



Austria / Carinthia / Villach – Lake Faak – Lake Ossiach Region / Attractions:  
*lovely lakes. Caribbean colours. idyllic island. family. active. entertaining. roaring.*

## **Fabulous Lake Faak – Caribbean colours in Carinthia – uplifting turquoise!**

**LOVELY LAKES.** Crystal clear and completely clean – the luxury of swimming in drinking water. And the water temperatures? Up to 28 degrees. A little known fact is that Lake Faak in the Villach Region ranks among the warmest in Austria. It comes from the many hours of sunshine. After all, Carinthia's fifth largest lake is on the south side of the Alps. [www.visitvillach.at](http://www.visitvillach.at)

**CARIBBEAN COLOURS.** And that typical easy-going atmosphere. Yes, Lake Faak seems more tropical than Central European. Its changing shades of turquoise water, local colour, infectious good mood, unique island (even with a hotel), sparkling setting, beautiful backdrop and deep-red sunsets – all the ingredients for a carefree, dream holiday closer to home. Incidentally, the distinctive blue-green colour comes from fine particles of limestone. [www.faakersee.at](http://www.faakersee.at)

**IDYLLIC ISLAND.** Who says an island always has to be in the sea? In the Villach Region there is one in the middle of Lake Faak. With woods, tennis courts, historic lido building, large sunbathing area and the only island hotel in Austria. Four stars, spa and restaurant – also for non-residents! Getting there is easy by hotel motorboat, what else? Excellent choice of accommodation: from campsites, cosy B&Bs and farms to four-star hotels or ones catering specially for families with children.

**PICTURE POSTCARD.** Lake Faak. Picturesque. Mountains all round like carvings, the meadows like scented carpets dotted with colourful flowers. Unique: the reed belt with incredibly diverse fauna and flora. Well worth trying: exploring Lake Faak's 'Everglades' by canoe or kayak – a real adventure.

**FAMILY.** Loads of fun for families – interesting things to do, exciting children's playgrounds (such as in Arneitz on Lake Faak) and scenic lakeside beaches in Egg, Dobrollach and Faak am See boast shallow shorelines and water slides. And that is just the start of what Lake Faak offers families. Holidays for all the generations.



**ACTIVE.** Countless walks, hiking trails and bike paths are a good way to discover the scenic countryside. And on the lake? Why not try windsurfing, sailing and boating? Amid the majestic mountains, the craggy pyramid-shaped summit of Mittagskogel rises up behind. Located on the border between Slovenia and Carinthia, at 2,145 metres it is one of the highest peaks in the western Karawanken Range. Perfect for a power break on the mountain. If you enjoy cycling, a tour round Lake Faak or along the Drau cycle path is ideal ([www.drauradweg.com](http://www.drauradweg.com)). Lake Faak has also made a name for itself as an e-bike region. Or do you prefer more challenging mountain biking? One recommended route takes you from Lake Faak over the Jepca pass to Slovenia and back via the Italian town of Tarvisio. With spectacular Alps-Adriatic views and scenery. Want to improve your handicap? Your holiday in Carinthia will go with a swing at Schloss Finkenstein Golf Club ([www.golf-finkenstein.at](http://www.golf-finkenstein.at)). And if rock climbing is more your thing, we recommend heading for Kanzi – Kanzianiberg practice rock face. Another exciting challenge for testing your skill and courage: the ropes course at Taborhöhe ([www.hochhinauf.at](http://www.hochhinauf.at)) and NaturAktivPark on Lake Faak.

**ENTERTAINING.** In summer Finkenstein Castle Arena overlooking Lake Faak draws crowds, as it hosts a wide range of cultural events every year. The historic arena seats just under 1,200 people with the mountains of the Karawanken Range behind. For very special concerts and cabaret in a simply stunning setting. Applause: [www.burgarena.at](http://www.burgarena.at)

**ROARING.** Every year Harley-Davidson owners and visitors from all over the world meet for European Bike Week on Lake Faak. The largest motorcycle event in Europe sees 130,000 riders rumbling through the region. Its highlight: the Harley-Davidson parade. [www.europeanbikeweek.com](http://www.europeanbikeweek.com)



