

Austrian Winter Adventure: Spectacular XC Skiing and Beyond

January 15-26, 2016 (trip# 1618)



A personal forward from the trip leaders:

Come with us as we enjoy a week of outstanding XC skiing and also explore two of Austria's historic towns, Innsbruck and [optionally] Salzburg. Our trip takes place predominantly in the Seefeld region, a high alpine resort area 25 miles northwest of Innsbruck that is renowned for its XC skiing facilities.

In 2015 we guided this trip which all the participants enjoyed immensely. Our 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 279 km of meticulously groomed XC trails, about half tracked for classic skiing and the other half for skate skiing.

Many trails are available for all

skiing levels and abilities. For more information on this spectacular area go to: [Seefeld resort overview](#) 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

accessible.

- The ease of getting around a resort area of this size. With short bus and train rides one can easily reach all 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

Every day you can participate in ski expeditions guided by the trip’s leaders, targeted at participants with intermediate-advanced Nordic skiing ability. Breathe in the fresh, clear 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 15-20 km (8-12 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 alternatives. 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, while adjusting to the European time zone, exploring Innsbruck, the capital of the Tyrolean region since the Middle Ages. In addition, at the trip's end, we offer an optional two day trip extension to visit Salzburg, a UNESCO world heritage renowned for its baroque architecture, Mozart's place of birth and residence, and the setting for "The Sound of Music." The full trip itinerary is described below:

Friday, January 15 - Depart the US.

Saturday, January 16 - Arrive in Innsbruck. Welcome dinner.

Sunday, January 17 – Morning - professional tour of Innsbruck that includes an introduction to Austrian culture and history. This will be followed by lunch and a chance to explore one of the downtown museums on your own. Afternoon transfer to our hotel.

Monday, January 18 through Saturday January 23 – XC skiing in the Seefeld region.

Sunday January 24 – Morning departure for the US OR take a train to Salzburg. Afternoon – private guided tour of Salzburg and the ascent of the [Hohensalzburg](#), the grand castle overlooking the city. Evening - optional attendance at a concert, the last night of Salzburg's 2016 renowned annual Mozart festival.

Monday January 25– 1) morning - For millennia the wealth of Salzburg was its neighboring salt ("salz" in German) deposits. Today we will travel to and explore a neighboring salt mine that has been active since the 1100's. The visit includes descent into the mine itself. 2) afternoon - we return to Salzburg and explore Mozart's birthplace, the Panorama Museum, the Dom Cathedral and other sites.

Tuesday January 26 –Final walk around Salzburg and then departure to the airport. Munich, the closest major airport, is ~2 ¼ hours away by train.



Photo credit: Mary Harding

Accommodations

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. In Innsbruck and Salzburg we will stay at three or four star downtown hotels.

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.

For those continuing on with us to Salzburg we will be staying in a three star downtown hotel.

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. For winter walking warm boots and Microspikes are recommended. The hotel will let us borrow hiking poles.

Trip Cost

The trip cost is \$2,150 for AMC members and \$2,200 for non-members. It starts on 1/15/2016 with your departure from the US and ends on 1/24/2016 with your departure from Innsbruck or

on 2/26 with your departure from Salzburg. It is recommended that non-AMC members join the AMC for \$50 and they will get the same price. The basic trip cost includes:

- Seven nights of deluxe lodging, breakfasts and dinners. Meals are covered from dinner on 1/16/2016 through breakfast on 1/24/2016
- 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 Innsbruck to the hotel in the Seefeld region
- Private professional tour of Innsbruck
- A 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

For those continuing onto Salzburg, the total trip cost is \$2,600 (an increase of \$450 over the basic cost). It includes:

- Transportation from our hotel in the Seefeld region to Salzburg
- Three days and two nights of deluxe lodging, breakfasts, and dinners from 1/24 evening through 1/26 breakfast
- Salzburg card which gives free access to all city transportation and all the main museums and sites.
- Transport and entrance fee to the salt mine
- Private professional tour of Salzburg

All lunches, trail snacks, cross country ski rentals, alcoholic and other beverages, transportation from the hotel at the end of the trip, 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 and from Innsbruck is your responsibility. Trip leaders will advise you as much as you need. Most participants will choose to fly in to the Munich, Zurich, or Innsbruck airports.

The final trip cost will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make and currency fluctuations. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases, will be passed back to you. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase. Currently, we estimate the cost of a winter round-trip airfare between the East Coast and Austria to be \$1200.

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 cost

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.

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 leaders have determined by telephone conversation with you that you and the trip seem to be a good match. The final balance of \$1,150 (basic) or \$1,600 (incl. Salzburg option) is due October 1, 2015.

Cancellation

Our 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 16 people, including the 2 leaders. 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 crossing country skiing skills. This means as a minimum: herring-boning up steep hills, strong snow plowing and turning for downhill control, smooth striding and gliding, and stamina for 15-20 km per day with moderate elevation gain. The daily ski expeditions led by the trip's leader and co-leader will be appropriate for those with this skill level. The trip leaders 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 us. We prefer to handle your inquiries by email if they are straight forward or by phone if they require discussion. The contact information is immediately below, with the leader biographies.

Trip Leaders



Steve Cohen leads trips for the AMC Boston Chapter. He has been a participant on many major excursions in the last ten years including trips to Alaska, the Smoky Mountains, Maroon Bells (near Aspen, CO), Grand Tetons/Yellowstone, Tour du Mont Blanc, Escalante Canyons (Utah), etc. In 2010 he organized and led a 14 day non-AMC trek along the Haute Route from Chamonix, France to Zermatt, Switzerland. In 2011 he went rock climbing

in the Dolomites (Italian Alps). In 2012 and 2013 he led AMC hut-to-hut treks in the Dolomites along the Alta Via II and in the Jungfrau region of Switzerland. He lived in Europe for four years and has a good command of 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. Steve can be reached at 617-997-6861 or scohen1234@gmail.com.

Sarah Keats is currently one of the Co-Chairs of the Maine Chapter Young Members. She has been leading AMC Maine Chapter trips since 2011. She raced cross country skiing when she was in high school, which consisted of both skate ski and classic ski competitions. She continues to be an avid skier, including skate ski, classic ski, and some back country skiing. Sarah has been hiking mountains over 4,000 feet since she was 12 years old, and completed the Adirondack 46 when she was younger and in July of 2012 she finished her New England 67, NH 48, and Northeast 111/115 on Cannon Mountain. She has been to Austria before on a short trip where she hiked one of the Alps and saw the area where the Sound of Music was filmed. Sarah can be contacted at 207-756-4226 or slkski@gmail.com.

