'Goatherd's path' via existing hiking paths and back into the village. / www.bizau-bregenzerwald.at
- The **Rotenberg Forest Path** in Lingenau, which has 20 stations, including a Waldzimmer (forest room), an alpine moor and a natural arena made of nagelfluh (gompfolite), points out the importance and special features of the forest. It takes approximately 2 hours to complete the small circuit, 3 ½ for the larger one. / www.lingenau.at
- In Au-Schopponau the **Alpgang Trail** offers 2 or 6 hours of glimpses into Bregenzerwald alpine cultivation, which has been based on a three-layer system for centuries. In the early summer, the alpine herdsman and their cows move from the valley up to the 'Vorsäß' or mountain pasture, continuing up to the high mountain pasture later in summer and then returning to the valley in the autumn. / www.au-schopponau.at
- Ramblers in Warth-Schröcken set out on the **trail of the Walsers**. In the 14th century, Walser people from the Western Swiss canton of Wallis settled around Tannberg mountain. Traces of their presence can still be found here today – and heard in the local dialect. A brochure available in the tourist offices presents the objects along the path that reveal the story of the Walsers. / www.tannberg.info
- In Langenegg, a municipality intensively engaged in activities relating to the issue of energy, the **Energy Trail** allows walkers to learn about and experience energy. / www.langenegg.at
- In Hittisau, the **Wasserwanderweg**, the water hiking trail, follows the Bolgenach river, and in about two hours of mostly flat walking takes ramblers through a delightful forest and river landscape. Information is offered on panels along the way. / www.hittisau.at
- At a total of thirteen stations the **Georunde Rindberg** in Sibratsgfall brings you that bit closer to the force of Mother Nature, letting you experience it for yourself. The tour takes you to the Rindberg plot where, a few years ago, mountainsides moved and left behind deep scars. For instance, you can see 'Felber's leaning house' on the walk. During the landslide, the former holiday home slipped 18 metres downwards towards the valley without suffering any real damage. The property, which you can visit, summarises the forces of nature, and presents the Nagelfluhkette nature reserve in its exhibition 'Gewaltige Natur' (The Force of Mother Nature). / www.bewegtenatur.at
- The **Tobelweg** in Sibratsgfall leads through sparse alluvial forests along the Subersach and streams. Interactive stations with such names as Quellwasser (Spring Water), Balance, Tagträume (Daydreams) or Baumklang (Tree Sound) stimulate the senses along this route. The hike takes around an hour to complete. / www.sibra-bregenzerwald.com
- The 2.6-kilometre-long **Sulzberg fitness trail** runs between Sulzberg's water tower and the Hochsträß. The forest health trail invites visitors to try out the exercises recommended by sports medicine at 24 stations. It's great for combining with the **Grenzerpfad** (Border Trail) towards Hochsträß to **Oberreute**. Ten experience stations provide information about the various habitats and their inhabitants on this extended hike. There's lots to discover on the Grenzerpfad, particularly for families with children: the 'Schmugglerpeter' ('Smuggler Pete')

takes the little ones on an adventure trip and invites them to explore nature through play. / www.bregenzerwald.at/aktivitaet/sulzberg-fitnessparcours/

Hiking to sunrise and sunset

- The early morning hike leads from Au-Schoppernau to the striking Kanisfluh (22 May to 15 October 2024). Guests staying in Au-Schoppernau may take part at no extra cost, all others will be charged €25.
- It's also possible to get to the Kanisfluh from Mellau. Early risers will be able to set out from there every Thursday from mid-May to mid-October 2024. The hike sets off between 2.45 am and 4.30 am, depending on the month. It's also possible to conclude the summit experience with a breakfast treat at the Alpe Obere. Breakfast costs €17.

Naturpark Nagelfluhkette

A magnificent cultivated landscape has developed over many centuries at the place where the Bregenzerwald meets the Allgäu region in Germany; it bears the coveted distinction of having been designated a nature park. This cross-border nature park extends through 15 municipalities, eight of which are in the lower Bregenzerwald, alpine meadows with 290 species of plants, precious high-altitude moors, silver-fir woods and forests in gorges and many alpine pastures. The imposing Nagelfluhkette, which runs from west to east through the nature park, constitutes the connecting link. Nagelfluh is what conglomerate is called here.

Numerous hiking trails lead through the habitats of black grouse, golden eagles, the rare Apollo butterfly and many other animals and plants. The circular hiking trail on the Hochhäderich near Hittisau, for example, impresses with wonderful views into the Allgäu and across the Bregenzerwald and also leads to large Nagelfluh rock faces. It takes around 3.5 hours to walk across several alpine pastures from Hittisau-Reute. Berggasthof Hochhäderich is a great place to stop off for a bite to eat.

Regular guided hikes take place from May to October. Nature park rangers provide insights into the special aspects of fauna and flora. Participation is free of charge.

A hiking package with three days of hiking through the Nagelfluhkette Nature Park and two days of hiking may be booked at Bregenzerwald Tourismus. / www.nagelfluhkette.info

Holidaying and hiking with four-legged friends

Those exploring the mountains in the company of their four-legged friends should know what the rules in regard to encounters with grazing animals are. These are available at www.sichere-almen.at.

