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TREKKING AUSTRIA'S ADLERWEG

The Eagle's Way across the Austrian Alps in Tyrol



Mike Wells

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**THE EAGLE'S WAY
ACROSS THE AUSTRIAN ALPS IN TYROL**

By Mike Wells

CICERONE

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To Christine, who accompanied me through the Tyrol, until stopped by a broken leg, and Nassereith Bergrettungsdienst, who rescued her from Haimbachtal.

Updates to this Guide

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/1090/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time.

The route maps in this guide are derived from publicly available data, databases and crowd-sourced data. As such they have not been through the detailed checking procedures that would generally be applied to a published map from an official mapping agency, although we have reviewed them closely in the light of local knowledge as part of the preparation of this guide. We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

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Front cover: Adlerweg passes below Spritzkarspitze between Eng and Hohljoch, (photo: Tirol Werbung; photographer – Dominik Gigler) (Stage 9)

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Mountain safety

Every mountain walk has its dangers, and those described in this guidebook are no exception. All who walk or climb in the mountains should recognise this and take responsibility for themselves and their companions along the way. The author and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this guide was correct when it went to press, but, except for any liability that cannot be excluded by law, they cannot accept responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person using this book.

International distress signal *(emergency only)*

Six blasts on a whistle (and flashes with a torch after dark) spaced evenly for one minute, followed by a minute's pause. Repeat until an answer is received. The response is three signals per minute followed by a minute's pause.

Helicopter rescue

The following signals are used to communicate with a helicopter:

Help needed:
raise both arms
above head to
form a 'Y'



Help not needed:
raise one arm
above head, extend
other arm downward



Emergency telephone numbers

Austria: Bergrettungsdienst (mountain rescue)
Tel 112 (emergency services number)

Weather forecasts

Austria: Bergwetter Österreich www.wetter.orf.at/tirol/bergwetter

Mountain rescue can be very expensive – be adequately insured.

ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

Stage	Start	Finish	Via	Distance (km)	Ascent (m)	Descent (m)	Page
Kaisergebirge							
1	St Johann in Tirol	Gaudeamushütte		13	1100	510	48
2	Gaudeamushütte	Schiesti (Hintersteinersee)		14.5	800	1140	55
3	Schiesti (Hintersteinersee)	Kufstein		11	820	510	60
Brandenberger Alpen and Rofangebirge							
4	Langkampfen	Buchackeralm		11	1370	540	66
5	Buchackeralm	Pinegg		16.5	920	1570	72
6	Pinegg	Steinberg am Rofan		18	1170	850	77
7	Steinberg am Rofan	Mauritzalm		18	1590	760	82
Karwendelgebirge							
8	Maurach	Lamsenjochhütte		17	1030	60	92
9	Lamsenjochhütte	Falkenhütte		12.5	820	930	99
10	Falkenhütte	Karwendelhaus		9	460	540	104
11	Karwendelhaus	Hallerangeralm	Birkkarspitze	14	1440	1440	108
11A	Karwendelhaus	Hallerangeralm	Karwendeltal	32.5	850	850	113
12	Hallerangeralm	Hafelekarhaus		13	1150	650	118

Innsbruck and Patscherkofel

12A	Innsbruck city tour			2.5			124
13	Patscherkofel	Tulfeinalm		8	300	230	130

Wettersteingebirge and Mieminger Gebirge

14	Hochzirl	Solsteinhaus		7	940	60	137
15	Solsteinhaus	Leutasch (Weidach)		18	800	1490	140
16	Leutasch (Weidach)	Ehrwald		24	600	720	145
17	Ehrwald	Loreahütte		19	1170	1189	153

Lechtaler Alpen

18	Loreahütte	Anhalter Hütte		16	1260	1240	161
19	Anhalter Hütte	Hanauer Hütte		12.5	750	870	166
20	Hanauer Hütte	Württemberger Haus		11	1300	1000	171
21	Württemberger Haus	Memminger Hütte		7	670	650	175
22	Memminger Hütte	Ansbacher Hütte		10	1040	910	178
23	Ansbacher Hütte	Leutkircher Hütte		12.5	970	1080	181
24	Leutkircher Hütte	Arlbergpass		13.5	630	1100	185