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## **Gerlitz Alpe and Lake Ossiach – magic mountain and wonderful water!**

**One for all.** Lake Ossiach arguably has it all: a natural shoreline with an atmosphere, peaceful beauty spots, a backdrop of magnificent mountains, stunning sunsets and top quality water in shades of emerald green. For action on the lake or rest and relaxation. Lake Ossiach to the northeast of Villach holds by far the most varied attractions in Carinthia. Rest and culture on the one hand, sports and events on the other. And the combination of Mediterranean and Alpine naturally appeals to everyone. [www.gerlitz.com](http://www.gerlitz.com), [www.ossiachersee.info](http://www.ossiachersee.info), [www.visit-villach.at](http://www.visit-villach.at)

**Swimming, sunbathing and sports.** Lake Ossiach is ideal for all kinds of water sports, with temperatures reaching up to 27 degrees in summer. Ship ahoy – the MS Ossiach cruise boat does the round trip several times a day until the autumn, stopping off at nine different spots on the lake. A landmark is the distinctive silhouette of Ossiach Abbey on the south side, a former Benedictine monastery. There are many ways of keeping fit on the lake, such as pedalling round it by bike or taking a leisurely walk on the Lake Ossiach Trail. Our tip: the Finsterbach Waterfalls. New: the Peterlewand practice rock face and Lake Ossiach ropes course. If you enjoy hiking, an attractive section of the famous Alpe Adria Trail takes you through a ravine here, directly from the mountain to the lake. Tired? When it comes to accommodation, you will be spoilt for choice around Lake Ossiach: top hotels, family-run B&Bs or 16 campsites in superb situations.

**Music on the lake.** To help your pulse get back to normal after all the action, why not listen to the beautiful music at the international Carinthian Summer festival. Or simply lie back, relax and unwind in the well-appointed spas to be found on Lake Ossiach. [www.carinthischersommer.at](http://www.carinthischersommer.at)

**Mountains and panorama.** If you climb Gerlitz Alpe, you will see Carinthia in a new light. Rising up on the north side of Lake Ossiach, the mountain is blessed with a wonderful mix of everything you could possibly want, making it highly popular: great circular routes, traditional alpine chalets, lovely Nordic walking trails, thrilling mountain go-kart rides, the best base camp for paragliding and start ramps for model aircraft.



**Walk or ride up.** The panoramic Kanzelbahn cable car and summit chairlift will take you up to just under 2,000 metres on Gerlitzten Alpe, often described by the locals as looking like a bald head because of its rounded top. And here the best panorama in Carinthia unfolds before you. Virtually all the lakes in the land lie at your feet. Time for 'television'.

**Between alpine rose and gentian.** Once at the top, you have a choice of routes. To be precise, there are no less than 146 kilometres of signposted footpaths, from the summit to the valley, chalet to chalet or round the mountain. A help for parents: many of the trails are also suitable for buggies.

**Family fun on the mountain.** Even more fun for families: swimming or splashing in the reservoirs, racing on Austria's first downhill go-kart track or practising acrobatic jumps on the Gerlitzten bungee trampoline for four. For thrills, try summer tubing or visit the adventure park. [www.adventurepark-gerlitzten.at](http://www.adventurepark-gerlitzten.at)

**Get out your poles!** Set off for the area around the Kanzelhöhe mid-way station where you will find several Nordic walking trails of various levels of difficulty. They are all signposted and with checkpoints. Top: guided trial walks with an instructor. No poles? No problem – you can simply hire them on site.

**On your bike.** The best thing about biking on Gerlitzten: it is downhill almost all the way. Because you are already at the top. So take your pick of the three dedicated routes. They mostly go right down as far as Lake Ossiach.

**Holy cow, it's the menu.** Feeling hungry? Not much wonder when you think of delicious Carinthian specialities like cheese-filled ravioli, fluffy stir-fried pancakes or cold platters. Luckily you can get refreshments at the alpine chalets, mountain refuges and restaurants in the hotels.

If you come across painted cows, don't worry – it's not a sign of altitude sickness. The animals act as a walking menu for the alpine restaurant beside the Neugarten lake. A quick look at the decorative items painted on the side of the cows (in natural dye) and you know what they'll be serving.



