

Bregenz & the Arlberg



favorite places in the Alps, home to both Austria's friendliest people and its most extreme mountain terrain.

◆ St. Anton am Arlberg

Population: 2,580

Base elevation: 1,300 m/4,264 feet

Mountain resort village

There's a lot to love about St. Anton. I adore it above all for its people, both its friendly residents and its spirited, hard-driving visitors. Although famed throughout the world as a winter resort, the village also has a respectable following among summertime hikers, bikers, and climbers. But St. Anton comes into its own as a superb playground for expert skiers. It's Austria's premier ski-bum resort – the rip-roaring bad boy of the Arlberg.

History & Overview

The Arlberg region occupies the western panhandle of Austria, the nation's most mountainous terrain. Once farmland, the region was opened to visitors in the 19th century by the arrival of the railway and the construction of the Flexen Pass road – basically a tunnel with an open gallery on one side. The now-famous Arlberg Ski Club was formed in St. Christoph in 1901. Member Hannes Schneider offered ski instruction here for the first time in 1907, assisted the Austrian military in the development of on-ski Al-



Skier above St. Anton

pine troops, and eventually developed the distinctive feet-together Arlberg style. Schneider also befriended British skier Sir Alfred Lunn, with whom he together coordinated the 1927 inaugural running of the Kandahar Race. Several local racers have gone on to great success and worldwide sporting fame in this and other World Cup competitions. World champions Karl Schranz and Marina Kiehl are just two of those. Today, the village enjoys a historical significance that spans an entire century – as home to Hannes Schneider, the father of modern skiing, and as host of the World Alpine Skiing Championships in 2001.

The Town



St. Anton's pedestrian zone

St. Anton sprawls along the Rosanna River, 30 km west of **Landeck**. The elongated town connects at its eastern edge with the neighboring villages of **Nasserein** and, farther down-valley, **St. Jakob**. The main valley road, the **Arlbergstrasse**, runs up from Innsbruck and into the center on its southern side. (Through traffic ducks into the Arlberg Tunnel, which empties out 14 km west of here.) The main train station sits on the hillside opposite town, across the main road and the river. St. Anton's action centers on its pedestrian zone and a long street called Dorfstrasse, which runs from the traffic circle at its west-

ern end downhill toward Nasserein. Paralleling Dorfstrasse just up the hill, Hannes Schneider Weg runs from the lifts to the wellness center along a lovely park, site of what was until just a few years ago an unsightly train yard. The main cable cars depart from just above the center, with other lift stations up the valley, above the wellness center, and at Nasserein.

Getting Here & Around



Visitors arriving by air will fly into Innsbruck, 100 km to the east; Zürich, 200 km to the west; or Munich, 250 km to the north. Airport transfers from Zürich are provided by **Arlberg Express**, ☎ 05582 226. The new, ultra-modern train station lies at the southern edge of the center, and train connections are frequent to both Innsbruck and Zürich.

Drivers will likely arrive via Landeck in the east or Feldkirch and the Arlberg Tunnel in the west. (Tunnel toll at last count was €8.50). As the center of the village is a car-free zone, parking areas line the main road into town. Local and regional buses serve the area well. In winter, free shuttle buses operate day and night between the villages of St. Anton and St Jakob; between the bases of the Galzig and Rendl areas; and between Alpe Rauz and the nearby village of Zurs. Tickets must be purchased for travel between St. Anton and St. Christoph, Alpe Rauz, Zurs, and Lech. For taxi service, contact **Taxi Harry** at ☎ 0554 23 68 or **Taxi Griesser** at ☎ 0554 37 30.

Mountain transportation includes 44 local lifts, six of which run in summer for lift-served hiking and mountain biking. A variety of passes are available.

LIFT PASS PRICE SAMPLES

Winter

1-day adult Arlberg Pass	€40.50
6-day adult Arlberg Pass	€194

Summer

7-day all-mountain Wanderpass.	€30
Pedestrian round-trip to the Valluga Summit .	€18

Getting More Info



The **tourist office** is in the center near the traffic circle, at the top of Dorfstrasse. New arrivals appreciate the electronic hotel map in the corridor outside; and skiers appreciate the resort Info Team, a group of multi-lingual folks that disperse across the mountain with the sole purpose of providing up-to-date information. Contact the tourist office at ☎ 05446 226 90, www.stantonamarlberg.com, info@stantonamarlberg.com.

The **post office** is along the main road into town, next door to the St. Antonerhof Hotel.