Lechtal valley

19A	Boden	Häselgehr		15.5	330	680	191
20A	Häselgehr	Steeg		19.5	220	100	195
21A	Steeg	St Anton am Arlberg		19.5	1190	1030	201



Klamml gorge on the way to Gruttenhütte (photo: Tirol Werbung; photographer – Jens Schwarz) (Stage 2)

INTRODUCTION


Eagle motif found at key points along the Adlerweg



There are two ways to soar among the magnificent peaks of the Tyrolean Alps: one is in an aeroplane as you fly into Innsbruck; the other, more challenging and exciting, is to follow the Adlerweg as it crosses the entire length of the Tyrol from St Johann in Tirol in the east to St Anton am Arlberg in the west. Not only will you experience the Wilder Kaiser, Brandenberg, Rofan, Karwendel and Lechtaler Alps close up, but you should also have spectacular distant views of Austria's other principal mountain ranges, including the peaks of Grossglockner and Grossvenediger and the Tuxer and Stubai Alps. As a bonus, you will pass immediately below the towering

south face of Zugspitze, Bavaria's (and Germany's) highest mountain.

The main route of the Adlerweg is a 326km long-distance path traversing the Austrian Tyrol, keeping mostly to the mountains that form the northern side of Inntal, the Inn valley. It is made up of 24 stages, with a total height gain of just over 23,000m. The route is primarily for experienced mountain walkers, but this guide includes a number of easier variant stages that circumvent the airier parts, thus making the Adlerweg doable for all types of walker. Well maintained and waymarked throughout, the Adlerweg follows established mountain and valley tracks. While it is not



The Adlerweg crosses Gruba bowl from Rofanspitze, just visible right of centre, passing beneath Roskopf (Stage 7)

a 'peak-bagging' path, it does offer the opportunity to visit the tops of a few mountains, including Rofanspitze (2259m) (Stage 7) and Birkkarspitze (2749m) (Stage 11). The full route takes a fit walker about three weeks to complete; however, if you wish to take things more gently, it is possible to undertake the Adlerweg as two 2-week walks, breaking the journey in Innsbruck. Most of the stages are well connected by public transport (train, postbus, cable car or chairlift), making it possible to tackle shorter trips as day excursions or weekend overnight breaks.

The path was conceived and implemented by Tirol Werbung, the regional tourist promotion agency, who named it the Eagle's Way (*Adler* being German for 'eagle'); when

overlaid on the map, its silhouette appears in the shape of an eagle, the outspread wings of which reach from one end of the Tyrol to the other, with Innsbruck, in the middle, as its head. The proud eagle is said to represent the feelings of freedom and independence, power and wisdom, grandeur and dignity, which you can experience when hiking the Eagle's Way. In addition to the main route, there is a separate shorter (but higher!) *kleiner Adlerweg* (Eaglet path) of nine stages in Ost Tirol, which is not covered by this book.

Since the first edition of this guide was published ten years ago, Tirol Werbung has made a number of significant changes to the route, particularly in Brandenburg and in the Lechtaler Alpen/Lechtal valley.

Overall, this has made the route a more challenging walk, one for experienced mountain walkers. This guide includes all of Tirol Werbung's changes. In addition, some routes from the previous edition have been retained where they provide easier alternatives. Although no longer way-marked as part of the Adlerweg, they are all well maintained and very walkable routes. Taken overall, the routes in this book should prove attractive to all grades of walker, not just those with prior mountain-walking experience.

Hiking in the Tyrol would not be complete without Austria's legendary hospitality and local cuisine. Since overnight accommodation in the form of serviced mountain *Hütten* (refuges), inns, guesthouses or hotels can be found at the end of each day's walk, all you will need to carry is a sheet sleeping bag. Everywhere along the way there are convenient places to eat and drink. These range from simple alpine pasture huts in the mountains, offering locally produced fare, to award-winning restaurants in the towns and valleys. On most stages, frequent water fountains and springs provide a safe source of drinking water.

