

Hallstatt

Hallstatt, Upper Austria is a village in the Salzkammergut, a region in Austria. It is located near the Hallstätter See (a lake).

Contrary to popular belief, Hall is most probably not the old Celtic name for salt (which was *saleinom*, the h-anlaut from historical s- being a characteristic of the Brythonic languages but not Continental Celtic). Rather, the name is derived from Old High German, and whatever its origin, the salt mines near the village were an important factor. Salt was a valuable resource so the region was historically very wealthy.

The village also gave its name to the early Iron Age Hallstatt culture and is a World Heritage Site for Cultural Heritage.

Until the late 19th century, it was only possible to reach Hallstatt by boat or via narrow trails. The land between the lake and mountains was sparse, and the town itself exhausted every free patch of it. Access between houses on the river bank was by boat or over the upper path, a small corridor passing through attics. The first road to Hallstatt was only built in 1890, along the west shore, partially by rock blasting.

However this secluded and inhospitable landscape nevertheless counts as one of the first places of human settlement due to the rich sources of natural salt, which have been mined for thousands of years, originally in the shape of hearts. Some of Hallstatt's oldest archaeological finds, such as a shoe-last celt, date back to around 5000 BC. In 1846 Johann Georg Ramsauer discovered a large prehistoric cemetery close by the current location of Hallstatt. In addition, one of the first blacksmith sites was excavated there. Active trade and thus wealth allowed for the development of a highly-developed culture, which, after findings in the Salzberghochtal, was named Hallstatt culture. This lasted from approximately 800 to 400 BC, and now the town's name is recognised world wide.

Hoher Dachstein

Hoher Dachstein is a strongly karstic Austrian mountain, and the second highest mountain in the Northern Limestone Alps. It is situated at the border of Upper Austria and Styria in central Austria, and is the highest point in each of those states. Parts of the massif also lie in the state of Salzburg, leading to the mountain being referred to as the *Drei-Länder-Berg* ("three state mountain"). The Dachstein massif covers an area of around 20×30 km with dozens of peaks above 2,500 m, the highest of which are in the southern and south-western areas. Seen from the north, the Dachstein massif is dominated by the glaciers with the rocky summits rising beyond them. By contrast, to the south, the mountain drops almost vertically to the valley floor.

Glaciers are uncommon in the Northern Limestone Alps, and those on the Dachstein are the largest, as well as being the northernmost and the easternmost in the whole of the Alps. The glaciers are retreating rapidly, and may disappear entirely within 80 years. The Hallstatt glacier withdrew by 20 m in the year 2003 alone.

The summit was first reached in 1832 by Peter Gappmayr, via the Gosau glacier, after an earlier attempt by Erzherzog Karl via the Hallstätter glacier had failed. Within two years of Gappmayr's success, a wooden cross had been erected at the summit. The first person to reach the summit in winter was Friedrich Simony, on 14 January 1847. The sheer southern face was first climbed on 22 September 1909 by brothers Irg and Franz Steiner.

Salzkammergut

The Salzkammergut is a resort area east of Salzburg, Austria, spanning the federal states of Upper Austria, Salzburg, and Styria. The name Salzkammergut means "estate of the salt chamber" and is so-called because it belonged to the Imperial Salt Chamber, the authority charged with running the precious salt mines in the Habsburg empire.

With its numerous lakes and mountains, the Salzkammergut offers many opportunities.

The Katrinalm, an alpine pasture, is found near Bad Ischl. Typical Salzkammergut culinary specialties include dishes such as Kaiserschmarrn (cut-up and sugared pancake with raisins), Krapfen (similar to donuts) or Lebkuchen (gingerbread). It was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1997, with this description: "Human activity in the magnificent natural landscape of the Salzkammergut began in prehistoric times, with the salt deposits being exploited as early as the 2nd millennium B.C. This resource formed the basis of the area's prosperity up to the middle of the 20th century, a prosperity that is reflected in the fine architecture of the town of Hallstatt."

Source: -- Wikipedia [<http://www.wikipedia.org>]