



Autumn IN THE Austrian ALPS

BY REBECA PICCARDO

The air is cool and crisp as you walk along the rugged terrain. You stop along the signposted trail you've been following most of the morning and look out at the panorama in front of you. Amidst the truly spectacular landscape, dotted by mountains, valleys, lakes and forests, you *almost* can't believe your eyes.

Although the Austrian Alps are synonymous with skiing, the region also offers a variety of diversions when there's no snow. Autumn is the perfect time to soak up the area's unspoilt natural beauty and explore the web of multilevel hiking and biking trails that wind up and down peaks, along crystal-clear lakes and past cascading waterfalls. Then there are the quaint little villages that invite wanderers to admire their charming wooden chalets and iconic flowerboxes.

A visit from mid-September and into October affords special opportunities to witness a longstanding custom: during these weeks, farmers herd their livestock from their alpine summer grazing locations to the valley below. The animals' homecomings are marked with vibrant celebrations that include processions through towns, music and elaborate costumes — especially for the cows.

The picturesque village of Hallstatt, with towering mountains on all sides, casts a shimmering reflection onto the namesake lake. The breathtaking panorama is perhaps best appreciated from the Welterbeblick Skywalk, an impressive viewing platform that juts out from the rock face gangway-style 360 metres (1,180 feet) above the hamlet.

Fesius Robert/age fotostock



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- 1 Cows don gorgeously decorated headdresses made of flowers for their downhill trek at the end of summer.
- 2 The trees' leaves begin to change colours in October. Bright bursts of yellow and orange foliage and late-blooming flowers contrast beautifully with the deep green of grassy fields.
- 3 Austria's legendary hiking trails offer plenty of opportunity to encounter magnificent natural spectacles such as thundering waterfalls and river-carved canyons and gorges.
- 4 Alpenhorn players at a festival pay homage to the famous instrument that is traditionally twice as long as the person playing it. The horns were originally used by herdsmen to communicate while they tended to their cattle in lofty pastures.
- 5 Farmers often mark their herds with bright paint spots to distinguish them from others' animals during the migration between pastures.

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AREA RESORT



CLC Alpine Centre and Club La Costa Alpine Centre (ACE, FSB)
 Conveniently set between Saalfelden and Zell am See, the resort is perfectly situated for enjoying a variety of sporting activities and sightseeing trips to Salzburg, Krimml Waterfall, the mediaeval town of Kitzbühel, Grossglockner High Alpine Pass, Eisriesenwelt ice cave, the Kapruner reservoirs and the salt mines and casino at Bad Reichenhall. The accommodation features a kitchenette and cable TV, and some units have a balcony. Amenities on-site include a games room and indoor pool.

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