A wide variety of animals and plants can be found. The lower meadows are carpeted with wildflowers in late spring, while once the snow disappears the upper slopes come alive with alpine plants, including edelweiss and gentian. Chamois, ibex and

marmots can be seen throughout the route. However, as you are walking the Eagle's Way, the creature you will most likely want to find is the eponymous golden eagle. Keep a good lookout and you may see one soaring around the highest peaks. If, however, wild eagles prove illusive, the route passes Innsbruck Alpen zoo, where there are two captive golden eagles.

The Tyrol tourist organisation describes the Adlerweg as 'arguably the most beautiful long-distance trail in Austria'. Does it live up to this claim? That is for you to decide. Walk it and see!

Note Throughout this guide the English spelling of Tyrol is used, except for proper nouns such as 'Count of Tirol', 'St Johann in Tirol' or 'Tirol Werbung', where the German 'Tirol' is used.

BACKGROUND

Austria

Located in the centre of the continent, and straddling the Alps, Austria is one of Europe's smaller countries in terms of size and population (9 million inhabitants). It shares borders with Germany (with which it has a common language), Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Its position in relation to the Danube, one of Europe's most important waterways, to the north, and the Brenner, the most accessible alpine pass, to the south,

has made Austria the crossroads of central Europe.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Austria's political, economic and military significance surpassed its modest size. After the turning back of Islamic incursions into Europe at the Battle of Vienna (1683), a long period of rule by one family enabled Austria to maintain strong stable government and build a pan-European empire. The Hapsburg emperors ruled until defeat in World War 1 led to the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the Treaty of St Germain in 1919.

A period of economic and political uncertainty during the 1920s and 1930s (when many mountain refuges fell into disrepair) was followed by the *Anschluss* political union with Germany in 1938 and Austrian participation on the axis side in World

War 2. After the conflict, government was briefly divided between the victorious allied powers until the current republic was established in 1955. Austria joined the EU in 1995, and the subsequent signing of the Schengen Agreement led to the removal of border controls.

Austria is a federal republic of nine states. The majority of the population lives in four lowland states, which include the capital Vienna, to the north and east of the country. Population density in the alpine states of the south and west, including Tyrol, is much lower.

Tyrol

Tyrol sits south-west of the bulk of Austria, between the states of Salzburg (east) and Vorarlberg (west). Its dominant feature is the

deep west-east gash of the Inn valley, between the northern limestone Alps (Nördlichen Kalkalpen) and the central high Alps, with most of the 760,000 population living along this axis. Tyrol's northern border, with Germany, runs through the North Kalkalpen, and its southern, Italian, border crosses the central Alps.

Tyrol's emergence as an identifiable state began in the 11th century when the Counts of Tirol from Meran (today Merano in northern Italy) gradually extended their control over the whole region. When the last count (or rather countess) died heirless, control passed to the Austrian Hapsburgs, with Tyrol becoming part of Austria in 1363. Apart from a brief period of Bavarian rule during the Napoleonic wars, it has remained Austrian ever since. However, Tyrol today is much smaller than Hapsburg Tyrol, as the peace treaties that concluded World War 1 transferred sovereignty over Sud Tirol and Trient to Italy.

Apart from Reutte in the north-west and Kitzbühel in the east, the main towns are spread along the Inn valley, from Kufstein and Schwaz in the lower valley to Imst and Landeck in the upper valley. By far the largest population centre, the state capital Innsbruck is located in the middle valley.

Tyrol is a region of open countryside. Only 12% of the state can be used for human habitation, with 35% forest, 30% pasture and 22% barren mountains. As a result, the

Tyrolean economy has been based on agriculture (mostly dairy farming), timber and mining (silver, lead, zinc, salt, limestone, silica sand and shale oil). Secondary industries have grown up using these raw materials, including wooden building materials, glass, cement and chemicals. Other light industry, originally based upon the ready availability of power from mountain streams but now using hydroelectric power, includes iron smelting, agricultural tools and machinery, railway carriages and electric power generators. In the 20th century, year-round tourism (winter sports and summer touring) became a major part of the state economy, while one of the largest employers in Innsbruck is its university.

