

Austrian Winter Adventure: Spectacular XC Skiing and Beyond

February 15-25, 2018 (trip#1815)



Trip overview: Enjoy a week of outstanding XC skiing in Austria's Seefeld region, a high alpine resort area 25 miles northwest of Innsbruck that is renowned for its XC skiing facilities. Get acclimatized to European time by exploring Salzburg, one of Austria's most famous historic towns and a UNESCO historical site.

Due to making hotel reservations during the winter holiday season, trip applications must be received no later than NOVEMBER 1, 2017 – of course, to be sure of getting a spot on this very limited participant count trip, they are welcome well before then as well!

Trip leader personal note: This trip ran in both 2015 and 2016. All the participants enjoyed it immensely. Here is a five-minute video prepared by a former participant Mike Barry. It conveys an exceptional visual summary of the area, the skiing, and the cuisine: [Austria XC Ski video](#) Note: there are scenes of Innsbruck at the beginning of the video because that city was visited prior to the XC skiing itself.

The biggest surprise was how the *total* experience contributed to an exceptional vacation:



Of course, we had excellent XC skiing. After all, the Seefeld area, made up of six charming villages, was the site of both the 1964 and 1976 winter Olympics. More recently it hosted the 2012 winter Youth Olympics. The cross-country ski facilities and conditions are unparalleled anywhere else in Europe. There are 271 km of meticulously groomed XC trails. Many trails are available for all skiing levels and abilities. For more information on this spectacular

area go to: [XC Skiing in Seefeld](#) The complete ski area map (4MB pdf) can be downloaded at: [Seefeld area XC ski map](#)

What also impressed all of us were the other complementary aspects of the trip that made it a truly memorable experience:

- The magnificent alpine setting. The snow-covered mountains tower over the narrow valleys where we ski.
- The four-star family owned and run hotel. The hotel provided a bountiful breakfast



buffet and an exquisite six-course gourmet dining every night. The genuinely friendly nature of the entire staff and the diverse evening entertainment made it a pleasure to stay there.



Photo credit: Sarah Keats

- The ease of getting around a resort area of this size. With short bus and train rides one can easily reach the more distant trails.
- The relaxed nature of the skiing itself. After a couple of hours on the trails one can always find a nice ‘gasthof or stube’ right nearby where one can sit inside or on the terrace and enjoy regional specialties for lunch or perhaps an apple strudel as a snack.
- The charm of a ‘foreign’ environment that is fun-loving and where most people speak English.
- The outdoor alternatives of prepared winter hiking trails and cultural attractions, all easily accessible.

Every day you can participate in ski expeditions guided by the trip's leader, targeted at participants with intermediate-advanced Nordic skiing ability. Breathe in the fresh, clean air as the trails take you through fields and hamlets with stunning views of the surrounding white-capped mountains. Usually we will leave mid-morning and return to the hotel mid to late afternoon. A typical day's trip will cover 15-30 km (9-18 miles) including stops for snacks or lunch throughout the day.

If you want to take a break from Nordic skiing or you would like to bring along someone who does not Nordic ski, there are many possibilities. There is excellent downhill skiing nearby encompassing 48 km of alpine trails served by 30 lifts.

Alternatively, there are 142 km of cleared trails for winter walking where you can also take part in the breathtaking landscape.



Photo credit: Sheldon Luberoff

And Beyond

It seems a pity to come all the way to Austria and not explore its rich cultural heritage. Therefore, we will spend our first day and one-half, while adjusting to the European time zone, by exploring Salzburg, one of the best-preserved city centers in the German speaking world, a UNESCO world heritage renowned for its baroque architecture, Mozart's place of birth and residence, and the setting for "The Sound of Music."



Salzburg at night

The full trip itinerary is described below:

Thursday, February 15 - Depart the US.

Friday, February 16 - Arrive in Salzburg. If you arrive early, you may want to visit into the DomQuartier, the 145,000 square foot baroque archbishop residence that contains magnificent exhibits. Welcome dinner.

Saturday, February 17 – Morning - professional tour of Salzburg that includes an introduction to Austrian culture and history. In the afternoon we will visit a historic salt mine that has been active since the 1100's. For millennia the wealth of Salzburg was its neighboring salt (“salz” in German) deposits. The visit includes descent into the mine itself. Group dinner.

Sunday, February 18 – Morning: the ascent of the [Hohensalzburg](#), the grand castle overlooking the city or explore Salzburg on your own. Afternoon transfer to the Seefeld region.

Monday, February 19 through Saturday February 24 – XC skiing in the Seefeld region.

Sunday February 25 – Morning departure for the US. Optional direct group transfer to the Munich airport by private bus.

Accommodations



Photo credit: Mary Harding

In Salzburg we will be staying in a three star downtown hotel. In the Seefeld region we will be staying at a luxurious four star hotel with easy access to the XC ski system.

The accommodations are two people to a room. Note: a European double room usually features two twin mattresses in a single frame bed. Each bed is made up individually, but they are side by side.

We start the day with an extensive breakfast buffet. After a day of skiing we may choose to enjoy the hotel's spa facilities. Later on, we dine in the hotel's restaurant and enjoy a multi-course gourmet dinner with plenty of choices. If we still have some energy left we may go downstairs to the hotel's 'stube' and enjoy the live entertainment. We will sleep well each night under cozy Austrian duvets.

