



Styrian Eisenwurzen

Nature and Geopark



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Styrian Eisenwurzen
UNESCO
Global Geopark

Wild & Smooth



Welcome to
Styrian Eisenwurzen Nature and Geopark

Gesäuse



Nature and Geopark

Explore. Indulge. Exercise.

Wild & Smooth



WELCOME TO OUR NATURE RESERVE!

Visit a region which is rich in nature, geology and culture. Discover places of unique biodiversity and meet the people who preserve it.

Oliver Gulas, MSc.
CEO of the Styrian Eisenwurzen
Steirische Eisenwurzen

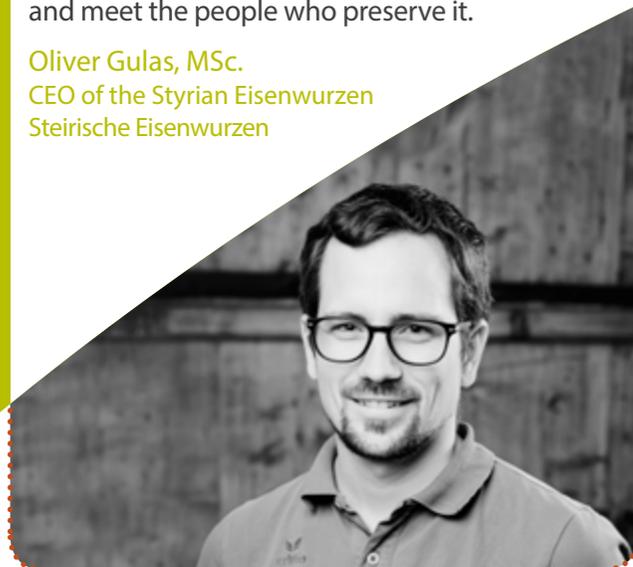


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Natural Gems

- Kraus Cave, Pitzengraben & Noth Gorge at Gams GeoVillage
- Mühlbach stream
- Palfau Wasserloch Gorge



Rare flora & fauna

Snowy mespilus, auricula, Christmas rose, orchid, daphne, Turk's cap lily, guelder rose, Danube salmon, firefly

Facts and Figures

Created in 1996 // European Geopark since 2002 // UNESCO GLOBAL Geopark since 2015
Covering an area of 586km² from Altenmarkt to Wildalpen and stretching along the border between Upper and Lower Austria, Styrian Eisenwurzen Nature & Geopark is often described as wildly romantic by visitors.

This unique cultural area is shaped by dramatic gorges, marvellous river landscapes stretched out along the Enns and Salza rivers, common beech forests, meadow orchards and Alpine pastures.

Our lead interests: geology and water.

Our lead product: white-water sports.

Number of inhabitants: 6,100

Landscape Protection Areas: Ennstal and Eisenerz Alps, Hochschwab-Zeller Staritzen;

Nature Conservation Areas: Wildalpen Salza valley, Wegscheid pond;

Conservation (Natura 2000): Ennstal Alps/Gesäuse, the Southern part of the Göstling Alps, various natural monuments



Heads up!

There is something interesting to see whenever you stumble upon one of these four icons. They indicate where you can find rare plants or animals, natural gems, they offer inside tips for hiking and destinations for day trips.



Rare plant or animal



Natural gem



Hiking tip



Destination

Biodiversity

We Preserve Biodiversity and Protect Natural Habitats.

We Preserve Biodiversity and Protect Natural Habitats

Nature Parks are protected areas because cultivated landscapes and the inherent biodiversity need our protection and preservation. This includes meadow orchards, pastures, low-intensity grassland and traditional flora and fauna species. The natural beauty of the Eisenwurzen region comes from its natural landscape. The Salza and Lassing valleys are shaped by picturesque common beech forests, the charming St. Gallen Wegscheid pond, countless natural monuments, clean air and fresh water.



Daphne
The daphne is the only indigenous species with its flower borne directly from the stem like tropical timbers.



ASK THE EXPERT

Eva Maria Vorwagner
Biodiversity Expert

„We are all talking about biodiversity these days, and that’s a good thing. Nature Parks are part of a large multi-generational network and contribute substantially to the preservation and support of biodiversity.“



Fireflies
Also known as lightning bugs, these beetles can produce light signals to communicate.



Turk's cap lily
One of Europe's most majestic lilies thanks to its eye-catching flower and impressive height!

What Is Biodiversity All About?

Biodiversity encompasses the diversity of all living things and the ways they interact with one another and their habitats. To get a better idea of it, we tend to speak of “biological diversity” or the “diversity of life” in everyday language.

Gamsstein Loop Walk

We start this challenging day trip at the village centre of Upper Palfau.

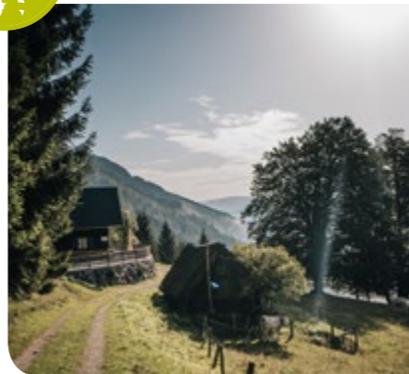
You can enjoy stunning views from Mount Gamsstein and overlook the entire nature reserve including Hochschwab, Gesäuse and the Eisenerz Alps.

Way to the top:

Start your hike at the centre of Upper Palfau and follow the hiking trail up to the Moaralm Guest House. You can take a short cut via Trail 51 here to get to Palfau's NaturfreundeHütte. Alternatively, continue your hike on Trail 284 until you reach the Moarhochalm pasture. Follow Trail 64 along the ridge of the Gamsstein massive, which marks the border between Lower Austria and Styria, and you'll get to the peak of Gamsstein mountain.