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## **Villach vibe – verve and vitality with shopping and regional specialities!**

**Alps-Adriatic centre.** If you come to Villach on holiday, you'll not only find it has a charming historic centre but also embodies the whole Alps-Adriatic area. Its proximity to Italy and Slovenia has given Carinthia's second largest town with 60,000 inhabitants a reputation of a Mediterranean free spirit with alpine lifestyle. Here you'll be served cappuccino instead of melange, tiramisu instead of Viennese chocolate cake. And Friulano instead of Veltliner. *Dolce far niente* is equally enticing on the River Drau – simply go with the flow.

**Cultural centre.** In the town of Villach you'll find everything your art-loving heart desires: interesting museums, art galleries, modern architecture, cultural gems and international design. Here modern art meets old masters, fine arts vie with traditional folk culture and historic venues host concerts and theatre productions. For true appreciation of the Alps-Adriatic area. Rating: worth seeing.

**Gourmet centre.** Tempting Villach – sample, savour, succumb. The way to your heart is through your stomach. Please, take a seat – on a sunny terrace in the historic centre, on the banks of the River Drau, in an elegant gourmet restaurant, in a traditional inn or a leafy garden restaurant. The food served not only reflects the proud traditions of Carinthian fare, but also pays homage to the entire Alps-Adriatic area. With delicious influences from Italy and Slovenia.

**Conference centre.** In the town on business and yet feel like you're on holiday? What could be better! The town of Villach with Carinthia's most modern conference centre has become an attractive business venue. Its convenient location close to Italy and Slovenia in the Alps-Adriatic area is another bonus. Irrespective of whether for conferences, congresses, presentations, corporate, social or cultural events – Villach proves it is sophisticated and competitive at a national and international level. [www.ccv.at](http://www.ccv.at)

**Drau centre.** The Drau or Drava winds its way through the Villach Region like a green ribbon. Carinthia's largest river is the most important lifeline and an exceptional recreational area. Very convenient: discovering the landscape by boat from the waterway. On day sails, round trips or themed cruises (jazz brunch, theatre on the boat etc.). [www.drauschiffahrt.at](http://www.drauschiffahrt.at)

The Drau cycle path always follows the river. It is 366 kilometres long stretching from the source near Dobbiaco in Italy to Maribor in Slovenia. The most attractive parts run through the Villach Region, well signposted, past many lakes



where you can have a dip. And if you don't feel like biking back – you can always take the bus or train to your starting point. [www.drauradweg.com](http://www.drauradweg.com) Incidentally, you can now leave your bicycle with the bike butler in Villach: he'll look after it for you while you are away and also give it a free service. Idyllic: canoe tours on the Drau. See the riverscape at close quarters from Villach to Völkermarkt.

**Feel good centre.** Humour and high spirits have crowned Villach with all kinds of superlatives. Twice a year the buzz in the town reaches peak level – naturally in a positive sense: at Villach Fair (*Kirchtag*) and Villach Carnival (*Fasching*). The figures to prove it – 400,000 visitors annually make Villach Fair the largest traditional festival in Austria, with 3,500 people in local costumes taking part in the parade. They consume some 10,000 litres of Villach Fair soup and 10,000 roast chickens. “*Lej, lei*” is the traditional greeting at Villach Carnival. Not to be missed: the grand parade with floats, around 4,500 in fancy dress and tens of thousands lining the streets and the popular Villach cabaret shows on television. At prime time, about two million viewers watch the footage. [www.villacherkirchtag.at](http://www.villacherkirchtag.at), [www.villacherfasching.at](http://www.villacherfasching.at)

**Shopping centre.** A small souvenir of your holiday, a stylish designer item, an alpine must have? In Villach opposites also attract each other in the world of shopping. You will therefore find high-end boutiques beside trendy jeans shops, well-stocked delicatessens next to independent book sellers, craft shops near shopping centres, exclusive shops selling Austrian fashions and colourful farmers' markets. We recommend the Atrio mall to both trendsetters and families. With its attractive shops, children's play areas and various food outlets, there is something to keep all age groups happy. Sophisticated? Naturally. Special? In every way. [www.stadtmarketing-villach.at](http://www.stadtmarketing-villach.at), [www.atrio.at](http://www.atrio.at)

