

Nature Park Pöllau Valley



www.naturpark-poellauertal.at





Nature Park and Culinary Region

Pöllau Valley – More than a holiday

A short time-out, a relaxing weeklong vacation, holidays with friends, a culinary tour or several weeks quality time with your family – welcoming hosts and the region’s stunning natural landscape offer a unique holiday experience throughout the year. Relaxation and the enjoyment of the region in all its diversity and uniqueness have gained Pöllau an international reputation of excellence and have long been part of its traditions and customs. The region’s diversity is also reflected in the local cuisine

which offers delights and delicacies from the Nature park. Located in the “green heart” of Austria, as Austrians lovingly call Eastern Styria, Pöllau is the ideal starting point for city trips, visits to thermal spas, extensive hiking and much more.

It is a pleasure to have you here – have fun discovering our unique valley.
We wish you a pleasant stay, interesting encounters, many colorful experiences and of course, a lot of time for enjoyment!



Nature Park Pöllau Valley

Fascinating history, natural jewels and culinary highlights – diversity unites

The Nature Park Pöllau Valley uniquely combines interesting history, diverse natural beauty and culinary highlights.

The historical market with its “Styrian St. Peter’s Basilica” and Pöllau Castle invites visitors to linger and explore. Culture lovers will also appreciate the impressive pilgrimage church Pöllauberg and the incomparable panoramic view of the surrounding landscape from up there.

Nature lovers find a paradise for hiking and recreation, which boasts highlights such as the “themed gardens Pöllauberg”, the flourishing Schlosspark (Castle Park), the “Hirschbirne” (“Autumn Pear”) hiking routes and other gorgeous education trails and viewpoints.

On a culinary round-trip through the region of Pöllau you will have the chance to enjoy truly delicious food from a wide variety of local taverns (“Buschenschänke”), local specialties by self-marketers as well as selected menus for real gourmands certified by the Culinary Association of Styria.



Planning a special group experience?

The tourism office will gladly assist you with planning your tailor made trip. Just tell them your preferences and requirements, and they will make sure it will be a trip to remember.

The Nature Park Pöllau Valley is uniquely positioned to offer a wide variety of group activities like celebrating together, sight-seeing, sports, tastings and tours, culinary delights or, if you wish, a group time out.

Hirschbirn hirsch'n

Try something new. Why not book this programme for your tour? Here is how it works: chose one of our partners and learn more about our flagship product the "Pöllauer Hirschbirne" (autumn pear). From March to October you can visit seven points that inform you about different aspects of the pear.

It is our aim to enable you to experience the Nature Park Pöllau Valley in all its diversity and to give you an insight into everything the region has to offer.



Holidays at the Nature Park Pöllau Valley –

arrive, let go, enjoy, stay

Chose from a wide variety of comfortable rooms and apartments, where welcoming hosts will pamper you with regional delicacies from the Nature Park. We have the perfect accommodation for all requirements and preferences:

- 4-Star-Superior-Hotel
- 4-Star-Hotel
- 3-Star-Superior-Hotel
- 3-Star-Hotel
- Bed and breakfast
- Private rooms
- Inns
- Holiday apartment
- Holiday house
- Farm holidays

Tip: 🍏 You have seen something of interest on our webpage? Try our new tool and compile a personalised list for your holiday or trip. Just click on the green bar with the pear symbol and collect ideas and inspirations. On the top of the page you can see how many topics you have marked. Click on it and share the list with your travel group or print it out to ensure you won't miss anything.



Nature Park Partners

Our Nature Park partners are certified businesses offering regional and seasonal Nature Park specialties, authentic lodging in Nature Park rooms, detailed information about our region's nature, culture, history and much more.



GenussCard – A free gift with your holiday

Participating holiday accommodations will provide you with this card free of charge. Enjoy reduced or free entry to museums, spa and wellness facilities, manufactories, historic sites and much more. The GenussCard opens the door to an almost limitless range of leisure activities from the 1st of March until the 31st of October.

