



Participants experience climbing and geology, a component of the GeoDynamicActive Programme.



Ore of the Alps

“Copper so close to the heavens”

The Geopark is located in the centre of the Province of Salzburg, Austria. It includes four communities, Bischofshofen, Mühlbach, Hüttau and St. Veit with a population of 17,000 inhabitants. Bischofshofen, the Geopark's oldest village, is famous world-wide for the annual ski jumping competition. The Geopark can be easily accessed via the Tauern Freeway (Tauern Autobahn), one of the most important roads through middle Europe to southern Europe. The capital city, Salzburg and the Airport W.A. Mozart, connected by regular flights from Vienna, Frankfurt, Berlin, London, Moscow and many other cities, can be accessed within 45 minutes.

The Geopark (212 km²) is situated in the “Innergebirg” (inner mountain area)”, and includes the Northern Calcareous Alps, the Graywacke Zone and the Central Alps. The Hochkönig mountain range in the Northern Calcareous Alps has an altitude of 2941 m and includes a permanent glacier, the “Übergossene Alm” (the “covered Alp” glacier). The mountainous Graywacke Zone region has pastures and forests extending up to an altitude of 2000 m. The Salzach Valley, which crosses the Geopark, is deeply incised into the soft rocks of the Graywacke Formation. All other valleys consist of extremely steep sided gorges. The discrepancy in the relative relief in the Geopark is very high with a variation in altitude of almost 2400 m.

The Geopark area has been permanently populated from 5,300 years ago. During the Bronze-Age, the region of Bischofshofen, Mühlbach, Hüttau and St. Veit was one of the most important sites for copper mining in Europe. The copper used in the world-famous Sky disc of Nebra was mined in this area. From the Middle Ages mining was extended to include gold, iron, lead and zinc. Since the 1970s all mining activities ceased but the mines still exist as a number of spectacular show mines.

The 77 geosites, which are described on the homepage www.geopark-erzderalpen.at, emphasize the great geodiversity of the Geopark and visits can be arranged through two programmes.

The GeoDynamicActive Programme is sporty! Rock formations, unique landscapes or the traces of mining activities, can be explored in selected tours, individually or in groups, either alone or accompanied by a qualified Geopark guide. These activities involve hiking, mountain biking, climbing, ski touring and snow-shoeing and are always combined with non-geological, but more or less dynamic and physical leisure entertainment.

The GeoEnjoyRelaxProgramme is based on “Gemütlichkeit” (cosiness). Geosites, which can be easily reached by short walks include visiting museums and show-mines and listening to lectures forming the focus of this “edutainment”. It involves a combination of non-geological activities, such as wellness, relaxing at an “oasis of silence and tranquillity”, farmers’ markets, farmers’ cookery courses, sports events, mountain exhibits and local alpine concerts. In addition the Geopark offers a great variety of local agricultural and high quality alpine products.

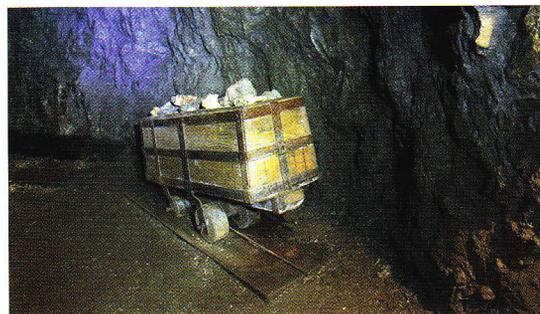
The Geopackages can be arranged according to the visitor's choice. They are comparable to the ordering of a pizza: Pizza dough, tomatoes and cheese form the base, all the other toppings can be chosen individually. Altogether these outstanding experiences are guaranteed by the Association “Ore of the Alps”, in which four communities and tourism offices work closely together.

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Mountain biking in front of the Mandelwände.



A tram used for transporting copper ore in the Sunnpau Show Mine.