**Advent centre.** There is no question of hibernating here in winter. And certainly not during Advent. However cold it may be, Carinthia's second largest town is bathed in warm light. It makes Villach full of magic, full of sparkle, full of surprises. Which means skating in front of the town hall, warming your hands around a mug of mulled wine, spending time in the cosy little cafés or simply watching the icicles grow. During Advent all of Villach turns into a wonderful world of festive sights and scents (traditional events, Christmas in the Park, food stalls on the main square). Year after year. [www.villacheradvent.at](http://www.villacheradvent.at)



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## **Villach's wonderful west: mountains, spas, panorama – the way to start relaxing!**

**Water, warmth, wellbeing – Warmbad-Villach: eye-catching KärntenTherme.** Head for Austria's most remarkable water park. Fed by hot springs, the KärntenTherme in Warmbad-Villach has that wow effect. And you can look forward to a unique combination of action and relaxation, spa and beauty treatments. Family fun is to be had on the water slides and in the Crazy River as well as the 25-metre sports pool, fully-equipped gym and spa that takes wellbeing to a whole new level. Tired and hungry after swimming? The Karawankenhof is only a walk in your bathrobe away. [www.kaerntentherme.com](http://www.kaerntentherme.com), [www.karawankenhof.com](http://www.karawankenhof.com), [www.warmbad.com](http://www.warmbad.com)

**Thermal spring pool.** An experience in itself: swimming in the legendary thermal spring pool at the Warmbad-Villach spa resort. Every day 10 million litres of spring water with a pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory effect bubble up through the pebble floor into the pool. And replace the existing water every three to four hours. What is more, excellent treatment facilities, five-star luxury, award-winning restaurants etc. [www.warmbaderhof.com](http://www.warmbaderhof.com), [www.med-warmbad.at](http://www.med-warmbad.at)

**Bad Bleiberg.** Ready for a new you? Welcome to Bad Bleiberg. Warm, soothing thermal water has been flowing here for decades. Instead of lead, the former mining village is famous for relieving stress, rheumatic complaints and respiratory diseases. In the comfort of the therapy centre. Or the famous Humanomed Bleibergerhof hotel. More health treatments? A relief to breathe freely – two underground health galleries open to the public. [www.bad-bleiberg.at](http://www.bad-bleiberg.at), [www.kurzentrums.com/bad-bleiberg](http://www.kurzentrums.com/bad-bleiberg), [www.bleibererhof.at](http://www.bleibererhof.at), [www.heilklimastollen.at](http://www.heilklimastollen.at)

**Terra Mystica, Terra Montana.** Exciting for the whole family: the show mine with multimedia effects in Bad Bleiberg is also one of the most popular attractions in Carinthia. The journey underground starts with a 68-metre-long miner's slide. Down you go! [www.terra-mystica.at](http://www.terra-mystica.at)

### **Dobratsch nature park – recreation on the mountain**

The best place to relax is outdoors. Like on Villach's nearest mountain, Villacher Alpe, at an altitude of 2,166 metres above sea level. It is also known as Dobratsch. Just another name for the massif due west of Villach. The area has been protected as a nature park for decades to preserve it for posterity – and of course for visitors – with its unspoilt countryside, wealth of flora and fauna,





amazing wonders of nature and vantage points for viewing, relaxing and enjoying the surroundings.

And on the summit? The huge radio transmitter towers up into the sky, Europe's two highest altitude churches cling to the rocks and the modern refuge (40 beds, restaurant, meeting rooms) stands proud. Highlights: lovely walks (all well signposted), a fascinating exhibition on local birds (at Aichingerhütte), an interesting geology trail (with fossils, karst and volcanic rock, Gail Valley crystalline and alpine shell limestone) and the unique rock garden with over 1,000 alpine plants. Worth booking: a fascinating wildlife watching trip with a park ranger.

You can drive up Dobratsch on the Villach Alpine Road – one of the most scenic panoramic routes in Austria. It runs 16.5 kilometres from Villach-Mölttschach to Rosstratte at an altitude of 1,732 metres. On route: many fantastic picnic spots and viewing platforms, fun children's adventure playgrounds, traditional chalets and welcoming mountain restaurants. Open all year round.

