

Vorarlberg Magazine

Happiness in the mountains

Sura Kees and other cheeses
- a hike to the Garnera alp

Radically regional

Jeremias Riezler only
cooks that which grows
around the Widderstein

's Fränzle fishes

Out with Lake Constance's
fisherman early in the
morning

Pure Pleasure

Alma

Why Alma has the most award-winning alpine and mountain cheese.

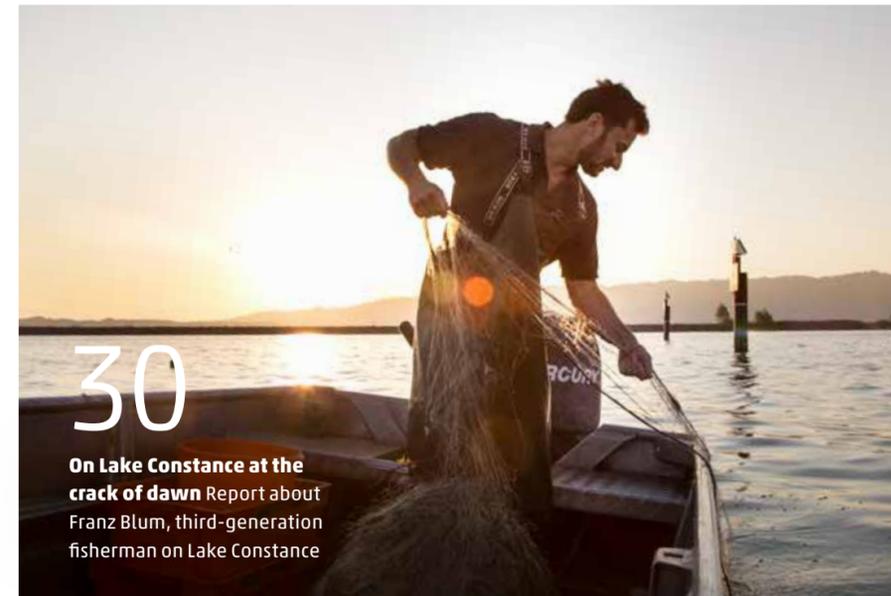
Only unprocessed hay milk is used to make the famous cheese specialties from Vorarlberg in the small Alma alpine dairies and on the dairy alps. Continuing in the tradition of yesteryear, the Alpine dairymen make their Alma Mountain Cheese PDO and Alma Alpine Cheese in massive copper vats by hand.



www.alma.at

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Read the digital version of the magazine

The Vorarlberg Magazine is also available as an e-magazine, featuring videos, slide shows, 360-degree photos and interactive elements.

Or as a magazine for smartphones and computers. All links and videos are available from:

www.vorarlberg.travel/magazine



www.vorarlberg.travel

People of pleasure

A brilliant conductor, a laterally-thinking architect, a green heroine, a bio-visionary, a dialect specialist and two stone sheep breeders all share their tips for enjoyment in the entire state

The last chord of "Turandot" strikes: Paolo Carignani, the Italian star conductor, moves quickly from the orchestra pit through the backdrop of the lake stage. He takes a deep bow, the audience gives him a standing ovation for the illustrious moments that are so seldom in life. The lake, the stage, the artists, the music: "Turandot" on the lake stage of Bregenz – another brilliant performance.

Paolo is bathed in sweat. Two hours non-stop – hard work for the actors and singers, for the musicians and, above all, for the conductor. Ultimately, such a performance is equal to top-level sports. Yet he loves this feeling. Paolo is one of the big stars amongst conductors – guest performances take him to the major opera houses around the world. Last year, for instance, he went straight from Bregenz to the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Yet he is still a down-to-earth type, and enjoys the moment. To compensate for the evenings he spends conducting, he indulges in mountain bike tours in Vorarlberg's mountains. "You get happiness hormones from sport, from love and from chocolate – maybe sport is the best way," says the maestro. What he likes about Vorarlberg is that the lake, the mountains and culture are all so close to each other.

His enjoyment tip: "I have discovered the Restaurant Mangold in Lochau – you get a great feed here. It's not far from Bregenz, which means that I can pop over there on my bike."



Paolo Carignani's tips on video – access the video directly via the QR code.

» Music, culture and sports – that's the ingenious mixture that reigns here!

My favourite pastime is a mountain bike tour. «

Paolo Carignani
conducts Puccini's "Turandot" at the Bregenz Festival – seen here against the stage set





A head of wild curls, designer stubble, a twinkle in the eye: Andreas Haller would easily pass for a gang leader or a pirate in a film. In real life, however, he has devoted himself to ecologically valuable permaculture here in the Kleinwalsertal.

“I cultivate all kinds of things in my permaculture garden, from cabbages, potatoes and courgettes through to flowers that blossom for a long time and serve as food for bees,” he says. “Despite the altitude of 1,110 metres, my self-sufficiency can cover the majority of my needs and I can even give away some of my produce to family and friends.” Permaculture is a concept which relies on the permanently functioning, natural cycles for the production of foodstuffs and which also includes social infrastructures. Industrially produced foodstuffs are not ecologically viable, according to Andi Haller. “In this way, you end up with fantastic quality which ultimately winds up on your plate!”

His enjoyment tip: “I love to take advantage of the intact countryside of my native country on my hikes. I find the tranquil regions such as the Gattertal and the Schwarzwassertal particularly lovely.”

 **The QR code takes you to the video** in which Andi Haller talks more about his native country and his work.

 www.kleinwalsertal.com

» Our Kleinwalsertal has a great deal of lovely tributary valleys. They each have a charm of their very own and are great daytrip destinations for hikers. «

Andreas Haller – as a permaculture horticulturist in the Kleinwalsertal, he relies on self-sufficiency



» I consider myself a 'Walser' native," says the lively old lady, a retired headmistress, "like so many others here, irrespective of how much Walser blood flows in your veins. «

Elisabeth Burtscher – the former headmistress from Fontanella cultivates the Walser language

"Grüaß Gott i der Schtuba" is how Elisabeth Burtscher welcomes her guests in her local dialect. Satisfied, she sits on the patio of her cosy house high above the town of Fontanella, afforded a wide view of the Große Walsertal, surrounded by her family. She currently has visitors from Australia. "I consider myself a 'Walser' native," says the lively old lady, a retired headmistress, "like so many others here, irrespective of how much Walser blood flows in your veins."

Around 700 years ago, people moved here from Canton Valais in Switzerland, usually for economic reasons, on the search for new agricultural land, and became 'Walsers'. Their main distinguishing characteristic is still their language which, as Elisabeth Burtscher says, "is so far removed from High German that you cannot mix the two." The Walser dialect and other traditions are lovingly maintained in the region.

Her enjoyment tip: "You really must attend the Walser Herbst – a festival held over three weeks in the late summer every two years. Thanks to its frequently bizarre film, music and theatre projects, it is known as the most offbeat festival in the middle of the mountains."



Elisabeth Burtscher speaks about "Walser-ness" in the video – the QR code takes you there.



» We turned the old stable into a small institution dedicated to our cultural area which is now attracting creative minds from all over the world. «

Gerold Schneider – the hotelier and architect from Lech is the founder of the Allmeinde Commongrounds

There is a fragrance of wood in this large, bright room with a high, open roof structure. Crystal-clear air pours through the sliding glass elements in the side walls, beyond which lie the extensive mountains of Lech am Arlberg. The conversion of the old barn into the “Allmeinde Commongrounds” started in 2001. “The ‘Allme(i)nde’ in the name refers to physical and intellectual common property, with Commongrounds being its English equivalent”, says Gerold Schneider, who read philosophy and architectural theory in Vienna and later took over the management of the Almhof Schneider luxury hotel in Lech, now in its fourth generation of the same family. The old stable, located close to the hotel, is now a multi-purpose venue for daily use, for art and culture. In addition to a small library, the ground floor accommodates the office of his wife Katia, once a child star as Heidi in the famous television series, today an architect following her studies in Paris. The 140 square metres above it, formerly the hayloft, sometimes serve the Schneiders as living quarters with practical fittings. Otherwise, it is used for readings, exhibitions by artists such as James Turrell and for concerts for up to 60 guests. “And so creative minds and fans of culture from all over the world make their way to Lech”, says Schneider. It doesn’t always have to be Paris or Vienna!

His pleasure tip: “Just behind the village, in the Lechquellen area, a fantastic countryside unfolds that is perfect for taking lovely hikes and drinking out of small streams.”

 **The QR code takes you to the video** in which Gerold Schneider talks about the Allmeinde.

www.allmeinde.org;
www.almhof.at;
www.lechzuers.com



» Our herbs are happy to be reared and harvested by hand so that, completely free of additives, they fight for the good of people. «

Elisabeth Breidenbrücker – who offers herb products under the brand name "Helden in Grün"

Herbs are the secret super heroes in the world of plants, according to Elisabeth Breidenbrücker – and that is why she called her brand "Helden in Grün". The young lady, who lives in Bizau in the Bregenzerwald, produces food from whatever grows in her small, exquisite garden. The herbs "are happy to be reared and harvested by hand, loathe chemical weapons and prefer to fight for the good of people – by themselves, completely free of additives," as she describes it on her website.

Elisabeth Breidenbrücker's range includes blossom sugar, honey made in the ground, Bregenzerwald green tea and blends of incense. "I find the effect of herbs and plants on people fascinating," she says. True heroic power sure enough. Only a limited number of all the products in her range is ever produced – using perfect ingredients, the only additive a great deal of love.

Her enjoyment tip: "Without doubt, that is our spicy salt which, in addition to rosemary and thyme, contains chilli peppers. Sprinkled over tomatoes, it is a real hit!"



In the video,
Elisabeth Breidenbrücker talks about her brand – the QR code takes you there.

www.bregenzerwald.at

Young Martin Mathies easily bounds up the steep slope. The expansive alpine meadow opens up behind a cluster of trees. At his call 20, maybe 30 four-legged balls of wool come rushing down the hill amidst a loud bleating and ringing of bells. “We don’t actually have to feed them anything extra,” says Martin. “It is just a reward for them being so good.”

Montafon stone sheep are considered particularly low maintenance, are tough and have a friendly nature. Since other breeds of sheep produce more meat, the Montafon species was long threatened by extinction. These days, people such as amateur farmer Martin (who otherwise works in the family’s carpentry business in St. Gallenkirch) and his neighbour Peter Kasper are devoted to the back-breeding of the small, nimble animals. In order to absorb the costs, the robust wool is turned into all kinds of products, from slippers through to the “Monti-lämmle” children’s pillow.

Their enjoyment tip: “The enjoyment box from the ‘bewusstmontafon’ society gives you a good idea of what our region stands for – it contains products from our farmers such as the Montafon Sura Kees, smoked sausage, herbal tea and fine schnapps.”



The QR code takes you to the video of Martin Mathies talking.

www.montafon.at



» A guided tour to our stone sheep takes you over a part of the Via Valtellina, through the loveliest countryside of the Montafon. «

Martin Mathies (left, with Peter Kasper) – the Montafon natives breed Montafon stone sheep in their spare time

All roads lead to enjoyment

Climbing peaks, hiking from alp to alp, familiarising yourself with art and architecture, sampling delicious cheese - Vorarlberg is a festival for all the senses.



Did you know that...