It's also good to be prepared and know where leads are compulsory, where dogs are not allowed – for example in cemeteries and children's playgrounds – where muzzles are required and which cable cars permit dogs to be taken along and under what conditions. All this information is available in the Bregenzerwald travel guide and at www.bregenzerwald.at/en/hiking-with-dogs

Two-wheel options

Leisurely through the valley, across passes or up to the Alps and peaks? Be it on a road bike, mountain-, gravel- or e-bike: on two wheels is a great way to enjoy the beautiful landscapes and the culture of living. Those who'd like some company on the road or who wish to improve on their cycling skills should get in touch with Bike Schule Bregenzerwald and other professionals. The 'Into the wold' festival is the new place for gravel bikers to meet up.

Several hotels specialise in accommodating mountain bikers and racers. They offer expert tips and suitable facilities for man and his machine. The **Hotel Bären in Mellau** (www.baerenmellau.at/en), and the **Gämsle in Schopponau** (www.gaemsle.at) are a specialists for roadbikers. The **Hotel Rössle in Au** is a specialist for mountain bike tours (www.roessle-au.at) and the **Alpen Hotel Post in Au** is also a certified mountain bike hotel (www.alpenhotel-post.com)

Cycling in the mountains

One thing that is extraordinary about Bregenzerwald is the broad spectrum of cycling tours available, from comfortably easy to highly challenging. Cyclists can choose from a total of around 460 km of posted routes. The 20 top tours reveal aspects of the life and culture of the region: through a selection of lovely landscapes, to the mountain and high mountain pastures, to summits offering fabulous views. Several outdoor specialists hold guided mountain bike tours and riding technique training sessions. / <https://sommertouren.bregenzerwald.at/en/tours/>

Die Bike Schule Bregenzerwald: The professionals from the Bike Schule Bregenzerwald take several mountain bike tours from Friday to Sunday. Individuals and groups are welcome. The school also offers regular technique training, bike camps and events.

The bike school is also a Liteville test and ride centre, and rents out this make of bike for rides. The specialised mountain bike guides can also be booked for individual tours and training. / www.die-bike-schule.at

'DussaFit' – guided mountain bike trips with Paulina Burger: the Sulzberg, which is around 1,000 metres high, is where Paulina Burger is most at home. The enthusiastic outdoor sportswoman accompanies mountain bike trips on and around the Sulzberg. 'Dussa fit (fit outside), fresh air and freedom' is her motto. / www.dussafit.at

Rössle Bikepoint: the bike school at the Hotel Rössle offers all guests a varied programme. It has something for all mountain bikers – from tour guiding across the Bregenzerwald to skills training and bike hire. / www.roessle-au.at/bike-hotel

Bike track: The Au-Schopponau bike track presents realistic simulated single trails with the 'blue', 'red' and 'pink' difficulty levels. It's also possible for cyclists to practice on the pump track, Northshore elements, the see-saw and short drops. The facility is particularly suitable for cross-country, all-mountain and dirt bikes. / www.au-schopponau.at

Pumptrack Mellau

A new training area for trail cyclists and mountain bikers has opened in Mellau. The pump track is located at the soccer field at the Bregenzerache. It's open to all types of bikes, mountain bikes, BMX bikes and skateboards. / www.mellau.com/en/pumptrack-mellau

Bike & Hike

Climb a 2,000-metre peak in around an hour? You can with Bike & Hike in the Bregenzerwald. The trip of discovery sets off from the valley and initially leads uphill by mountain bike or e-bike to an alpine inn or hut. That's where the bikes get a rest as the trip continues on foot to the summit. Several Bike & Hike tours are available to choose from, ranging from moderately difficult to challenging, all with stops for refreshments along the way. Wonderful peace and magnificent distant views across the mountains, in some places even to Lake Constance, are the rewards for the effort. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/mountainbiking-and-cycling/bike-hike-en

TIP: into the wold – Gravelbike-Festival

The Bregenzerwald will be entirely dedicated to gravel biking from 27 June to 30 June 2024. The new festival is all about exploring the Bregenzerwald in all its facets. The highlight is going to be a big joint cycle trip, on which the participants will be challenged physically but will also be given the space and time to enjoy the region's impressive natural spectacles. Top regional caterers are going to be serving food and refreshments. / www.intothewold.at

Roadbike tours

The Bregenzerwald has routes with various degrees of difficulty for roadbikers. Au-Schoppernau and Mellau are the perfect bases for these tours. From here, road racers have alpine passes such as the Hochtannbergpass, the Flexenpass, the Faschinajoch, the Furkajoch, the Bödele and the Riedbergpass at their disposal. Thirteen mapped-out racer tours, from the leisurely, medium-difficult to difficult, take the racers across the mountains, past meadows, through forests and the 23 pretty villages which make up the region. Cross-border circular tours into Appenzellerland, Allgäu, Lechtal and Paznauntal extend the radius of action. / <https://sommertouren.bregenzerwald.at/en/tours/>

Cycling in the valleys

Most of the villages in the Bregenzerwald are located on expansive valley floors, making them ideal terrain for journeys of discovery by bicycle. The cycle paths are located on quiet side streets and on specially marked cycle tracks.

