



Austria's Grand Park Hotel: Snow, Spa and Cuisine at Its Finest

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If you are bored with the uniformity of five-star hotels and prefer personalized treatment, a daily gourmet food experience, sport followed by wellness to recover, you want to read on.

The 89-roomed [Grand Park](#), with its understated elegance and obliging service staff, is Bad Hofgastein's only five-star hotel. Its location is perfection, in the midst of the Alps, the gateway to world-class hiking and skiing. The hotel itself, Georgian in style, is located well for a skiing holiday and is only short walk to the bottom of the slopes.

The rooms are large with huge comfortable beds, a smart lounge area, Wi-Fi, flat screens with cable, a well-stocked mini bar, plus all the other mod cons required of 21st century living. All the rooms have balconies with breath-taking views of the mountains. The marble bathroom, with its Jacuzzi bath and rainwater shower is unadulterated luxury.

You could not possibly compare other spa hotels to the Grand Park as this one is pure decadence and includes magical spa treatments like Finnish saunas, steam rooms, aroma therapy rooms, hot tubs, a large panoramic indoor swimming pool, massages, beauty treatments and body wraps. It's one of the grandest spas you'll find in Europe and it's the only place in Bad Hofgastein where you're able to get a course of natural radon baths treatments – excellent for sufferers of arthritis and rheumatism.

You'll soon understand the need to dress for dinner when you're presented with award winning Chef Franz Huick's divine cuisine. He skillfully infuses haute-cuisine with traditional Austrian cooking, bringing to your table five-course of gourmet heaven – prepared with the freshest ingredients imaginable. The Austrian wine knowledge of maître d' Jatin Kothari is impeccable – ask after their Grüner Veltliner.

The Grand Park Hotel, set at the foot of the Alps, is in a class of its own. You couldn't ask for better. The property is luxurious, the spa indulgent and the staff, well, they're just world class.

High season rates start at €238. As a rule, they offer half board accommodation, so it may look pricey but bear in mind what's included: a sumptuous breakfast, afternoon tea and cake, healthy snacks in the Vital Lounge and a fine dining experience.

Where to Ski in Gastein: Avid skiers and snowboarders, carvers and freestylers all head to the [Gastein Valley](#), which has a total of 205 km well-groomed slopes and around 50 ski-lifts, ski trails and over 100 km winter walking trails. In its four ski areas, there are 64 easy, 117 intermediate and 24 difficult slopes and modern lifts suitable for all abilities. The area's special attraction is the 140m high suspension bridge (the highest in Europe) at the Stubnerkogel and the viewing platform of Glocknerview with its breathtaking views across Austria's highest mountain, the Grossglockner.

Gastein, along with Dorfgastein, Bad Hofgastein, Bad Gastein and Sportgastein (the highest winter ski resort in the Salzburgland with an altitude of 2,700 meters), is one of the five regions of the Ski amadé network with 760 km of slopes, 356 different pistes and 270 lifts.

Learn to Ski in Gastein: "I cannot" is a phrase that doesn't exist in Gastein. Here, patient and knowledgeable ski school teachers can have anyone master the sport – no matter what age. And those who think they are already king of the pistes will be amazed at the tricks the pros have up their sleeves.

Inexpensive Skiing: The ski pass for the Ski amadé applies to around 356 pistes of over 760km and 270 lifts in the region and in its neighbouring Styria. The Salzburg Super Ski Card offers great value season tickets. Children and teens have a junior weekend discount, meaning every Saturday and Sunday they get to ski at discounted prices of up to 35% off. Ski passes are available at the Grand Park Hotel's reception or directly from the [Ski amadé online ticket shop](#).

Fun Things to Do:

- What would a winter vacation be without a ride in a sleigh? Cuddle up in warm blankets, and glide on silent runners through a winter wonderland with only the snorting of horses and trotting of hooves heard in the soft snow.
- Zooming down the mountain on one of the Gastein valley's three flood-lit toboggan runs at night is tremendous fun for the whole family, especially when done on traditional wooden sledges that were once used to transport the farms' hay. Just be sure your cornering and balance are developed – the next bend is waiting.
- Being active at Gastein's altitude (+1,000m) is an endurance test, which makes cross-country skiing even more challenging. On both the left and right sides, the jagged peaks of the Hohe Tauern range, the clear Alpine air and the winter peace make the 45km marked and groomed trails a multi-sensory experience.



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