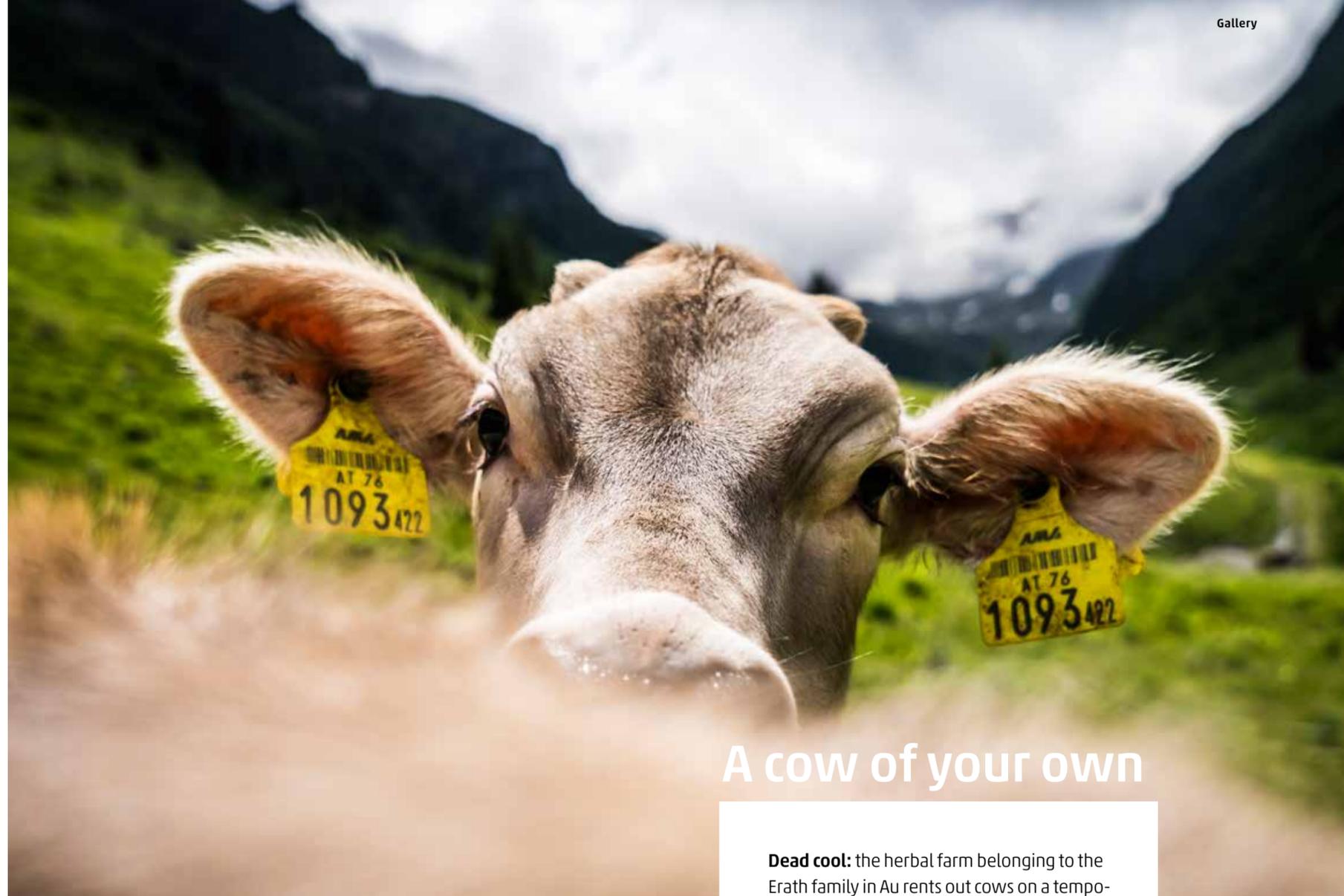
... you can drink cornmeal? Along with a handful of farmers, Richard Dietrich has been collecting the original seeds of the Vorarlberg sweetcorn and cultivating this old variety since 2005. Cornmeal not only forms the basis for the traditional Vorarlberg dish of "Riebel" - the distinctive taste is also impressive when taken from the bottle: Dietrich's corn Whisky Xi.3 spends three years maturing in oak casks, and has an exquisite bouquet.

www.vorarlberg.travel/souvenirs

Experiencing architecture

Indigenous wood, glass and concrete: it was back in the 1960s that the first Vorarlberg architects were struck with the idea of building in a formally straightforward, resource-friendly manner to fit in with the environment. A great number of bold, contemporary buildings are still built here. Ten "Architectours" devised by the Vorarlberger Architekturstudium in conjunction with Vorarlberg Tourismus take visitors to modern and traditional buildings such as the Angelika Kauffmann Museum in Schwarzenberg (photo). The trips, which take up half a day or a full day, are dedicated to these main topics: Nature & Landscape, Art & Culture, Wood & Material, Old & New, Craftsmanship & Innovation, and Spatial Domains.

Visit the following for descriptions of the tours:
www.vorarlberg.travel/architecture



A cow of your own

Dead cool: the herbal farm belonging to the Erath family in Au rents out cows on a temporary basis. The best thing about the scheme is that the cow is well looked after and you can visit it at any time - but you don't have to take it home with you! In exchange for the rent, you get to take away mountain cheese produced from the cow's milk. And if you are missing your cow, simply pop by the barn via webcam ...

So which one do you fancy? Bibi, the whirlwind, or do you prefer Edith, the homely one? You can choose your rental cow on the website of the Erath herb farm in Au in the Bregenzerwald. Naturally, there are photos to help you come to your decision. The Erath family has various cow-of-your-own packages on offer: a cow for eight weeks including 8kg of natural mountain cheese sent to you by post, a cow for four weeks which gets you two 2kg of cheese and a week's holiday on the farm. Naturally, you can also make a present of a cow. The idea behind the project: guests and locals alike are given the opportunity to gain a greater insight into sustainable dairy farming. They learn to understand how important this is to both nature and tourism in equal measures. At the same time, the owners of the cows are involved with all their senses: they may visit their cow in the meadow or in the barn at any time, and participate in festivals such as the driving of the cows up to and down from the alpine pasture.

www.kuhforyou.at

Counting the stars

If you wish to experience sunset on the mountain and sleep under a starry sky, you get to choose from a raft of offers: for instance, a bivouac is erected on the Stierlochkopf, in Lech Zürs on the Arlberg, for you to spend the night in. You can experience the magic of a sunset on the Diedamskopf in Au-Schopperrau in the Bregenzerwald. Take a short hike to the peak, where you are rewarded with a view as far as Lake Constance. You can also go camping on a mountain in the Montafon. The campsite is located above Gaschurn.

www.lechzuers.com; www.bregenzerwald.at; www.montafon.at



A distant view

Sun. Happiness. A view. You get a very special moment of the joy of hiking when you arrive at the top of a mountain. You are still out of breath from the ascent, yet prepared for the privilege of enjoying the fantastic panorama of the mountains. If you are out and about in Vorarlberg on foot you are treated to an intensive experience of the countryside: the magical images of the landscape of the Rhine Valley and the region of Lake Constance, the world of mountain meadows and alps as well as the high mountains. "Min Weag" (My Route) is a circular walk which allows you to get to know the whole of Vorarlberg: it takes you across the whole of the federal state in 31 stages. It would take you a good month to cover the whole route or you can take individual stretches, since "Min Weag" offers lots of different opportunities. Whichever stretch you decide on, hikers are afforded great views such as of the Pfänder, the Bregenz locals' very own mountain, and the summit of the Hochhäderich in the Bregenzerwald. You get a fantastic view of the Hoher Ifen and the Kanisfluh from the Hochleckachalp.

www.vorarlberg.travel/hiking



» No enjoyment is fleeting, since the impression it leaves behind is enduring. «

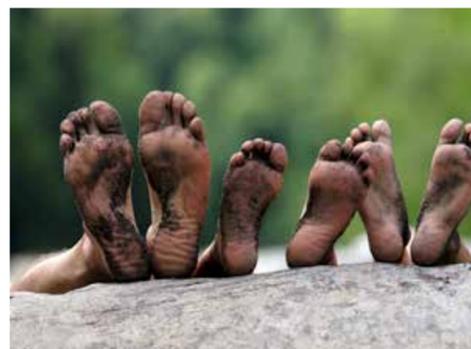
J. W. von Goethe

Following ancient landscapes

Living space for masters of the art of living: Krumbach's moorlands in the Bregenzerwald are home to many rare breeds of animal and species of plant. With a bit of luck, you get to spot dwarf birches, yellow-spotted whiteface and upland moor fritillaries on a moorland ramble. An expansive network of paths around Krumbach is at the disposal of the curious. Naturally, you get the most out of it on a guided tour. Trained moorland guides in Krumbach share their knowledge and their impressions, accompanying guests on a dawn hike, for instance. Afterwards, a moorlands breakfast awaits guests, offered by one of the proprietors of four moorland establishments whose cooking is dedicated to the topic of the moorlands.

Tip: Kick off your shoes and find out for yourself how moss feels – like a soft carpet on which your steps are wonderfully light and springy.

www.bregenzerwald.at



Major spatial impact

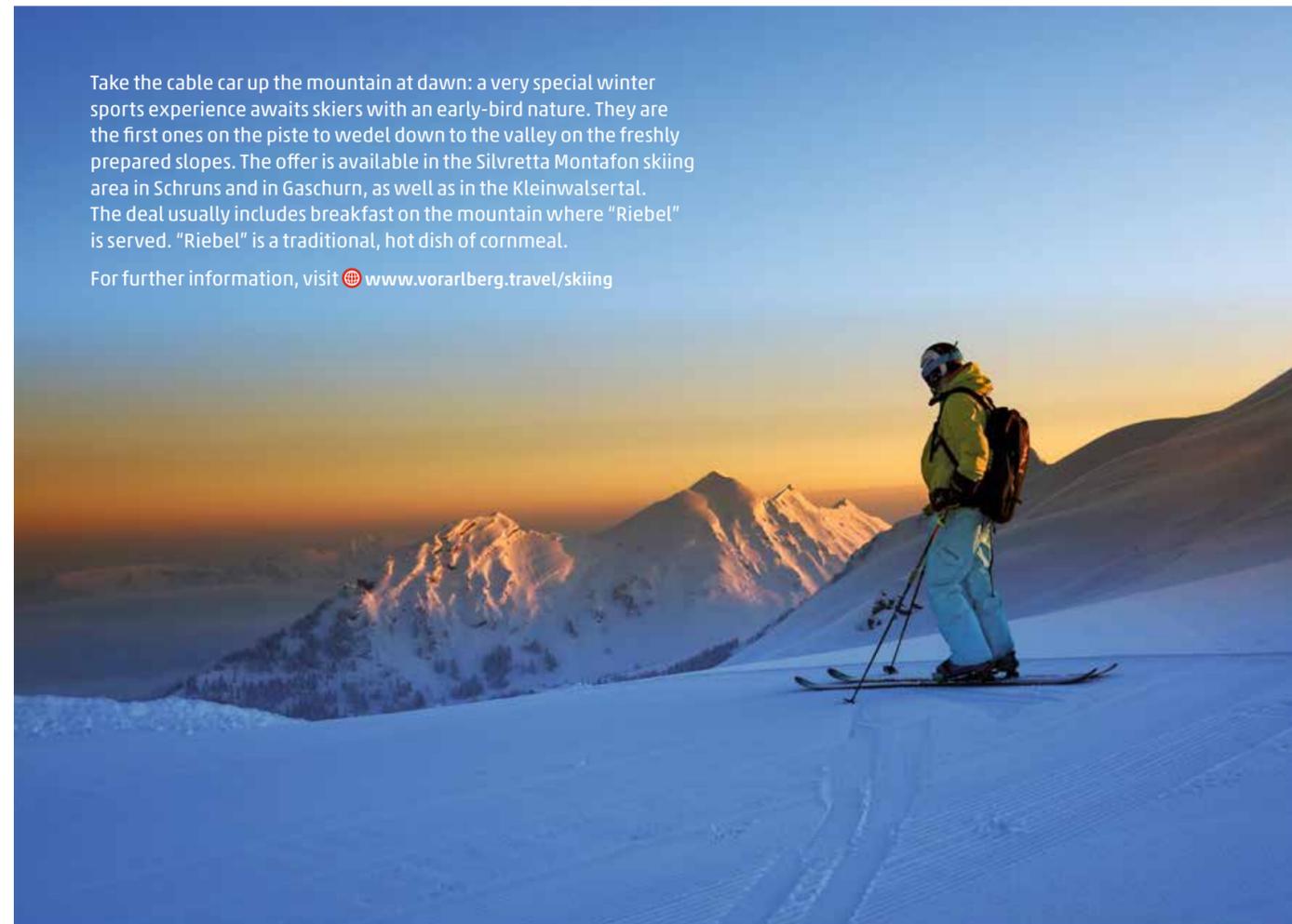
Impressive: the panorama room in the Vorarlberg museum in Bregenz offers a very special basis for a view into the distance. Artist Florian Pumhösl designed the space, with its 14-metre broad glass façade. Surrounded by perfect silence in the empty room panelled with dark, fan-shaped wood, you overlook Lake Constance. In the form of exhibitions fashioned in a modern way, the museum deals with the history and the present of Vorarlberg and of the region of Lake Constance.

www.vorarlberg.travel/culture

Sensing energy

Take the cable car up the mountain at dawn: a very special winter sports experience awaits skiers with an early-bird nature. They are the first ones on the piste to wedel down to the valley on the freshly prepared slopes. The offer is available in the Silvretta Montafon skiing area in Schruns and in Gaschurn, as well as in the Kleinwalsertal. The deal usually includes breakfast on the mountain where "Riebel" is served. "Riebel" is a traditional, hot dish of cornmeal.

