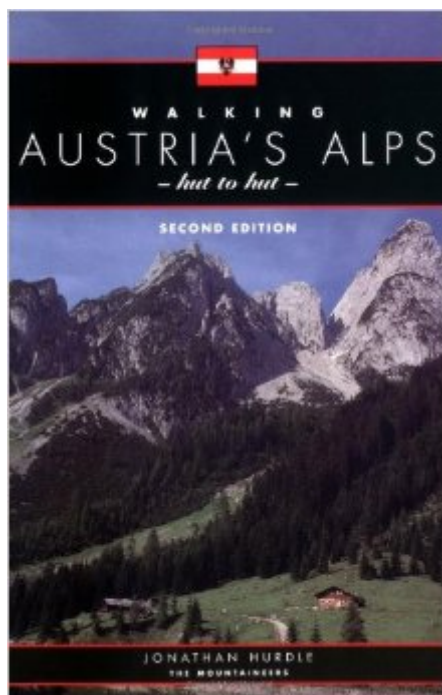


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Walking Austria's Alps: Hut To Hut 2nd Edition



Synopsis

Newly updated, Walking Austria's Alps offers 11 treks, ranging from four to 11 days in length, which include nightly stops at a mountain hut where walkers can eat well and sleep in comfort. The daily itineraries allow plenty of time for interesting detours, climbs on nearby peaks, or simply sitting to admire the scenery. 75 b&w photos, 40 maps.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

should not sell this book. I strongly recommend that readers should not use this book as a guide, for the reasons described below. I purchased this book several years ago and since have been planning a trip to Austria to do several of the hikes. I just returned from said trip. I completed the Karwendal tour this past week. This tour is described as a beginner hike, for those with only a modest bit of hiking or walking experience. I had this hike planned as a warm up. After which I intended to do another of the hikes, in the Zillertal region. I found the trail descriptions in the book to be grossly inaccurate, and to highly understate the actual conditions I found underfoot. There were numerous sections of steep scree fields, exposed cliff and ridge walks, and precipitous cabled ascents and descents, some sections of scrambling, and steep slopes covered in loose gravel. Needless to say, these conditions were certainly not for beginners. Throughout the book, the author makes reference to "nur fur die Gestube" signage to be found on the trail. This term means "only for the experienced". Sections of trail will be signed "nur fur die gestube", when the DAV or OEAV intended it to be attempted only by experienced "climbers", not walkers. These sections of trail will be marked as "steig" (climb) as indicated by black dotted lines on a AV map, or "klettersteig" (ladder climb) as

marked by red dotted lines on an Alpenverin (AV) map. These sections are not hiking trails in any but the most extreme sense. In particular, steig or certainly Klettersteig should only be attempted by fit individuals with some climbing training, a harness and a helmet. An ice ax to arrest a slide could also be usefull if there is any ice, or the potential for ice. The author downplays the danger and exposure associated with these sections of trail, which is, in my opinion, reckless and cavalier. The descriptions to be found in the book do not describe the conditions to be found, either for the "nur fur die gestube" sections or the sections without such signage. In addition, many sections or trail with significant exposure are unmarked, and are not described as containing cables, steep slopes or risk of injury in the text of the guide. These sections will come as a nasty surprise to those expecting the conditions described in the text and pictures. In one case I found myself literally climbing up a 75-80% incline, hand over foot, to the top of what turned out to be a knife edge ridge, with a sheer drop on the other side. In another situation, the trail called for descending down a 75-80% incline of solid rock, backwards, relying on a steel cable. In several cases, I followed a narrow trail along high, steep cliff sides, aided by steel cables laid into the rock. In the latter case, I was lucky to cross these exposed sections before a electrical storm came up. In addition, the hiking times stated in the text are often not realistic, particularly the descent times. I purchased the exact Alpenvereinkarte and have a good deal of hiking nad some climbing/scrambling experience in the states, having completed the Mount Whitney day hike and several other long distance back country hikes. This fact should sum up my experience. I encountered four other hikers on the trail, all of which came to the Karwendal based on this guidebook, and its promise of beginner conditions. I was the only one to finish the tour, the other four turned back early due to the hazardous conditions. All of us were highly dissappointed with this guide. In fact, the locals who were amongst us on this trek got a good laugh out of the description of this hike as a beginner's hike. It certainly should not be attempted by anyone who is not fit, or without significant experience high in the mountains, or with any fear of heights.

"Walking Austria's Alps, Hut to Hut" Jonathan Hurdle ISBN 0-89886-640-5 This book deals with a mountain world that exists above the picturesque towns, the beautiful lakes, and the majestic valleys of Austria. For the most part, it must be reached by foot. To those who are in reasonably good shape and can rough it a little, though, this book provides the insight to partake of that Alpine world in all its glory. Having visited Austria on several occasions and ridden by cable car near the tops of mountains such as the Kitzbuehler Horn and Grossglockner, I have glimpsed from up there the pale blue-white mountain peaks that lead off almost endlessly to the distant horizon. But to have

the opportunity to walk for days in those mountains, spending the nights in mountain lodges built just for hikers, that would be a fine experience. These mountain huts are probably unfamiliar even to those who are fairly familiar with Austria. These huts, Mr. Hurdle explains, are not shacks, but they are professionally run, clean, and comfortable mountain lodges, where hikers sleep on long mattresses in communal areas for as many as twenty persons at a time without regard to sex or age. Sometimes food is available, as well as wine and beer. Hut guests have also been known to sing. Altogether, there are about 900 such places in the mountains of Germany and Austria. The book describes eleven different tours of from four to eleven days. The hikes are mostly in the southern part of Austria where it borders with Italy. The hikes include tours in the Oetztal Alps, where the famous ice-age man, that Austrians call "Oetzi" was found, as well as a hike on Grossglockner, the highest mountain in Austria. There is a map for each tour, and a description including the appropriate hut in which to sleep for each stage. This is an interesting book, but perhaps it loses a little by focusing almost entirely on the details of the hikes. The general reader might hope for a slightly broader context that included a little more detail about the towns or areas near the starting or ending points of some of the tours. It is somewhat difficult, even for one familiar with Austria, to get one's bearings in terms of the familiar towns and highways of the country. One other shortcoming in this book is that the pictures are all in black and white. Color would have enormously increased the degree to which the beauty of the mountains is conveyed. On the whole, the book sparked my interest, and I hope, before long, to walk in the beauty of some of those high remote places.

Having used the book as a guide on some of the walks described in the book, I found it to be a top notch guide book as well as containing a number of useful suggestions. Anyone who is interested in going hiking in spectacular scenery should strongly consider Austria and Mr. Hurdle's book. Using the guide along with the detailed maps available everywhere in Austria is the perfect way to find your way around the mountains.

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