The **Mail Box Café** in the pedestrian zone offers Internet access. It's open 9 am-10 pm in season. **Jennewein Sport** also offers Internet access from its rental and sport shops.

The Sights



St. Anton Ski Museum

St. Anton is a sporting resort, and few sights stand out. Chief among them is the **St. Anton Ski Museum**, which documents the development of St. Anton, local cultural traditions, and the history of the local ski club. The museum is located in the Arlberg Kandahar Haus chalet – and its lovely interior is alone worth the price of admission.

It's open Sunday through Sunday, 3 pm to 6 pm in winter, less frequently in summer; ☎ 05446 24 75, www.museum-restaurant.at, €3. Also of interest to history buffs is the **Thöni**

Haus, dating from the Middle Ages and thereby among the region's oldest homes. The old wooden house is tucked inconspicuously away at Im Greis, and today remains in private hands.

- ✓ The tourist office offers guided village tours every Monday at 4 pm during the summer; the tours are free of charge.

The 360° view from 2,650-m/8,700-foot **Valluga Summit** offers one of the most spectacular panoramas of the Alps. From the small viewing platform at the top, views extend to the Lechtal Alps in the north, to the Zügspitze of Germany in the northwest, to the Silvretta and Switzerland's Bernina in the south, and to the Stubaital glaciers and Italy's Dolomites in the southeast.

The Adventures

● ON FOOT



Hikers enjoy 270 km of well-posted paths. Six summertime lifts access the local mountains, and 33 mountain huts offer refreshment. The tourist office runs a program of guided walking tours Tuesday through Friday in summer. Walks include an outing to an Alpine dairy farm, a walk through mountain flowers and a photo tour. Contact the tourist office for information and to make reservations, ☎ 05446 226 90, www.stantonamarlberg.com.

THE ARLBERG CLIMBERS' TRACK

Experienced climbers consider the Arlberg Climbing Track one of the Alps' most demanding and scenic fixed routes. The track stretches 2.8 km along the Lechtal Alps and takes around five hours to complete. To access the starting point, walk approximately 20 minutes east from the Valluga Grat cable car station toward the Einstieg or, from the Kapall chairlift, approximately 15 minutes west. Proper equipment, weather conditions, and expertise are required.

● IN WATER



Swimmers head year-round for the **ARLBERG-Well.com** and its pool facilities, which include an indoor pool, waterfalls, an outdoor river current, and excellent sauna area; contact ☎ 05446 4001, www.arlberg-well.com, for current open hours. In the summer, the **Waldschwimmbad** provides an outdoor pool in a forested locale. Watersport fans looking for more extreme action pair up with **H2O Adventures** (see *Sports Services, Outfitters & Guides* below, page 51) for canyoning, rafting, and such. Fishing is an option, too, both in the Rosanna River and at Lake Verwall. Make inquiries at the tourist office for permits and regulations.

● ON WHEELS



Summertime **mountain bikers** take advantage of 200 km of timber access road and designated trails. Routes run along the Rendlalpe, Tritschalpe, and Putzenalpe; one favorite 1.5-hour run climbs past the Verwallsee up to the Konstanzerhütte and, if you're game, another two hours up to the Heilbronnerhütte at 2,308 m/7,544 feet. The tourist office sells maps and guidebooks specifically for mountain bikers.

● IN THE AIR



Paragliding flights include training, trial course, and tandem jumps. For more information, contact Simon Penz at **Flight Connection Arlberg**, ☎ 0664 141 51 66, www.fca.at.

- ✓ The Summer Active Programme offers a gamut of recreational activities. Check in at local hotels and enjoy guided hikes, mountain bike rides, golf, archery, and children's fun-and-games with Hoppl the rabbit. A wide range of wellness courses is also on offer.

● ON SNOW & ICE



St. Anton is Austria's signature resort, a name well known throughout the **skiing** world. A mecca for on-ski experts, and a magnet for après-ski addicts. The ski region surrounding St. Anton includes 267 km of groomed



runs served by 85 lifts in six resorts: St. Anton, St. Christoph, Stuben, Lech, Zurs, and Sonnenkopf. The 44 local lifts access the region's largest section of slopes, a 40-km network of steep, groomed pistes.

Recently, the resort invested €13 million in efforts to open up additional runs for beginning- and intermediate-level skiers. Improvements target the Rendl and Fang areas. Mid-level skiers can enjoy most of the mountain, including the area's longest