THE ADLERWEG

The Adlerweg is a project promoted by Tirol Werbung (the state tourism promotional agency) to encourage walkers to explore more of the region. It came to fruition in 2005 with the opening of the main route between St Johann in Tirol, in the east of Tyrol, and St Anton am Arlberg, on the western border with Vorarlberg. The route had no 'new' paths, being a series of existing paths and tracks linked by common signposting, usually by means of adding an Adlerweg motif to existing signposts.

There was, however, a political dimension to the project. Tirol Werbung is funded by regional



Descending from Memminger Hütte into Parseiertal, with Parseierspitze in the distance (photo: Tirol Werbung; photographer – Dominik Gigler) (Stage 22)

government and by payments from all of the local government areas (*Gemeinden*) in the region. As a result, there was pressure to ensure the route visited as many *Gemeinden* as possible. In consequence, the route was extended by the addition of 88 regional paths that formed a series of legs running off the original route, thus taking the Adlerweg name into many other parts of Tyrol. Unsurprisingly, a degree of confusion crept in. Mapmakers were encouraged to add 'Adlerweg' or the eagle motif to their maps of the region. This was done without discriminating between the main route, easier variants or regional extensions, with 'Adlerweg' soon popping up all over the map, making it difficult to identify the correct route.

A change of policy in 2015 abandoned this proliferation, with the Adlerweg now confined to one continuous route of 24 stages between St Johann in Tirol and St Anton am Arlberg, plus nine stages forming a separate 'Eaglet' path in Ost Tirol. The stages that now form the main route have varying degrees of difficulty, although none requires climbing skills or equipment. They average 13.5km in length with 950m of ascent. The easier alternatives described in this guide are no longer officially part of the Adlerweg. However, as most were part of the previous network, they are well-maintained paths which are still labelled as the Adlerweg on some older maps.

One aspect of the Adlerweg that makes it different from most other long-distance paths is the use of various modes of public transport to speed access to and descent from the mountains. As a result, you will encounter cable cars, chairlifts, trains, buses, a funicular and a tram all integrated into the route. It is possible to avoid some of the cable cars and chairlifts, and this guide indicates where such options occur.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Physical geography

The Alps, which form a high mountain barrier between northern and southern Europe, are some of the youngest European mountains. They were formed approximately 50 million years ago when the African and European tectonic plates collided, pushing the land up. The Alps run west to east through Austria and consist of three parallel mountain ranges: the high, mainly granite, central Alps flanked by the slightly lower northern and southern calcareous limestone chains. The Adlerweg traverses the most northerly of these, the Nördlichen Kalkalpen, following the range from east to west. For much of its length there are extensive views south across the deep glacial defile of the Inn valley, with the higher permanently snow-capped central Alps on the horizon and occasional views north across the Alpine foothills to Bavaria.



Krahnsattel, with the view north across Gruba bowl to Rosskopf (Stage 7A)

The chain is broken into a series of blocks by a number of north-south glacial river valleys that have broken through the mountains. As their name implies, the Calcareous Alps are composed mostly of porous limestone, with the exact composition of this limestone varying from block to block. The two most significant geological aspects of the region are glaciation and karst country.

During the great ice ages, ice sheets covered all of central and northern Europe. As the ice retreated, great glaciers carved deep valleys through the Austrian Alps, the deepest and longest forming the Inn valley. Running east from the Engadin region of Switzerland right across Tyrol, where it separates the northern and central Alpine ranges, it reaches the

Danube basin beyond Kufstein. Along its length, the Inn is joined by lateral glacial valleys flowing in from the north and south. Most of the glaciers have long since melted and only a few remain, mostly in the high central Alps. There are none on the Adlerweg.

The enduring legacies left behind by the retreating glaciers are characteristic deep U-shaped valleys and morainic lakes. Throughout the walk you will be able to trace old glacial flows, from smooth bowl-shaped cirques surrounded on three sides by high jagged mountains, down stepped valleys blocked by terminal moraines containing either morainic lakes or the dried-up beds of earlier lakes. The descent from Birkkarspitze (Stage 11) is almost a geography lesson, with every kind of glacial feature on show.