Go on a memorable voyage of discovery and get to know the three most beautiful regions of Austria with one card: the GenussCard takes you from eastern Styria through a region of thermal spas and ancient volcanoes to southern and western Styria, opening the door to over 200 destinations for excursions.

Do find out more about the GenussCard, participating accommodations, destinations and terms & conditions, please visit the website or have a look in the information brochure. Children accompanied by their parents are our most valuable guests and will also receive the GenussCard from the age of 6 onwards. Children under the age of 6 are eligible for free entry at most destinations without the GenussCard.



More information:
www.genusscard.at



Our Nature Park Cuisine

...cooked with love

...a true feast for all your senses.

Try a hearty plate with delights directly from our Nature Park at a local Buschenschank tavern, a delicious roast filled with dried pears in a local inn, or a fine steak in a gourmet restaurant – and top it off with a sweet temptation from a local confectionery. Nature Park Pöllau Valley offers countless moments of enjoyment.

High-level cuisine and hospitality:

- Traditional inns
- High-end cuisine restaurants
- Styrian cuisine, Gault Millau, Falstaff
- Local Buschenschank taverns
- Cafés, Confectionery shops

Tip: 🍏

Take a piece of the Nature Park Pöllau Valley home with you. We have many local specialities to chose from.

An overview of restaurants, shops or the calendar for the local Buschenschank taverns can be obtained at the tourism office.



Nature Park Pöllau Valley –

so much to experience, so much to enjoy

The diverse landscape of the Pöllau Valley is a patchwork of forests, meadows, fields, and orchards dotted about on soft hills. The plain of the valley at its lowest point is 345 meters above sea level and rises to 1,280 m above sea level at its highest point.

Pöllau was awarded the title of Nature Park in 1983 because of its outstanding natural beauty. The Nature Park Pöllau Valley strives to protect nature via the strategy “protection through utilization”, meaning that humans should benefit from nature but in a circumspect and sustainable way. The biodiversity of the landscape must be preserved.

The traditional and careful farming of the land and the way traditions and customs have been kept alive in the region are im-

portant factors for living in tune with nature. With the title, the region commits itself to being an example for the development of sustainability, conservation and environmental protection. Recreation, education and regional development are also indispensable tools to achieve this.

What is a Nature Park?

Austrian Nature Parks distinguish themselves through a characteristic, ecological and valuable cultural landscape. They stand for a symbiosis between plant life, animals and humans. This reflects the natural cycle of nature and is the basis for a healthy way of living together.

Tip: 🍏 Want to know more? Our Nature Park guides are happy to help.



Pöllauer Hirschbirne – Autumn Pear

biodiversity and product variety

The Nature Park Pöllau Valley has been awarded the title „GENUSSREGION ÖSTERREICH“ (Austrian Region of Culinary Delights) by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture – all because of a humble little pear referred to as “Hirschbirne”.

The “Hirschbirne” is an old Styrian variety of pear. The name derives from the word “Herbst” (“Hiascht”), which means autumn, because the pear is harvested mid-October. It is not only the pride of Pöllau’s cuisine, but the knobbly trees with their magnificent crowns – planted in groves or scattered throughout orchards – are also a key characteristic of the valley’s stunning landscape.

This award shows that all the hard work and the decision to specialize in the cultivation of the “Hirschbirne” as a flagship product has paid off. The little pear also facilitates cooperation within the rest of the region and serves as a fantastic marketing platform for the whole community.

In May 2015 the geographical origin of Pöllau’s “Hirschbirne” was declared protected by the E.U.

Among the products created from this pear are dried fruit, pear juice, pear spirits, pear vinegar, pear cider, pear jellies, pear liver pate, “Hirschbirne” liver meat loaf, and much more.



Cycling tours...

...either on your own or in a group...
...bikes, e-bikes or mountain bikes...

Enjoy yourself!