The latest cycling path was opened in summer 2014. The 10-km path goes from Egg to Doren, and follows the tracks of the former Bregenzerwald railway. The walking and cycle path with minimal ascents reveals the wonderful and charming nature and landscape of the Bregenzerache.

The particularly scenic cycle path (30 km) between Schoppernau and Egg follows the Bregenzerache and its floodplain forests. Another tip: the Rohrmoostal cycle path in Sibratsgöll, 26 km in length. On a road free of cars, it takes you through the impressive nature reserve, with a view of striking mountains such as the Gottesackerwände.

TIP: The Bregenzerwald Bicycle Bus

The 8R1 Bicycle Bus with its own bicycle trailer is the perfect choice for all those who would like to combine their cycle tour through the Bregenzerwald with public transport or would like to travel by public transport from a little further afield to the area. It runs from Thursdays to Sundays between 30 May and 29 September 2024, starting from Bregenz railway station and terminating in the village square in Warth. The No. 851 bus from Au to Damüls and the No. 890 bus (only the routes from and to Oberstaufen) operate with rear racks for five bicycles. / www.landbusbregenzerwald.at

Bicycle and e-bike rental

Several hotels offer guests e-bikes for rent, as do shops in Alberschwende, Au, Damüls, Egg (just e-bikes), Hittisau and Mellau. The number of places offering this service is increasing.

Custom-made: Culinary Cycling – On the trail of Bregenzerwald's architecture –

The day-excursion takes (e-)mountain bikers on a round trip through the villages of Mellau, Andelsbuch, Reuthe, Bizau and Schnepfau. Many amazing examples of old and new timber architecture will be encountered along the way. Breakfast, lunch and a sweet finish as well as the exact description of the 36.1-kilometre-long route are included. The actual cycling time is around three hours, there are 458 metres of altitude to master. The package, which costs €55 is available to book from 4 May to 27 October 2024. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/culinary-cycling/

Custom-made: culinary cycling on the trail of architecture in the Bregenzerwald

The latest and physically active (e-)mountain-bike trip is a visual and culinary treat. It takes cyclists from breakfast in Lingenau through the beautifully situated alpine settlement area of Schetteregg. Lunch awaits in Sibratsgfall. This small village is located at an altitude of 930 metres in the Nagelfluhkette Nature Park and is, geologically speaking, on the move. The trip then returns through a typical forest with continuous cover to Lingenau for dessert. Breakfast, lunch and a sweet finish as well as a description of the 34-kilometre-long route are included. A cycling time of around four hours is to be expected. Not to forget an altitude difference of 838 metres. The one-day package, which costs €53, is available to book between 1 June and 20 October 2024. / www.bregenzerwald.at/package/kulinarisch-radfahren-lingenau

Adventures in the green

Filling up on fresh air, trying out new things and experiencing them: there are so many activities to do in the great outdoors. From adventurous activities like rafting and paragliding to more meditative ones like fly-fishing and golfing. Courses and guided tours are available from experienced experts.

Golf in and around Golfpark Bregenzerwald

The 18-hole Golfpark Bregenzerwald in Riefensberg-Sulzberg is situated in the hilly north of the Bregenzerwald near the border to Germany. It cooperates with the Oberstaufen-Steibis 18-hole golf course in the neighbouring Allgäu region so that golfers may enjoy an even greater variety. They arrange joint special offers for green fees and work with participating golf hotels. It's possible to book courses through Golfschule Bregenzerwald (golf school). Course materials range from tips about the swing and strategies of the game to mental training. Golf-course permits issued by Golfpark Bregenzerwald are also recognised in Germany and Switzerland. Guests staying at the Golf Partner Hotels may also benefit from green-fee discounts on five other golf courses in Vorarlberg. **Romantikhôtel Das Schiff in Hittisau** (www.schiff-hittisau.com) and **Hotel Gasthof Krone in Hittisau** (www.krone-hittisau.at) and **Wellnesshotel Linde in Sulzberg** (www.wellnesshotellinde.at) are the specialists for golf in the Bregenzerwald. / www.golf-bregenzerwald.com

Fly-fishing

Anglers can try their hand at the art of fly-fishing in selected lovely river landscapes and at sustainably farmed fishing grounds. And hosts provide the appropriate all-round service.

Custom-made: Package deals comprising three or seven nights' accommodation in a hotel with half-board, including a half-day introductory lesson, fishing permits for the loveliest fishing grounds on the Bregenzerache and Subersach, and the Guest Card Bregenzerwald & Großes Walsertal. A fly-fishing course can also be booked as an optional extra. Available from 1 Mai until 30 September 2024. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/fly-fishing-bregenzerwald

Outdoor adventure

The Bregenzerwald outdoor specialists offer both games and adventure. They accompany you as expert guides on your tours in the countryside. On offer are canyoning and rafting tours, canoe and (fun) kayak tours on the Bregenzerache, guided cave hikes in the Schneckenlochlöhle, mountain bike tours, bungee-jumping, adventure days for children, climbing for children, guided via ferrata tours, guided mountain tours and much more. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/outdoor-activities

White water swimming in Lech

The Lech river, which has its source near Lech am Arlberg and flows into the Danube 264 kilometres later, has formed a gorge about six kilometres long between Lech and Warth, which is barely visible from above. In this section, swimming enthusiasts can let themselves be carried along by the white water. Guided and accompanied swimming trips are offered on demand. / www.alpinschulewiderstein.at

Climbing gardens and via ferrata

Be it for beginners or experts, younger people or those who are a little older: the climbing and ropes courses in the Bregenzerwald constitute the ideal training grounds.