SECTION 1 KAISERGEIRGE



STAGE 1

St Johann in Tirol to Gaudeamshütte

Start	St Johann in Tirol station (670m)
Finish	Gaudeamshütte (1263m)
Distance	13km
Ascent	1100m
Descent	510m
Grade	Red
Time	5hr
Highest point	Baumgartenköpfl (1560m)
Maps	ÖAV8 (1:25,000); FB301 (1:50,000); K09 (1:25,000)
Access	Hourly ÖBB trains between Wörgl and Schwarzach-St Veit call at St Johann 20min walk from Gaudeamshütte to Wochenbrunnalm for frequent shuttle bus to Ellmau

A quiet country road leads to a forest path climbing through the Niederkaiser foothills to Diebsöfen cave and Schleierwasserfall, where the 60m sheer rock face behind the waterfall is popular with climbers. Emerging above the trees, you get your first close-up views of the jagged Wilder Kaiser peaks. The path crosses the heads of two valleys to reach its highest point at Baumgartenköpfl before descending steeply to Gaudeamshütte with spectacular views of Ellmauer Halt (2344m).

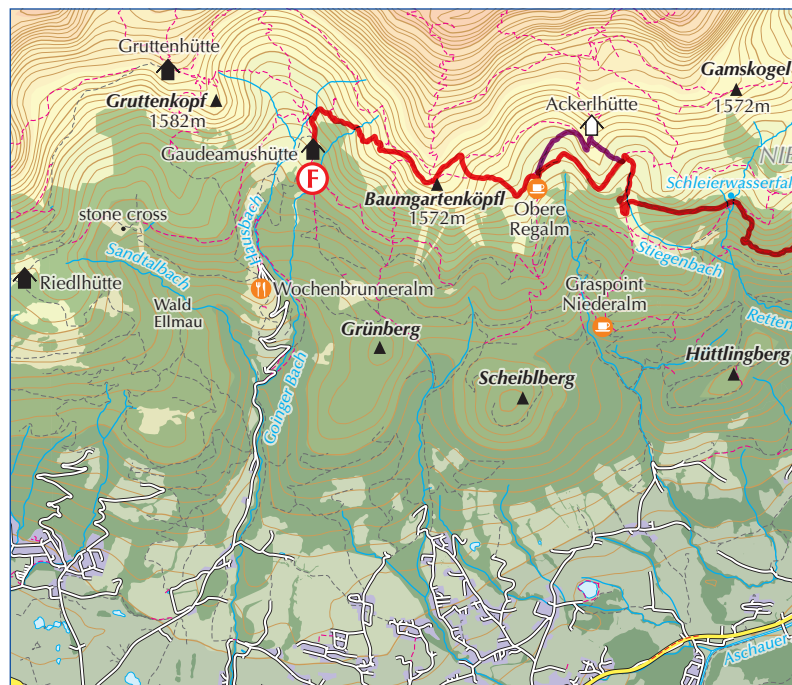
Although the official Adlerweg starts from Rummlerhof, 4km by quiet country road from St Johann in Tirol, the route described here starts at St Johann station.

St Johann in Tirol (all services, accommodation, meals/refreshments, tourist office Poststrasse 2, +43 535 263 3350, www.kitzbueheler-alpen.com, rail and bus stations). From **St Johann station** (670m), go straight ahead along Bahnhofstrasse,

