

# Innsbruck: Austria's paradise in the alps ideal for summer and winter holidays

Motaz Othman / Innsbruck



It is always a pleasure to visit Austria as I consider it one of the best tourism destination in the world for many reasons: the nice, friendly people, fresh air, magnificent heritage and civilization, food and everything a tourist could wish for.

My most recent visit centered around a trip to the alps and Innsbruck city (population 130,000) in Tirol region, west of the country.

We have all heard about the Great Alps which are spread over many countries in Europe: Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy and Germany. Their beauty and magic is legendary. Innsbruck city is considered to be the center of the Alps. It has an excellent connection to other

European cities and the best facilities for winter tourism and skiing.

My visit to the city was in its best season, at the end of January 09, after my participation in ACTB 09 (Austrian and Central Europe Travel Business) held in Vienna.

The name Innsbruck came from the Inns River which crosses the city, and bruck which means bridge. It's a first class tourist location which attracts millions of visitors who come to enjoy its nature, fresh air, and ski resorts considered one of the best in the world, where two world championships took place.

Innsbruck is also a cultural city and tourists can spend nights around its lakes, and in the small, surrounding

villages where you can enjoy the country side. In the summer time cycling and various sports, including mountain walking and water sports are popular. Tourists can stay with Austrian families. On a 45 minute flight between Vienna and Innsbruck the mountains with snow covered trees show their varied colors. I was accompanied on this trip by a group of travel agents and journalists from the UAE and Iran. We were invited by the Austria Tourism Office in Dubai, managed by Mr. Klaus, the regional director.

The ski facilities in Innsbruck have many advantages, like the long run ski areas and different locations and heights that allow professionals and beginners to ski.

I was impressed by seven and eight year olds skiing in a very professional way and even had a go myself! Families often ski together and the children learn from their parents.

There are plenty of ski schools and the locals provide excellent services and share their cars and experience with tourists.





In the program of our visit, we had the chance to reach the highest mountains in Innsbruck by using the very advanced cable carriage; you can enjoy the view, and have a tea and coffee in the restaurants and cafes.

We also visited the Swarovski show room, considered to be the second most visited place in Austria, with the biggest crystal - a 300,000 carat.

We were also very fortunate to see a unique carnival where all the citizens dress up in strange costumes and masks and dance and sing to welcome the snow and the tourists. They also thank God for their beautiful city.

We stayed in the four-star Sport Hotel, with a wonderful view of the Alps, and were served traditional food. The hotel also had a swimming pool and a spa. The Schiloss five-star hotel nearby, managed by the same family, had a very rich history. There is no room in Innsbruck for the major hotel chains and almost all the old buildings have been renovated and turned into hotels.

Innsbruck is one of the world's top summer and winter tourist destinations combining the splendor of the alps with fresh air, magnificent scenery, a rich cultural heritage and sports for all tastes and ages.