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Press Kit Seefeld

THE CRADLE OF CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: 1964. 1976. 2012. The Olympic flame has already burned three times in Seefeld. The suntrap on the high plateau has established itself as the centre for Nordic sports in ski-mad Tyrol. Back in the early 1960s in the Tyrol, it was considered a real curiosity to move on the flat with skis on your feet. It was trendier in those days to prove your courage on steep slopes and descents. But when Innsbruck was awarded the Winter Olympics in 1964, the Seefeld plateau offered perfect conditions for competitions in the Nordic disciplines.

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Cross-country skiing in Seefeld

Until then, cross-country skiing was a purely competitive sport, but the Olympic Games left their mark in Seefeld: with the newly created infrastructure, more and more teams came to train and the Seefeld Olympiaregion became the first place in the Alpine region to popularise cross-country skiing as "ski walking" for holidaymakers and locals. What had been competitive sport became a leisure activity suitable for all ages. The cross-country ski trail network was expanded especially for the 1976 Olympic Games and the pedestrian zone was created in the village. It is still one of the oldest in Tyrol. One of the highlights in the cross-country history of Seefeld followed in 1985: the first FIS Nordic Ski World Championships were held here. The third Olympic flame was lit in 2012 at the Winter Youth Olympic Games. The cross-country ski trail network was again expanded for the 2019 World Championships and the new kilometres of cross-country ski trails will subsequently be used by beginners and sporting enthusiasts.

WELCOME TO THE HIGHEST ICE RAILWAY STATION IN EUROPE

According to the WWF, tourism is responsible for five percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Traveling by plane or car is particularly critical. That doesn't have to be the case. Holidaymakers can travel to Seefeld in a comfortable fashion and in an environmentally friendly way by taking the train to the snow - even from December 2018 by using the ICE. Deutsche Bahn now offers direct ICE connections from Hamburg via Hanover and from Dortmund via Frankfurt and Cologne to Seefeld. Winter holidaymakers will then travel to Europe's highest ICE railway station with top speeds of over 300 km/h without the hassle of having to change trains, without traffic jams and without stress.

FACTSHEET

Olympiaregion Seefeld

Villages: Seefeld in Tirol, Leutasch, Mösern-Buchen, Reith and Scharnitz

Surface area

ca. 320 km²

Population

ca. 8.000

Situation

Around 600 metres above the Inn valley, on a south-facing plateau, surrounded by the Karwendel nature park, a landscape conservation area and the Wetterstein mountain range, as well as the Hohe Munde.
Highest mountain: Birkkarspitze at 2,749 m
Altitude: 1,200 m (ideal for altitude training)
Best travel time: year round

Climate

Warm half of the year 4°C – 25°C
Cold half of the year -7°C – 11°C
Best views:
Seefelder Spitze (2,221 m), Gehrenspitze (2,163 m), Birkkarspitze (2,749 m), Hohe Munde (2,662 m), Reither Spitze (2,374 m) and Große Arnspitze (2,196 m)
Viewing platforms: Kurblhang, Brunschkopf

Arrival

Good travel options from every direction - not only by car!
It is possible to travel direct from Hamburg via Hannover as well as from Dortmund via Frankfurt and Cologne with the ICE to Seefeld. Additionally, it is possible to travel by the Austrian Federal Railways Railjet from Vienna and Zurich.
Innsbruck Airport is 20 km away from the Olympiaregion Seefeld. Munich International Airport is a popular destination airport only 138 km distant.

Outdoor sports potential in winter:

> 245 kilometres of cross-country ski trails
30 km of alpine runs, modern cable cars and lifts, children's areas
142 km of winter hiking trails, 1 distance winter hiking trail (3 nights, 4 days)
35 km signposted snowshoe hiking trails
8 toboggan runs
3 ice rinks
20 curling rinks
1 angling lake for ice fishing at 1,123 m
2 wellness centres with indoor and outdoor pool

Outdoor sports potential in summer:
650 km of hiking trails
570 km of bike and E-bike tours
4 km roller ski trail
3 climbing areas with over 280 routes
2 golf courses, 9-hole & 18-hole
2 bathing lakes and 2 periodic bathing lakes (Wildmoos- & Lottensee)

THE SEEFELD PLATEAU
As it did in the entire Alpine region, the last ice age also formed the landscape that is visible today on the Seefeld plateau. However, in Seefeld's case there was no huge valley glacier which carved a deep furrow into the terrain. Instead, a small tributary of the mighty Inn glacier formed a gentle plateau at around 1,200 metres above sea level, almost 600 metres above today's Inn valley. A unique landscape at the heart of Tyrol - with both mountain and valley views. Peaks both gentle and rugged of the Karwendel range, the Wetterstein massif and the Mieminger chain form the scenery without overwhelming the five villages of Seefeld, Leutasch, Mösern-Buchen, Reith and Scharnitz. The geography of this sun-drenched and snow-sure plateau with its small lakes, deep gorges and high mountains offers unique outdoor sports potential.

THE MONACO OF THE ALPS
Caviar and champagne in luxury hotels, rich gentlemen and beautiful ladies in fur coats, a visit to the casino and a ride in a horse-drawn carriage - the jet set openly displayed its prosperity in the Seefeld of the 1960s and 1970s. The small, sophisticated town was widely admired in high society circles as the "Monaco of the Alps". The region experienced an unexpected tourism boom - and slept through the development. It was only in the 1990s, after a dramatic slump in overnight stays, that the signs of the times were recognised and action was taken: the natural landscape of the plateau harboured a tourist potential that had hardly been exploited until then. This contributed significantly to a successful image change towards a holistic outdoor destination. Today, the Seefeld plateau successfully markets itself to a wide public as an adventure playground, but its main town still radiates the charm of bygone days - without showing off.

THE BIRTH OF SKATING
"Skating forbidden!" After the Nordic Ski World Championships in 1985, signs with this inscription were put up on almost every cross-country ski run on the Seefeld plateau. How did this come about? Cross-country skiers were almost exclusively familiar with the classic cross-country technique until well into the 70s, although the Finn Pauli Siitonen had been experimenting with a new "half skate step technique" for quite some time. The cross-country skiing notables, especially the organising bodies, were very sceptical about the new technique - where one ski remained in the classic track and the other was used for pushing off, as in ice skating. For this reason, the 1985 World Ski Championships in Seefeld were designed to be narrow and steep. The aim was to prevent the use of the new step as far as possible. Against expectations, the Siitonen step was nevertheless used by the athletes in the race. Today the Siitonen step is considered a pioneer of the modern skating technique. Just two years later, at the Nordic Ski World Championships in Oberstdorf, skating was introduced as a separate discipline.
Even if in retrospect Seefeld can be regarded as the cradle of skating, the cross-country skiing region was initially unable to cope with the rapid development of the new technology and the high demand. It was necessary to put up prohibition signs all over the region as the infrastructure was not yet geared to the new needs of cross-country skiers and the classic cross-country trails were destroyed by the new technology. It was only in the following years that the cross-country trails on the high plateau were broadened with the addition of a separate skating track. Today, Seefeld is known for its extra-wide cross-country ski trails - perhaps also so that it can be prepared for a possible fresh cross-country revolution.

THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN FIGURES
- 52nd FIS Nordic Ski World Championships
- 2nd FIS Nordic Ski World Championships in Seefeld
- 12 days
- 700 athletes
- 60 countries
- 21 medal decisions
- 200,000 expected spectators

- 12,000 grandstand seats in Seefeld
- 1,250 steps from Seefeld train station to the Medal Plaza
- 1,200 workers and volunteers
- 1,000 press representatives

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