For further information, visit www.vorarlberg.travel/skiing



Discover the power of silence

The fly fishers in their waders gingerly take short steps into the water to avoid slipping. The skilled anglers love the clear, flowing waters such as those you get in the Brandnertal. They patiently demonstrate the elegant way they cast their lines which, hopefully, will attract trout and arctic char. The air is so silent that the only thing you can hear is the buzzing of the lines with their artistically bound bait. A meditative sense of peace gradually takes hold. Guests can learn the art of angling, such as in Brand and in the Bregenzerwald.

www.brandnertal.at; www.bregenzerwald.at

Radically regional

Atop the Widderstein, the highest mountain in the Kleinwalsertal, he took a decision: henceforth, he would only cook with ingredients from the region he could see from there. Jeremias Riezler lives out the concept of regionality, and serves it up with every dish.

TEXT: ANNE SCHÜSSLER PHOTOS: DIETMAR DENGER





The Enzianstüble is a former barn – with lots of wood and a rustic flair

In his vegetable garden, Jeremias cultivates many herbs he will use in his kitchen later



If anyone knows what regional cuisine is all about, then it's him: Jeremias Riezler, 38, chef in the Kleinwalsertal. He manages the "Walserstuba" hotel in Riezlern, at the entrance to the Kleinwalsertal, along with his wife Bettina and his parents Jodok and Ulrike. Their two daughters Klara, six, and Theresa, four, also help create an informal family atmosphere in the hotel, sometimes keeping the guests company at dinner.

The native Walser Jeremias left his roots for the big wide world during his training as a chef or, rather, he went as far as Switzerland, the Allgäu and Wörthersee. "The most exciting thing about it, however, was coming home", he says. "I was motivated and cocky, and thought I had to win over the world of the Kleinwalsertal with these special global products I had come to know during the years of my training. Yet the guests couldn't have given a fig about such things. Nobody

was interested in dining on turbot", relates Jeremias with that infectious laugh of his. And so he decided to revamp his entire kitchen and its offerings, and to only use regional products in future.

Jeremias picks some of the ingredients high up in the mountains

"When I am standing on the Widderstein, our highest mountain here in the valley", says Jeremias, "everything I can see from there is my home. The products I use have to come from here. That, to me, is regionality." So does that mean that only products from the Walsertal make it to the table? No, that isn't feasible, since some things simply aren't available in the valley. For this reason, Jeremias buys pork, chicken and certain types of fruit and vegetables from other regions of the state of Vorarlberg and neighbouring Allgäu. Naturally, he sources everything in organic

The Widderstein and the Walsertal mountains



At 2,526 metres, the Große Widderstein is the highest mountain in the south-eastern Walsertal mountains. They are a small mountain group of the Allgäu Alps and border the Lechtal Alps to the east and the south east, with the foothills of the Alps to the north. The Widderstein borders the Lechquellen mountains/Arlberg and the Bregenzerwald to the south and the west.

quality. Animal husbandry appropriate to the species is absolutely essential for him. "The best meat comes from game from the Walsertal mountains anyway, the animals have such a good life", he enthuses. "And that is apparent in its flavour."

Jeremias picks the matching herbs for his dishes from his own vegetable garden behind the "Walserstuba". The garden is a paradise of countless fragrant, appetising flowers and herbs. Three happily quacking ducks swim in the pond, curiously observed by donkeys Raoul and Laurentius. Bearing his wooden basket, Jeremias sets off in the morning to pick what he needs in the kitchen that evening. His garden grows sage, chives, thyme, mint, nasturtium, lemon balm and much more. He also pops in to see his chickens. "It is an indigenous breed", explains the chef. "They lay eggs, of course, but also give a lot of meat."

»» The best meat comes from game from the Walsertal mountains. «



Jeremias cannot source all of his products down here in Riezlern – he has to head upwards for some foods. This time we get to accompany him. For his beloved alpine cheese, he ascends 1,500 metres to the Stutz alp. It is located above Hirschegg, far into the valley. The operator of the chair lift greets Jeremias warmly – he is a well-known figure around these parts. Yet his many awards from the Gault Millau restaurant guide and other bodies have also made Jeremias well-known far beyond the borders of the Kleinwalsertal. He has just been named the national winner of the “GenussWirt for 2015/2016” competition – not for the first time. The chair lift takes us upwards to the Sonna alp. It belongs to Jeremias’ cousin Wolfram, who drives us to the Stutz alp. The two men take advantage of the drive to swap news.

Jeremias ascertains the degree of maturity and quality of a wheel of cheese by the sound

Ten minutes later we reach the alp, which turns out to be a rustic hut with a lovely view of the valley. Hikers can take a break in the small beer garden with wooden benches or in the restaurant. Helmut Schuster, known as Helle, and his wife Andrea run the hut and make the cheese that Jeremias is such a fan of. The family has owned the alp for a century, with the milk for the cheese coming from their own herd of cows.

The wooden house has some nooks and crannies, bestowing it with a charm of its very own. The restaurant smells of fresh herbal tea and hot coffee. First of all, Helle shows us his cellar, where the wheels of cheese are stored. A huge wooden barrel stands in front of the door to the cellar room. In it, two cheeses float in a brine solution. “This is what gives it the right taste”, explains Helle. It is really dark in the cellar room, with the wheels of cheese lying next to each other on wooden boards. There is the fresh, intensive fragrance of cheese and salt. Jeremias gently taps a wheel of cheese. For: no kidding, he ascertains the degree of maturity and the quality of the alpine cheese



Row upon row, wheels of cheese lie next to each other, regularly monitored by Helmut Schuster



Floating above Mittelberg by chair lift – Jeremias enjoys the view of his home

Jeremias Riezler on video



If you would like to see how Jeremias Riezler cooks his typical Travel Through Time and other Walser specialities, simply scan the QR code. Further information about the “Walserstuba” is available at:

www.walserstuba.at

Further information about the region available at:

www.kleinwalsertal.com

by its sound. The more hollow the sound, the more holes it has formed – meaning that it has been matured for a long time.

Now it is time for a glass of water with home-made elderberry syrup before returning to the chair lift and the valley, since Jeremias wants to pay a visit to the Xond farm shop.





Riezlern, Kleinwalsertal:
"Alpine Peace" and the village
gang that minds it ...

» It is important to revive
Walser traditions
and to pass them down
the generations. «

The Fritz family's farm is located but a couple of hundred metres from the "Walserstuba". The special feature on this farm are its goats. Farmer Bernhard Fritz makes goat's cheese from their milk. Some time ago, the family opened up its own farm shop where Jeremias likes to do his shopping. "There is always something to rummage about in, they are constantly introducing new products, but above all they have good goat's cheese and good beef ham." Incidentally, Xond means healthy, and that is what it is all about here. The farm shop, with its wood-panelled walls, is small, which makes it really homely. It smells vaguely of freshly cut wood and the expansive Vorarlberg forests.



Around 1910, the mountain farmer Anastasia Drechsel wrote down her recipes from the Kleinwalsertal. Today, they function as the basis for Jeremias' creations.

**Jeremias loves time travel:
he cooks old dishes and their
modern interpretations**

Every evening, Bernhard fetches the goats from the meadow and takes them back to their shed to be milked. He needs to herd them across the main road to the farm. If you imagined this were complicated, you would be wrong – the goats follow the goatherd quickly: indeed, it is almost as if they have been trained to do so. The bells around their necks ring wildly, a couple of pedestrians stop to watch.

Jeremias and his team cook for their guests every evening. The meals that they cook are based on seasonal

Jeremias enjoys shopping in the Xond farm shop – especially goat's cheese and beef ham



ingredients. Before they get cracking in the kitchen, we ask what is on the menu this evening. However, he only laughs: "I haven't a clue!" We'll just have to wait and see then! Jeremias' hobby horse is culinary time travel. He cooks a traditional dish, with a modern interpretation as a side. "It is important to me to pass Walser traditions down and to give them a new lease of life," he says. This also includes old methods of cooking. Jeremias has gained much of his knowledge from old cookbooks, some of which were written by hand. His favourite cookbook is from Walser mountain farmer Anastasia Drechsel, who wrote down all her recipes between 1907 and 1910.

Our ancient dish: a piece of boiled pork on "Riebel", made from cornmeal and semolina, and chanterelles.



Filet of venison on fir shoots:
Cook Jeremias Riezler serves up regional products

For the modern interpretation, Jeremias replaces the pork with a steak featuring chanterelle crackling. Even as he is dressing the plate, we start watering at the mouth. And we finish our plates much too quickly because it tasted so good. We are actually full – however, Jeremias has been busy and that wasn't all. On two slate plates, he prepares fir shoots with honey, and lovingly places a piece of venison filet on top.

He doesn't even manage to get this dish as far as our table: we tuck in to the filet still in the kitchen, doing away with cutlery, dipping it into the honey again and again. Jeremias sends us a mischievous grin. "That's the way I expect satisfied guests to look!" Without a word, he disappears to the back of the kitchen, a smile on his face. To fetch new ingredients.



Comfort food for cold days

These two have something in common: at second glance, you can see the classic "Riebel" on the left-hand side. Once upon a time, it was a traditional dish enjoyed by farming families in Vorarlberg. On the right-hand side, you can see the modern interpretation of "Riebel" which forms the basis of the "Riebel tapas" – served with toppings such as rare saddle of lamb, chanterelles and lake trout.

TEXT: LISA SCHÖNEMANN PHOTO: MICHAEL GUNZ

Many a grandma would never have thought it possible: Riebel, the traditional cornmeal dish for poor folks and farmers' families as tapas? Not half! Riebel – also known as Stopfer, Pflutta and Brösel – is served as an exceptionally flavoursome, modern variation in many restaurants and inns. Visually, it doesn't look much like the classic Vorarlberg Riebel made from semolina with milk or water, the dish to warm your cockles during the winter. In past times, it was prepared the evening before, fried in clarified butter early the next morning and then, by means of rhythmically poking it with a flat wooden spoon in the frying pan, it was made into a crumbly mass of little lumps of semolina. The idea was to fill up the whole family over breakfast, and to even leave some for the forestry workers.

Riebel has advanced to become a speciality with many different facets. You can now have Riebel strudel, Riebel tiramisu or even the tasty Riebel tapas – here topped with lake trout and onions done in red wine, with ox tongue and pickled turnip, with sweet-and-sour chanterelles or with saddle of lamb and red pepper salsa as well as sugared rosemary. If you find this too fanciful, you can enjoy Riebel with Vorarlberg cheese or with sugar, apple compote or sauce in its traditional form as the popular classic dish.

Several farmers are dedicated to continuing the tradition of the Vorarlberg cornmeal and are having the varieties indigenous to the state planted in their fields. "Slow Food Österreich", the organisation of responsible consumers, has raised the Vorarlberg Riebel to the status of "Genuss Produkt" – a very special status denoting the product as particularly enjoyable.

www.vorarlberg.travel/cuisine



's Fränzle fishes

Please allow us to introduce ... Franz Blum, fisherman, son of Franz Blum, fisherman who, in turn, is the son of Franz Blum – also a fisherman. Third-generation fisherman on Lake Constance. An early morning trip out.

TEXT AND PHOTOS: JOACHIM NEGWER





Very special countryside
Franz Blum's haul area borders on Fußach bay, one of the loveliest on Lake Constance. Rohrspitz headland, overgrown with reeds, on the one side – the Rhine dam on the other side. Otherwise nothing but the open lake.



These fish splash around in Lake Constance

Lake Constance is home to around 30 species of fish, some of which are real delicacies. Here are six types of fish you can find on the menus of the restaurants around Lake Constance.



The catfish is the biggest fish in Lake Constance, reaching a length of up to 2 metres. Its long barbels make it easily distinguishable. The catfish has multiple uses in the kitchen – tasting particularly delicious when smoked.

The river perch is a common predatory fish in Lake Constance. It is well-loved thanks to its lean meat which has few bones.

The white bream lives in shoals, preferably close to the shore where there is plenty of plant life. It has a slightly silvery shine to it, which makes it easy to distinguish from its relative, the common bream. It reaches a length of about 20 cm.



The grayling is easily recognised by its large dorsal fin. When cooked, it smells of thyme, which is how it derives its scientific name, *Thymallus thymallus*.

The roach belongs to the carp family. It reaches a length of up to 50cm and a weight of up to 3kg. The roach has an exquisite flavour: however, it also has many fine bones.

