

CURRENT INFORMATION

Rules for safe winter tourism

- The winter season plays a central role for tourism in Austria. More than 50 percent of winter holidays in Europe are spent in Austria.
- Winter holidays in Austria are dominated by one activity: skiing. However, other forms of winter holidays (relaxing in the mountains, cross-country skiing, thermal spas, city breaks, Christmas markets, etc.) have also created great demand for holidays in Austria in recent years.
- Around half of all annual overnight stays – 73 million in winter 2018/19; still 59.7 million in winter 2019/20 despite CORONAVIRUS – take place in the winter season. Strict, consistent and predictable rules offer the best possible way to ensure a safe and enjoyable winter holiday experience.
- The Austrian government recently presented its **three-step plan** for the coming winter. Some specific areas are of particular importance to the tourism industry. The precise rules in these areas will be developed on the basis of the general rules presented so far.
- What is clear is that there will be a winter season this year. Strict rules will ensure a safe winter in Austria.
- The Austrian Minister for Tourism, Elisabeth Köstinger, has drawn up winter rules in close collaboration with with the Ministry of Health, the regional governments and the winter tourism industry in order to be able to guarantee safe and predictable conditions for the tourism sector and its guests this winter.

Rules for safe and successful winter tourism

- The Austrian government's three-step plan aims to prevent the country's hospitals from becoming overstretched and to avoid Austria being classified as a high-risk area. The guiding principle is that there will be hardly any restrictions for people who have been vaccinated or had and recovered from Coronavirus.
- Restricted opening hours in bars and restaurants, limits on ski lift transport capacity and social distancing are to be a thing of the past.
- Therefore, further measures will primarily affect the unvaccinated. Those people who get vaccinated now can be sure that they will have access to all areas (ski lifts, restaurants, concerts, cinemas, etc.) this winter.
- The following measures apply up to Level 3. This level comes into force seven days after the intensive care bed occupancy rate has exceeded 20% (400 beds). Measures beyond Level 3 will be taken if there is a further increase in intensive care bed occupancy. These measures will target in particular unvaccinated people.

Hospitality and accommodation

- Stage 1 (in force since 15 September): Guests must have a valid negative test result, proof of vaccination or proof that they have had and recovered from Coronavirus. This is known as the 3G Rule. Lateral-flow antigen tests are only valid for 24 hours.
- **Level 2 and above.** Do-it-yourself lateral flow antigen tests performed at home will no longer be accepted. This regulation comes into effect seven days after the intensive care bed occupancy rate has exceeded 15% (300 beds).
- Level 3 means hospitality and accommodation locations will no longer accept any lateral flow antigen tests (neither those carried out at home nor those performed in a certified testing centre). The only type of test result which will be accepted is a negative PCR test. Visitors can also provide proof of vaccination or proof that they have had and recovered from Coronavirus. This regulation comes into effect seven days after the intensive care bed occupancy rate has exceeded 20% (400 beds).

- Measures going beyond **Level 3** – in particular restrictions on unvaccinated persons – will be in line with the general measures.

Après-ski

- In general, après-ski locations are subject to the same rules as nightclubs. At Level 1 (current level), guests must show a valid negative PCR test result, proof of vaccination or proof that they have had and recovered from Coronavirus.
- From Level 2, the 2G Rule (access only for vaccinated people and those who have had and recovered from Coronavirus) will apply to nightclubs and après-ski locations. This regulation also comes into force seven days after the intensive bed occupancy rate exceeds 15% (300 beds).
 - Regulation for unvaccinated employees: mandatory wearing of an FFP2 mask and regular testing by means of a PCR test – at least three times a week.
- There will also be the option of making après-ski locations close earlier than usual and forcing them to remain closed at certain times of the day. In addition to the regional governments and the district administrative authorities, local municipalities are also able to impose stricter measures as part of the powers given to them in the Austrian Federal Coronavirus Act and the Austrian Federal Epidemics Act.

Ski lifts and cable cars

- 85% of ski lifts and cable cars are open-air and therefore pose a low risk of infection given the travelling time of less than 15 minutes. To ensure a safe winter season, additional measures will also be taken.
- Level 1-3: Since 15 September it has been mandatory for all people using ski lifts and cable cars to wear an FFP2 face mask.
- From the start of the season (October), the 3G Rule will be introduced:
 - When selling ski lift tickets, operators must check that each person has a valid negative test, is vaccinated or has had and recovered from Coronavirus.
 - Work is currently underway with the tourism industry to create a practicable way of implementing this rule in order to minimise disruption to ski lift operators and visitors (for example, checking the Coronavirus status of people automatically when they purchase their ski lift tickets online).
 - Visitors must carry their proof of test, vaccination or recovery with them at all times. Random checks will be carried out.
 - Visitors must continue to wear an FFP2 face mask on lifts and cable cars.

- If visitors fail to comply with the epidemiological measures, the ski resort will be closed.
- Measures going beyond Level 3 – in particular restrictions on unvaccinated persons – will be in line with the general measures.

Christmas markets

- Stage 1: Christmas markets as temporary venues (unlike standard food markets) will be subject to following regulations, which have been in place since 15 September 2021:
 - Admission only according to the 3G Rule (proof of a negative test result, proof of vaccination or proof that you have had and recovered from Coronavirus). Please be aware that lateral flow antigen tests are only valid for 24 hours. Work is being carried out to develop a practicable way of carrying out these checks to minimise disruption to operators and visitors.
 - Markets which expect to receive more than 500 visitors must obtain a permit from the local administrative authority.
- Level 2 and above. Do-it-yourself lateral flow antigen tests will no longer be accepted.
- Stage 3 means for Christmas markets that no lateral flow antigen tests of any kind will be accepted (visitors will require a negative PCR test, proof of vaccination or proof that they have had and recovered from Coronavirus).
- Measures going beyond Level 3 – in particular restrictions on unvaccinated persons – will be in line with the general measures.

Further information can be downloaded at www.sichere-gastfreundschaft.at. A comprehensive guide to the winter rules will also be made available soon.