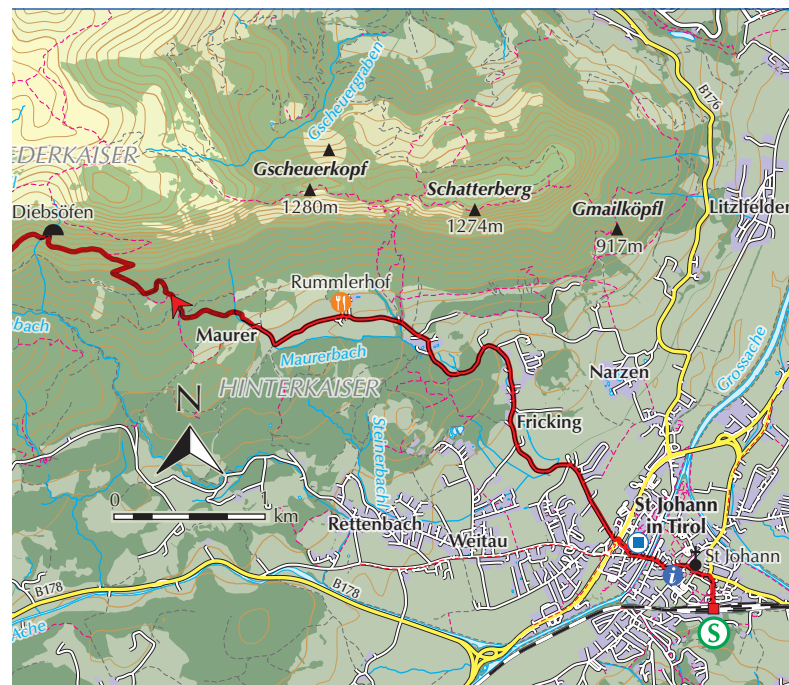
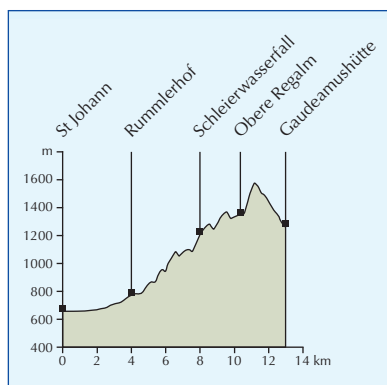
ST JOHANN IN TIROL, KITZBÜHEL'S LESS WELL-KNOWN NEIGHBOUR

Situated in the Leukental valley, between the Kitzbüheler Alps and the Kaisergebirge, St Johann in Tirol gets its name from a church dedicated to St John the Baptist (St Johann in German), which was built by Catholic missionaries before AD738. Copper and silver mines, opened in 1540, ushered in a period of prosperity that lasted until the 18th century. Indeed, in the 17th century the 778m Heilig-Geist-Schacht (Holy Ghost Shaft) was the deepest mine shaft in the world. Throughout this period, St Johann remained a village, while Kitzbühel, just 10km along the valley, prospered as a medieval city, its charter having been granted in 1271.

The coming of the railway in 1875 led to the growth of tourism. With the extensive development of ski runs in the Kitzbüheler Alpen, Kitzbühel became one of the most prominent winter sports resorts in Europe. As Kitzbüheler Horn ski area is equally accessible from both places, St Johann shared in this success, becoming a less expensive alternative to glamorous Kitzbühel. In 1956, St Johann was recognised as a market town and much of the commercial development since then has taken place there. Indeed, the population of St Johann (9400) now exceeds that of Kitzbühel (8300).



passing the hospital L. Bear L at a roundabout, still following Bahnhofstrasse, to reach the town square, Hauptplatz, with the parish church R. Cross the square and exit far L opposite the post office. This short street leads to Kaiserstrasse where you turn R. **If you turn L, the tourist office is second building L.** Continue along Kaiserstrasse, crossing the **Kitzbüheler Ache** river. Bear R at a



fork (sp Hinterkaiserweg), passing the bus station R, to reach the main road at a roundabout (**10min**).

Cross the roundabout and leave St Johann by Hinterkaiserweg (sp Adlerweg), which you follow for 3km, ignoring all side roads. The road bends L and R, sometimes quite sharply. Level at first through meadows and occasional houses, it begins to ascend gently after **Fricking** as you reach the trees. Ahead you can see the Niederkaiser ridge, with the bare limestone of the much higher Wilder Kaiser rising beyond. Looking back there is a good view of the Kitzbüheler Horn (1996m) above St Johann. Shortly before reaching Rummlerhof, cross a cattle grid where there is a sign L officially marking the start of the Adlerweg. **A row of large boulders accompanying the sign carries the names of the various mountain ranges passed by on the route.** Hinterkaiserweg passes **Rummlerhof** R (780m) (meals/refreshments, Apr–Oct, closed Mon) (**40min**).