Enjoy ski touring, cross-country skiing and winter walking to your heart's content in Carinthia's oldest nature park. If anything, Dobratsch is arguably more attractive in the cold weather. Located above the fog boundary, it is absolute paradise for snowshoe walking (with cleared paths up to the summit) or simply soaking up some winter sunshine. Great fun: sledging on the groomed tobogganing hill at Rosstratte. There's a snow playground here too. Not just for the kids...

Villach Alpen Arena. A Nordic ski centre for ski jumping and cross-country. Top local athletes also train here on the internationally recognised race trail. The stats? Five kilometres long, floodlit, three kilometres served by snow machines. Cross-country skiing guaranteed therefore until the spring. Even then you don't have to stop: the trail is used for roller skiing in summer.  
[www.villacheralpenarena.at](http://www.villacheralpenarena.at)

For further information on the nature reserve and Villach Alpine Road visit [www.naturparkdobratsch.at](http://www.naturparkdobratsch.at), [www.villacher-alpenstrasse.at](http://www.villacher-alpenstrasse.at), [www.alpengarten-villach.at](http://www.alpengarten-villach.at)

### **Nötsch bathed in light**

It was the light. That unique light that fascinated the artists in Nötsch at the foot of Dobratsch. So much so that they formed a group, a centre of impressionist art known as the Nötsch Circle. The painters who belonged to it included such internationally recognised names as Sebastian Isepp, Anton Mahringer, Franz Wiegele and Anton Kolig. Today paintings by the artists and their followers can





still be seen in the Wiegele bakery and mill (the oldest still working in southern Carinthia) in Nötsch.

Visit the museum or go on a guided walk to gain a real insight into the lives led here by the Nötsch Circle artists. Other things to do? How about a horse and cart ride along the River Gail? Or a guided walk with local knowledge provided by a park ranger? If you want more adventure, you can canoe or raft down the Gail. Or get a bird's eye view of the impressive countryside from a small plane.

Prefer a more leisurely pace? 50 kilometres of signposted walking trails, bike paths and bridleways as well as ideal angling spots await you. Take your pick of the fun pool or nearby lakes for a swim afterwards. The Nötsch people enjoy a party, as St Joseph's market in March, the Gail Valley fair with barrel bashing on horseback in summer and the polenta festival in October all show.

For fans of fine arts: Museum des Nötscher Kreises in the centre of Nötsch. It is dedicated to the lives and works of the Nötsch Circle artists led by Franz Wiegele. They had a profound effect on Austrian art at the beginning of the 20th century with their very individual style of painting. [www.noetscherkreis.at](http://www.noetscherkreis.at), [www.naturparkdobratsch.info](http://www.naturparkdobratsch.info)

### **Arnoldstein – holidays beyond borders**

The Arnoldstein holiday region in the Gail Valley is literally on the border between Austria, Italy and Slovenia. As national borders become blurred, it is gaining significance as being at the interface between three of Europe's great cultures: Germanic, Romance and Slavonic.

Each of these unique cultures has left indelible traces. Traces you will find wherever you go in Arnoldstein and indeed in the region as a whole. One example is a cross-border walk that takes you through three countries. Or on the many cycle paths and mountain bike trails.

And in winter? Dreiländereck is one of Carinthia's most attractive ski areas: small and ideal for families. With perfectly groomed runs and a fun atmosphere. What more could skiers want? Away from the slopes, visitors can look forward to wonderful winter walks, an eight-kilometre-long toboggan run and cross-country ski trails covering over ten kilometres.

Is the thought of a holiday here enough to make your heart sing? The landscape is definitely inspiration for Grenzlandchor Arnoldstein, one of Carinthia's most famous choirs. More culture is to be had at Klosterruine Arnoldstein. The renovated monastery is now used as a cultural centre for concerts and events. Also not to be missed: the Fuggerau shot tower, heritage museum, churches, Pöckau waterfall and the interesting bunker museum on Wurzen Pass covering



an area of 11,000 square metres. [www.naturparkdobratsch.info](http://www.naturparkdobratsch.info), [www.3laendereck.at](http://www.3laendereck.at)

**Information and bookings:**

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