Way down:

Follow Trail 283 to NaturfreundeHütte. Open from Mid-May to Mid-September, this shelter offers drinks, snacks and 16 beds. From there, follow Trail 283 for 45 minutes to reach the valley and the nearest alpine farm. Hike along the main road to get to Stiegenwirt Guest House located in Upper Palfau.



Gesäuse Meadow Orchards

Plant. Cultivate. Harvest.



Further information

www.eisenwurzten.com

www.arche-noah.at

www.baumschule-loidl.at



The apple does not fall far from the tree – once fallen, it's not going anywhere

Fruit from meadow orchards has always been vital for the survival of the rural population. It has helped attract tourists to the region and has served as a habitat for indigenous varieties. However, in recent years, we have been facing a growing number of challenges to the protection and use of meadow orchards as their existence in our landscapes has become increasingly threatened.

Start Your Own Meadow Orchard:

It can be difficult to keep track of where the food or products we consume actually come from. Creating your own meadow orchard is the perfect way to sweeten your days and smarten your garden.

Why create a meadow orchard? Meadow orchards help protect biodiversity. If you do it right and plant different apple and pear varieties, you'll be able to enjoy your own fruit throughout the whole year. While the tree provides shade, the fruit is a mouth-watering source of vitamins. Kickstart your day with home-made jam or juice or make your celebrations perfect by offering hand-crafted liquor!

For further information, please go to www.eisenwurzten.com, ask at the local Landmark shops or at Genussmstohof Veitlbauer (www.veitlbauer.at)



Snowy mespilus

A member of the rose family, this extremely rare plant enjoys growing on steep cliffs and stony soils.



Wildalpen Variety Garden

We care about the preservation of old and rare fruit varieties, mainly apples and pears. Two public orchards in Hopfgarten in the Wildalpen Nature Park Community do this purpose justice, and they make an ideal walk. You can access them on foot from the village centre of Wildalpen.

(The Variety Garden cooperates with www.bundesforste.at)



Harvest

In late summer and autumn, the fruit is ripe and ready to harvest and process. However, if you can't stand the temptation, you can always enjoy it earlier.



Products

We have found endless ways of enjoying and processing local fruit varieties. Local specialties can be purchased with our partners or in one of the many shops affiliated with the Gesäuse partners.



Rediscovered Fruit Cultivars

Our meadow orchards feature rare and unique fruit varieties such as the Gesäuse apple, Eisenwurzten pear, Palfau Pommeralm apple, Salza valley rafting apple, Styrian Constantin and Wildalpen Hubertus apple.



An Abundance of Water

The Nature Reserve Is All About Water

The predominant element which has shaped the landscape: water.

Natural gems such as rivers, streams, springs, lakes, wetlands, gorges and caves make up the beauty of the nature reserve and are waiting for you to get up and explore them. To name a highlight, the Salza river is one of the few wild rivers left in Austria.



The Salza river

The best way to enjoy the water is by getting into a rafting boat or a canoe and go. Or how about taking our breath-taking GeoRafting tour? (More info on p. 22)



**Kläffer spring
Wildalpen**



**Take a dip
in the river near the
Wasserloch Gorge**

St. Gallen Water and Adventure Park



The Water and Adventure Park offers a large number of activities such as a 400-metre canoe trip, rafting, timber rafting, turning water power into energy, saving a village from the flood and many more.

When to visit: May to September
Phone: +43 664 5204426
www.wasserspielpark.at



Brunnsee Wildalpen

„Brunntal“ (Weg 91) | Start your hike at the entrance of Brunntal village

When entering Brunntal, look for a small chapel. Turn left right before you pass it. Follow a gently sloping forest road which leads you along the “Brunnsee” lake into the valley and on to Brunnmäuern. Tackle the very steep section at the valley head until you find yourself right below the so-called Rotmauer. Turn around and take the same path to get back to the start.

Look out for impressive, steep rock faces, stunning landscapes marked by water at the beginning of the walk and staggering views of the Lang Eibl Gorge and the Hochschwab massif. Easy hike through a beautiful scenery.

Length of the trail: ca. 5,6 km, Gehzeit 3 h

Further information: Befahrbar mit Kinderwagen und Rollstuhl

Wildalpen SpringWater Museum:

Since 1910, the 2nd Vienna Mountain Spring Pipeline has transported approximately 217,000 m³ of drinking water daily from the Hochschwab mountain to the Federal Capital of Vienna.

When to visit:

May to October 26th, Mon-Fri 10-12 and 13-15
Sundays and Holidays 10-12

Phone: +43 3636 451 31 871 | www.wasserleitungsmuseum.at

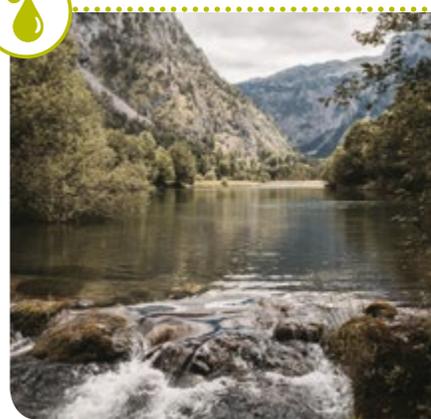
Austrian Forest Museum Silvanum Großreifling

What is rafting all about? Timber rafting, i.e. transporting timber on water was one of the most important regional industries. Fun Fact: The men who were recruited as raftsmen couldn't swim.

