

# Danube trail IV

## Route IV - round hiking Strudengau

5 days / 4 nights

- ✓ **450 KM HIKING EXPERIENCE IN 24 STAGES AND 40 LAPS**
- ✓ **125 FABULOUS REST AND PANORAMA SPOTS**
- ✓ **WITH LUGGAGE TRANSFER**



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*Everything we need to stay healthy, nature has given us  
in abundance!*

**Sebastian Kneipp, German priest and naturopath of cold water therapy 1821 – 1897**

Hardly any other river opens up such diverse landscapes as the Danube. On its more than 2,850-kilometer journey from its source in Germany to its mouth in the Black Sea in Romania, it crosses ten countries, elegant cities, countless fascinating and aesthetic natural landscapes as well as diverse cultural areas. Opened in 2010, the Donausteig long-distance hiking trail clearly focuses on the experience of nature. The alternation

between spectacular narrow passages and wide basin landscapes, world-famous monasteries and historical-medieval towns characterizes the Upper Austrian part of the Danube.

On this hiking tour, the focus is on the Strudengau; it is a narrow and meandering valley of about 25 kilometers, formed by the Danube. The name derives from the many whirlpools and shoals of the Danube in this area of the river and was feared by boatmen in the past for this reason. The route through the steep notch valley in the Strudengau is varied. You pass rural cultural landscapes as well as typical forest areas or hike through wild gorges with water cascades; Again and again, wonderful views of the Danube flowing in the valley open up.

## Highlights

- + **INSIGHT INTO THE UNIQUE NATURAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE AREA OF THE STRUDENGAU**
- + **EXPERIENCE MAGNIFICENT MONASTERIES AND FASCINATING CASTLES ON HEIGHTS WITH GREAT VIEWS**
- + **FIND OUT THE HEALING POWER OF WATER**
- + **GORGE, NARROW VALLEY AND CANYON - HIKE THROUGH GEOLOGICAL FEATURES ALONG THE COURSE OF THE RIVER**
- + **HIKES OVER AN ATMOSPHERIC HILLY LANDSCAPE**

## Course of the hiking tour

### 1. Day: Individual arrival in Grein

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Upon arrival in Grein, you will receive your documents at the hotel. Right at the beginning of the journey, the medieval town invites you to take a stroll. In Grein, the Strudengau is reached, once very notorious among Danube boatmen because of the whirlpools that form here. The quaint historic city theatre - it houses the oldest secular stage in Austria - clearly shows the nostalgic charm to be admired here. Also worth seeing is the Maritime Museum in Greinburg Castle.

(1 night in Grein)

## 2. Day: Wild waters in the Strudengau

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Through the steep drop of the landscape towards the Danube, deeply cut streams flow towards the great river. The slope was and is often used by mills. This is what happened at the Gießenbachmill, which is passed at the beginning of today's tour. Before you reach it, there is a beautiful view of Werfenstein Castle. The mill at the entrance to the Stillenstein Gorge invites you to a small snack with local delicacies. The following section through the wildly romantic Stillenstein Gorge leads uphill. The Gießenbach, which sometimes overcomes splashing cascades and suddenly disappears completely, accompanies the hiker for a good part of the way. High above the Danube, you then roam through atmospheric mixed forests on historic paths, which are unfortunately becoming increasingly rare today. Down to the Danube again, St. Nikola is reached. In the church, the patron saint of sailors was thanked when the whirlpools were survived in one piece. A real hiking highlight awaits us on the last section to Sarmingstein with the historic Säbnich Castle. (1 night in Sarmingstein)

**Hiking: approx. 6 hours (16 km, ascent 567 m in height, descent 623 m in height)**

## 3. Day: Over the peaks of the Donausteig

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From Sarmingstein, a hiking trail leads up the steep flanks of the Danube through primeval hillside forests. Finally, the easternmost of the Donausteig peaks is reached, the rock pulpit of the Predigtstuhl, located high above the river. We are now moving away from the Danube, because the trail leads deep into the Aist-Naarn-Kuppenland. Again, the route follows a narrow valley, through which the Sarmingbach stream splashes idyllically. At the Dobmill we leave the Sarmingbach valley and walk towards the pretty village of Waldhausen. The magnificent collegiate church of the former Augustinian monastery with its early baroque collegiate church on the Schlossberg is the centre of this harmonious landscape and at the same time a symbol of the development of a remote region. The route continues through a varied hilly landscape until the ascent to the edge of the Waldhausen basin begins. Once at the top, wide views of the Danube valley and the alpine scenery to the south open up. The following route over a ridge is full of views, then it runs down again - to the Gasthof Aumühle in the Gießenbachtal.

