



## MUSIC, CULTURE AND CUSTOMS IN SAALFELDEN LEOGANG

### Tradition and enjoyment in the heart of the mountains

With plenty of social distancing, spending time in the open air, and a proper event concept, cultural enjoyment is still possible even during the coronavirus pandemic. Nowhere is this more true than in Saalfelden Leogang, a special place for those interested in culture that also boasts beautiful mountains and scenic Alpine pastures. This summer, the most contrast-rich region in the Alps is gearing up to offer a variety-rich music and cultural programme.

In addition to the famous International Jazzfestival Saalfelden, there are also the all-new TONspur music-enjoyment islands, the VOLXOMMER theatre festival, the Kunsthaus Nexus, or the opportunity to gain an insight into the history of mining. The region's annual customs will also make a return this year. Guests can expect a diverse mix of tradition and rural life from events like the summer solstice, Bauernherbst and the "Saalfeldner Holzmusi" wooden instrument bands.

### The International Jazzfestival featuring a diverse musical programme and plenty of variety

Artists from around the world will once again transform Saalfelden into the most worthwhile music city in the mountains. The legendary International Jazzfestival will take place in the third week of August. From 16-22 August 2021, world-renowned and domestic jazz musicians, as well as newcomers, will take the stages to the delight of concert-goers. The selection of jazz styles that can be enjoyed at around 60 concert events is both broad and varied. Artists such as Anna Högberg, KUU!, the Kaja Draksler Octet and Chuffdrone will perform on various stages. There are also outdoor concerts, both in the mountains and at the Nexus, as well as musical walks and even bike tours. The city park will be transformed into a huge outdoor stage and domestic as well as international acts will perform on the stage at the Congress Saalfelden.

Visitors can attend the concerts with prior registration. Best of all, half of the concerts are free of charge! So that the event can take place as planned according to the current status quo this year, a comprehensive safety concept including hygiene measures is available.

### Naturkino natural spectacles and TONspur islands: 365 days of music enjoyment in nature

The Saalfelden Leogang region also boasts an extensive outdoor cultural programme. Experience nature, sharpen your senses and enjoy culture at the same time: it's all possible at the Asitz in Leogang. "Sit down, relax and take a break from everyday life" is the motto of the unique relaxation area boasting panoramic views. On different plateaus, cosy wooden lounge islands and hammocks have been set up. Hikers can reach this special spectacle via the Asitzbahn or Steinbergbahn gondola lifts, or via Leo's Spiewanderweg and the Grosser Asitz mountain.

During your hike, you'll pass by the five TONspur islands, which were completed in 2020. These stations, where you can listen to live recordings of the TONspur concerts from the previous year, are located along the hiking trail between the mountain station and the Asitz summit and are especially popular with true music fans. These TONspur islands consist of wooden loungers that offer the possibility to experience nature even more intensely. The right way to set them up depends upon the prevailing weather conditions: when it is sunny, the loungers can be pulled out of the covered station by means of rollers; when the weather is poor, there is a canopy. Four of the five islands were specifically placed to face each cardinal direction. The fifth island is located in a quiet place in the middle of the forest. During construction, an excellent sound system,

visual details and a good sense for the surrounding natural environment were equally important factors. The result: Pure music enjoyment in the great outdoors, 365 days a year.

This fantastic outdoor attraction is so indescribably beautiful that the TONspur Islands were even awarded the MAECENAS Austrian Art Sponsorship Prize in 2020. In 2021, the popular TONspur concerts will take place once again on the Asitz from 1 July to 19 August. On five special Thursdays in summer, bands and musicians of different genres will perform on stage against a breathtaking mountain backdrop. When the weather is good, you can enjoy concerts at sunset on an outdoor stage at the foot of the Grosser Asitz. When the weather is sub-optimal, you are invited to the Asitz Bräu. The Mnozil Brass brass ensemble, Angelika Kirschlager & Pianist, Marianne Mendt & Band, as well as Kapelle So&So and the Octet of the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra will all be performing this year.