When to visit:

May to October, Tue-Sun 10-12 and 13-17

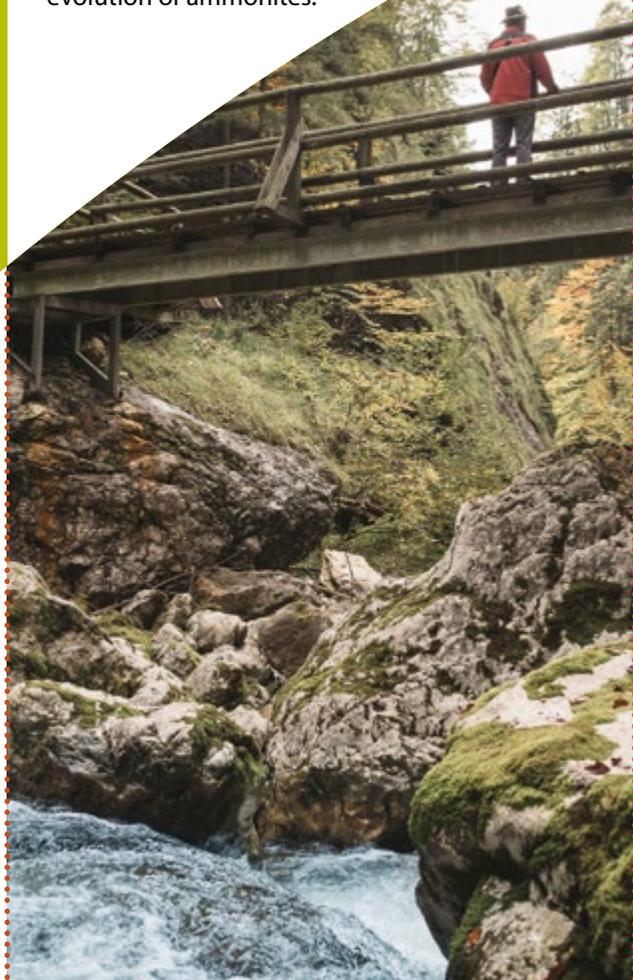
Phone: + 43 3633 2201 40 | www.forstmuseum.at



UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

Since 2015

Our journey begins about 250 million years ago. Back in the Triassic Period, this part of the earth was underwater, at the bottom of the tropical sea. In Großreifling (Landl municipality), this Mesozoic period is called the Anisian stage (Latin: Anisus fluvius = Enns). It's definition is linked to the evolution of ammonites.



Kraus cave

To date, the only cave formed by sulfuric acid we know of.



Orchids

Rare and beautiful: orchids, lady's-slippers, and cephalanthera

UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

Currently, there are 145 geoparks worldwide. The mission of geoparks is to preserve and protect exceptional deposits, raise awareness and make geological phenomena accessible to tourists.



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Global Geopark



A Hell of a (Holy) Mass



Hike the Spitzenbach Gorge

Due to its north-south extension, alpine plants thrive next to thermophilic plants in this area. They provide an extensive range of food for caterpillars, butterflies and moths. To date, approximately 700 butterfly species have been determined.

Itinerary:

Start your hike at St. Gallen's market square (next to the "Kropitsch" painting business and the fire brigade). Start on Trail 637 to "Wieskapelle", then take Trail 9 towards the Spitzenbach "Pfarralm" until you reach the "Roth" waypoint. Follow Trail 637 which takes you all the way to the Spitzenbach Gorge. Once you make it there, look for the "Klammbrücke" waypoint and follow Trail 12 all the way up to Teufelskirche ("devil's church").

Way down: Descend from Teufelskirche and keep left after passing the Kohlmann farm. Follow the tarmacked road to get back to St. Gallen

Approx. hiking time: 3,5 hours, **difference in altitude:** 415 m
approx. hike distance: 10 km



Mesozoic

Timeline of the Mesozoic Era from 250 to 65 million years ago



Did you know?

This is an Anisian stage ammonite. Ammonites are part of an extinct cephalopod subgroup which is a member of the mulluscan class.

Timeline

65 M

CRETACEOUS

135 M

JURASSIC

205 M

Rhaetian
Norian
Carnian
Ladinian
ANISIAN
Olenekian
Induan

TRIASSIC

250 M

GeoVillage

Get a Feel for Geology

Places You Must See:

the sulphur spring, Noth Gorge, Kraus Cave, Pitzengraben shell reef or rocks studded with fossils of sea lily stems.



Did you know?

Sea lilies aren't actual plants. They are echinoderms.



Further information: Gams GeoVillage

Phone +43 3633 2201 50
geodorf@landlkg.at
www.geodorf.com

Gams GeoRama

Alongside the GeoPath, visitor often name GeoRama Gams "the most beautiful geology museum". Thanks to our many fossils, we get an idea of life in the warm seas throughout the different eras. There are 14 fossil species which have been discovered in Gams before anywhere else in the world. To mention another local phenomenon: jet stones. They are basically tar-like, bitumen-rich coal and were used to fabricate rosaries.



GeoWorkshop

Entrance/Tickets
Hiking the Noth Gorge
Akoglst. 8922 Gams bei Hieflau



GeoPath

Awarded "Themed Trail of the Year" in 2014.



Marble Grinding Mill
in the Noth Gorge



Noth Gorge (Gams)

You're almost floating – or at least that's the impression you have when entering the 700-metre climbing facility. Leading the way through the dramatic Noth Gorge, the Noth footpath winds its way slightly up and down connected by a few steps here and a bridge there. Discover deep crevices, limestone erosions, overhanging cliffs, avalanche paths and thunderous waters. Allow yourself to linger and feel the power of nature unfolding in both past and present.