Equipment

We recommend renting your XC ski equipment. A week's rental is ~\$100, a much better alternative than carrying skis through airports and train stations and possibly paying excess luggage charges. Since we will be out all day, you will want to bring along a day pack or larger fanny pack that can accommodate an extra thermal layer, snacks, and water. We may also do some winter walking on prepared trails: warm boots and microspikes are recommended. The hotel will lend us hiking poles.

Trip Cost

The trip cost is \$2,400 for AMC members and \$2,450 for non-members. It starts on 2/15/2018 with your departure from the US and ends on 2/25/2018 with your departure from Seefeld. It is recommended that non-AMC members join the AMC for \$50 and they will get the same price.

The trip includes:

- Nine nights of deluxe lodging, breakfasts and dinners. Breakfast and dinners are covered from dinner on 2/16/2018 through breakfast on 2/25/2018

- Use of the hotel's spa facilities including sauna, steam room, and more
- Seven day nordic ski pass
- Waterproof trail map
- Free regional bus transportation
- Transportation from Salzburg to the hotel in the Seefeld region
- Private professional tour of Salzburg and entry to the salt mine and the Hohensalzburg castle
- A Seefeld resort pass which gives you discounted access to a large swimming pool, spa, museums and other resort amenities. Here is a link to the services covered: [Seefeld resort card](#)
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance

All lunches, trail snacks, cross country ski rentals, alcoholic and other beverages, and other personal expenses are not included in the price. There are cafés and restaurants along the trail where you can purchase lunches or you can buy groceries to make your own lunches.

Your transportation to Salzburg and from Innsbruck is your responsibility. The trip leader will advise you as much as you need. It is strongly urged that all participants fly into Munich airport and then take a two and one-half to three hour train ride to Salzburg.

The final trip price will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements the trip leader can make and currency fluctuations. Any savings achieved, as well as any cost increases, will be passed back to you. The cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase. Currently, the estimated cost of a winter round-trip airfare between the East Coast and Austria to be \$1000.

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis. Leaders are volunteers who are not compensated except for their travel costs associated with the trip. The advertised trip price includes a surcharge which goes toward the administrative expenses of the AMC Adventure Travel program.

The trip fee includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage, which is required by the AMC. It does *not* include insurance for travel delay, interruption, or cancellation, or for baggage loss. If the possibility of such problems concerns you, individual travel insurance is suggested. The AMC has a recommended vendor whose material will be sent to you if your application is accepted.

While the itinerary in this prospectus is what the leader has planned at the time of writing, various factors may require changes for reasons of safety, transportation or lodging availability, and unforeseeable circumstances (such as weather considerations, natural disasters in areas to be visited, or recommendations of governmental agencies). The leader reserve the right to make such changes as necessary, both before and during the trip.

It may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse

participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of safety, whether it be of the group or of the individual. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activity. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.

Ready to apply?

Download the participant application documents (application, confidential medical form, supplemental medical form [if appropriate], and assumption of risk and release form) from the following web folder: [Application Documents](#)

Fill out the forms and enclose a registration deposit of \$1000 payable to the *Appalachian Mountain Club*. Mail everything to Steve Cohen at 2802 Arbor Drive Apt #2 Madison, WI 53711. You will not be accepted, and your check will not be deposited, until the leader has determined by telephone conversation that you and the trip seem to be a good match. The final balance of \$1,400 is due October 15, 2017.

Cancellation

The cancellation policy is based on several considerations. Cancellation will not be allowed to raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. Minimum penalty is \$200. If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf, and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead, unless they can be applied toward another acceptable participant. No cancellation fee applies if the trip is cancelled by the leaders.

We expect a group size of 7 people plus the leader. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible. When registration is complete, we will send all participants the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all those going on the trip.

In the unlikely event that the trip is cancelled because not enough acceptable participants apply, everything you have paid will be refunded in full.

Participant experience and risks

The trip is geared to people with intermediate to advanced cross country skiing skills. This means as a minimum: herring-boning up hills, strong snow plowing and turning for downhill control, smooth striding and gliding, and stamina for 15-30 km per day with moderate elevation gain at a moderate pace. The daily ski expeditions led by the trip's leader will be appropriate for those with this skill level. The trip leader will adjust the daily itinerary based on the participants' proficiency. Several of the days may be long and strenuous.

The trip takes place at the elevations of ~4,000-6,000ft. Although these elevations are not high, the combination of physical exertion and slightly lower oxygen levels require that we pace ourselves and pay attention to proper nutrition and hydration.

This trip **welcomes** spouses, friends, and/or significant others who are not intermediate-advanced XC skiers. One could use the many beginner XC tracks or do one of the several alternative

activities highlighted above. The one critical caveat: the daily guided Nordic ski trips will be aimed at those with intermediate-advanced XC ski skills.

Questions and requesting materials

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. The contact information is immediately below.

Trip Leader



Steve Cohen leads three season hikes for the Hiking/Backpacking Committee of the AMC Boston Chapter. Since 2012 Steve has planned and led sixteen hiking/trekking-oriented Adventure Travel trips to such destinations the Haute Route (from Chamonix, France to Zermatt, Switzerland), the Alta Via II through the Italian Dolomites, the tour of the Jungfrau region (Switzerland), Patagonia, the high mountains huts of Austria, etc. He lived in Europe for four years and is fluent

in both the French and German languages. Steve has been an avid XC skier for the past 15 years; he skis both classic and skate style. He led this XC ski trip in both 2015 and 2016. Steve can be reached at 617-997-6861 or scohen1234@gmail.com. He is currently chair of Adventure Travel.