- **Au-Schnepfau climbing garden** offers several routes in the degrees of difficulty 3 to 8.
- The **'Widaschrofa'** area between Mellau and Schnepfau has two attractive via ferrata on offer. On both the Wälder via ferrata (degree of difficulty D) and the Abendrot via ferrata

(degree of difficulty E), climbers have to overcome 100 metres' difference in altitude. Climbing times are around 1.5 hours.

- **Schrofenwies climbing garden** in Warth offers climbers the chance to practice on up to 32 routes (degrees of difficulty 4b to 7c).
- **Bürstegg climbing garden** located between Lech and Warth comprises 28 secured routes (degrees of difficulty 3 to 7c).
- There are also two popular routes close to Warth: the **Mindelheimer via ferrata** (degree of difficulty medium, about 2.5 hours to the entrance) and **Karhorn via ferrata** (east and west ridge, 1,200 metres in length, degree of difficulty medium to difficult (A/B to D), walking time 2 to 4 hours).

Climbing forest in Egg

The Alpenverein Egg has built a new space for climbing called the 'Kletterwald' ('Climbing Forest'). It's home to a climbing area of around 500 square metres with a lead height of 12 metres. There are 20 lines and around 50 routes. There are also two automatic belay devices, a boulder cave with campus board and a system wall. Courses are always on offer. / www.alpenverein.at/vorarlbergbezirk-egg/

A bird's eye view

Seen from above, the world looks completely different. The best conditions abound in the Bregenzerwald for anyone wishing to engage in this exciting experience. The thermal currents around the Nedere close to Andelsbuch/Bezau and the Diedamskopf close to Au-Schopperrau are considered particularly agreeable. The flying areas in the Bregenzerwald are amongst the best in the whole of Europe. Tandem flights are available. / www.gleitschirmschule.at

Geocaching on the Tannberg

Treasure hunters both young and old can find so-called caches on four routes on the Tannberg between Warth-Schröcken and Lech am Arlberg. Between four and ten caches can be found along the routes, which are between four and nine kilometres in length. Tours that tell a story are available to fans of GPS devices and geocaching apps (at a charge): the more physical 'Pfarrer Müller und das weiße Gold' ('Father Müller and the White Gold') tour in Warth, the cultural 'Walserdorf und Naturjuwelen' ('Walserdorf and Natural Jewels') tour in Schröcken and the 'Gipf's das' nature tour of the gypsum holes in Lech. / www.warth-schroecken.com

Summer biathlon in Egg

Biathlon is also a great activity for summer. That's because it's also possible to combine it with running or hiking instead of cross-country skiing. Supervised programmes provide insights into this complex sport. The participants practice shooting with air rifles (10-metre shooting distance) in Egg. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/outdoor-activities/archery-biathlon

Archery

Archery is becoming increasingly popular – especially when you can practice the sport on 3D courses in nature. The Bregenzerwald offers several options to this end. There are 3D tracks in Andelsbuch, in Doren, in Riefensberg and in Warth. They're usually open from April to October or until the beginning of winter. Archery courses are also available. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/outdoor-activities/archery-biathlon

Running trails in Andelsbuch, Bezau and Lingenau

Runners can find an array of trails of different lengths and degrees of difficulty in the Bregenzerwald. The villages Andelsbuch, Bezau and Lingenau have marked running trails. In Andelsbuch, there are three routes on offer: easy, medium difficulty and advanced. There are six routes in Bezau, and seven in Lingenau. Andelsbuch, Bezau and Lingenau are connected via the regional hike and cycle path, the Achtalweg, which is 18.1 km in length. Runners can not only use this lovely path – they can also check out the network of running trails offered by the villages. A good regional bus service makes it easy to get backwards and forwards. / www.bregenzerwald.at

TIP: Trail running guides Andrea and Norbert Rauch from Bizau offer trail-running courses as well as accompanied trail running and route-planning tips. / www.bewegungscoaching.at

Take part or simply watch

- The 8th **Bizau Trail Run** is being launched on 18 May 2024. There are two routes to choose from: the 7.6-kilometre experience run and the 32.8-kilometre trail run that takes in an altitude difference of 1,880 metres. / www.bizautrail.at
- As suggested by its name, participants in the **‘Seven Summits Tour’** have to overcome seven summits, 50 km and a difference in altitude of around 4,500 m and will be held on 7 September 2024. The proceeds of the long-distance hike go to an international aid organisation. / www.7berge.at

Family activities

A huge space for adventures opens up to children and families in the Bregenzerwald. There are farms and alps to be explored. And those who'd like to try out new activities can give climbing or canyoning a go. Riddles need to be solved, cultural programmes to be attended. Family-friendly services are offered by a number of accommodation options, from hotels to holiday farms.

