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A wide variety of natural scenery

While the vast expanse of Lake Constance gives off a seaside vibe, just a few kilometres away, mountain summits rise up to almost 3,000m in altitude. Although small in size, Vorarlberg comprises an astonishingly wide variety of landscapes – pleasant low-lying areas, river valleys, forests, moors, alpine pastures, and towering summits await.

Vorarlberg is a beautiful region. To ensure that it stays this way, great emphasis is placed on protecting and preserving the habitats of numerous species of animal and plant life. Areas that are particularly vulnerable and valuable have been designated as reserves, where nature is allowed to thrive freely and strict rules apply for human intervention.

Protecting and preserving nature is also high on the agenda of tourism operators. Coming up with innovative energy schemes and implementing a plethora of environmentally friendly measures, they make a strong contribution towards sustainable development. The same holds for everyone who behaves mindfully and respectfully during whatever activities they pursue out in nature. The “Respect your limits” campaign reminds people to consciously experience nature and put its protection first. This includes, for example, respecting off-limits warnings on trails and slopes, refraining from entering wildlife quiet areas and, as a matter of course, taking your litter back home with you.

Water and forests

Lakes, rivers, moors, and forests are refreshing places to be when temperatures are up. During the colder months, they radiate a special kind of peace and tranquillity. The best way to take in the beauty of these landscapes is to explore them on foot. You will also find bike and mountain bike trails that take you along lakes and streams or through forests. The internationally renowned Rhine delta nature reserve, which is located directly on Lake Constance, is home to numerous rare animal and plant species. Some bird species overwinter in the shallows and on the partly reed-covered shores. Moors, of which Vorarlberg boasts quite a few, count among the most precious of nature's assets.

About a third of Vorarlberg is covered by forests, most of them featuring a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees. Sustainably managed, these forests fulfil a number of functions, among them as a source for the timber and wood used by innovative craftspeople to build houses and furniture.

Mountains and valleys

Merrily up and down is the motto for any trip through Vorarlberg's mountain scenery. In summer, hikers and mountain bikers alike can enjoy the lovingly curated landscape. Its preservation is owed in no small part to family-run farms many of which still practice Alpine transhumance: Every spring, the livestock is moved from the valleys to mid-alpine pastures (called Vorsäss or Maisäss) and then on to high-alpine pastures in the summer before being brought back down again in the same way.

In winter, skiers flock to the slopes in Vorarlberg's excellently developed ski areas. While the destinations best known internationally are Lech Zürs am Arlberg and Montafon, all other regions of Vorarlberg offer opportunities galore to carve your turns on the slopes, glide along cross-country skiing trails, go on a snowshoe hike or whoosh downhill on a sled. But no matter the season, protecting nature is always a top priority. The great variety of natural and cultivated landscapes is reflected in the number of protected areas found in Vorarlberg: European protected sites, nature and plant protection areas, biosphere and nature parks or wildlife quiet areas – they all serve to preserve nature's valuable resources.

www.vorarlberg.travel/en/living-space-vorarlberg