

May 2026

Subject: Osttirol Unveils New Nature and Culinary Experiences South of the Alps
Preheader: Subtle Highlights Instead of Spectacular Attractions

What's New in Osttirol
Where Peaks Meet Authentic Experiences



A new viewing platform along the award-winning Iseltrail opens up breathtaking perspectives of the Isel, the last free-flowing glacier-fed river in the Alps, creating yet another gateway to Osttirol's unspoiled natural world. © Matthias Schickhofer

Where exactly is Osttirol? Perhaps it is the place where new experiences do not need to be loud to leave a lasting impression. Here, innovation blends seamlessly into landscape, culture, and tradition. Rather than relying on artificial attractions, East Tyrol creates meaningful experiences that feel authentic and deeply connected to their surroundings. summer 2026, visitors to the holiday region south of Austria's main Alpine ridge can look forward to interactive nature experiences for all generations, the reopening of the historic Seespitzhütte mountain hut at 2,327 metres, a spectacular new viewing platform above the Isel River, and a unique culinary destination inside the revitalised medieval Castle Heinfels. www.osttirol.com

Between listening and feeling



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Nestled amid the wide meadows surrounding Virgen and framed by the stunning landscapes of Hohe Tauern National Park, the newly redesigned **Path of the Senses (Weg der Sinne)** invites visitors to experience nature in an entirely different way from June 2026 onwards. © Markus Mühlburger

Rather than overwhelming the senses, the trail encourages guests to slow down and reconnect with what already exists: light, wind, water, and earth. Across 19 interactive stations, visitors are invited to engage actively with natural phenomena and discover the world through personal experience.

Balance, movement, and the water cycle become tangible through playful exploration rather than information panels. A water playground turns learning into adventure, while an open-air "landscape cinema" focuses attention on the beauty of the surrounding scenery. Young explorers can follow butterfly mascot Isi on a journey of discovery, while an authentic alpine hut introduces visitors to local herbal traditions and practical applications.

Designed for families, nature lovers, and mindful travellers alike, the Path of the Senses offers a refreshing alternative to fast-paced attractions, placing curiosity, awareness, and connection at its heart.

Simple. Authentic. Seespitzhütte



From **Seespitzhütte mountain hut in Osttirol**, a marked trail leads to the impressive **Oberseitsee** at 2,576 metres, a natural alpine lake formed following the retreat of the glacier. From there, a steep path, partly secured with fixed ropes, climbs to the **Seespitze**, one of the most rewarding panoramic summits along the Panargen ridge. © Axel Muser

After standing empty for almost a decade the mountain hut **Seespitzhütte** in Defereggental welcomes guests once again from **6 June**. Two young hosts are breathing new life into the traditional mountain refuge at 2,327 metres, creating a warm and authentic destination for hikers, with overnight accommodation for up to 13 guests in dormitory-style lodging. Throughout the day, freshly prepared dishes and regional specialties are served on the sunny terraces and in the cosy alpine parlour. The deliberately concise menu focuses on classic Tyrolean cuisine, while also offering vegetarian and vegan options, including nettle dumplings and wild garlic strudel.

Families can reach the hut via an easy two-hour hike from the **Jagstube mountain inn** (approximately 600 vertical metres). Alternative approaches suitable for mountain bikers lead from Erlsbach in around three hours or from the Trojeralp Valley car park via the Alpine Flower Trail in three to four hours. Seespitzhütte also serves as the ideal base for ascents of **Seespitze** (3,021 m) and **Wei es Beil** (2767 m).

Between Sky and River Isel

Since its inauguration in 2020, the **Iseltrail** has become one of Austria's most celebrated long-distance hiking routes. Stretching more than 80 kilometres along the Isel, the Alps' longest free-flowing glacial river, the trail received the **Tirol Touristica Award for Sustainable Tourism** in 2023.

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Since June 2024, the project has featured another spectacular attraction: a suspension bridge spanning approximately 84 metres and soaring around 90 metres above the dramatic Isel Gorge, connecting the villages of **Virgen** and **Prägraten am Großvenediger**.

In summer 2026, adventurous hikers will be rewarded with yet another highlight. A newly constructed viewing platform will offer breathtaking perspectives of the Isel's roaring glacial waters. Extending almost 25 metres out over the gorge, the corten steel structure projects directly above the river canyon, providing unobstructed panoramic views both upstream and downstream.



The culinary concept of the revitalised **Heinfels Castle** in Osttirol's Hohe Tauern region combines regional products with a cuisine that is both modern and deeply rooted in local traditions. © Peter Leiter

When the **Loacker family**, internationally renowned for its wafer and chocolate specialties, acquired **Heinfels Castle** in 2007, the motivation was never commercial. Instead, the family sought to preserve an important cultural landmark, assume long-term responsibility for the region, and restore new life to the historic site. Through a carefully planned and sustainable revitalisation process, the "**Queen of the Puster Valley**" has once again become accessible to the public, transforming into a vibrant centre for culture, history and gastronomy. Following extensive restoration work carried out over several years and two major construction phases, the castle has welcomed not only museum visitors but also culinary guests since May 2026.

A charming bistro and adjoining Knights' Hall now offer refined snacks and a daily changing lunch menu, attracting food lovers, hikers and culture enthusiasts alike. One of the highlights is the regularly staged **Emotional Dinner** experience, during which up to 60 guests embark on an immersive journey into the Middle Ages. Reinterpreted historical dishes, captivating storytelling and multimedia productions bring the world of medieval castle life vividly to life.

"Our goal is to offer cuisine that combines the highest standards of quality and regional authenticity while remaining accessible. The focus is not on awards, but on creating a genuinely memorable experience in an extraordinary setting," says Marco Perez, Managing Director of the castle's culinary operations.

Nature lovers discover vast areas of untouched wilderness and exceptional freedom, while outdoor enthusiasts enjoy first-class conditions for hiking, mountaineering, climbing and mountain sports. Among alpinists and climbers, the region has long earned cult status.

Food lovers are equally drawn to Osttirol's remarkable culinary diversity. From rustic mountain inns and traditional farm taverns to award-winning fine dining establishments, the region offers authentic Alpine cuisine at the highest level. Rural traditions remain deeply embedded in everyday life, with centuries-old customs, genuine craftsmanship and a rich cultural heritage continuing to shape the identity of Osttirol and its people. www.osttirol.com

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