Friendly stays

Many an establishment offers a family-friendly ambience and services – from childcare through to the right furnishings and fittings – hotels and B & Bs as well as farm-holiday establishments. The specialist hotels include the **Almhotel Hochhäderich in Riefensberg** (www.alm-hotel.at), the **Hotel Gasthof Adler in Lingenau** (www.adler-lingenau.com), the **Schetteregger Hof in Egg-Schettereg** (www.schettereggerhof.at), the **Sonne Bezau Familotel** (www.sonne-bezau.at), the **Alpen Hotel Post in Au** (www.alpenhotel-post.com), the Hotel Alpenblume and the **Hotel Jägeralpe #erlebniswasbleibt in Warth** (www.jaegeralpe.at).

Hiking from one mountain hut to the next

Spending the night at a mountain hut far from the nearest village has a particular charm. The simple, easy-going atmosphere can be entrancing.

Custom-made: Family hikes from one mountain hut to the next – The hiking package includes two nights' accommodation in two different mountain huts and an exact description of the route. Each day's hike leads through fairly even terrain and walking times vary from about 2 to 5 hours, leaving enough time for playing in nature or a refreshment break or two. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/family-hikes-between-alpine-inns-bregenzerwald

The world on a farm

Around 10% of the population in the Bregenzerwald live from and with farming, either in a full-time capacity or as a sideline. Hence, there are accordingly many opportunities for spending your 'holidays on the farm'. Living in rhythm with nature, with people and products from the region, is a varied adventure and valuable experience, especially for kids.

Alp experience on Brongen alp

Every Wednesday morning in July and August, the Meusburger family from the alp offers insights into the production of alpine cheese, the animal kingdom and daily routine on the alp. From the car park in Egg-Schettereg, you can walk to Brongen alp in about 25 minutes. Participation costs €5 per person. / The Meusburger family, T +43 (0)664 6304073.

Riding lessons, horseback tours and horse-and-carriage trips

Riding courses for all levels and playful encounters with horses and ponies available from several horse owners in the Bregenzerwald. Even trips on horse-drawn carriages can be booked:

- Children from three to 10 years of age may enjoy educational riding experiences and pony-riding lessons in Doren that are provided in accordance with the FEBS principle – FEBS stands for imagination, experience, movement and play. / www.reitpaedagogik-biserhof.at
- Courses and riding lessons are available from Pferdehof Hammerer in Egg (Kasia Hammerer, M +43 (0)664 3913324).
- From her home in Sulzberg, Natalie Bregenzer shows participants how to be more self-confident in their interactions with horses. / www.nati-westernreiten.at

- The Blank Family is also based in Sulzberg and offers trips on a carriage drawn by a team of Friesian horses (Silke Blank, M +43 (0)664 4411380).
- Those interested are able to experience the mountain world of Damüls by horse-drawn carriage every Monday from 3 July to 11 September 2023. Meeting point is at the Uga-Express valley station 1.30 p.m. The cost per person is € 5.00, children participate free of charge. / www.damuels.at

Conquering steep faces

Climbing trains coordination, and is enjoying increasing popularity.

- The Aqua high-rope garden enjoys a spectacular position above the Bregenzerach in Andelsbuch. / www.aktiv-zentrum.at
- Climbing and abseiling – including above the Bregenzerach – are offered in Schröcken adventure park. It goes without saying that a helmet and safe climbing equipment are provided, enabling kids from 6 years of age to have fun too. / www.abenteuerpark.net
- In the high-rope garden in Damüls, at a height of between 2 and 13 metres, ropes are stretched out and various obstacles erected: the idea is to overcome them. The course is suitable for all age groups, from beginners through to experts. It also has a 200-metre long Flying Fox zip wire. / www.das-seil.at

Canyoning for kids and teenagers

Equipped with a wet suit, helmet and climbing rope, set off for an exciting tour of the canyon. After your jump into the water, enjoy sliding and climbing, and abseiling on the waterfall. The programme, which is held every Tuesday and Thursday in July and August, is aimed at the whole family, and kids from the age of seven can participate. Participation costs €32 for children and €42 for teenagers and adults. / www.holzschopf.com

3-D archery for children

Following professional instruction in archery, the participants set off on an exciting hunt on the 3-D range in Andelsbuch-Bersbuch. The programme, which takes around 2 hours, is aimed at adults and children from the age of 10, and is held between May and October upon request. Including equipment hire, participation costs €144 per family (of three) and €42 for each additional person. / www.aktiv-zentrum.at

Children's adventure summer

During the summer months, the **Au-Schoppernautourist information** office organises a programme of events for the family just about every day. 'Hut magic and magic herbs' takes you to the herb garden, for instance. On the cattle pasture, kids find out more about cows and milking. Abseiling, barbequing, climbing and felt-work are also on offer. / www.au-schoppernautourist.at/en