The whitefish is one of the best-known fish in Lake Constance and, thanks to its tasty meat, is the anglers' favourite. It reaches a length of around 30cm and its narrow body makes it easily recognisable.

It is pitch black this morning in mid July, and chilly, at 14, maybe 15°C.

4:35 am

Franz starts the Mercury outboard motor on his boat. The boat is anchored in a small bay, right next to Fußach pumping station. Bang in the middle of the reeds of the Rohrspitz, one of the most interesting nature reserves on Lake Constance. Franz puts his foot down. With a loud roar he quickly ploughs through the morning. The first signs of the morning's red sky are appearing behind the Pfänder, Bregenz's very own mountain. Reeds on the one side, the Rhine dam on the other. Otherwise, nothing but the open lake. Franz casts his net: "Let's see," he says, "maybe we'll catch a few perches today." He is not very chatty at this time of day. And he keeps yawning. How come? Isn't it normal for fishermen to go out early? "Yeah," he says, "that's true actually. But our new terrace was so busy yesterday that I was

helping out until one in the morning." And then he had to get back up at four o'clock. Fish don't ask questions – daybreak is the best time of day to go fishing.

In a practised manner, he casts his net, which is 200 metres long. One hand on the outboard motor, one on the net, he manoeuvres his elegant aluminium boat, which floats quickly and almost silently in the lake. These days nets are made of nylon, they are light and stable, not as heavy as the cotton nets they used to use in his father's day. Floats on the top end and weights on the bottom end make sure that the net is nicely tensioned under water. "Exactly so that the hopefully sleepy perches swim right into it." Two hundred metres of net are quickly spread out – it takes Franz ten minutes until he puts the red plastic bottle into the water. This plastic bottle functions as a float which shows the end of the net on the surface of the water. A green plastic bottle indicates the start of the net. He already cast

three more nets last night. This is the way he always does it – he goes out every evening, casts his nets and hauls them back in the next morning.

Every single morning? Three hundred and sixty-five days a year? You never go on holiday, never get sick, never just take a day off? "More or less every morning," says Franz, "there is a period in November when there is less going on. We spend that time mending the nets and repairing everything that has accumulated over the year. We even get to go away with the family for a couple of days."

Franz Blum, fisherman, is the son of Franz Blum, fisherman who, in turn, is the son of Franz Blum – also a fisherman. Third-generation fisherman on Lake Constance. "s Fränzle", as he is known around these parts, is 38, married with two kids – one boy of six and one girl of one.

» The fishing boat features little in the way of technology. The fisherman's most important tools are his gut instinct and experience. «



The day gets off to a good start: Franz loads his catch on to his pick-up just after seven a.m. By half past nine, the fish have already been filleted and are on the sales counter. Franz's sister (left) and her colleague are responsible for selling the fish.

Incidentally – and you might have guessed it already – his son is also called Franz and, who knows? Maybe he too will become a fisherman one day. Although it must be said that the prospects for the few professional fishermen left aren't particularly rosy. The catches have been decreasing constantly for years. Lake Constance is cleaner than it has ever been, and that is what is causing problems for the fishermen. The water has too few nutrients in it. "When fishermen start telling their yarns, they start complaining by the time they start their second sentence. I don't want to add my own complaints," says Franz in his typically calm manner. He is glad that he has now been able to add the lovely lakeside terrace to his restaurant. "It's the second string to my bow that we can now really build upon for the whole family," he says. His sister Gabi also works in the family business. His father can also be frequently seen in the restaurant.

5:10 am Franz drives on a bit and spies the green canister, which is the start of the whitefish net. He pulls on it and there follows a long phase of hauling-in: he has cut the engine and now he needs both hands. This net is 600 metres long and must be hauled out of the water metre for metre. The first whitefish is caught in the net about 30, 40 metres in. There then follows another. And another... then, in rapid succession, he plucks the whitefish out of the mesh one after another, throwing them with a practised gesture into the orange plastic box. The empty net is tidily piled up on a cloth on the floor of the boat to prevent it from getting tangled up. The box is almost full by the time the net has been hauled in on board.

A fishing boat such as this is very simply equipped, with Franz having recourse to practically no technology. Just a depth finder which is located at the rear of the boat, next to the engine – a true work tool bearing many a sign of use – shows him how much water is under the keel. His other equipment: a couple of plastic boxes for the fish, two big tubs, nets and not a great deal else. His most important tools are his gut instinct and his experience.

5:40 am The sun is now up, the morning sun shines brightly across the lake. Franz takes off his pullover. It gets really warm when the first rays of sun start beating down. He has two more nets in other places in the lake. The procedure is always the same: green canister, haul, haul, haul and, if things are going well, the boxes are full to bursting.

"Fränzle's" is the name of fisherman Franz Blum's bistro in the harbour of Fußach. The new lakeside terrace with a view of "Little Venice" is the setting for fine dining.



Franz Blum, fisherman, on video

 Franz Blum's favourite way to eat whitefish filets is flash-fried in butter accompanied by a glass of Grüner Veltliner. It doesn't get any better than this! You can watch the fisherman at work in the video, where he also shares his tips. Scan the QR code to directly access the video.

Lakeside terraces and more ...

about the topic of enjoyment in the Bodensee-Vorarlberg region can be viewed here: www.bodensee-vorarlberg.com

6:45 am "Today was a good day," says Franz before firing up the engine for the journey home. A box full of whitefish, plus roach, white bream, perch and a catfish. All in all, an above-average catch. Franz puts his foot down again and, showing a great sense of direction out on the open lake, manoeuvres through the labyrinth of the reed islands to his home harbour at Fußach's pumping station.

7:05 am Franz loads the fish onto the bed of a metallic-blue pick-up and drives to his nearby house, which has a perfectly equipped work room. There, he fillets the fish and, with extreme precision, ensures that they are largely boneless.

9:20 am Gabi, Franz's sister, stacks the refrigerated display case in the restaurant with the fish and the filets. By half past nine everything is perfect. Let the day commence! The writing on Franz Blum's blue pick-up bears the claim "Fish caught fresh from Lake Constance". And it's right. You don't get any fresher than this fish.

Herbs, glorious herbs

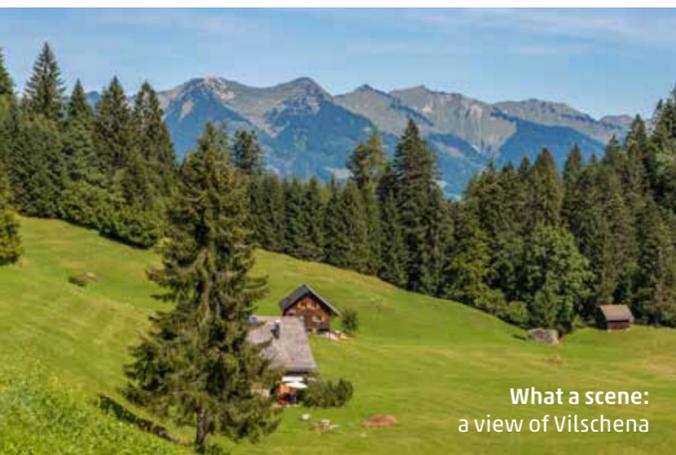
Away we go into the countryside: we have joined a ramble with the herb expert Eva Wachter in the Brandnertal as far as the Tschengla plateau, turning over and inspecting almost all the leaves on the way

TEXT: JOACHIM NEGWER PHOTOS: UDO BERNHART

Huflettsich



Welcome refreshment:
Eva Wachter refills the
drinking bottle



What a scene:
a view of Vilschena

In her red headscarf, Eva Wachter is easily recognisable no matter how colourful the mountain flower meadow around her is. Once a week, the graduate herb expert takes families on a herb ramble in the Brandnertal. This time she is taking guests, grandson Moritz and dog Latisha up to the Tschengla. “Particularly valuable herbs grow up there,” explains Eva, who knows over 500 medicinal plants by name and knows what they are grown for – and against. And if one should slip her mind, Moritz helps her out: her 12-year-old grandson can sometimes give his Herb Granny a run for her money.

It is fantastic up here on this plateau which, at an altitude of 1,250 metres, lies at the entrance to the Brandnertal: between the thinning larches whose green needles gradually turn yellow in the late summer. Against the impressive mountain panorama of the Rätikon. In the middle of the meadow which smells so lovely of summer, of the outdoors, of kinds of flowers. Cow bells ring in the distance. And the view across the five surrounding valleys is enough to make your heart skip a beat.

After the hike, the guests make their own tincture or ointment from the herbs

Eva Wachter roams through the countryside with us big and small herb apprentices: she finds eyebright, common yarrow and ribwort on today’s ramble. “Sometimes we dry the herbs afterwards in order to have an exquisite tea later on,” she explains. “Frequently, however, the guests and I mix the herbs to make a tincture or we make an ointment in a herb workshop following the tour.”

It is great to be able to not only know the difference between larches and fir trees or between poppies and



A meadow with a view: a special multitude of herbs grows on the Tschengla plateau

dandelions. When you can suddenly recognise horsetail, burnet and coltsfoot in a mountain meadow, your experience with Mother Nature is much more intensive, you simply see more when you are out and about in the great outdoors.

Each ramble is different. You discover new plants over and again.

“I love taking these rambles,” says Eva Wachter who, in an earlier life, was a PA. “The countryside looks different every single time – sometimes I discover blossoming orchids, then another time I’ll discover a completely new plant. Herbs are my major passion! It is great that this ancient knowledge has once again become important to us,” she says, quickly stirring the rockrose tincture, which helps the family out through the winter months, one more time. The herb woman swears by it.

»» If you discover eyebright and burnet in this way, you get a more intensive experience with Mother Nature. «

Eva and the herbs on video



Scan this QR code to experience a ramble with Eva Wachter and find out what healing properties the common yarrow and co. can have.

For all you need to know about the topic of enjoyment in the region around Bludenz, visit:

www.alpenregion-vorarlberg.com

Information about herbs in Vorarlberg:

www.vorarlberg.travel/cuisine





Matching outfits:
Irma Renner (right) with cook
Milena Broger

**Old and new have entered
into a loving relationship at
the "Adler".** A picture by the
Vorarlberg artist Paul Renner,
Irma's husband, adorns
the wall.

Saving the best until the weekend

Excellent eateries abound in the Bregenzerwald. Yet the Sunday inn in Egg-Großdorf is one of a kind: at the "Adler", females from the region cook up their favourite dishes for their guests. And it is only ever open on Sundays!

TEXT: CHRISTIANE WÜRTEMBERGER PHOTOS: DARKO TODOROVIC



No Sunday is like any other:

it is important to Irma Renner that everything runs smoothly yet is fun for all



What can you do when you lose your heart to an abandoned inn? If you do it perfectly, then you do it exactly the same as Irma Renner from the Bregenzerwald went about it. You simply make the best out of it! The traditional “Adler”, typical of inns in the Bregenzerwald, in the centre of Egg-Großdorf, was closed down a few years ago and, despite several attempts to breathe a new lease of life into it, it never got back on its feet. There was no help in sight. Another traditional inn less in the region? Surely not!

Irma Renner crept around the lovely yet aged shingled building a couple of times. Pondered a while, discussed it, spoke with her husband and many friends about it and, two years ago, finally came to a far-reaching decision: the “Adler” (“Eagle”) was to take

flight again and be reinvented as a small, exquisite Sunday inn. The idea behind the project: females from the region cook up their favourites dishes for their guests. A special three-course meal is served up every Sunday in the “Adler”. Saturdays are spent preparing, so that there is enough time on a Sunday for the odd chat with guests.

Every Sunday is different, each Sunday is a minor challenge

“In line with tradition, we open up as soon as church is out,” explains Irma Renner. “Then the first guests start coming in for a glass of wine. Food is available all day from half past eleven.” Bread and cake, home-made according to well-guarded family recipes, complete the Sunday feast and provide for a merry, carefree atmosphere amongst the guests. The façade bears a real inn sign. The old wooden boards are a bit on the



Light one time, hearty another It all depends on who is doing the cooking as to what is served up every Sunday – and it can vary a lot.