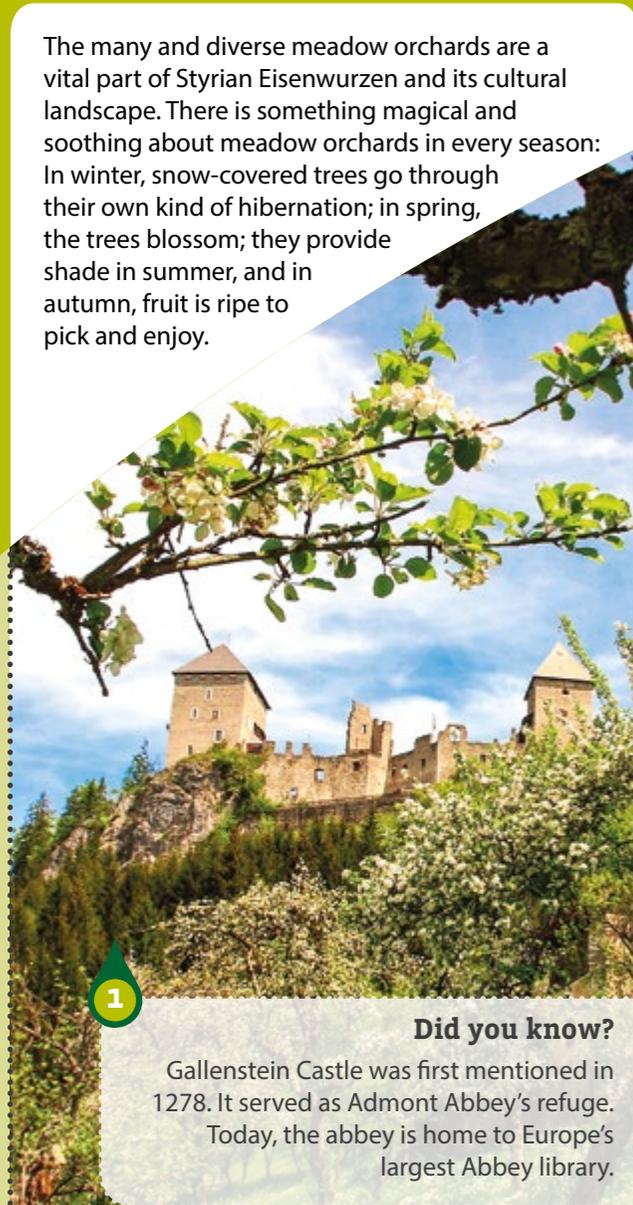
5 GeoVillage Attractions:

- GeoRama
- GeoPath
- Noth Gorge
- Kraus cave
- GeoWorkshop

Things To Do

The Whole Nature Reserve Is Yours To Explore

The many and diverse meadow orchards are a vital part of Styrian Eisenwurzen and its cultural landscape. There is something magical and soothing about meadow orchards in every season: In winter, snow-covered trees go through their own kind of hibernation; in spring, the trees blossom; they provide shade in summer, and in autumn, fruit is ripe to pick and enjoy.



1

Did you know?

Gallenstein Castle was first mentioned in 1278. It served as Admont Abbey's refuge. Today, the abbey is home to Europe's largest Abbey library.



2

CULTURAL GEMS

St. Gallen Festival

The St. Gallen Festival attracts visitors from mid to late August every summer.

www.festival.stgallen.at



3

Forum Stockbauer

A Powerhouse for Man & Art

Kirchenweg 184,
A-8923 Palfau

www.hansstockbauer.at

Day Trip Destinations

- Gesäuse National Park
- Admont Abbey
- Erzberg Mine
- Kalkalpen National Park
- Dürrenstein Wilderness Area
- Waidhofen an der Ybbs
- Eisenwurzen Nature Reserve Lower Austria
- Pürgschachen Moor
- Mariazell
- Mendingtal
- Steyr
- Liezen
- Windischgarsten

Check out Our Adventure Map on Pages 18 and 19

Must-See Destinations



Water and Adventure Park
St. Gallen

wassererlebnispark.at

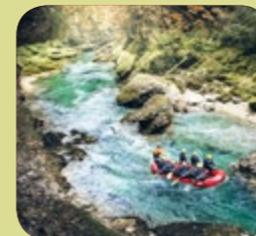
4



High Ropes Course
Eschau

freelife.at

9



Salza river
GeoRafting Tour

raftingcamp.at

5



SpringWater Museum
Wildalpen

wienerwasser.at

10



Archery
in Eschau

bogensport-salzatal.at

6



Forest Museum
Silvanum
Großreifling

forstmuseum.at

11



Gams
GeoVillage

geodorf.com

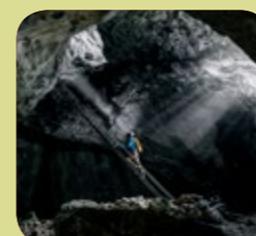
7



Bathing Pond
Landl

landl.at

12



Arzberg Cave
Wildalpen

wildalpen.at

8



Wasserloch Gorge
Palfau

wasserlochklamm.at

13

Gesäuse PARTNER

In 2016, partner networks affiliated with the Styrian Eisenwurzen Nature Reserve and Gesäuse National Park have joined forces and have been working together since. Both organisations represent a similar set of values: they focus on protecting nature and the environment and they both operate within the framework of the Gesäuse Tourism Association, which plays a leading role in their marketing. The framework features agricultural direct marketers, restaurants, excursion providers, commercial businesses, associations and leading companies located in the region. Gesäuse partner businesses choose to cooperate (instead of operating as lone wolves) while fully supporting the values of the National Park. All partner businesses are committed to regionalism and sustainability and they meet strict quality criteria. The partners' core characteristic is appreciation:

They are aware of how valuable the region and its residents are and how important the preservation of nature and local identities is.

The network thrives when its members actively shape the day-to-day life in the region. What unites them is a common, positive idea of the future. A community which nourishes a common, positive vision and communicates it accordingly is key to the success of a region because the way we speak about ourselves and our future defines how we evolve and how our future unfolds.

Contact & further information:
 partner@gesaeuse.at | <http://partner.gesaeuse.at>



Accommodation & Food

Craft Industry & Businesses



Art & Culture

Outdoor Adventures & Education



Local Specialties

We believe in local food production.