There is no better way to enjoy your holiday destination than to get on a bike and explore. The Nature Park Pöllau Valley with its soft green hills has many routes for bikes that offer cyclists a unique way to get to know the region, the landscape and the people of Pöllau.

Cycling tour suggestions:

- R57 cycle track
- Enjoyment cycling tour “from the Rome of Eastern Styria to the Empire of the “Hirschbirne”-pear”
- HB9 Schönegg tour
- HB18 Safental cycling track

E-Bike rentals:

- RichtWerkBikestore, www.richtwerk.at
- Hotel Grüne Au, www.gruene-au.at
- JUFA Pöllau, www.jufa.eu/hotel/poellau (E-Bike-Box)
- Hotel Retter, www.retter.at (E-Bike-Box)

Bikeguide:

Tours, trainings, rider safety trainings and grouptours... just book a bikeguide at office@richtwerk.at

Nature Experiences

With its unique ambience and rich cultural influences, the Nature Park Pöllau Valley has many adventures in store for you. You can either explore the surrounding area on your own, book a nature park guide or just enjoy nature. Our guides are true experts and can provide you with many insider tips.

Here are some suggestions:

- Nature Park Circular Route/ Naturpark-Erlebnisrundweg
- Herbal Path of the Senses/ Kräuterpfad der Sinne
- Schönau Gorge/Schönauklamm
- Way of the Pilgrims Pöllau-Pöllauberg/ Wallfahrerweg Pöllau-Pöllauberg
- Bee Nature Trail/Bienen- und Hummelschafpfad

- Pankratius Route/Pankratiusweg
- Bird Watching Trail/Vogelthemenweg
- Wood Education Trail/ Masenberg Waldlehrpfad

Tip:

Feel like hiking?
Get our hiking app “Outdooractive” for free.

Exercise or flowers?

Pöllau is renowned for its beautiful floral decorations and displays. What better way to spend a lazy afternoon than to stroll through one of our beautiful parks.

- Castle Park Pöllau
- Themed Gardens Pöllauberg
- Aupark
- Alpine Herbal Garden Käfer



Pöllau Castle Park

The blooming green castle park is a spacious site for relaxation and a popular starting point for hiking tours. It also includes an “open-air classroom”, the info station “Hirschbirn hirsch’n” as well as a root observation station, which can be booked for tours providing fascinating insights into the impressive world of the plant organ root.

Theme garden Pöllau Valley

A romantic walking trail around the village center of Pöllauberg connects diverse experience and theme gardens. Here, visitors can enjoy the “room with a view”, the sumptuous flowers of the “rose garden”, the “Hirschbirn Hirsch’n” landscape window and discover the secrets of the “Schnaps garden” and the other gardens.

The park of natural ENERGY – NaturePOWERpark

A fun park for the soul, a fitness trail for the senses – is this possible?

Yes, indeed. The NaturePOWERpark in Hinterbrühl helps you expand your senses and consciousness. The ability to hear, see, feel and smell is normally taken for granted – in the NaturePOWERpark you can heighten your sensitivity and sharpen your perception by trying some simple sensory exercises which will inspire you to listen to your inner senses, discover your true feelings and pay attention to your instincts.

Alpine herbal garden Käfer

The Alpine herbal garden in Rabenwald – departure point of the herbal trail of the senses – allows you to immerse yourself in the world of herbal and medicinal plants and learn about the unique diversity of plants and their healing powers.



The History of Pöllau

Nearly 2000 years ago the Romans left their traces in Pöllau:

Tombstones from that time have been found, among them a tomb statue depicting a lion – at present it is located atop the balustrade outside the music school.

On the site of the monastery used to be a water-castle and a parish church in the 12th century.

The ruling dynasty of the region were the Lords of Stubenberg, who were three hundred years later replaced by the Lords of Neuberg. The last Lord of Neuberg remained childless and therefore determined in his last will that the castle should be converted into a monastery for the Augustinian canons. In 1504 the first monks came to Pöllau from the monastery of Vorau.

