

Mountain hiking for beginners in the Tiroler Zugspitz Arena

An interview with mountain guide Riccardo Mizio

Last year many people discovered the appeal of the mountains. Enjoyment of nature and active recreation are more in demand than ever, with mountain hiking and gentle mountain climbing in particular becoming especially popular. However, the advice is that novices in particular should take one step at a time. We spoke with Riccardo Mizio, a mountain guide from the Tiroler Zugspitz Arena, about what newcomers should bear in mind on their first mountain tours:

Last summer it seemed that more people than ever discovered the mountains. What is your experience of this mountain sport trend?

“My feelings are mixed! On the one hand lots of people are coming into the mountains in order to enjoy the peace and nature. The downside, however, is that many of these visitors don’t really know how to appreciate nature. They leave behind litter and destroy the sensitive eco-system by not observing general rules of behaviour and simply failing to treat nature with due respect.”

It is above all novices with little experience who often set off on tour without preparing properly, lacking the correct equipment and without informing themselves about the conditions. What does the novice hiker/mountaineer need to bear in mind and where do the dangers lie?

“A hike or mountain tour starts at home in the living room with good tour planning. What is the route, what are the trail conditions, what kind of footwear do I need, what will the weather be like, what mountain refuges are on my route, how much do I need to eat and drink. Do I have insurance in case something happens? Do I perhaps need climbing equipment, a helmet and a climbing harness? It is now possible to find many tours already well planned online, including GPS tracking, route, elevation gain, etc. You can phone a local alpine school to enquire about the conditions in the area or to book a mountain guide for a certain stage. On the subject of emergency numbers: In Austria the mountain rescue service number is 140. Throughout Europe you can also dial 112.”

What advice do you have for beginners for their first mountain tour?

Every mountaineer needs to start out small. Many alpine schools offer an abundance of courses and training for all activities that make a mountain tour considerably safer. You shouldn’t simply set off into the mountains without experience. While it is very beautiful in the mountains, it can also quickly become dangerous with inadequate knowledge.”

How do you move correctly on the terrain?

“This always depends on the condition of the trails or the surface. You need to move differently with crampons than with snowshoes. Do I have a fall site, what is above me, what is below me, can other people cause rockfall? It is essential that you move in an upright stance and with a particular awareness of potential risk. Gradually and with practice you will then become more sure-footed. Therefore always start with easy tours.”

What equipment is essential for a mountain tour?

“Every rucksack should contain a first-aid kit, a charged smartphone, a bivvy bag for unavoidable emergency use, enough to drink/eat, appropriate clothing and a head torch.”

Is it true that you carried a bench up the Zugspitze last summer? Why did you do that?

“Yes, to mark the 200th anniversary of the first ascent I was permitted to carry a bench up Germany’s highest mountain, the Zugspitze. There were two of us so we were able to share the burden a little. We planned to take two days. Starting out from Ehrwald, we stayed in the Knorrhütte refuge on the first night and then continued to the summit the next day.”

Which tour in the Tiroler Zugspitz Arena would you recommend to beginners?

“There are lots of lovely tours and hikes in the Tiroler Zugspitz Arena. One of the most beautiful is undoubtedly the tour to Lake Seebensee, which is one of the most impressive lakes in Tirol. You simply have to see this spot. Starting out in Ehrwald, experienced climbers can take the newly-renovated Hoher Gang via ferrata, while it is also possible to take the Ehrwalder Alm cable car and then follow the gentle hiking trail to Lake Seebensee. It is also possible to continue for another hour up to the beautifully situated Coburger Hütte hut.

Why is the Tiroler Zugspitz Arena the perfect destination for a mountain holiday?

“The Tiroler Zugspitz Arena is in a stunning mountain setting. There are countless activities on offer, from simple hikes and mountain bike routes to extreme climbing experiences. Anyone who pays a visit is sure to come back again.”

PRESS RELEASE



Riccardo Mizio is a qualified state mountain and ski guide and a canyoning/gorge guide based at the Alpenschule Lermoos.

You are welcome to use the full interview or excerpts free of charge.

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Digital text and image material can be downloaded at www.hansmannpr.de.

The Tiroler Zugspitz Arena lies on the Austrian side of the Zugspitze in the Außerfern region of Tyrol, nestling between the Wetterstein Mountains with the Zugspitze to the north and the Mieminger range to the south. It comprises the villages of Ehrwald, Lermoos, Berwang, Bichlbach, Biberwier, Heiterwang am See, Lähn-Wengle and Namlos. The Zugspitze marks the border between Germany and Austria. It is accessible from both the German and Austrian sides of the frontier. From Ehrwald the Tiroler Zugspitzbahn cable car serves the western summit of the Zugspitze.