

## Footprints in the snow

**Putting on a pair of sturdy shoes or snowshoes and going out to explore nature has a special attraction and is a good alternative to skiing. The silence is relaxing, the views are breathtaking and walking is good for your circulation.**

Vorarlberg offers a whole host of opportunities to go on a winter hike or snowshoeing. What is the difference between the two? While winter hikers usually stick to cleared or groomed trails, snowshoe hikers move in open terrain and ramble on special boots across deep powder. In the interest of safety, it is advisable to always set out in the company of a guide who is familiar with the local terrain.

All of Vorarlberg's regions offer guided **snowshoe tours**. Accompanied by their guides, the snowshoe hikers stomp their way to amazing viewpoints or hike in the light of the full moon. Also, culinary delights are often combined with a snowshoe tour. In Kleinwalsertal, for example, pleasure hikers can stomp through the **GourmetRegion Kleinwalsertal** every Thursday until 9 April and learn more about the Kleinwalsertal specialties such as game and beef. Along the way, Herbert Edlinger will share some information about regional farming and hunting, and at the end of the tour guests get the opportunity to taste some of the local products.

A highly developed network of more than 180 uniformly marked **winter hiking** trails from leisurely walks to demanding tours, criss-crosses Vorarlberg's landscape. Top tip for anyone who wishes to explore the peaceful side of winter are the "culinary winter hiking" tours in Bregenzerwald. Guided tours on the "Umgang Bregenzerwald" paths invite guests to explore the villages and their unique architecture. Into a world of ice leads the trail through the Breitachklamm gorge in Kleinwalsertal. Llamas or alpacas accompany hikers in Montafon and Lech am Arlberg. A hike and overnight stay in an igloo made of snow or wood is available in Bregenzerwald and Montafon.

### **Culinary winter hiking in Bregenzerwald**

Hiking and fine Dining combine the day tours of "**Culinary Winter Hiking**" in the Bregenzerwald. The trail leads from breakfast to lunch and on to dessert, as each meal is served in a different mountaintop inn or restaurant. Hikers can choose from hiking routes in Hittisau/Hochhäderich, Mellau-Bizau-Bezau and Sibratsgfall-Schönenbach.

### **Full moon fairy-tale hike in Silbertal valley in Montafon**

On the four full moon nights in winter, Hertha Glück takes participants on a winter hike through Montafon's fairy tales. Equipped with kerosene lamps, the group strolls through the darkness, hearing about the night folk and the devil's creek. Included in the participation is a three-course menu with traditional dishes.

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### **The Frozen Breitachklamm Gorge in Kleinwalsertal**

Snow and ice transform the **Breitachklamm** gorge into a fairy-tale landscape. Glittering icicles, mighty ice curtains, frozen waterfalls and mysterious caves cast a spell on the beholder. Just as impressive are torch-lit hikes which are organised at given dates.

### **Exploring the Bregenzerwald Villages**

“**Umgang Bregenzerwald**” is the name of twelve village tours. In an entertaining manner, they provide insight into the creative spirit of the Bregenzerwald people. Unobtrusive steel columns with a faux-rusted metal finish created for that purpose direct hikers’ attention to architecture, artisanry, the cultural landscape and culinary specialities. The trails in Andelsbuch, Bizau, Hittisau, Krumbach, Mellau and Schopponau are negotiable also in winter. Guided tours on the Umgang Bregenzerwald trails are organised from January to April 2020.

### **Spending a night in an igloo**

Equipped with saws and shovels, the participants set off from **Hittisau in the Bregenzerwald** to build an igloo in the middle of winter nature. It is up to each individual to decide whether to stay overnight in the igloo. How to build an igloo is also shown by experts from the **AktivZentrum Bregenzerwald** in the area around Schnepfau. On snowshoes and with GPS devices the group set out on an expedition. Before nightfall the igloo is built.

New is the **Igloo Glamping** in the Silvretta Montafon ski resort: Gaze at winter’s starry skies high up in the mountains all while spending the night comfortably. Participants are first treated to a cheese fondue at Valisera Hüsli. Then they go on a torch-lit hike to the igloo village at Schwarzköpfe at 2,000m altitude. Cuddling up in cosy warm blankets, they spend the night in the pleasant warmth of the timber igloo, returning to the close-by Valisera Hüsli for breakfast.

### **Hiking with Llamas and Alpacas**

They were once known as mere pack animals, but many people nowadays appreciate llamas and alpacas for their calm demeanour and their lovable character. This is evidenced by the increasing popularity of hikes with the “Camels of the Andes”. These animals feel right at home in Vorarlberg, and thanks to their thick fur, they don’t have a problem with the winters here either. There are several ways to go walking through our wintry landscape with llamas and alpacas: Tours with llamas are offered by **Horst Kuster** in Bartholomäberg near Schruns in Montafon, **Birgit Knecht** from Röns combines hikes with llamas and alpacas with therapeutic programmes and guests can also experience individual alpaca trekking tours and hikes at the **Hotel Aurelio** in Lech Zürs am Arlberg.

More information on Snow Shoe Hiking and Winter Hiking in Vorarlberg can be found at [www.vorarlberg.travel/snow-shoe-rambling](http://www.vorarlberg.travel/snow-shoe-rambling) and [www.vorarlberg.travel/winter-hiking](http://www.vorarlberg.travel/winter-hiking).