From Rummelerhof, continue along Hinterkaiserweg for 750 metres, bearing R to reach **Maurer** (818m), where the road ends. Pass the farmhouse R and turn immediately R (sp Schleierwasserfall) beside a water trough onto a grassy path which ascends through meadows towards the woods. Cross a stile and continue winding up through the trees. Go ahead over a second stile and continue uphill, eventually crossing a stream by a wooden bridge and bearing R onto a 4WD track. Continue uphill to reach a forestry road at a sharp bend and turn L. After 25 metres turn R, still uphill, onto a smaller forestry road. When this ends, turn R uphill on a path through the trees. At a path junction, bear L then after 125 metres turn R on a path uphill. Follow this round two zigzags then at a third zig-zag continue ahead contouring for 700 metres, with a short section along a cliff face, where a steep drop-off has fixed cables for security, to reach **Diebsöfen** cave (1086m) (**1hr 20min**).

You are now below steep cliffs with a huge open-fronted cavern eroded into them. Follow the path as it descends for a short way through the cavern. The floor of the cave is very uneven and very slippery. Above your head, the cavern roof is one of Europe's most difficult 'dry tool' climbing pitches. Looking up, you can see pitons and karabiners left by previous visitors.

Continuing below the line of cliffs, a winding ascent brings you to the impressive **Schleierwasserfall** (1158m). The water tumbles down cliffs with a 60m drop, the path running through the eroded cavern behind the falls (**30min**). The waterfall is a popular climbing location and climbers are often seen inching their way up the precarious cliffs behind and beside the falls.



Walkers have to pass behind the water at Schleierwasserfall



The cliffs beside Schleierwasserfall are a popular climbing location

From the falls, continue on a path, passing a toilet hut R, scrambling up boulders beside the cliffs (sp Gaudeamushütte) for a further 750 metres, then descend into a coomb below Stiegenbachwasserfall. At the bottom of the coomb bear L then turn sharply R (sp Ackerlhütte) and ascend the other side to reach meadows above the cliffs. From here, the jagged peaks of Ackerlspitze (2329m) and its neighbours come into view ahead. Continue through meadows, ascending in a long arc, curving round from initially heading NE and ending up heading SW, to reach the top of a ridge at Ackerlrucken.

From Ackerlrucken, an easy walk along a grassy ridge takes you to **Ackerlhütte** (1465m), which can be seen R about 400 metres away and 100m above (ÖAV, 15 beds 0b/15d, self-catering, open mid May–end Oct, warden at weekends only, AV key required at other times, +43 664 254 2503, www.alpenverein.at/kitzbuehel) (15min off-route).

The path descends into another grassy coomb, with the path curving L to reach **Obere Regalm** pasture hut (1315m) (snacks/refreshments, early Jun–early Oct, Wed/Sat/Sun 10:00–17:00) (**1hr**).

Leave by a path ascending through meadows behind the refuge (sp Gaudeamushütte), following waymarks painted on occasional rocks. At a painted arrow, turn sharply R and continue ascending NW through a coomb to reach a junction with a path coming directly from Ackerlhütte. Turn L and contour to reach the day's high point (1560m) below **Baumgartenköpf**, with a summit cross above the path L (35min).

Descend slowly on a path winding through dwarf conifers past Freibergshaus, where a magnificent view appears. On a ridge across the valley is Gruttenhütte, and towering above it are the spires and peaks of Ellmauer Halt (2344m), the highest point in the Kaisergebirge. Descend steeply into the valley, zigzagging through the trees before bearing L to reach **Gaudeamushütte** (1263m) (DAV, 48 beds 32b/16d, meals/refreshments, mid May–mid Oct, +43 5358 2262, www.dav-main-spessart.at) (45min).