The first century after the Middle Ages was a very difficult time for the country: about 400 years ago, the Turks attacked villages, burned down houses and kidnapped young people. On top of that, Pöllau was flooded several times and there was a series of catastrophic fires.

Most of the houses burned down because they were made out of wood. On one occasion a single fire destroyed 40 houses at once. The greatest catastrophe, though, was the plague, which killed 3.000 people in the parish within only 15 years, as an inscription on the town hall documents.

All the historical buildings which characterize Pöllau's present-day appearance were built 300 years ago: the church, the former monastery and several houses in the village.

In 1785 the monastery of the Augustinian canons was abolished by Emperor Joseph II., a son of Empress Maria Theresia. Today, the former Augustinian monastery is regarded as a castle, but continues to be a place of inspiration, education, spiritual growth and intellectual enlightenment. For example, it is the home of the Pöllau-Vorau-Joglland music school, whose skilled students are highly regarded internationally, as well as the "headquarters" of Austria's best brass band.

The fresco hall is a unique and festive venue for different types of occasions. Among other events, the traditional annual carnival ball is hosted there. The tourism office is also located in this beautiful historic castle. It provides all the information about the region visitors might need.

Historically, textile workshops were a very important local industry – 150 years ago Pöllau still had 15 small factories, which produced textiles from sheep wool.



The parish- and former monastery-church

very impressive with beautiful frescoes

In 1680 the medieval castle and the former church, located somewhat north of the present-day church, still existed. Through the entry of numerous aristocratic canons the monastery of Pöllau experienced a boost. Owing to generous donations, Provost Michael Maister commissioned substantial reconstruction works.

The architect entrusted with planning this project was the Italian Domenico Sciassa, who based his plan on the design of the Cathedral of Salzburg. He also constructed the churches and monasteries of St. Lambrecht and Mariazell. That's why all these buildings have architectural similarities.

The monastery (without the church) was completed in 1700 under Provost Ernst of Ortenhofen with active support from the population; the framework of the church was finished ten years later, based on plans by Antonio and Joachim Carlone. Remigius Horner, a local master builder and cabinetmaker, also responsible for other East-Styrian churches and numerous other small monuments (e.g. chapels), made important contributions to this project as well. The Augustinian canons only lived in this enormous building for a short time. In 1785 Joseph II. closed the monastery down.



Structure of the building

The so-called “Styrian St. Peter’s Basilica” is an impressive landmark and can be seen from virtually everywhere in Pöllau due to its mighty 42 meter high dome and its 53 meter high tower. The church was built in the typical baroque fashion of the time with its large central dome and modelled after the famous St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. The architecture of the dome draws on Roman construction concepts.

Beautiful frescoes and paintings as well as an abundance of opulent ornaments illustrate the highly decorative baroque style.

The eye is drawn upward and catches a glimpse of heaven. Light is used in a spectacular way and reflects off the gilded surfaces to create a dramatic effect. The outline of the church resembles one part of the cross bottony which is why the nave ends in a trefoil. The size and grandeur of this place of worship is enhanced through the galleries, the tall windows, the side altars and the sheer height of the church, which all inspire awe and humility.

Fresco decoration

Matthias von Görz decorated the church

with illusionistic architecture paintings and used stucco. This combination is most likely unique in Styria. The painting series “Durch das Erdenleben Gott entgegen” (“Through life on Earth to God”), can be considered the climax of Styrian baroque fresco-painting and of the Italian representational style. Provost Michael Maister recognized the talent of the orphan boy Matthias von Görz and not only accommodated him in his monastery but also sent him to Graz to be taught in the art of painting as well as on educational trips to Italy.

The ceiling frescoes of the church draw the focus upwards. The arched vault above the nave is not partitioned but one big work of art. The pivotal theme is the worship of the apocalyptic lamb through angels and saints of both the New and the Old Testament as well as the ascent of the sacred cross.