Kids' rally in the village

The Kids' Rally that takes participants through Bezau, Mellau, Bizau, Reuthe and Schnepfau is great fun particularly on rainy days. The puzzle brochure is available at the respective tourist office. The rally is all about solving exciting puzzles and tasks for a small reward at the end. / www.mellau.com/en

Bergwelt zum Sehen und Staunen (,Mountain world to see and be amazed by')

The interactive 'Bergwelt zum Sehen und Staunen' exhibition at the mountain station offers insights into the history of the formation of the Alps. The native animals and the colourful world of flowers in the Diedamskopf area. New: Weather and snow on the Diedamskopf. / www.diedamskopf.at

Tip for rainy days – indoor playground

Climbing and fun elements, toddler's area, climbing wall, table football and table hockey. Free entrance and open to all families. It's located at the top floor of the Alpenrose multi-use building in Damüls. The play room is not supervised. / www.damuels.at

Getting to know alpacas

If you want to get acquainted with gentle alpacas or take a hike in the company of these animals, contact the Sonnenbühl-Alpakahof in Sulzberg. Visits to the farm are possible by arrangement with Wolfgang and Jessica Oberhauser. The around one-hour programme helps visitors learn more about alpacas and gives them the opportunity to pet and feed them. The Oberhauser family organises hikes with alpacas for groups of two or more. / www.sonnenbuehl-alpakas.at

Visiting the beekeeper

Why do people need bees? What happens in a beehive and how is honey made? Beekeeper Günther Huber, at home in Sulzberg, provides answers on guided tours. Dates for a minimum of five people are available on inquiry. The tour lasts for around one and a half hours. Participation costs € 7 for adults, € 3 for children. / www.sulzberg-bregenzerwald.com/package/besichtigung-imkerbetrieb/

Well-being on holiday

Take a rest and tank up on fresh energy. There are a number of specialist hotels offering relaxation for the body, mind and soul. With their harmonious, usually modern architecture, they offer an inspiring atmosphere. Medicinal products are also created in the Bregenzerwald, usually from local herbs, natural essences, honey and whey. The latter process can be seen by visiting the new building owned by the Metzler family in Egg.

Effective moor

Gesundhotel Bad Reuthe stands in a quiet location that's surrounded by meadows. The Frick family runs the traditional four-star hotel with great commitment and is constantly investing in improvements. One thing that's special about the location is its proximity to the moor, which is right next to the hotel. Moor is freshly dug for use in a variety of health applications. There's plenty of space for spending time in the sauna, swimming and resting at the two-story oval bathhouse built in the style of modern Vorarlberg timber architecture. / www.badreuthe.at

Fasting experts

Pension Engel in Hittisau is a great choice for those wishing to devote a few days to fasting. It offers seven- or 10-day fasting courses. The options include therapeutic fasting, therapeutic fasting with yoga, alkaline fasting and mindfulness weeks with yoga, Pilates and Feldenkrais. / www.fastenkur.at

Wellness with a view

Several of the Bregenzerwald wellness hotels have built new spas in recent years, in the style of modern Vorarlberg architecture. Made from wood, with lots of glass and the best view nature has to offer. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/wellness-and-health

Yoga in the Bregenzerwald

The availability of yoga for its fans has grown continuously over recent years. Some of the wellness hotels offer yoga classes throughout the year, also for guests not staying at those specific hotels. Experienced yoga instructors at several locations are happy to welcome beginners and practitioners to their classes and individual lessons. Styles taught range from classical yoga to hot yoga, hormone yoga for women and yoga for children.

It's best to contact the respective instructors in the event of any questions or special requests. It's also advisable to secure your place on the mat in advance as the courses are taught in small groups. / www.bregenzerwald.at/en/yoga

Outdoor summer yoga in Schwarzenberg and Hittisau

Yoga on the lawn at the swimming pool: twice weekly for both beginners and experienced practitioners. Elfriede Nussbaumer offers yoga sessions at the Hittisau swimming pool on Tuesdays in the early morning during summer. Claudia Jochum-Breuß gives a lesson at the Schwarzenberg swimming pool on Wednesdays. The foyer at the Angelika Kauffmann Hall becomes the practice venue when the weather isn't playing along. No registration required. / www.erlebe-yoga.com and www.yogaananda.at

Experiencing nature – herbs, the woods and nutrition

Walks along herb trails are available from June to September. Katharina Moosbrugger takes visitors on herb hikes through the Fohramoos every Thursday at 10 in the morning. Katharina Moosbrugger is available for special hikes on inquiry – from sunrise hikes to herb hikes on individual dates. / www.naturerfahren.at

Natural cosmetics

Natural remedies and cosmetics enjoy a long tradition in the Alps. The experts combine ancient knowledge with modern insights.