(1 night in the Aumühle)

**Hiking: approx. 7 hours (18 km, ascent 749 m in height, descent 505 m in height)**

## 4. Day: Over panoramic heights and along soothing waters

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Right at the beginning of today's stage, the summit ascent to another mountain of the Donausteig, the Wetzelstein, begins. At first, you follow the meandering Gießenbach, but quickly gain altitude along forest and meadow paths. Once at the top, the view sweeps far over the backward hills to the Alps. The wildly romantic Kasmüllerbach valley brings us closer to the spa town we are now heading for. Floodplains with their typical tree and bush species are still largely preserved on many waters. The location of Bad Kreuzen must have been very suitable for therapy according to the teachings of Dr. Sebastian Kneipp. How else can it be explained that Austria's largest Kneipp garden with numerous herbs, aromatic and medicinal plants, a swimming pond and much more was created here. The view from another vantage point on the hiking tour, Kreuzen Castle, one of the largest fortifications in Upper Austria, is fantastic. Now the hike goes down a nature and culture hiking trail into the so-called Wolf Gorge. Information boards along the way vividly describe the bathing facilities of the former cold water sanatorium Bad Kreuzen. Wonderful light moods accompany us in a special way during this spiritual-looking hiking trail. At the end of the gorge, the path leads past the Speckalm, via Lehen and Mühlberg back to Grein on the Danube.

(1 night in Grein)

**Hiking: approx. 5 hours (16 km, ascent 379 m in height, descent 561 m in height)**

## **5. Day: Individual departure or additional nights.**

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For all those who would like to spend even more time in the Strudengau, additional overnight stays can be reserved. For the ones who want to conquer another of the seven peaks of the Donausteig, the ascent from Grein to the Gobelwarte is a good idea. Otherwise, the individual departure will take place.



## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

The tours have height differences up to max. 1000 m, the daily walking distance varies from 10 to 30 km, is without difficulty and easily manageable within 4 to 8 hours. The starting points and resting places are equipped with detailed information boards, which narrate illustrated Danube legends.

## Arrangement

- 4x** overnight stay in **\*\*/\*\*** Donausteig inns/hotels with breakfast buffet
- 1x** welcome video with explanations and information that you need for the tour
- 1x** snack in a traditional tavern with "Brettljause" and ½ l drink to choice
- 1x** Donausteig hiking book (1 x per room)
- 1x** map material (1 x per room)
- 3x** luggage transfer - max. 2 pcs./person and max. 25 kg/piece of luggage
- +** Daily service hotline from 8.00 am - 06.00 pm (even on weekends)

### Rates per person and arrangement in €:

	01.05. – 30.09.25
<b>**/**hotels double room with breakfast</b>	440,00
<b>Supplement for half board (min 2 course dinner)</b>	115,00
<b>Supplement for single room</b>	130,00
<b>Additional night double room with breakfast</b>	83,00
<b>Additional night supplement for half board</b>	31,00
<b>Additional night supplement for single room</b>	24,00
<b>Day of arrival</b>	daily

The local tax, also known as visitor's tax, is payable locally to the landlord; the amount depends on the resort and is between 1,00€ and 4,00€ per person per night. Children up to the age of 15 are usually exempt.

### Accommodations:

For the major part the chosen inns and hotels are official Donausteig Trail-Accommodations.

This means: - situated near the Donausteig Trail routes

- individual service for hikers
- mostly family-run businesses

#### Information for arrivals by car:

The parking place does not always situate next to the accommodation but on a public parking place.

(Possible costs have to be paid on spot)

#### Reductions for children sleeping in their parents' room (2 fully paying guests):

0 - 5 years: 100%

6 - 15 years: 30%

The standard terms and conditions of the Salzkammergut Touristik GmbH apply in the current version.

Rates and operating hours / timetables are subject to change

Our recommendations:

Get a travel cancellation insurance.

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## Informations

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For environmental reasons, we recommend arriving and departing by public transport (train/bus). We are happy to help you organise your train journey within Austria. Talk to us!

The **UNESCO World Heritage List** currently lists 1,154 natural and cultural sites from 167 countries worldwide. The excellent cultural and natural monuments have an extraordinary universal value that must be preserved in the long term. Austria is represented with 10 World Heritage Sites.





### Level of difficulty

Daily stages with up to 900 metres of ascent - Ø 4-10 hours walking time - medium to difficult terrain: Trails with major obstacles.