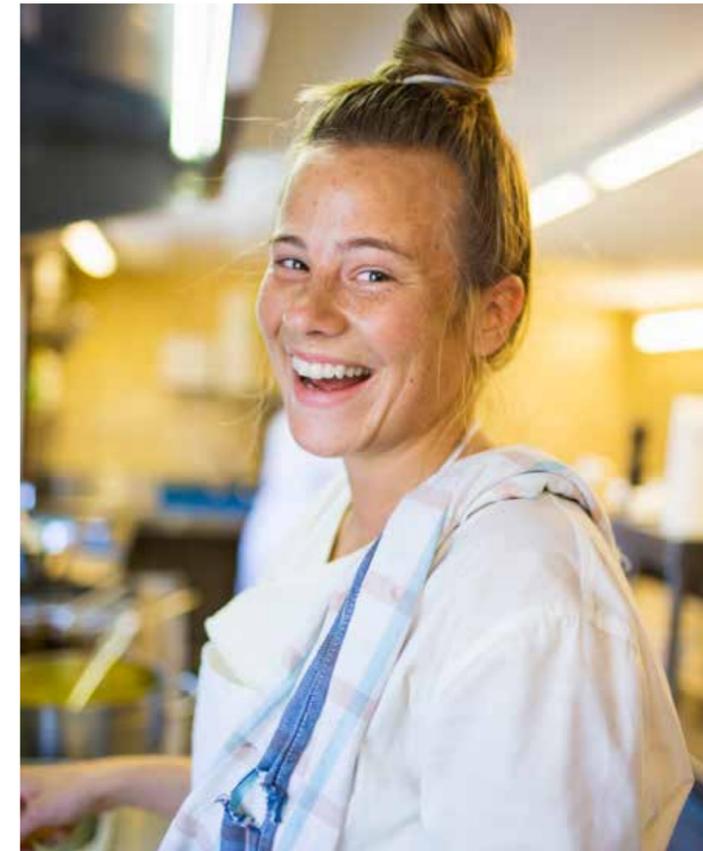
Simple and brilliant: slices of beef fillet with rocket and Parmesan

Talent with a passion for travelling: the native of the Bregenzerwald Milena Broger regularly cooks at the “Adler”. And always has new ideas up her sleeve ...

creaky side, the walls are panelled and, thanks to a happy coincidence, Irma Renner succeeded in getting her hands on some Thonet chairs from another inn, which, despite their age, are still attractive. The superwoman, whose background is actually in the marketing business, applies a good instinct for beauty, classic and simplicity she absorbed in her second chosen home – Italy. And so the “Adler” retains its lovely homely, nostalgic character. And yet it is elegant in its own way. The pictures by Irma’s husband go well with the centuries-old walls. He – Paul Renner – is not only a well-known Vorarlberg artist, but these days is also a cook in the Sunday inn. Irma has seen a lot of the world with him by her side. And that is why the “Adler” now combines in no small part all those things which the two of them discovered on their travels – or which they have wished for.

Everyone gets to cook their own favourites for the guests in the “Adler”

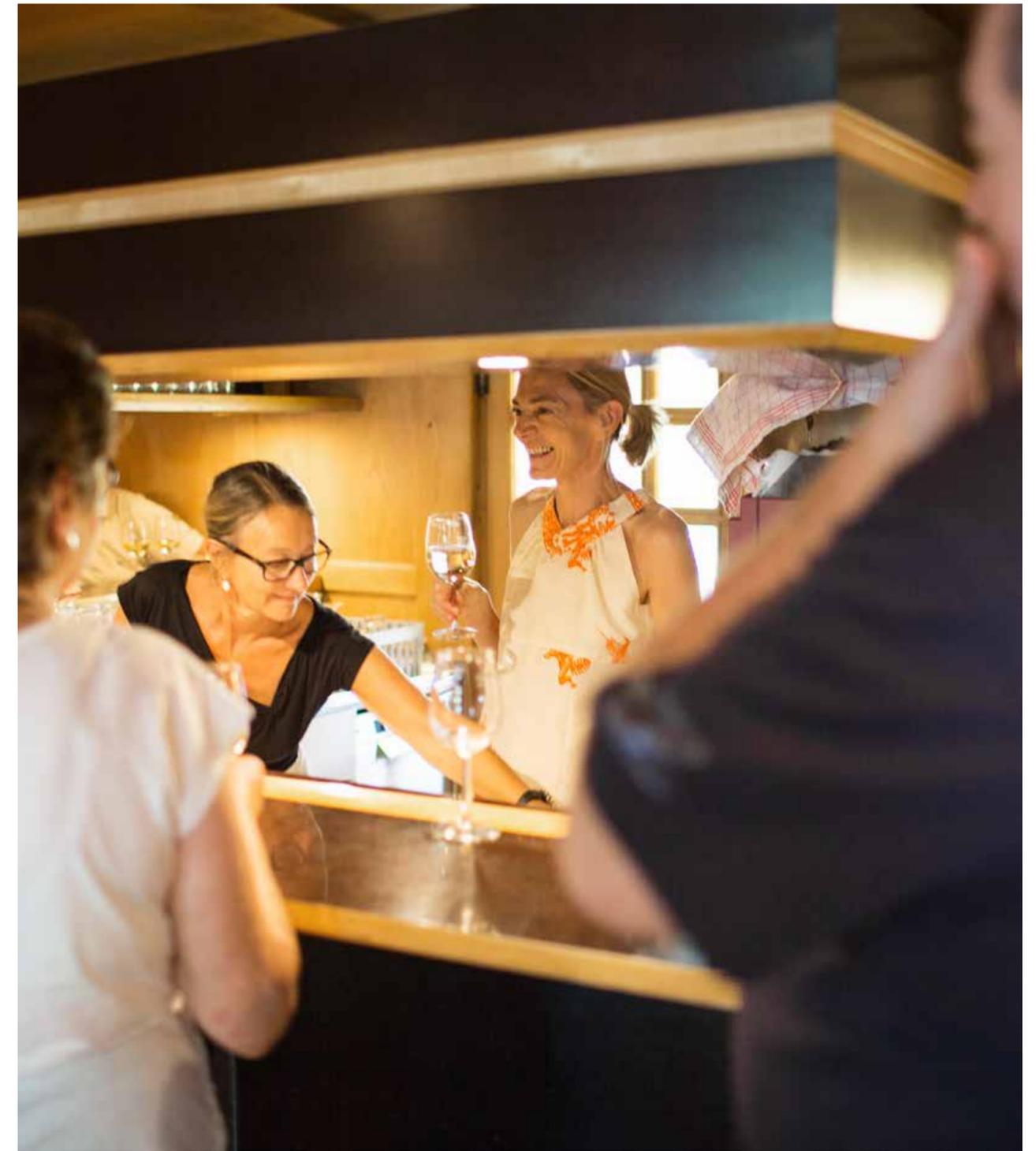
“I really had no idea at the start how it would work out, cooking for 50, 70 or even 90 guests on a Sunday,” explains Irma Renner. “Yet I was sure about one thing – that it would have been a terrible shame to simply give up on the ‘Adler.’” And so the native of Vorarlberg launched a search of her own, and found in her circle of acquaintances good cooks such as Herta Covi who regularly cooks her favourite dishes at the “Adler”.



» We sometimes invite guest cooks. Those Sundays can take on an exotic flavour. «



You can really feel that they are having fun. Sometimes celebrity chefs come along, such as the great Reinhard Gerer from Vienna.



“Herta’s roast veal and her potato noodles cooked in the oven are truly delicious,” enthuses Irma Renner, for whom seasonal cuisine using fresh, high-quality ingredients is the most important factor of all. That, and a good atmosphere. The team works in harmony with each other: Irma’s sister is part of the team, as are acquaintances, friends and friends of friends. Hard work is the name of the game in the “Adler” on the holy day – yet there is a lot of laughter too. “Right from the start, the guests picked up on the fact that we all love doing what we are doing here,” says the restaurant proprietor who received her calling relatively late. “We

experience every Sunday as something different, each Sunday is a minor challenge.” And although everything seemed to be fairly perfect, Irma Renner once more followed her gut instinct. She thought that Vorarlberg cuisine ought not to be served up every single Sunday. After all, at home you cook Asian or Italian on a weekend, don’t you? Hence, in addition to her very own favourite cooks, she engages guest cooks from the four corners of the world: “We have already had the pleasure of hosting several guest cooks, such as the famous Reinhard Gerer from Vienna and Jussuf from Marrakesh”, she explains.

Milena Broger, a talented young cook from Hittisau, has been part of the regular team right from the start. Milena, a mere 22 years of age, goes off to cook in different places for a couple of months at a time – Tokyo, for instance, the Caribbean or Scandinavia. But then she is always happy to come back home – home to the “Adler”. “At the Adler, it is not all about cooking; it is also about art and the whole spice of life,” she says. Milena Broger simply brings along her new ideas and favourite dishes, most recently from Bornholm – potato soup served with or without black pudding. A smoked rainbow trout filet with spring onions and sour cream. And as a dessert, blueberry pie with buttermilk.

What can you do when you lose your heart to a lonely old inn? You do as Irma Renner did: pack it full of life. Serve up first-class food. And watch it become the love of your life.



One video and any number of handy tips



In the video, Irma Renner explains why the “Adler” is something special. Simply scan the QR code.

For further information about culinary delights and culture in the Bregenzerwald, visit:

www.bregenzerwald.at

Gourmet days, culinary hikes and much more

For everything to do with the topic of culinary enjoyment in the entire state, visit:

www.vorarlberg.travel/cuisine



Art, traditional costume, dance and great opera

Breath-taking excitement, the sound of open-air concerts, the hands-on experience of old traditional costumes – Vorarlberg presents any amount of opportunities to indulge in thrilling cultural encounters all year round. Here is an excerpt from the events diary if you want to see what awaits you.



1

Bregenzerwald beauties

Around the turn of the 18th century, practically all females wore the traditional costume. These days, many young women are rediscovering a love of this tradition, its origins and its history: dyeing of the so-called "Juppe" is a centuries-old craft which is only carried out in the Juppenwerkstatt in Riefensberg these days. It is in accordance with an ancient recipe that the stiff material is produced for one of the oldest traditional costumes in Europe – the "Juppe". In order to provide visitors with an insight into the production of the Bregenzerwald female traditional costume, a seamstress, a needlewoman, a weaver or a hat maker accompanies the guided tours of the workshop.

www.bregenzerwald.at

2

Great moments of contemporary dance

International dance companies and their breath-taking productions: from March, ballet fans will come together at the Bregenz Spring, the dance festival that is well-known for its performances by renowned ensembles way beyond the borders of Vorarlberg. The Bregenzer Kunstverein sets a stylish scene for the series of events in the Bregenz Festival Theatre.

www.bodensee-vorarlberg.com/bregenzer-fruehling

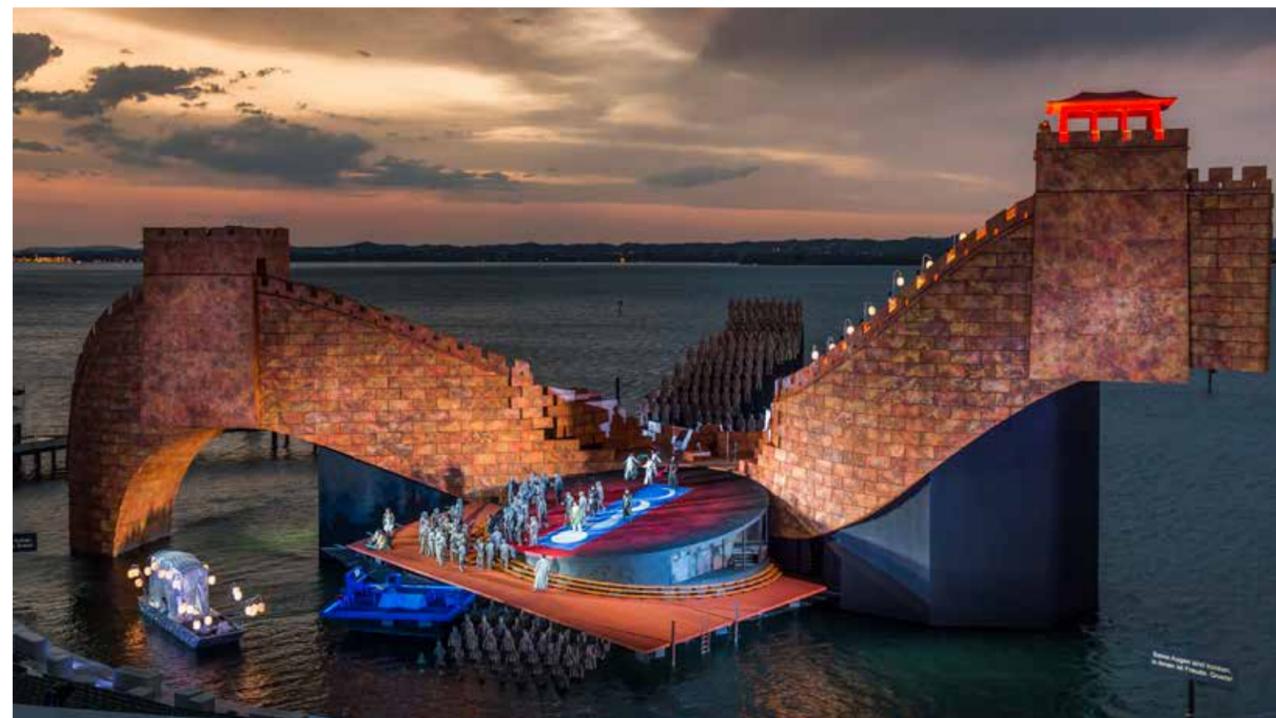


3

DJ-bearing gondolas

Visual art, spatial and sound installations in the snow – at the Fantastic Gondolas event (photo, top) around Lech Zürs am Arlberg, visual artists, DJs and visualists perform on the mountain and in the gondolas of the Rüfikopf cable cars. A brilliant spectacle for all the senses. Fantastic aftershows turn the winter paradise into a hotspot for culture enthusiasts. The happening is completed by live music at an altitude of 2,350 metres.