Nature Park Shop

Try various local specialties and delicacies

Our small Nature Park shop in the centre of St. Gallen offers a great variety of titbits and gifts provided by the Gesäuse partners. A visit is highly recommended.

When to visit: Mon - Thu: 09:00 to 12:00

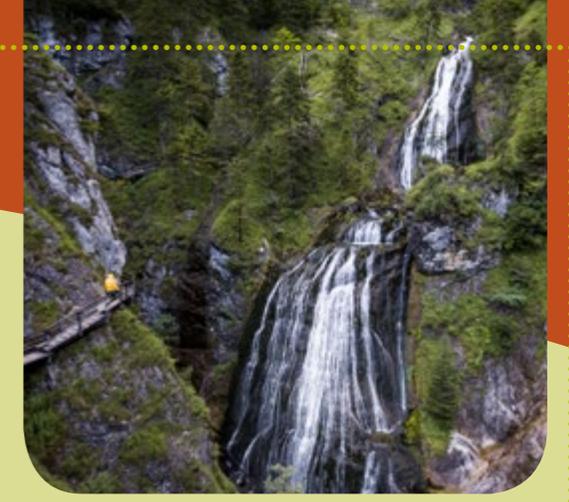
Markt 35 | 8933 St. Gallen
 +43 3632 7714
 naturpark@eisenwurzen.com



ASK THE EXPERT

Elisabeth Riegelthaler
 Nature Park Shop

"To me, the ambassadors of the region are hand-crafted products made with love."



Palfau Wasserloch Gorge

You will hear the thundering sound of Palfau's waterfall before you see it. However, there are times when you merely hear a gentle splash. Originating from a gigantic karst source on the southern slope of Hochkar mountain, the waters are cascading down over five massive rocks. Styria's largest aquiferous cave, this enormous spring cave ranks among Austria's greatest karst phenomena. From spring to mouth, the stream passes 300 metres in altitude before flowing into the Salza river. Visitors can experience the 900-metre gorge via a wooden footpath with steps and bridges. It is easy to access and adapted to nature.

Way to the Gorge: ca. approx. 1,5 hours
Way down: Hike through the gorge in 1 hour or take the path via Jägerriedel in 1,5 hours (for those who are sure-footed and free from giddiness)
What to take: sturdy shoes

