



Kitzsteinhorn

The Mountain

From 1961 until 1965, Austria's first glacier ski resort was developed on the Kitzsteinhorn – and to this day, it remains the only one in the state of Salzburg. Over the decades, one thing has defined the “Kitz” more than anything else: change – in climate, in technology, in what people seek.

- 1825** Part of the Glockner Group along the main Alpine ridge of the Hohe Tauern range, the Kitzsteinhorn is located within the municipality of Kaprun in the state of Salzburg. Its summit rises 3,203 meters above the Adriatic Sea. In 1825, imperial military surveyors designated it as a triangulation point for Austria's first official map. Hans Entacher, a native of Kaprun – 26 years old at the time and well-known as a *Rangler Hågmoar* (a traditional Alpine wrestler) – was hired as the mountain guide. The first ascent was a success.
- 1878** The Österreichische Touristenklub (Austrian Tourist Club) built the Salzburger Hütte and secured the ascent to the Kitzsteinhorn with fixed cables. In 1908, the Krefelder Hütte was opened by the Krefeld section of the Alpine Club.
- 1915** When World War I broke out in 1915, the Austrian army needed a mobile unit on skis for warfare in the Alps. The Kitzsteinhorn was chosen as a training and practice site – marking the beginnings of glacier skiing.
- 1945** Toward the end of World War II, U.S. troops occupied Kaprun and set up a summer ski school for their soldiers on the Kitzsteinhorn. After initial enthusiasm, American interest faded, and the ski area gradually slipped into obscurity. Eventually, the Kitzsteinhorn was rediscovered by Wilhelm Fazokas, a former ski instructor with the German Gebirgsjäger (mountain troops).
- 1965** In 1946, Wilhelm Fazokas, a native of Vienna and an engineer by training, came to Kaprun to work on the construction of a hydroelectric power plant. Within 15 years, he rose to become operations manager of the Tauernkraftwerke. In 1961, he was elected mayor of Kaprun. That same year, he began developing the Kitzsteinhorn with the vision of creating a glacier ski area. Construction of the first cable car to the Kitzsteinhorn began. In 1963, Gletscherbahnen Kaprun AG was founded, with Fazokas serving as chairman until 1978. On December 12, 1965, the completed cable car carried its first paying guests to what is now the Alpincenter. The following year, the Gipfelbahn (summit lift) also went into operation.

- 2000** For more than 25 years, the first alpine tunnel railway, GBK2, transported guests from the valley up to the Alpincenter – until tragedy struck on November 11, 2000: a fire broke out on board. The blaze claimed the lives of 155 people. The world mourned.
- 2001** From 2001 to the present, Gletscherbahnen Kaprun AG has invested approximately 220 million euros in new cable cars and lift systems, as well as in quality assurance and improvement. In 2001 and 2002, the Gletscherjet 1 and Gletscherjet 2 gondolas – a detachable gondola and a mono-cable gondola, respectively – were opened as replacements for the tunnel railway. In 2010, Gletscherbahnen Kaprun AG became the first mountain lift operator to be certified under ISO 9001, the standard for quality management systems. It also received certification under ISO 14001 (environmental management) and ISO 50001 (energy management).
- 2011** TOP OF SALZBURG officially opens: with it, the Kitzsteinhorn becomes home to the most elevated attraction in the state of Salzburg. At 3,029 meters above sea level, visitors find two panoramic viewing platforms – “TOP OF SALZBURG” and “National Park Gallery” – as well as Austria’s highest-situated movie theater, “Cinema 3000” Also part of the experience: the 360-m-long “National Park Gallery” tunnel, featuring six information stations offering insights into the nature, geology, and technology of the Hohe Tauern.
- 2012** Gletscherbahnen Kaprun AG and the Hohe Tauern National Park sign an open-ended cooperation agreement – aimed at continuous knowledge exchange and strong synergy effects. One result of this partnership is the ability to offer guided informational tours with National Park rangers on the Kitzsteinhorn, both in summer and winter – helping to raise environmental awareness among visitors.
- 2019** Connecting Kaprun to the Kitzsteinhorn via the Maiskogel by cable car – a dream cherished for generations in the Zell am See-Kaprun region. The 3K K-connection finally brought it to life: Salzburg’s first tricable gondola links up with the top station of the MK Maiskogelbahn and carries guests to the Langwied area. The K-ONNECTION cable car axis stretches 12 kilometers – from the center of Kaprun at 768 meters above sea level all the way up to the summit station on the Kitzsteinhorn at 3,029 meters. Nowhere else in the Eastern Alps is there a continuous lift line that covers more distance or overcomes a greater difference in elevation.