

Of unique places and special moments: Mountain adventures in Pillerseetal

Amidst the Kitzbühel Alps, seclusion and pristine nature as rarely found these days anymore open up to visitors.

It is in this moment that tranquillity becomes serenity. Up here, on Wildseeloder mountain at more than 2,100 m, you'll find this moment. It is an ideal spot to pause and recharge your batteries, visualise and move on. Even the summit cross is something special, having been made from Pillerseetal steel. And the view of the Wilder Kaiser, Lofer and Leogang mountains are simply gigantic. A couple of hundred metres further down below, sparkles Wildseeloder lake, regarded as one of the most beautiful lakes in the Alps, and rightly so. Next to it, like a speckle beside its surface, stands Wildseeloderhaus, a picture-postcard cottage in unique surroundings. That's what the idyll looks like. And best of all: There are more than one such place and moment – in Pillerseetal in the heart of the Kitzbühel Alps.

In Pillerseetal, around the five villages of Fieberbrunn, Hochfilzen, St. Ulrich am Pillersee, St. Jakob in Haus and Waidring, a type of seclusion opens up to visitors hardly to be expected amidst the Kitzbühel Alps. Not a soul far and wide, instead the distinctive Steinplatte mountain on the horizon as a silent companion during hikes or bike tours. On the way, Hausberg (1,120 m), Kirchberg (1,678 m) and Schafelberg (1,597 m) salute, with wild and romantic Weissbachschlucht gorge also being a rewarding destination – as is Winterstelleralm restaurant, where Anni calls the shots. The fun-loving dairymaid sustains not only the many cows up here, but also hungry hikers – with wonderful Ploughman's lunches and a no less wonderfully cold beer. Or two. And again such a spot and such a moment.

What makes Pillerseetal so unique cannot simply be sloganeered, as they rather uneloquently say in marketing jargon. There's no need for an event here, the special is simply already there: The peacefulness on the mountain, when there are no sounds but the cow bells ringing and the birds circling the cloudless skies. The gurgling mountain streams, the cool gorges, the clear lakes. Ah yes, the lakes: First there is Pillersee Lake, after which the valley takes its name. Its drawn-out surface shining in deep turquoise. With a maximum water temperature of 20 degrees it is not necessarily ideal for swimming, but great to explore by pedal or rowing boat. But there's no shortage of warmer waters in Pillerseetal either. The artificial lake in Waidring is customised for swimming, Lauchsee Lake in Fieberbrunn is quite shallow with four meters, warming up after just a few days of sunshine. Moreover, thanks to the moor water it is known for its healing and pain-relieving effect well

beyond its shores. Add to that the many smaller lakes such as Wiesensee. And of course Wildseelodersee Lake, see above.

Speaking of above: In St. Jakob on Buchensteinwand mountain, also known as Buach among the locals, a Cross of Saint James can be seen already from afar. Not just any Cross of Saint James, but with 30 m the largest walk-in Cross of Saint James in the world and something of a landmark for Pillerseetal. It is dedicated to the pilgrims who have been coming through here on their way from Salzburger Land to Santiago de Compostela since centuries. A true power place, built from wood and glass and illuminated at night. Those who peek through one of the telescopes on the viewing platform by the cross can see the surrounding summits with their names and altitudes. The 360°-panoramic view from the uppermost viewing platform is simply: breathtaking. But somehow that's what you would expect from Pillerseetal.

Threefold savings with the guest card: Those who come on holidays to Pillerseetal, can use the public Regiobus for free with the guest card. Straight through the Kitzbühel Alps (from Hochfilzen to Wörgl) travelling by suburban train and railway (REX) is free. In addition, you'll get the Pillerseetal Card even cheaper this way, with which the cable cars, swimming pools and numerous further offers are free. The four-day discount ticket is available at € 52.00 for adults, € 27.00 for children. For the conclusion of the mountain season (from 12 September) the 3-day card is available. Here, adults pay € 47.00 and children nothing when presenting the guest card. By the way: The little ones, if born in 2016 or later, always get in for free – no matter which ticket their parents have.

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