- Family Metzler, the innovative farmers from Egg, have rediscovered an old natural remedy in the form of whey. Whey is a by-product of cheese-making, is free of fat and protein, and contains numerous nutrients and vitamins. The Metzler family produces fine personal hygiene products and powder to be made into drinks from whey. / www.molkeprodukte.com
- Susanne Kaufmann has developed her own line of cosmetics. Her products are defined by clear visuals and essential aromas drawn from nature in Bregenzerwald. They are available for purchase at her online shop and in the Bregenzerwald. / www.susannekaufmann.com
- The Bentele family offer WERBINA care products made from honey from their own hives. Honey nourishes the skin, making it supple and beautiful, and helps it stay fresh. The products are available online, in shops throughout Vorarlberg and in the Bentele Genuss shop in Alberschwende. / www.gsiberger.at
- Phystine – that's the name for the regulating natural cosmetics that Lara and Clemens Bechter make. Phystine products have a natural balancing and harmonizing effect. They are rigorously kept free of plastic and aluminium as well as of any artificial or nature-identical ingredients. They're available from a variety of partners and from the online shop. / www.phystine.com

TIP: How whey cosmetics are made

As of spring 2017, in addition to the exhibition barn where cows and goats live, visitors to the estate of the Metzler family in Egg will be able to experience live the production of whey cosmetics in the new building with visitors' gallery. From the open-plan gallery, you get to hear, see and smell how whey, medicinal plants and high-quality essences are turned into cosmetics and skin care products. You are also granted insights into the special recycling system used by the Metzler family: a thermal solar system with large gravel storage system underneath the floor slab of the new building produces energy. From grass as animal feed, to silage-free milk through to cheese and whey for producing cosmetics, everything is processed in one place in a transparent manner, presented, offered as samples, and sold. / www.molkeprodukte.com

Helden in Grün

Elisabeth Graf-Breidenbrücker from Bizau has devoted herself entirely to the 'Helden in Grün' (heroes in green), namely plant superheroes. She produces essences at her herb workshop for drop-by-drop enjoyment based on ancient knowledge and traditional European medicine. Such finely adapted herbal spirits as Aqua Vivo or Aqua Cielo have a beneficial effect on the body, mind and soul. Elisabeth Graf-Breidenbrücker offers workshops on herbal lore in cooperation with hotels in the Bregenzerwald on certain dates for all those who want to find out more about herbs and how to use them. / www.heldeningrün.com

Feeling nature

- The **Kneipp water-treading facility** is to be found at the Brühlbach just a little way down from the football pitch in **Andelsbuch**. Ice-cold spring water awakens the spirits, stimulates the circulation and activates the immune system. Kneipp cures also have a balancing effect on breathing, the heartbeat, blood pressure, the metabolism and temperature as well as the digestive, nervous and hormone systems. / www.andelsbuch.at
- Walking barefoot is good for your feet and the entire body, and is enjoyable to boot. A playful **barefoot trail** takes you through the moss and through the river Ulvenbach close to

Bizau. Wooden beams divide the trail into sections. By taking these balancing beams, you have dry feet when you reach the other side. Benches invite you to tarry a while on the peninsulas of the river meanders. / www.bizau-bregenzerwald.com

- A **barefoot and fitness course** is in Riefensberg too. If you do the exercises at the 22 stations of the course, you train your five motor skills, i.e. coordination, stamina, strength, mobility and speed. / www.riefensberg.at
- You can explore the **moor habitat** in Krumbach. Paths lead to Moorsitze (moor seats) and to the 'moor-room' observation platform, designed by architects. Moorland innkeepers arrange Moor Weeks; guided tours are held regularly. / www.krumbach.at
- Mud baths may be enjoyed at the **Naturmoorbad** (Natural Mud Bath) in Sibratsgfall, which is idyllically situated in the forest. Two wood-lined pools are available for bathing. There's also a paddling pool and a natural water pool for swimming. / www.sibra-bregenzerwald.com
- Swimming and Kneipp cures in moor water are also possible at the **Moorbad Oberköhler** (Oberköhler Moor Baths) near Sulzberg. A moor belt runs through the 1,000-metre-high ridge. This biotope complex is the source of the healing moor water which springs up from the Oberköhler plot and fills a shallow water biotope zone as well as an artificial swimming pond that is between 0.5 and two metres deep. It's possible to swim, take Kneipp cures, play and barbecue at the public barbecue area at this beautifully situated location. Changing rooms, WC and parking spaces are also available. / www.sulzberg-bregenzerwald.com
- **Moor hiking and fitness training** may be combined in the company of Ingrid Fink-Nöckler. Her two-hour Bodybalance programme takes participants out and about with Smoveys (= hand-held medium-sized weighted rings that are used for exercises). Corresponding exercises improve coordination and strength and help participants wind down. / www.kreativbewegen.at
- The '**Witmoos**', a Natura 2000 protected area, is located near Langen. Its special feature is the Spirkenhochmoor, a mountain-pine peat bog. In a sense, the bog represents the 'original state' of the Langen moors before they were extensively altered by peat extraction, partial drainage and litter gathering. Many rare and sometimes endangered plants thrive on the Witmoos and the adjacent moss meadows. / www.langen.at

Shinrin Yoku in Damüls

Shinrin Yoku (forest bathing) has recently acquired an increasing number of followers. Spending time in the woods helps decelerate, draw new energy and train mindfulness. Breathing in forest air also has a positive effect. Interested parties may take part in forest-bathing trips that take place for between three and four hours in Damüls every Tuesday (4 July to 26 September 2023). Participation costs from €38 per person. Everyone over the age of 14 years is welcome. / www.damuels.at