The dome with its eightfold echo, with the four evangelists and with the vast heavenly vault is almost impossible to absorb in its entirety. The centrepiece of the high altar is a picture of the patron, Saint Vitus, by Johann Adam von Mölck from 1779. The statues of John and Paul followed in 1804.



Marian Pilgrimage Church

Gothic church with an impressive organ

The veneration of a picture of the Virgin Mary marked the beginning of Pöllauberg as a pilgrimage site around 1160. At the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century a small Romanesque chapel – now the site of the Anna Chapel – was built. Pilgrims predominantly worshipped there on Saturdays which is why Mount Pöllauberg is also called “Samstagsberg” (Saturday Mountain).

The Late Gothic miraculous image of the Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus is at the centre of the high altar, which was built between 1714 and 1730 by Marx and Joseph Schokotnig according to plans from Remigius Horner. The pulpit (1730), designed by Remigius Horner, became the model for many East Styrian pulpits. In the north are two side altars dedicated to the folk saints Patrizius and Florian. On the small side altar next to the high altar hangs a painting by Martino Altomonte depicting the holy kinship (from before 1745).

Of particular interest are the Gothic seating niches in the choir ambulatory. Above simple stone benches are blind arcades with pointed arches. In between are slender columns above which protruding corbels are mounted depicting different types of foliage, bizarre masked heads and the winged symbolic figures of the four evangelists.

The organ from circa 1684 is the oldest preserved grand organ in Eastern Styria and has 18 stops on two manuals with pedal. It is considered one of the most important “monuments to sound” in Austria.

Nowadays people come here from all over the world to pray or to enjoy the outstanding panoramic view over the Pannonian lowlands.

If you are interested in hiking trails, guided tours or would like to find out more about the history, please contact the tourism office and they will happily help.

Museum of Folklore

illustrates the life of the farmers in the region...

The Museum of Folklore does not only take visitors back to the “good old days”, but also allows them to experience extraordinary exhibits and curiosities like a drill for creating square holes or a manually operated device for haircutting.


Museum of Folklore

Frau Krogger, Prätis 117, 8225 Pöllau

Tel: +43 (0) 3335 3567

Opening hours: at any time by appointment

Admission: voluntary donation

Tip:  Combine the visit of the museum with a hike.

ECHOPHYSICS –

The European Centre for the History of Physics

ECHOPHYSICS is the first and only centre for the history of physics in Europe. Here you learn more about the considerable contribution of Austrian pioneers to modern physics. You can also find a replica of Antikythera, the first calendric and astronomic computer, as well as the estate of the only Styrian Nobel Prize winner, Victor Franz Hess, who discovered cosmic radiation. The museum is located in the castle of Pöllau.

Opening times –
Thursday to Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm
The museum is closed from
November – March

Particularium

is part of the European Centre for the History of Physics and is a new exhibition about the important topic of energy. Would you like to learn more about battery research and what a hydrogen fuel cell has got to do with it? Is it possible to recreate the sun's energy on earth? What is a Stellarator? Why should nuclear energy be avoided? Can we find sustainable options of energy for future generations?

If you would like to visit the Particularium please contact the ECHOPHYSICS team under 00 43 3335 2433 or alternatively send an email to info@echophysics.org.

Don't miss any of our events!

A calendar with all current dates can be found on our homepage:
www.naturpark-poellauertal.at

Become a fan on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/naturparkpoellauertal

Follow us on Instagram:
[naturpark_poellauer_tal](https://www.instagram.com/naturpark_poellauer_tal)

Dear Guests, we are happy to personally assist you with planning your individualized vacation, your group travel project, hiking trips, sightseeing and much more. Comprehensive brochures and detailed maps can be obtained in the tourism office.

Tourism office Nature Park Pöllau Valley

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www.naturpark-poellauertal.at



Public Parking:

Pöllau:

P+R Schloffereckstraße
 (Parking also for coaches)
 Pöllau Nord
 (next to Aupark-Freibad)
 Castle park
 P+R Tutten

Pöllauberg:

Nature park arena
 (parking space for coaches)
 Local area of Pöllauberg