### **VOLXOMMER Theatre Festival: Performances for kids, teenagers and adults**

Theatre productions and dance performances also play a significant role in Saalfelden Leogang. The VOLXOMMER theatre festival will celebrate its 5th anniversary in 2021. From 26 July to 15 August 2021, concert-goers can expect a varied cultural programme in Saalfelden, Leogang and Lofer under the motto "Diversity rather than uniformity." The colourful programme includes workshops, plays for children, young people and adults, circus and dance performances, as well as audience discussions and concerts. The event was created in 2014 by the Freiraum cultural association and the ecce theatre.

### **The Kunsthaus Nexus featuring numerous art and cultural events**

The Kunsthaus Nexus was opened in 2002 and has been an important part of the Pinzgau art and culture scene ever since. Visitors can expect a variety-rich programme featuring plenty of jazz, blues, rock and metal concerts, a Gschnagga theatre for kids, club events and band contests, an art-house cinema and numerous literary lectures and cabarets.

### **Show mine: go in search of minerals at an artificial gallery**

Keen to learn more about mining? Then check out the Leogang show mine! First opened in 1989, it covers the history of mining dating back to the 14th century. Under the guidance of well-trained guides, guests travel through the ramified mine. Travelling at times in single file with the need to stoop down occasionally, this adventurous journey through narrow tunnels leads guests directly into the past and provides an insight into the hard work that miners once performed while extracting silver, copper, nickel, lead, cobalt and mercury. Starting this year, an old railroad that once carried both miners and mined treasures now offers younger visitors the opportunity to better get to know the mine by means of an artificial gallery.

The cosy miners' pub is the best way to round off an eventful visit to the show mine. Here you can enjoy the local cuisine, peruse interesting mine maps, or purchase a mining souvenir. Guided tours are offered from May to October. Sturdy footwear and warm clothing are required.

### **Mining and Gothic Museum and Schloss Ritzen Museum: minerals and nativity scenes**

The Mining and Gothic Museum in Leogang is a special destination. The exhibition provides an insight into the heyday of mining in Leogang. The silver ore was mined for the famous Salzburg 'Silbertaler' silver dollar. In addition, copper, cobalt, nickel, mercury and lead were also mined. Rare mineral species can also be admired in the mineral cabinet. The museum also houses sacred art, such as the "Beautiful Madonna", a Gothic figure of a saint from the Alpine region, which was made as early as 1410.

Since 2020, the museum building now has its very own library. Additionally, this year you can also visit the special exhibition "Pinzgau cattle - a state cultural asset," which was designed by Stefan Gimpl. It provides insights into the regional and cultural significance of cattle breeding.

This year, the Mining and Gothic Museum in Leogang is one of 27 European museums nominated to be for the European Museum Award 2021. The award ceremony will take place at the beginning of May.

The Saalfelden Leogang region is surrounded by four noble castles. One of these is Schloss Ritzen castle, which also houses a museum containing Austria's most important and largest collection of nativity scenes as well as other sacred treasures.

In addition to the baroque church nativity scene, there is also a large oriental nativity scene and the Saalfelden nativity scene by the famous nativity scene builder Alexander "Xandi" Schläffer from Saalfelden.

In earlier times, the castle was known as "Grub bei Saalfelden." In 1603, the castle complex came under the ownership of Freien Haimeram von Ritz, for whom this magnificent building was then named. From 1968 onwards, the municipality of Saalfelden became responsible for the care of the preservation of the castle complex. The Schloss Ritz Museum features permanent exhibitions such as nativity scene exhibitions, Roman frescoes that present a collection of Roman wall paintings, as well as exhibitions on the history of Saalfelden, which can be visited all year round.

### **Hermitage: An idyllic hiking trail featuring wonderful views of the Leogang mountains**

At 1,006 metres above sea level, the hermitage is also often referred to as the "resting place of the soul." As one of the last inhabited hermitages in Europe it was built in the 17th century in the rocky outcroppings above Schloss Lichtenberg castle. The property also houses a small chapel. A hiking trail, which is accessible for the entire family, leads up to the hermitage. Once you have reached the top, you will be rewarded by magnificent views of Saalfelden and the Leogang mountains as well as the Steinernes Meer plateau.