www.lechzuers.com/fantastic-gondolas



4

Passion on the lake

Visitors to the Bregenz Festival can look forward to this breath-taking scenario between 20 July and 21 August 2016, presenting Giacomo Puccini's opera Turandot about the princess of the same name who is an enigma to every man that woos her. Also on the programme is the infrequently performed Hamlet by Franco Faccio.

www.bregenzerfestspiele.com

5

Schubert in the country

The attraction of the Schubertiade is the chance to experience many artists over a short period. A series of concerts is dedicated to the Vorarlberg pianist Aaron Pilsan and the cellist Kian Soltani this year. The venues for the renowned Schubert Festival are situated in the picturesque Schwarzenberg in the Bregenzerwald and in Hohenems in the Rhine Valley.

www.schubertiade.at



6

The most offbeat festival in the mountains

The Walser Autumn 2016 is staging thrilling encounters with contemporary art and culture professionals for the seventh time. In August and September 2016, the biennial festival of culture attracts visitors with an array of music, literature and performances, with European auteur cinema and culinary experiments bang in the middle of the countryside of the biosphere park Großes Walsertal.

www.alpenregion-vorarlberg.com

7

Architectural gems

Visitors to Bregenz are awarded with an impressive cultural mile right next to Lake Constance, home as it is to Vorarlberg's National Theatre, the Kunsthaus Bregenz (KUB) and the vorarlberg museum with its façade adorned with 16,000 flowers. The exhibitions in the KUB stage a stimulating dialogue between contemporary art, architecture and society. The glass cube was designed by the well-known Swiss architect Peter Zumthor.

www.kunsthau-bregenz.at



A micro-world of its own

The Garnera alp lies somewhat concealed in the Garneratal. Its inhabitants are the keepers of a very special treasure: Veronika and Christian produce "Sura Kees", a landmark of the Montafon. We were lucky enough to get to watch them at work producing their cheese.

TEXT: ANNE SCHÜSSLER PHOTOS: DIETMAR DENGER

Mountain time: during the summer, little Julia lives on the Garnera alp along with her little sister, their parents and lots of cows



Animal encounters: hikers come across more than just cows on their hike through the Garneratal, with marmots and deer sometimes popping into view



Lush green meadows and steep mountain slopes line the path through the Garneratal

Mountains: guide Gerhard Blaas takes advantage of a break in order to explain to the guests the features of the countryside



Brown hair, big brown eyes, red trousers, pink socks: that's Julia, five. She is standing on a wooden bench in front of the alpine hut. From a bouquet of colourful flowers on the table behind her she picks a yellow flower. Then she plucks the petals off one by one, throwing them onto the floor in front of her. "Come butterfly, come!" she calls, and jumps excitedly up and down on the bench. Julia loves butterflies, and there are loads of them fluttering about up here, at an altitude of almost 1,700 metres. The Garnera alp is Julia's entire world during the summer months. There is nothing up here to prevent her play – no roads, no cars. The little girl lives in the mountains with her parents Christian and Veronika Kartnig and her little sister between early July and mid September.

The Garnera alp is part of the three-phase agricultural system of alpine transhumance, which is a centuries-

old practice in Vorarlberg. The farmers' cows spend the summer months on the alp. They have the whole of the Garneratal to graze on – some of which is characterised by steep slopes, yet it also has many wild herbs and lush green meadows. Christian and Veronika milk the around 30 animals at the "Stofl", where the alpine hut and the barn are located. For years, the milk was transported down into the valley, where it was sold to a dairy. These days, however, the couple use the milk to produce cheese, butter, yoghurt and quark themselves. "My parents have a farm, and as a child I used to come up here to the alp and help my cousin," Veronika explains. She was always interested in the alpine dairy, and that is why she wanted to continue it.

The Kartnig couple are well-known for their traditional Sura Kees, a cheese made from skimmed cow's milk which has been around in the Montafon since the 12th century. First of all, Veronika skims the milk – later on

she will use the cream to make butter. She then pours the skimmed milk into a wooden vat where the milk is stored for a couple of days and turns sour. No cultures at all are used in this process. This is the way tradition dictates. Veronika heats up the sour milk, producing a somewhat firmer component – known as “Bolma” – and the liquid whey. Veronika fills the Bolma into moulds. A day later, the cheese is salted and moved to the cheese cellar to mature. “These days, Sura Kees is usually eaten fresh, or with pumpkin seed oil or in a salad,” explains Veronika.

The Sura Kees resembles sheep’s cheese, but has a much milder, creamier taste. Of course, the best place to try it is where it is produced – on the Garnera alp. Take a seat on one of the rustic wooden benches, imbibe the delicious fragrance of the mountain meadows, take in the ringing of the cow bells and tuck in!

It is so peaceful, you would think somebody had turned off the sound of the world

Now, however, it’s time to get back to the base of our short tour: for several years now, guided tours to the Garnera alp have been available, starting from Gaschurn – and this morning we have joined hiking guide Gerhard Blaas to take such a tour. Gerhard has been living in Vorarlberg for 40 years, and shows guests the loveliest places that abound in his chosen home. Equipped with a felt hat and a pair of binoculars, he greets us at the Vernetta cable car station in Gaschurn at 8 a.m. This is where we start the two-hour tour to the Garnera alp. First of all, we take a gondola to the middle station, at an altitude of 1,400 metres. From here, we get an expansive view across Gaschurn towards Tyrol. And naturally, Gerhard knows the name of all the mountains.

Cows on a walkabout



The grazing livestock in Vorarlberg doesn’t have time to get bored – it keeps on moving pastures. Alpine transhumance has been practiced for many centuries in Vorarlberg. It has been on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list since 2011. The three-phase system comprises the

following: after the thaw, the cattle grazes in the valleys, then they head up to the alpine mountain pastures at medium altitude. Subsequently the animals spend the summer in the high alps. The variety of herbs to be found there is not only healthy – they guarantee particularly aromatic milk and, hence, the basic ingredient for the lovely, tasty alpine cheese.

The path towards the Garneratal winds its way through little forests and, sometimes, across country through the meadows. First of all we cross the alpine mountain pasture of Laminar and then continue along the Garner abach. On the way, we hear nothing apart from the burbling of the water or the call of a bird. You would think somebody had turned off the sound of the world. Seriously peaceful.

Every few metres, Gerhard hops off the path and into the meadow, and shows us a plant – wood ragwort, white veratrum, arnica and bird’s foot trefoil. “Many of the plants have medicinal properties – in the olden days, farmers and shepherds used to pick the proper herb when injured,” he explains.



In full work dress: Veronika Kartnig is getting on with the production of the Montafon Sura Kees whilst outside, on the terrace, the hikers are having a high time, as is the dog



» Marmots keep appearing, watching us inquisitively. «

Meadows and mountains as far as the eye can see: the Garnera alp is located in the middle of an oasis of green



+

How the Montafon Sura Kees is made

 In the video, Veronika Kartnig and her husband Christian describe their life between the valley in the winter and the alp in the summer, explaining how they produce the traditional Sura Kees. Simply scan the QR code to watch the video.

Everything you need to know about culinary hikes
in the regions of Vorarlberg is available at:
www.vorarlberg.travel/hiking

He also relates a lot of information about the farmers' life in the valley and on the alps. "Every farmer has to work up here in the spring in order to keep the alpine cultural landscape going," he explains. The number of working days depends on the number of cows sent up to the milking alp during the summer months. The rule of thumb is: one working day per cow. A wooden bench at the start of the Garneratal offers the chance to take a short break. From there, the 9.5km long valley stretches out in front of us and affords us an expansive view as far as the Plattenspitzen (2,883 metres). Director Joseph Vilsmeier was also enchanted by this view, and it was in this magical place that, in 1994, he shot the film "Schlafes Bruder" ("Brother of Sleep"), based on the novel of the same name by the Vorarlberg author Robert Schneider. The adventure hike continues along the Garnerabach as far as the alp. Occasionally a call sounds. To us, it sounds like a bird of prey. Gerhard just laughs at us and points to a slope. Suddenly, something



Hiking is hungry work: the snack of cold cuts on the Garnera alp is just the thing – featuring of course the traditional Montafon Sura Kees

So much for an old wooden shack: the oldest hut on the Ganeu alpine pasture might be over 500 years old, but is still in good nick



A reward for the ascent: a lovely view of Gaschurn at the end of the hike

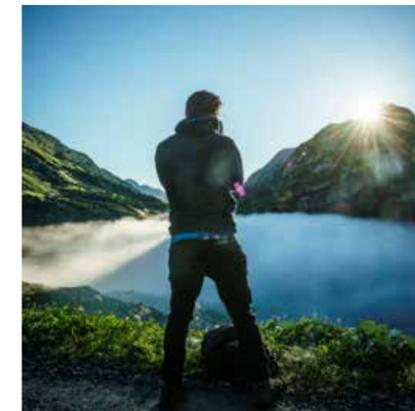
brown and fluffy hops through the grass. It's a marmot! A few metres away is another one standing on the cliff, observing us – it doesn't seem to feel threatened by us. It is only once you have seen one that you notice the others. They keep on appearing on the slopes and accompany us as far as our destination, the Garnera alp. Once hikers have made it to the top, a snack comprising cold cuts and a glass of milk awaits them – including an inquisitive crowd. Now and again, a cow plucks up the courage to go up to the alp, observing us inquisitively as we eat.

The oldest of the huts, the Ganeu alpine pasture, has been braving the weather for 500 years

We have to make our way back down far too soon. This takes us past the Ganeu alpine pasture, where the oldest double barn in the Montafon from 1522 is located.

Despite the weather and the snowfall, it has been well preserved. "Several families take advantage of the cows being on the milking alp on the mountain to renovate their houses," says hiking guide Gerhard, pointing at a building right down the slope. Two men are sitting on the roof constructing wooden roof shingles. "They are renewing the house in line with the traditional construction method," explains the hiking guide. The path down the mountain takes you through a forested area before it winds across a stream and a meadow. From here, we get a great view of Gaschurn. It will take a while before Julia and her parents return to Gaschurn. It is not until September that they and their cows leave the Garnera alp and return to their house in the valley. Then they once again go about their actual jobs – Veronika is a graphic designer and Christian is a programmer. Julia will have to live without her butterflies, unless one flies to the valley by mistake.

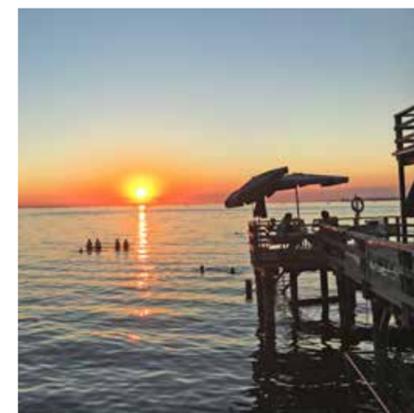




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-  vorarlberg.travel
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The spätzle speciality

High-quality egg pasta with cheese and roast onions – the traditional dish of “Kässpätzle” or “Käsknöpfle” is a true culinary delight. It is only the uninitiated that consume the classic dish from the mountain as a side dish.