DER KAISERGEIRGE: THE CLIMBERS' MOUNTAINS

The mountains north and south of St Johann could not be more different. The Kitzbüheler Alpen, seen to the left throughout the first two stages, are rounded and green, and being the site of one of Europe's finest skiing areas, they are well developed. The Kaisergebirge, towering above on your right, are jagged, rocky and white and contain many challenging climbing routes and *Klettersteig* (via ferrata). Tourist infrastructure is limited to a few mountain refuges.

This difference in development lies in a referendum held in 1961, which resulted in the Kaisergebirge being declared a protected area. Plans to develop the skiing industry were blocked. As a result, only one man-made up-lift exists in the range, the Kaiserlift chairlift at Breitenjoch, which the Adlerweg uses to descend to Kufstein at the end of Stage 3. The range consists of two mountain blocks: the high, wild and jagged Wilder Kaiser (Wild Emperor) and the slightly lower Zahmer Kaiser (Tame Emperor), divided by the Kaisertal valley.

The Wilder Kaiser Steig (WKS) long-distance path loops around the Wilder Kaiser on a four-day circuit from Kirchdorf. For most of Stages 1 and 2 it parallels the Adlerweg, contouring around the mountains at a higher altitude. The WKS is a more challenging route than the Adlerweg, with more height gain and some sections of *Klettersteig*.

STAGE 2

Gaudeamushütte to Schiesti (Hintersteinersee)

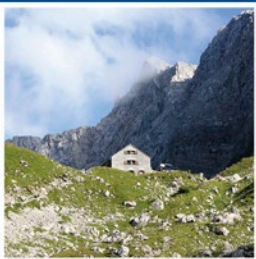
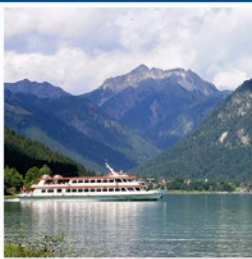
Start	Gaudeamushütte (1263m)
Finish	Schiesti (Hintersteinersee) (922m)
Distance	14.5km
Ascent	800m
Descent	1140m
Grade	Mostly red, but the Klamml ascent to Gruttenhütte is black
Time	6hr
Highest point	Gruttenhütte (1620m)
Maps	ÖAV8 (1:25,000); FB301 (1:50,000); K09 (1:25,000)
Access	Frequent shuttle bus from Ellmau to Wochenbrunneralm, then 20min walk to Gaudeamushütte Frequent shuttle bus from Hintersteinersee to Scheffau

After a steep assisted climb to Gruttenhütte, this stage becomes a mid-level walk on forest and meadow paths contouring well below the Wilder Kaiser summits before descending to Hintersteinersee lake, a popular tourist spot, where it is possible to cool off with a refreshing swim.

The stage starts with a very steep, difficult and partially assisted ascent, which is graded black, from Gaudeamushütte through the Klamml gorge to Gruttenhütte. As the path up the gorge is liable to closure due to rockfalls, you should check at the refuge if the path is open before setting off. An alternative route drops down a little from Gaudeamushütte, then follows the Gruttenweg up through forest.

Klamml route to Gruttenhütte

From **Gaudeamushütte** head NNW (sp Gruttenhütte über Klamml) across meadows, on a path that crosses a river washout (often dry by midsummer) and ascends through scrub towards the col R of **Gruttenkopf**. This narrow path



- 326km walk through the Austrian Tyrol • challenging walking with easier alternatives for the most difficult stages
- Wilderkaiser, Brandenberger Alpen, Lechtaler Alpen



- can be completed in three weeks
- total ascent of 23,000m
- ideal for all grades of walker with a good level of fitness
- walkable between mid-June and mid-September
- local transport by bus, train or cablecar connects many of the stages, providing access to the mountains

The Adlerweg, or Eagle's Way, is a long-distance path that soars through the beautiful Tyrolean Alps. Across 24 stages follow the wingspan of the eagle from St Johann in Tirol in the east to St Anton am Arlberg in the west, passing through the historic city of Innsbruck at the mid-point.

The route allows you to see the best of Tyrol and enjoy Austria's legendary hospitality and local cuisine.

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