www.wasserlochklamm.at

Adventure Map

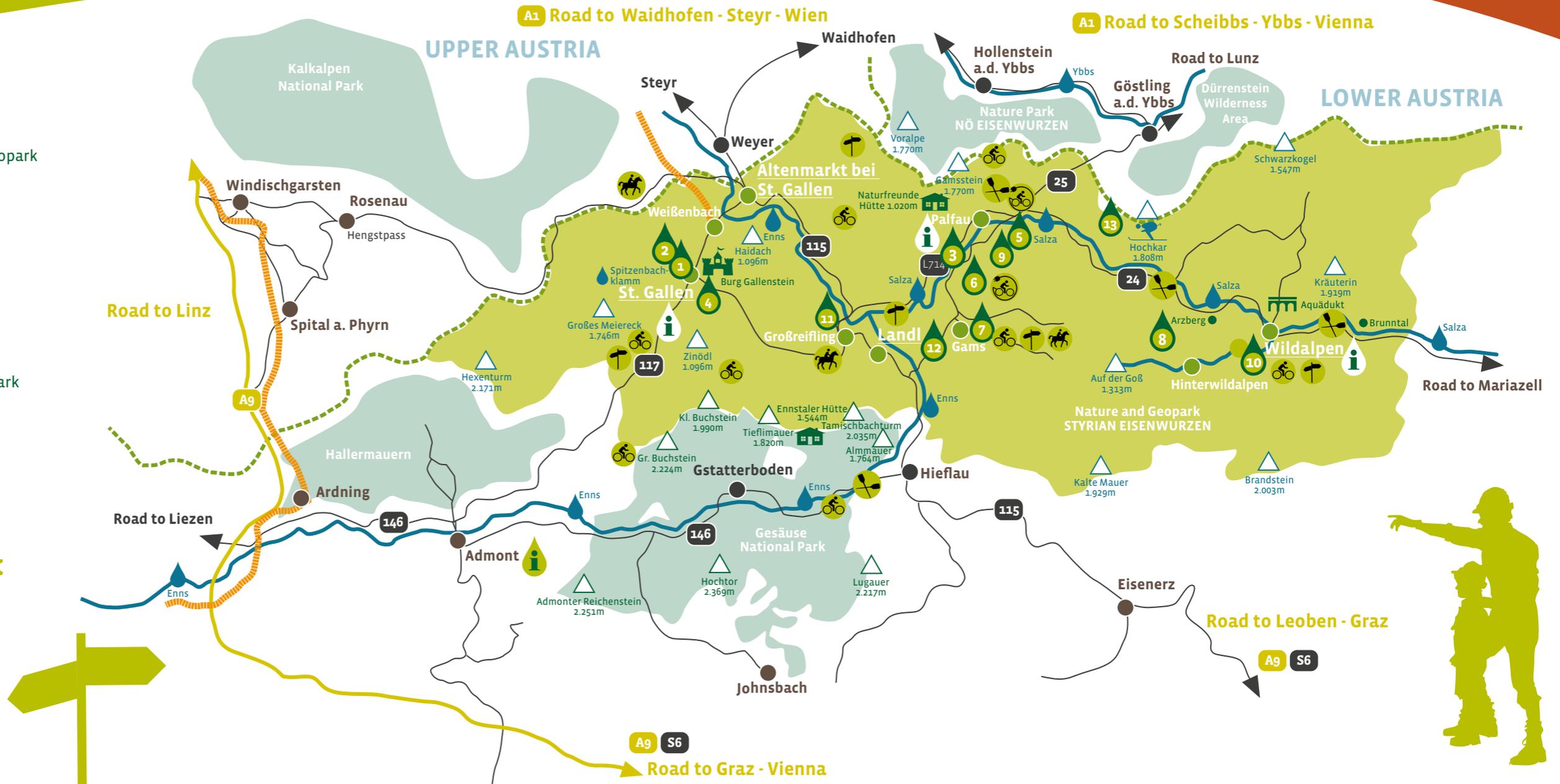
The Nature Reserve at a Glance

Legend

-  Information Centre at Styrian Eisenwurzen Nature & Geopark
-  Information Centre at Gesäuse Tourism Association
-  115 Main road
-  A9 Highway
-  Peak at Nature & Geopark
-  Peak at Gesäuse National Park
-  Community in the Nature & Geopark
-  Community
-  River
-  Enns
-  Railway

The Nature & Geopark Is Yours To Explore!

-  1 Must-See Destination



Sports & Activities

Lovers Of Nature and Water: This Is Heaven On Earth!

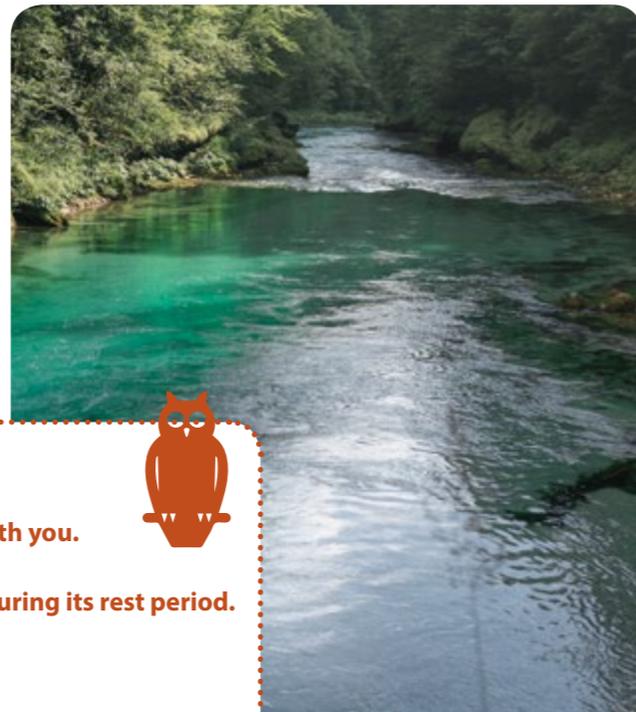
Our pool of outdoor activities is endless. We recommend a rafting tour in the Salza river, the Flying Fox high ropes course, our 3D Archery Parcours and a relaxing fly fishing trip to all sports enthusiasts, while others can get a closer look of the magnificent scenery and its bizarre limestone slopes on horseback, hiking or mountain biking.



TransNational Park
Two National Parks. Two states.
Access from 15 April to October
www.transnationalpark.at



LynxTrail
Discover the Wild Heart of Austria
Got stamina? This long-distance trail takes you over 11 stages and into 3 designated protected areas.
www.luchstrail.at



Respect Nature

Keep qualm and quiet.

Take your trash home with you.

Do not make open fires.

Do not disturb wildlife during its rest period.

Stay on existing trails.

Do not disturb plants.



White-water sports

A wild river by nature and a source of crystal-clear drinking water: the landscapes surrounding the Salza river are among the most scenic ones in the entire Alps.



Bike Tours

Ride over hill and dale as you enjoy the nature reserve and its biodiversity from your bike! We offer everything from easy rides to challenging three-day trips in the TransNational Park. E-bikes and e-scooters are available for day trips.



Hiking

Keep your eyes open for rare wildlife and plants — whether you walk down the "Path of the Senses" in Altenmarkt at 350 metres or go all the way to the peak of Mount Gamsstein in Landl/Palfau at 2,000 meters altitude — be sure to take a look around.



Horseback Riding

As the German proverb has it, "the greatest happiness on earth is sitting in the saddle of a horse." Our guided horseback rides on remote paths and in unspoiled nature are a horse lover's dream come true.



Fishing

Those who seek peace and tranquility in nature can be found fly fishing in the Enns river.



Archery

Be mindful, focus and... shoot! Surrounded by nature and wildlife, our 3D archery course makes it easy to find your inner balance.

GeoRafting

Experience Geology



Ever experienced earth's history from a rafting boat? Now you can:

“Travel through time, do sports and explore the Salza valley”.

This tour teaches you all about the Gesäuse region, the Nature & Geopark and the formation of the Salza valley. Our passionate trained GeoRafting guides have a certain Styrian charm and are happy to tell you everything you might want to know.

The best way to experience our stunning landscapes is by getting into a boat and seeing the river in action. This tour allows you to discover 200-million-year-old rocks, conglomerates and deposits from the Ice Age, beautiful gorges and steep slopes with a unique biodiversity.



5 Get your tour at
Rafting Camp Palfau
Palfau Nr. 35, 8923 Palfau
+43 3638 240 | office@raftingcamp.at
www.raftingcamp.at



Our GeoRafting Programme is brought to you as a part of the following project:
Interreg Danube GeoTour
Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, IPA)



Huchen
The large number of hollows and flow sections make the Enns river an ideal living space for the “Danube salmon”.



ASK THE EXPERT

Andrea Matousch
Nature Park Travel Agency

“Protecting the environment and understanding nature have been close to my heart ever since I was a child.”

Programs for Schools

Unravel the Mysteries of Nature

Planning an excursion, a school trip or project days? Check out our educational programs!