TEXT: LISA SCHÖNEMANN PHOTO: MICHAEL GUNZ

The cobwebs have been well and truly blown away, your legs are pleasantly tired. After a hike in the mountains or a day's skiing, there is nothing better: you sit together in a rustic alpine hut or in a homely inn in the village along with the other guests and treat yourself to a portion of Vorarlberg Kässpätzle or Käsknöpfle. Mixed with melted Vorarlberg cheese and topped with crispy roast onions, they are a culinary delight like no other.

Cheese-making has a long tradition in Vorarlberg – it is hardly surprising that Kässpätzle tastes particularly delicious here. The thick dough is made of eggs, water, coarse flour and salt.

If you wish to try it out for yourself, this is how it is done: using a special type of grater designed especially for spätzle, the dough is added directly to the boiling water. The spätzle rise to the surface of the water once they are cooked. You can then skim them off with a ladle. To add the crowning touch to the spätzle, up to four types of mountain and alpine cheese, both spicy and mild, are added, including Sura Kees in the Montafon. The hearty, tasty speciality is served in what is known as a “Brenta” or “Gepse”, the traditional wooden bowl. It is served with potato salad, green salad or home-made apple sauce.

Enjoy the fragrant spätzle with the aroma of cheese from Vorarlberg!

www.vorarlberg.travel/cuisine

In harmony with Mother Nature

He possesses extensive knowledge about the effect of a healthy diet on the human organism, and his motto is: simple enjoyment, using only high-quality products. It is thanks to his creative recipes that star chef Thorsten Probst has been one of the greatest in his guild for many years.

TEXT: THOMAS ZWICKER PHOTOS: UDO BERNHART

The stream, clear as glass, rushes to the valley, there is the smell of alpine flora all around, the Rote Wand, Rüfikopf and Omeshorn tower majestically in the steel-blue sky of Vorarlberg. Star cook Thorsten Probst stands on a bridge and, using a fishing net, catches a large arctic char from the fast-running water. Along with herbs, fresh fish plays a special role in his kitchen. “We don’t import any salt water animals: instead, we much prefer to use the excellent fish that the clear rivers, streams and lakes in Vorarlberg bless us with,” he says. Arctic charrs, carps, pike-perches and co. are sourced almost exclusively from local breeder Andi Mittermair. The animals grow very slowly here, in the cold mountain waters, ensuring that the meat is of excellent quality.

At the northern end of the village of Lech, a narrow road branches off, turning into winding bends up the green slope to an altitude of 1,700 metres above sea level, where the Burg Vital Resort is located. Thorsten Probst – tall, well-built, shock of curly hair, kind brown eyes – has been guaranteeing culinary quality here for 13 years, these day in his function as Executive Chef in his gourmet restaurant “Griggeler Stuba”. His recipes are known both for their taste and the well-being of his guests.

Probst’s knowledge of a healthy diet, of the interplay between high-quality regional foods and, not least of all, the beneficial effects of herbs on the human organism is extensive. Do you fancy a sample? “Purslane for instance contains an abundance of omega-3 fatty acids which can have a curative effect on high

» We only use the excellent fish from our local waters. «



Top-class quality: meat and vegetables come from regional farms

Great view: from the Burg Vital Resort at an altitude of 1,700 metres, you get a wide view of the mountains



Everything is fresh: fish from local breeders



The herb guru of Lech

It is hard to imagine Probst's kitchen without good local herbs: he has gradually adapted his dishes in line with the knowledge of their effects. Whereas, once upon a time, the chef used to use plants with an exotic background such as Gotu Kola (Centella Asiatica) and Hora Santa (a Mexican species of pepper), they were slowly but surely being replaced by local pimpinella, common speedwell, campion and co. Many of the plants are picked by Probst himself every day from the surrounding mountain meadows in bloom. Each dish is even accompanied with a portion of the used herb in its raw form, meaning that the guest can rub it between their fingers to get the pleasurable fragrance of it.

cholesterol level." Or: "A vasodilatory effect is ascribed to rue." Working in conjunction with dietitians and doctors, an intelligent diet concept was concocted – for the good of the body and the soul of the guests.

Probst has already been richly rewarded for his dishes – there is no lack of fame and reputation. After several years' moving about from place to place, including abroad, where he familiarised himself with foreign methods of cooking, the native of Swabia has been at home in Austria's top gastronomy since 1996. He soon acquired a Michelin star with his Griggeler Stuba, was named Chef of the Year by Gault Millau in 2008, awarded three toques (18 of 20 possible points), received the 2015 Award for Innovation by the Kochvereinigung Jeunes Restaurateurs (JRE), whose honorary president he is, making him top of his trade in the whole of Austria. Despite all this, Thorsten Probst is still a down-to-earth type.

Regionality is in great demand when it comes to the choice of products

Puristic yet creative – that is his style, based essentially on high-quality products which thrive in Vorarlberg, always working hand-in-hand with Mother Nature. "It is daft to slaughter cows in the summer, since it is in the summer that they eat the best herbs on the alp, storing vitamin D from the sun in their muscles, supplying particularly nourishing meat in the winter," he says. Instead, game is on the menu during the warm season, i.e. chamoix, deer and ibex, the "princes of the mountains" according to Probst.

Bread made from ancient types of grain containing little gluten and few carbohydrates, home-made jam, the use of xylose (wood sugar) instead of industrially produced sweeteners, lactose-free dairy products, meat from healthy, naturally grown animals – some of which are from regional farms: it is with these uber-healthy ingredients from the region that the chef composes his dishes which stimulate the metabolism, and taste great to boot! According to Probst, the



Thorsten Probst on video



Adapting one's diet in line with the human genetic make-up – that is one of Thorsten Probst's objectives. Simply scan the QR code and watch the video.

Further information about the hotel, the restaurant "Griggeler Stuba" and the region:

www.burgvitalresort.com;
www.lechzuers.com;
www.vorarlberg.travel/cuisine

objective of all culinary delights is to adapt one's diet in line with the human genetic make-up.

For him, regionality is of major importance. "Many producers around here are doing an excellent job, and we gladly pay them higher prices for their produce since they contain more power than industrially produced goods. Additionally, in many cases we only need smaller amounts of them." Probst frequently procures a whole animal from the farm rather than just the filets, ensuring sustainable use, and this is more profitable for the farmer too. Gradually, this approach has resulted in a network of content suppliers which satisfy the high demands made by the exceptional chef.

The richly stocked wine cellar can match the quality of the dishes. The Griggeler Stuba doesn't have a fixed menu – it is at the table that the chef talks with the guests about what Mother Nature is currently providing, and asks them about any allergies. His creativity then kicks in, supported by Probst's great love of detail. His motto: "The finished plate must be perfect – and look so good that it almost hurts to give it away!"



Of big adventures for small folk

How soft does the fur of a young goat feel? When will we find our way out of the labyrinth? And where can we play with water to our heart's content? Selected ideas for unforgettable family outings.

1

Oh, how cute!

Children get to experience indigenous animals up close on the animal adventure trail, and are afforded the opportunity to stroke guinea pigs or observe a calf taking its first steps. The Alvierbad in Brand serves as the starting point for this trail. A different attraction, the interactive natural station trail, enables participants to experience nature anew: nature fans both big and small can track down the secrets of the mountains: who is it that brings the stones up the mountain? And what exactly goes on on an alp?

www.brandnertal.at



2



Experience, look, smell

Get to know Vorarlberg's nature from its most thrilling side – with a load of multi-media presentations, games and taxidermed specimens. This is enabled by visiting the inatura, the interactive nature exhibition experience on the premises of the former Rüscher engineering works in Dornbirn.

www.inatura.at

3

Suspense on the Marulbach

The forest adventure trail in the Großes Walsertal biosphere park offers two circular paths and fun for the whole family. The highlights include a 300-year-old elm tree, a barbecue pit with hammocks for hanging around in and a log cabin to build yourself as well as a labyrinth that only real navigators will be able to find their way out of! The hikers' car park in Marul is the starting point.

www.walsertal.at

4

For water boys and water girls

Splash, splash, cool water: the natural elements of water, stone and wood are there for children to discover in a playful manner on the Burmiwasser adventure trail. The trail takes you to various stations with pumps, water wheels and locks, past the mountain station of Kanzelwand as far as the popular Riezler alpine lake. Kids will love it!

www.kleinwalsertal.com

5

Off into the wilderness

Sneak through the thicket and creep up to observe the animals, find herbs and mushrooms – children have great fun pursuing these activities! The "Expedition Wilderness" in the Brandnertal offers all of this. A similar programme, the "Wilderness Days", is offered in the Kleinwalsertal, whereby a shelter is built and fire is made. Naturally, without matches!

www.brandnertal.at; www.kleinwalsertal.com

6

And where will we sleep tonight?

The perfect summer programme: stopping off somewhere different every evening, having plenty time to play and make new friends amongst the other children. Children discover rambling in the Bregenzerwald anew on the individual family tours from hut to hut.

www.bregenzerwald.at

7

Disclosing secrets

What is the most valuable commodity on earth? There are riddles a plenty on the Green Puzzle Ring to be solved by the whole family. The starting point is Rüfiplatz in Lech am Arlberg. A gift awaits the participants at the finishing line.

www.lechzuers.com

8

A day full of adventures

Fun and excitement await young skiers during the weekly ski safari on the Golm. The tour comprises a downhill run in deep snow, the telling of tales and a barbecue party in the snow-covered forest. The Golm adventure night, on the other hand, involves participants walking on snow shoes to the Kristakopf at dusk. Then there is the nightly flight with the Flying-Fox-Golm across Latschausee. Also open in winter, the all-weather Alpine-Coaster-Golm toboggan run offers fun galore.

www.montafon.at

9



Milkers big and small

Watching, smelling, tasting and touching are the centre of attention when it comes to producing your own tasty cream cheese according to Grandma's recipe (available to groups following prior registration). Cheese and other products such as whey shower shampoo with dandelion is available from the farm shop as well as from the online shop.

www.bregenzerwald.at



Winter holidays way up high

This is where everything started: Vorarlberg is the birthplace of skiing – and these days the skiing regions of the state offer the entire range of the world of winter. Information about the skiing regions can be found at: www.vorarlberg.travel/skiing.

Yet you can also enjoy the winter with all your senses off the beaten track, for instance on a snow-shoe hike with a view, on a llama trek or on a culinary tour. Here are lots of tips and six individual recommendations from people with insider knowledge.