### **Summer solstice: A mystical Alpine spectacle featuring glimmering mountain fires**

Customs and traditions are very important in the Saalfelden Leogang region. On 19 June, for instance, fires will be lit on the Pinzgau mountains to mark the summer solstice, a tradition dating back to early Christian times. Fire is said to replicate and invoke sunlight to drive away evil spirits, which in turn ensures sufficient growth and fertility for the fields and meadows. On the evening of 19 June 2021, the contours of the Leoganger Steinberge mountain range and the Steinernes Meer plateau will be ignited to reveal impressive symbols and shapes on the mountain slopes.

### **Bauernherbst events, traditional costumes, creative shop and the "Saalfeldner Holzmusi" wooden instrument bands**

Bauernherbst begins at the end of August and is the Saalfelden Leogang region's fifth season. During this time, the focus is on good food, enjoyment and the seasonal harvest that has been brought forth. During the Bauernherbst events, guests have the opportunity to better get to know traditional rural life with handcraft demonstrations, hikes, cooking courses, harvest festivals, traditional cattle herding to the Alpine pasture and traditional events. At each event, sufficient safety concepts and hygiene measures are in place.

Keen to wear the right outfit for every traditional occasion? Then you should visit the small traditional costume workshop in Saalfelden. Dirndls are handmade here by Regina Wienerroither, a seamstress who has been working at the workshop for more than 30 years. She is also the inventor of the Stretch Dirndl, a unique dirndl made from fabrics with a stretchable component made from Loden felt, linen and printed cotton.

Meanwhile, the Leogang Kreativ-Laden (creative shop) is the perfect place to pick out a unique souvenir for the relatives at home. There are handmade wooden works of art and a beautiful garden, which can also be visited in the summer as part of a guided tour. The 740 square metre site is the ideal place to get inspiration for your own home. Products made of Swiss stone pine are also produced in the creative shop. These unique products contribute to a better interior air climate and have beneficial effects on health. The "Saalfeldner Holzmusi," which perform at traditional festivals and weddings, are a special musical experience. Here musical instruments exclusively made from wood are played, which are supposed to represent mythical creatures and animals. The musicians perform, for example, with wooden instruments shaped like snakes and dragons. The performers are dressed in leather knee breeches with light blue socks, a red waistcoat and a black hat complete with red and white feathers. The artists play traditional folk music and do not need sheet music. By ear and feeling, music is created by beating, plucking and rattling the instruments.

### **Direct sales outlet: rich products to enjoy on site and at home**

In the Saalfelden Leogang region, there are many farms that market their products directly. Enjoyment on site as well as the opportunity to take home a culinary souvenir as a valuable holiday memory are the top priorities. In addition to eggs, bread, cheese and milk, there are also schnapps and spirits as well as alpaca and sheep's wool products. At the Leogang village shop, for example, there is a large selection of Pinzgau delicacies including the 'Leogang BIO' sausage and meat products. The "Gerstbodner Troadladl," the farm shop at the Zieferhof, is also known for its milk and grain products. Also not to be missed: the HPH anno 1905, a village

shop that was created at the site of a former horse stable and has already won several awards for its homemade butter.

And who could forget the Stechaubauer organic farm? No matter the time of day or night, fresh organic vegetables are always available here. There's also the Gemüsehütte (Vegetable Hut), a self-service vending machine where you select your vegetables via touchscreen and then pull them out from the appropriate tray. The best place to quench your thirst and your fondness for schnapps is the Kleinbrennerei Tribuser distillery. Here you can buy and taste fine spirits made from raspberries and rowan berries. A tour of the distillery is also a worthwhile pursuit. The sea buckthorn products, which are grown on site, are a true speciality. If you're in the mood for more high-proof spirits, you should also plan a tour stop at Herzog's schnapps distillery. Here, at one of Europe's most modern distilleries, Pinzgau gin and vodka are produced in addition to fine spirits.

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