Experience and understand nature — this slogan illustrates our commitment to teaching children about nature, cultivation and how they are related to one-another. Our programs include hands-on experience and eye-opening moments to share the joy of nature and awaken their curiosity. Our Nature and Landscape Guides help children learn about nature in a playful way and help them explore unknown territory when walking through natural woodland and crossing streams.

To name a few highlights:

- The conquest of Gallenstein Castle
- Stepping into a geologist's and speleologist's shoes
- Rafting
- High ropes course and Canyoning
- Wildalpen SpringWater Museum
- Austrian Forest Museum Silvanum Großreifling

Sign up & further information:

Andrea Matousch
+43 664 882 305 44
a.matousch@eisenwurzten.com
www.eisenwurzten.com

Events

Learn How To Preserve Nature

Learn more about preservation, geology and cultural landscapes. There is plenty of room to meet people, organisations or networks interested in nature during our educational programs. The pillars of our Academy's work in adult education are training, further education, discussion and exchange.



Gesäuse

For further information on regional events, head to:

www.gesaeuse.at/events-veranstaltungen

Information & Contact:

Gesäuse Tourism Association
Phone: +43 (0) 3613 211 60 10
E-Mail: info@gesaeuse.at
Web: www.gesaeuse.at

Information & Course offers:

Styria Preservation Academy
Stein an der Enns 107, 8961 Sölk
+43 (0) 676 / 966 83 78
kontakt@naturschutzakademie.com
www.naturschutzakademie.com

Info: The Styria Preservation Academy is supported by A 13 – Naturschutzreferat, the Government Office of the Province of Styria and powered by the 7 Styrian Nature Parks and Gesäuse National Park

Events Education & Learning

Choose From A Wide Range Of Activities



Clippety-Clop Around the Clock

Take a Horse-Drawn Carriage or Sleigh Ride!

Get your tour & further information at:
Claudia Gesellmann | +43 (0) 650 8402114
haflinger.gams@gmail.com | www.haflingerhof-gams.net

Tickets: € 290,- (2 persons, in summer: picnic basket included)
€ 80,- (2 persons, in winter: tea basket included)

Duration: 1-2 hours

Departure point: Halfingerhof - Gams 78, 8922 Landl

The Power of Herbs

Ancient wisdom in a new guise

Get your tour & further information at:
Sandra & Gerhard Stangl | +43 (0) 664 7389445
stangl@kraeuterbergbauer.at | www.kraeuterbergbauer.at

Tickets: € 9,- Duration: approx. 2 hours
Departure point: Kräuterbergbauer, Lainbach 25, 8931 Landl

Master Your Focus

Time To Make Robin Hood Proud.

Get in touch & further information at:
Bogensportclub Salzatal, GH Eschau | +43 (0) 3638274
gasthof@eschau.at | www.eschau.at

Tickets: approx. 2 hours | € 15,- Youth | € 10,- Children up to 15 years
Duration: ca. 2 Std. Departure point: Gasthof Eschau - Palfau 102, 8923 Landl

Good Morning, Nature!

Enjoy the Thrill of an Early Morning Stalk

Get your tour & further information at:
Claudia Pechhacker | +43 (0) 664 2190082 | fewo@rinntaverne.at

Tickets: € 25,- pro Person

Duration: approx. 4 hours

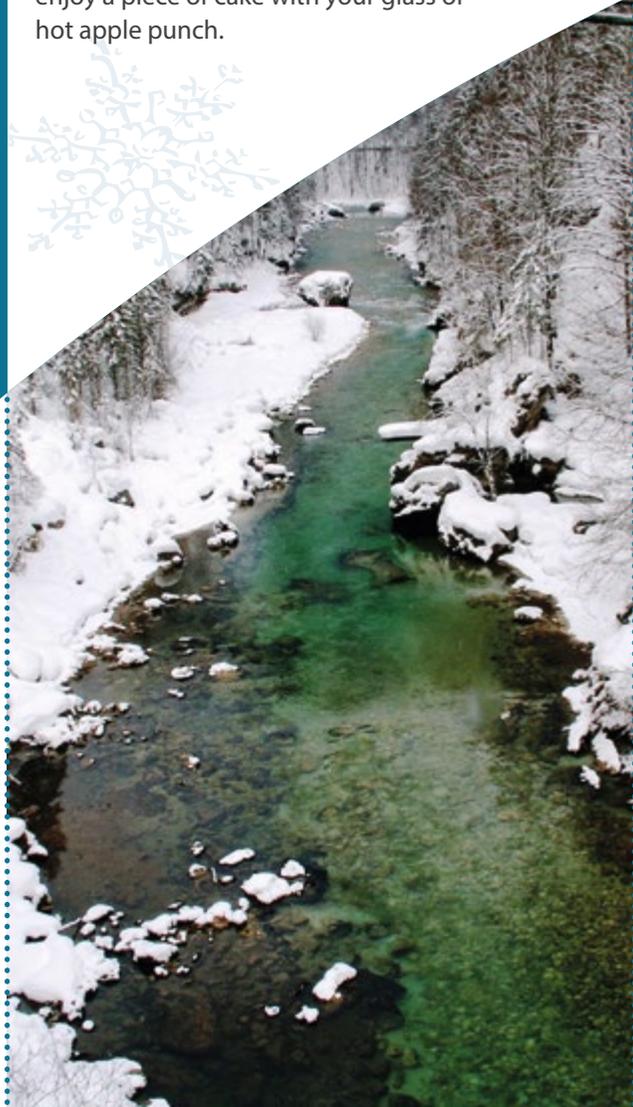
Departure point: Rinntaverne, Palfau 28, 8923 Landl



Winter Wonderland

Romantic Getaway Where Snow Is Guaranteed

Take a stroll or short hike to indulge in snowcovered landscapes. As you warm up by the fireplace later, you can listen to locals' tales and enjoy a piece of cake with your glass of hot apple punch.