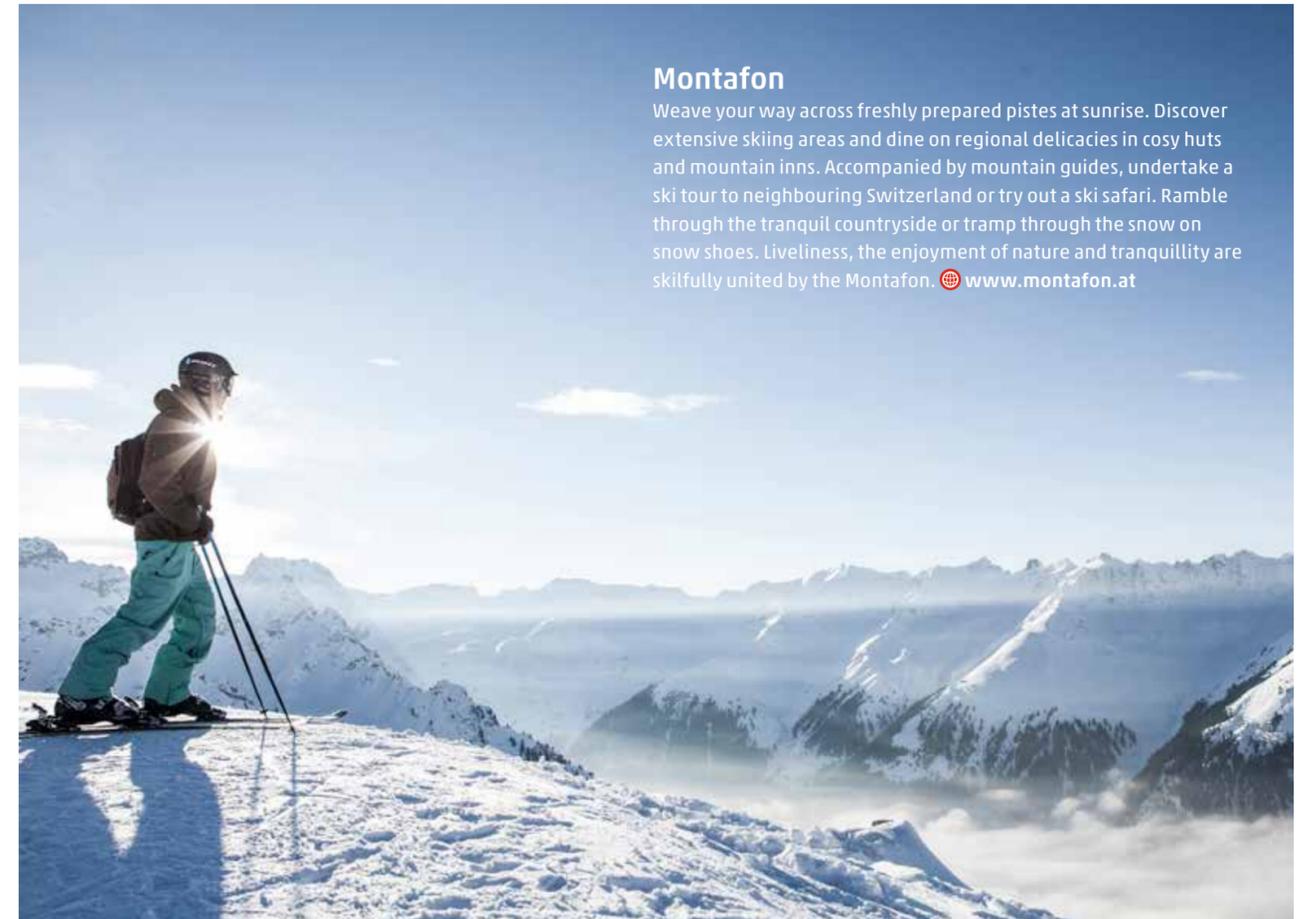
Lech Zürs am Arlberg

Where, once upon a time, the pioneers of alpine skiing honed the art of skiing, these days skiers weave their way over excellent pistes and free-ride slopes. Lech Zürs am Arlberg has ranked amongst the top winter sports destinations in the Alps for over a century. Hotel proprietors also offer top quality, from the luxury hotel through to the holiday apartment. Events of both a cultural and musical nature add a touch of variety to the winter goings-on. www.lechzuers.com



The special tip from Lorraine Huber, professional freerider from Lech

» Reserve a ski guide for the picturesque circular ski tour across the Rauher Kopf to the Stuttgarter Hütte, which isn't open in the winter. Make sure you pack a snack in your rucksack. Once you get to the top, you can take this refreshment and enjoy the tranquillity. «



Montafon

Weave your way across freshly prepared pistes at sunrise. Discover extensive skiing areas and dine on regional delicacies in cosy huts and mountain inns. Accompanied by mountain guides, undertake a ski tour to neighbouring Switzerland or try out a ski safari. Ramble through the tranquil countryside or tramp through the snow on snow shoes. Liveliness, the enjoyment of nature and tranquillity are skilfully united by the Montafon. www.montafon.at



The special tip from Lukas Kühlechner, mountain and ski guide in the Montafon

» The Madrisa circular tour is a trans-border tour for all those who really get a kick out of deep snow. A relatively short ascent on the Gargellen/Montafon skiing area enables generous deep-snow downhill runs to Switzerland or back to the Montafon. Spectacular view of the snow-covered mountains of the Rätikon or the Silvretta. «

Bodensee-Vorarlberg

It is easy to combine urban culture and winter fun close to the shores of Lake Constance. The skiing areas are easily accessible from the cities and towns of Bregenz, Dornbirn, Hohenems and Feldkirch. The region's small skiing areas are practically just outside the front door. Museums exhibit the interesting. The musical and theatrical stages perform the exciting. The Christmas markets in the towns guarantee the atmospheric. www.bodensee-vorarlberg.com



The special tip from Bernd Knünz, Manager of Kästle-Ski

» Nestled between Staufen, Schöner Mann and Bocksberg at a plateau above the Rhine Valley, the Schuttannen mountain inn serving cooking is the perfect starting point for ski tours. From there you can head to the Emser hut, for example. «

Kleinwalsertal

The Kleinwalsertal is the perfect place for recharging your batteries. In the skiing areas, you can weave your way across pistes between Austria and Germany. Leisurely downhill runs abound as do the demanding pistes and deep-snow slopes. The Crystal Ground Snowpark is the meeting point for freestylers and beginners alike. Cross-country skiers, winter hikers and snow-shoe hikers can rediscover their rhythm in nature. www.kleinwalsertal.com



The special tip from Daniela Schwendiger, mountain hike guide from Hirschegg

» On the circular path across the Gottesacker am Ifen, even less seasoned winter hikers can enjoy in full the view of the snow dunes forged by the wind and the Allgäu Alps. Pure joie de vivre! The starting point is easily accessible by chair lift. «



Bregenzerwald

The Bregenzerwald combines a treat for the eyes, the pleasurable and comfort. The interplay between old and new (wooden) architecture delights in its 22 villages. The new Mellau cable car in the Damüls-Mellau skiing area is set to make things even more comfortable from this winter. From Warth-Schröcken, Lech Zürs am Arlberg is just a short trip away via ski lift. Practical: the three-valley ski pass is valid for all the skiing areas in the region as well as in the neighbouring valleys.

www.bregenzerwald.at

The special tip from Thomas Dietrich, former deep-snow world champion from Mellau

» Gourmets come together in our Naze's Hus restaurant in Mellau. The Kässpätzle hits the spot of those who love the home-made and wish to discover the Bregenzerwald from its culinary side too. The three dining areas are housed in a building which is under a preservation order – a cooperage which, in its day, made wooden barrels. «



Winter magic off the beaten track

Dessert in the gondola, jazz to round off the day and frozen waterfalls by torchlight – leaving your skis behind for once can prove rewarding in Vorarlberg. Here are our tips for particularly atmospheric moments. Both inside and out.



Brandnertal – Alpenstadt of Bludenz – Klostertal – Großes Walsertal

The Brandnertal family skiing area and the Klostertal with the Sonnenkopf skiing area offer various options especially for families. You can go skiing, take a husky-pulled sleigh ride, tramp through the snow on snow shoes or dash down to the valley by toboggan. If you wish to get to know several skiing areas, your best bet is to choose the alpine town of Bludenz as your starting point. The Großes Walsertal biosphere park is the place for natural winter sport activities. www.alpenregion-vorarlberg.com

The special tip from Christian Beck, outdoor trainer from Brand

» Above the Brandnertal, at an altitude of 1,700 metres, is the Palüdhut, which frequently receives fresh snow, looking as if it has been wrapped in cotton wool: our guests can enjoy the panorama of the Rätikon and tasty, traditional fare such as quark lasagne with custard and stewed damsons. «



Torchlight through the ice

A torchlit ramble through the frozen Breitachklamm in the Kleinwalsertal is unforgettable, with the light of the fire giving the ice a mysterious glow.



Set meal on the mountain

"Palüd Exquisit" in the Brandnertal offers an atmospheric five-star set meal on the mountain. The aperitif is taken in the valley station of the Palüdbahn, the amuse-gueule in the gondola. After soup and starter in different restaurants, the diners ramble to the Palüd hut where the main course is served. The gondola once again serves as the venue for dessert.

What about a torchlit ramble?

Culinary ramble

Ramble through the Bregenzerwald and be treated to regional culinary delicacies at each stop: the "Culinary winter ramble" includes directions and a meal voucher comprising breakfast, lunch and dessert.

Hiking with llamas

First stop on this one-day trekking tour for parents with children in the Bartholomäberg is the llama farm belonging to Lamer Horst. Accompanied by the South American animals, the participants set off on their tour through the snow-covered Montafon. The destination is the Kristberg.



Take to the floor in the Tanzcafé Arlberg

The Arlberg swings

Après-ski as it used to be is promised by the Tanzcafé Arlberg in Lech Zürs in March and April. Live bands play jazz, soul and swing to see out season. Spring can make its appearance now!

No need for winter tyres

No fresh air for a change? These posh cars don't have to leave home either when it is snowing: the biggest Rolls-Royce museum in the world is located in an old textiles factory in Dornbirn.



Information and travel arrangements

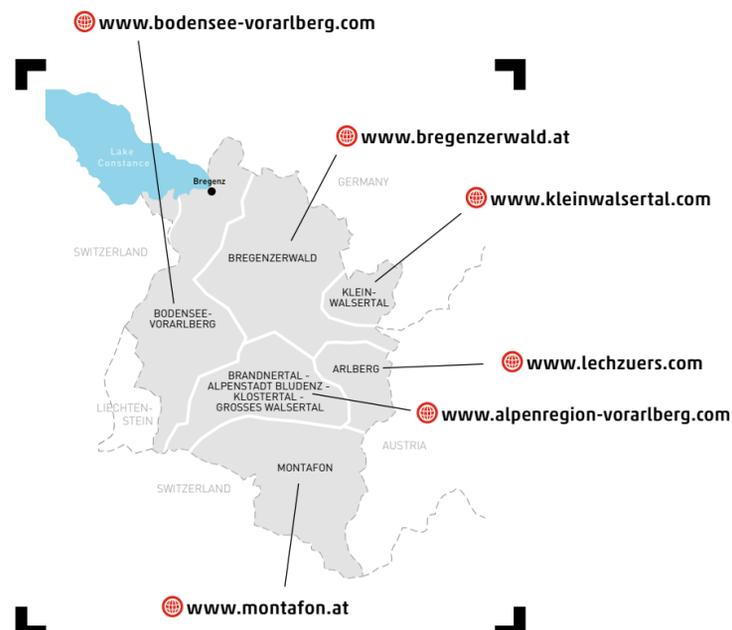
Here is an overview of everything you need for planning and reserving your holiday in Vorarlberg

Six regions full of diversity

Vorarlberg is 100km long from north to south, and the great diversity in its scenery is impressive. An hour's drive from the Mediterranean-like shore of Lake Constance at an altitude of 400 metres via gently undulating hills takes you to the high mountains. Nature and lifestyle bestow each of the six holiday regions with a character of their own.

Vorarlberg interactive

Practical aids are available for the preparation of hikes and to help you find your way around once you get there. Interactive maps on www.vorarlberg.travel describe numerous paths in detail. The information about all routes can be downloaded and printed out. Via "layers", you can add further information, from sights through to restaurants, from photos through to bus stops.



Travelling to Vorarlberg

Vorarlberg is easy to reach by all traffic routes and all modes of transport. The public transport network is well developed.

... by car

Coming from the north via Singen – Lindau or Singen – St. Gallen, via Ulm – Lindau. Via Augsburg or Munich – Lindau or via Nuremberg – Lindau. **Coming from the west** via Zurich – St. Gallen or Zurich – Walensee – Sargans. **Coming from the south** via Como – San Bernardino – Chur, Brenner – Innsbruck or Reschenpass – Landeck. **Coming from the east** via Innsbruck – Arlberg or via Reutte – Bregenzerwald (please note: the L 198 Lechtal Straße from Warth to Lech is usually closed in winter). **The Kleinwalsertal** can be reached on the A 7 via Immenstadt and, further, via Sonthofen and Oberstdorf.

... by train

Austria: www.oebb.at; **Germany:** www.deutschebahn.com and www.dbautozug.de; **Switzerland:** www.sbb.ch

... by air

The closest airports (distance to Bregenz): **Bodensee-Airport Friedrichshafen** (D, 35 km), **St. Gallen-Altlenrhein** (CH, 20 km), **Allgäu-Airport Memmingen** (D, 77 km), **Zurich** (CH, 119 km), **Innsbruck** (A, 184 km)



Information and booking

If you have any questions regarding the planning of your holiday or require further information about any of the topics, please contact Vorarlberg Tourismus directly. You can also order brochures directly from the website:

www.vorarlberg.travel

T +43.(0)5572.377033-0



#visitvorarlberg #myvorarlberg

Vorarlberg Tourismus
Poststraße 11, Postfach 99, 6850 Dornbirn, Austria
info@vorarlberg.travel



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Enjoy every moment. Winter in Vorarlberg.

Tranquil, shimmering mountain peaks and fine powder snow – Vorarlberg is a paradise for skiers and a hotbed of enjoyable hedonism. Villages and people radiate warmth. Give you strength. The careful way tradition is handled and the receptiveness for new things shape a landscape which excites, which inspires, which absorbs you. Enjoy the moment.



Vorarlberg Tourismus

Postfach 99, 6850 Dornbirn, Austria

T: +43.(0)5572.377033-0, F: +43.(0)5572.377033-5

info@vorarlberg.travel, www.vorarlberg.travel

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ARL
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