Breathing courses and meditation in Warth-Schröcken

Weekly breathing and mental well-being programmes with mental well-being coach and energy practitioner Rebecca Manser and with breathing and relaxation coach and mindfulness trainer Carmen Drexel are available in Warth-Schröcken. Participants will learn how to facilitate their capacity for resilience in ways that they will later be able to integrate into their everyday life. The programmes – forest bathing as well as talks about resilience and happiness, stress-relief meditation and imaginary journeys – take place indoors and/or outdoors depending on the weather. / www.warth-schroecken.at

Mountain experiences for all

Bregenzerwald can be explored by wheel chair users as well. Several hotels and excursion destinations are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Rambling on wheels

- **Wellness in Lingenau:** The 3-km long route leads from the village square – always on pavements and roadways with minimal elevation changes – to Vitalhotel Quellengarten. Hotel Löwen, Gasthaus Traube and Vitalhotel Quellengarten, which also has an accessible indoor pool, are excellent options for a barrier-free break.
- **At the foot of Kanisfluh:** Kanisfluh is a particularly impressive massif that has steep rock cliffs in the north and a curving, grassy southern face. The route is fully paved and almost level. Ramblers must manage small vertical rises/drops only at stream crossings. The ramble begins at the parking lot for the cable car in Mellau and finishes in the village of Schnepfau. The one-way route is 5.2 km long; the return trip is 10.4 km. Food and drink are served at the barrier-free M1 and Hotel Die Wälderin next to the Bergbahnen Mellau (cable-car stop). The Schnepfau village hall has a wheel chair accessible WC that can be used on working days.

Up the mountain by cable car

Two mountains are fully accessible by cable car:

- Diedamskopf by Au-Schoppernau is one of the loveliest mountains in all of Bregenzerwald when it comes to scenic views. A trip to the summit is always worthwhile. Two parking spots for persons with disabilities are available right next to the valley station. The entrances and exits of the valley and mountain cable-car stations, with its wide, eight-seat cars, can be comfortably reached by lift. The restaurant at the mountain station and the sun terrace there can also be reached by lift; WCs are accessible. / www.diedamskopf.at
- A modern cable car runs from Bezau to Sonderdach and Baumgarten mountain station, where there is a panorama restaurant with a terrace. All access points to the cable car and the restaurant are barrier free. / www.seilbahn-bezau.at
- The Mellau cable car, which seats 10, takes you from Mellau to the mountain in a matter of minutes. All entrances to the cable car and the restaurant in the valley station are barrier-free. / www.damuels-mellau.at

Travelling with the 'Wälderbähnle'

The 'Wälderbähnle' is a nostalgic narrow-gauge railway with steam and diesel engines that travels between Bezau and Schwarzenberg station. The 'Bähnle' is barrier-free. Every train has a carriage with a lift ramp. / www.waelderbaehnle.at

Barrier-free living

The accommodation directory at www.bregenzerwald.at provides an overview of selected barrier-free accommodation.

Overview of Bregenzerwald

Facts	
Location	North-easterly part of the state of Vorarlberg, between Lake Constance and Arlberg
Villages	23 small villages
Inhabitants	32.000
Peaks	23 peaks with more than 2.000 m
Highest mountain	Braunarlspitze, 2.649 m
Area	550 km ²
Accommodations	17.000 beds, from the 4-star hotel through to the farm
Camping	7 campsites: Au, Bezaus, Doren, Egg-Schetteregg, Lingenau, Riefensberg and Sibratsgfall
Arrival	
By train	Destination station in Austria: Bregenz or Dornbirn, good bus connections to the Bregenzerwald Attractive destination in Germany next to the boarder: Oberstaufen www.oebb.at and www.vmobil.at
By long-distance coach	Destination station in Austria: Bregenz or Dornbirn, good bus connections to the Bregenzerwald www.flixbus.at and https://fahrplan.vmobil.at/
By car	Due to the many entrances and exits, the recommendation is to choose a digital route planner Attention closed in winter: Warth - Lech and Damüls - Laterns Toll: Basically, a toll-free section in Vorarlberg between Hörbranz (border with D) and Hohenems, in between is the Dornbirn-Nord exit for the Bregenzerwald
By plane	Zürich (CH), Altenrhein (CH), Friedrichshafen (D), Memmingen (D), München (D), Innsbruck (A) Shuttle-transfer from and to the airport e.g. www.airport-drivers.com
Mobility on location	The Bregenzerwald is well connected with 18 rural bus services. The buses run daily, including on weekends and public holidays, from early to late, from village to village, to Bregenz and Dornbirn as well as to the neighbouring regions. The buses sometimes run to and from Dornbirn until just before midnight.
Safety	
Bergwetter	Before going out into the unprotected areas in the mountains, it is a must to find out about the current weather conditions. / www.zamg.ac.at
Medical care	Where is the nearest pharmacy? Which doctor's practice is on duty and when? Information is provided by the free "Wälderdoc" app, which can be downloaded from www.waelderdoc.at