Hazel grouse

Like the capercaillie, black grouse and ptarmigans, the hazel grouse is one of the members of the grouse family of birds, a subfamily of the Phasianidae. A small and shy woodland bird, the hazel grouse feels at home in deciduous and mixed woodland.



Christmas rose

The seed of the Christmas rose contains elaiosomes and is dispersed by ants and snails.



Exercise:

Time to go on a ski tour, go snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or try out the local skiing area.

Local Customs and Traditions

In the Christmas season, all hell breaks loose in the Nature Reserve – in the truest sense of the word!

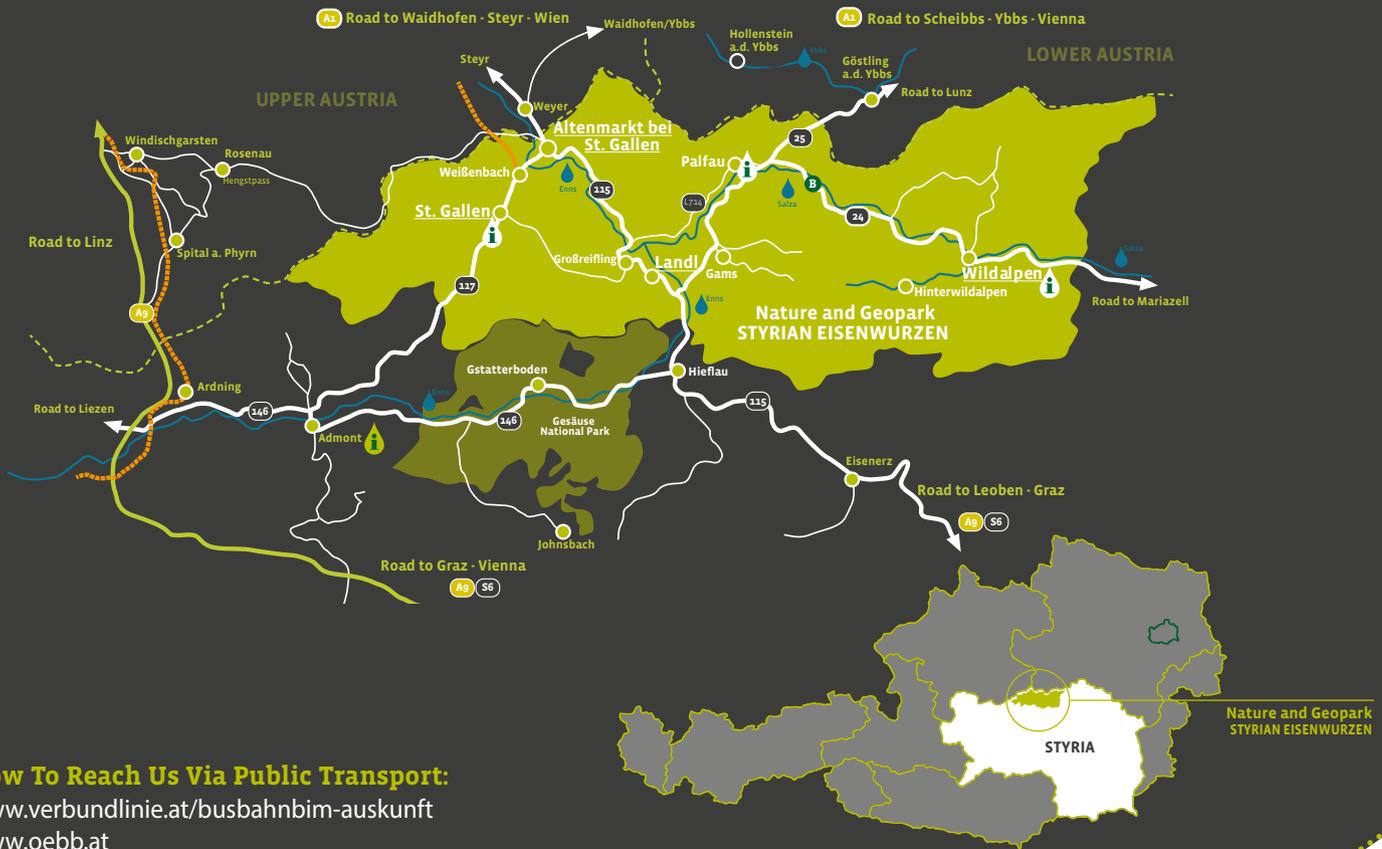
Preserving local customs is vital to the Nature Park communities.

In early December, locals honour customs such as “Bärenstreiben” and a parade we call “Hammerschmiedteufellauf”. What these are all about? During “Bärenstreiben”, the so-called “Waldmandl”, i.e. forest dwellers used to oust the bear threatening their cattle in the old days, while the “Hammerschmiedteufel” run emerged in the golden age of iron ore mining when blacksmiths, who were also known as “Hammerherren” (hammer masters), lived in excess.



When Saint Nicholas Day came along, other citizens punished them for their gluttonous lifestyles by dressing up and scaring them. They would dress up as devils, bears, lynxes and forest dwellers, wear scary masks and dance through the streets. When this tradition is honoured today, look for Saint Nick. He's part of the parade urging caution against gluttony and carelessness. On Saint Thomas's Day (December 21st), you can witness the “Thomasniglumzug” - a parade which takes place in Gams exclusively. And on January 5th, Wildalpen's unique Glöckler run is celebrated. The “Schönperchta” or “Pretty Perchta” run is a traditional procession where all participants wear stunning headdresses to drive out evil spirits and bring blessing for the upcoming year.





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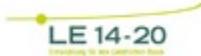
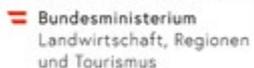
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