

Title:

Destination Snow: Kitzbuehel Austria

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Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Scenic Kitzbühel is everything an alpine resort should be: a charming village with a medieval center, a world-famous après-ski mecca, and a ski run regularly used on the World Cup circuit. Whether you go to Kitzbühel to ski the Hahnenkamm or to party all night (or both), Kitzbühel doesn't disappoint.

The village is situated at the southern foot of the Kitzbüheler Horn, about 100 kilometers (63 miles) from Innsbruck. The area around Kitzbühel has turned up archaeological evidence of human habitation as far back as the Bronze Age. During the time of the Roman Empire, it became a major crossroads for merchants and travelers. The first records of the village of Kitzbühel date back to 1271. The area didn't become a tourist destination until 1902, when construction started on a major hotel. Franz Reisch organized the Association of Winter Sports and staged Kitzbühel's first public ski race.

That's the old news in Kitzbühel. Here's what's new: improvements in lifts and snowmaking facilities for the 2005/2006 season. Old T-bars are being replaced with a state-of-the-art chair lift equipped with child safety devices. Also new this season is the "Panoramabahn Kitzbüheler Alpen," an eight-seat mono-cable circulating gondola. The resort is also increasing its snowmaking system. Work is underway on a new water reservoir. Man-made snow will cover the ice increasing the amount of terrain by 30 hectares and improving the condition of the snow at the Resterhöhe ski area.

Now, back to the basics - Kitzbühel offers over 145 kilometers (90 miles) of trails with 39 percent designated for beginners, 46 percent for intermediates,

and 15 percent for advanced skiers. There are four main mountains: the Hahnenkamm, theKitzbüheler Horn, the Bichlalm, and Pass Thurn. While it is a great resort for intermediates, experts are not left out. They can test their skills on the famous World Cup Streif run (on Hahnenkamm) and there is plenty of off-trail terrain to explore. Skiers can even have their speed clocked with radar on the Pengelstein. There are also steep trails around the Ehrenbachgraben bowl and also on the Rettenstein at Pass Thurn.

Kitzbühel is home to the popular Ski Safari circuit, marked by elephant symbols. The circuit allows skiers to explore the entire area between Hahnenkamm and Pass Thurn. A recently installed 3S (tri-cable) continuous loop cableway allows skiers to complete the circuit in both directions without taking off their skis. The Ski Safari covers 35 kilometers (22 miles) of runs.

Snowboarders are most likely to head for the Kitzbüheler Horn. In addition to free-riding terrain, there's a half-pipe and funpark. There's a boarder-cross near the Brunellenfeld lift with a 95-meter (312-foot) vertical drop and at least 14 obstacles. The Red Eagle Snowboard Academy in Kitzbühel is a great place to learn and perfect snowboarding skills.

The Kitzbühel area is a good choice for cross-country skiers. Kitzbühel offers 30 kilometers (19 miles) of groomed trails. With the trails of the surrounding towns added on, there is a total of 120 kilometers (75 miles) of groomed trails to explore. Snow hikers and snowshoers find over 100 kilometers (62 miles) of well-maintained hiking trails. Free guided hikes are available during the week as well as special torchlight and photography hikes.

Visitors enjoy other winter activities, as well. Tobogganing, indoor and outdoor ice skating, tubing, and sledding add to the fun. Riding in a horse-drawn sleigh is a romantic way to see the spectacular scenery surrounding Kitzbühel. There are a lot of things to see and do in Kitzbühel. In addition to shopping, visitors can tour several medieval churches. There are spas, the Cable Car Museum, a casino, art galleries, and an alpine zoo.

The village is filled with brightly painted houses, many dating back to medieval times. Visitors can browse through trendy shops and stop for coffee and pastry at one of the many cafés. The only hard part about dining out is deciding where to go. There are more than 100 restaurants in Kitzbühel. Food choices range from Tyrolean, Mexican, and Chinese to Italian, Swiss, and even American. Many great restaurants are found in the town's four-star hotels.

Some people choose Kitzbühel just for its party atmosphere. Famous for its wild après-ski, the town draws the rich and famous from around the world. Bars and

discos keep the fun alive all night. There are, however, quiet pubs for those looking for a more romantic evening.

Kitzbühel is preparing for its opening celebration, with special events planned for December 8 - 11, 2005. Whether you come to ski and snowboard, party or shop, Kitzbühel is the ultimate fun alpine resort.