



ADVENT IN GASTEIN – tradition-conscious and authentic

When the days grow noticeably shorter and the year draws to a close, a very special time begins in Gastein Valley. Peaceful, reflective, with an array of fondly nurtured folk traditions, thoughts now turn to Advent in this valley flanked by the Hohe Tauern mountains.

Here, where the mountains are high and the valleys narrow, ancient folk customs are still as much a part of daily life as they have been for countless generations. It was especially the darkest of the four seasons, a period of quietness and introspection, that gave birth to numerous fascinating myths and rituals.

Traditional events, festive Advent markets, eerie Krampus parades, gentle concerts and moving Nativity plays provide guests with insights into many of the Alpine region's most authentic folk customs. One particularly beautiful tradition in the Alps is known as Anklöckeln: Dressed as Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the innkeeper, groups of singers make their way from house to house during the weeks just before Christmas, retelling the story of the search for shelter and the proclamation of Christ's birth through their songs.

Magical tones and wild creatures

This coming winter, it will above all be the town center of Bad Hofgastein, with its festively illuminated pedestrian zone, which provides the unique backdrop for a truly atmospheric Advent market. Tradition and variety are guaranteed by groups of folk musicians from the region as well as local actors performing in Nativity plays. A sleigh ride or hike by torchlight through the snow-covered Kurpark conjures up the idyllic romance we so associate with the Christmas season.

The evocative flavor of the heimat.kunst.advent Advent market in the Merangarten in Bad Gastein, with its arts & crafts, delicious regional specialties and even a "Christmas Workshop", can be counted on to enchant everyone. The gentle tones of Christmas wind musicians, the spooky goings-on during the Krampus parades and the sweet fragrance of tasty Christmas treats provide visitors with an excellent opportunity to immerse themselves in the traditions of the Alpine world.

As they do every year, on 5 and 6 December Saint Nick and his companions – the basket bearer, an angel and Krampusses – will make their way through Gastein Valley. The focus of this particular tradition is to have Nicholas reward the children who have been good during the year on the one hand, while at the same time allowing the fearsome Krampusses to stir up a terrible din in order to drive out any evil demons. By the time the Anklöckler stand at your front door, the people of Gastein know: Christmas can't be too far off. True to custom, the singers reenact the Holy Family's search for a place to stay, making their way through the cold night by candlelight. Those who open their doors to them – which is strongly advised – will get to enjoy some beautiful songs. The Nativity play, performed by lay actors and children from Gastein, also reminds us of the birth of Jesus.

More Informationen www.gastein.com/en/events/winter/advent/

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