

# AUSTRIA

## HOHE TAUERN N.P.



May 24 - 31, 2025

Austrian high Alps | marmots | mountain birds |  
alpine flower meadows | waterfalls and lush  
forests | traditional alpine farms

7 nights, GBP 2900

# CONTENTS

---

our formula

the location

what's on offer

our venue

specifics



# our formula

**F**OOD AND PHOTOGRAPHY RETREATS combines a high standard of hospitality with the sharing of professional photographic experience accumulated over 30 years. We create a home-from-home for you in the large comfortable houses we rent for the Retreats, freeing you of the restrictions of hotels. Over the course of the week, this space and our field locations become the settings for learning, sharing and enjoying good food and conversation with like-minded people.

Maybe it helps that we enjoy our work with guests. We take a lot of pleasure in seeing the lights go on in the eyes of someone who realises they have just made something special. Or who has understood a setting properly for the first time. Or whose expression is pure delight as a plate is set down before them.

We enjoy sharing because, in one way or another, it always rewards. We know how ideas go out into the world from our Retreats, grow and develop with other guardians only to return to us later, mature and fully-formed. And how recipes are taken home and meals recreated for the enjoyment of friends and families we will never meet.

We hope you will join us to make some new stories together.



*Charlotte and Niall Benvie, your hosts and directors of Food and Photography Retreats Ltd.*

the location



**T**HE HOHE TAUERN IS FAMED as the largest national park in the Alps, extending to almost 1900 sq. km. Of this, around two-thirds is strictly protected, where no economic development is allowed. It boasts more than 300 peaks over 3000 m and rises, at its highest point, to the summit of Glossglockner, at 3798 m. There are waterfalls and alpine lakes, pastures and alpine wildflower meadows. Over 330 glaciers cover 126 sq. km, although they are shrinking by the year. Its biological richness and integrity helped to gain it a Category II IUCN listing 20 years ago, marking it out as a national park of international significance. This is important not only for the 3500 plant and 15000 or so animal species (mostly invertebrates) that are found in the Park but for the economic welfare of the people who live outside the strictly protected core region.

Importantly for us, some of the most interesting and charismatic species are easily accessible, meaning less time hiking and more time photographing. If we're lucky we may also have a chance to photograph one of the bearded vultures re-introduced into the Park, originally, in 1986 or the more numerous griffon vultures.

This Retreat isn't only about wildlife photography and the Park's extraordinary features has plenty to keep the landscape photographer busy too not to mention the extraordinary diversity and abundance of alpine flowers, many of which are great rarities in the UK.









# what's on offer

**T**HIS SEVEN NIGHT SUMMER RETREAT is based at the village of Heiligenblut in the southern Alps. Charlotte and her team will look after you and provide you with lovely meals, as well as joining us in the field whenever possible. From here, we have easy access, via the Großglockner Hochalpenstraße, which runs through one of the most spectacular mountain landscapes in Europe. There are plenty of interesting spots we know and places to pull in!

- Marmots. Here, they are habituated to people and will allow a close approach. Bring a wide angle
- Ibex. Normally shy, these icons of the Alps are more tolerant of people than normal here, sometimes giving the opportunity for some striking portraits
- Mountain landscapes. From grand vistas featuring ice-honed summits and glaciers to alpine meadows, the Hohe Tauern is the largest Alpine National Park and features every upland landscape type
- Alpine flowers and butterflies. It's still early in the season so expect the first flush of exquisite alpines, in rare abundance
- Lush coniferous forests lower down with streams and woodland plants including Martagon lily
- Agricultural landscape shaped by traditional farming practices where hay is still cut by hand with a scythe
- Alpine birds including snowfinch and alpine chough.

**Y**OUR ACCOMMODATION WILL BE in the *Oberer Gollmitzer*, a traditional alpine chalet providing comfortable modern accommodation. surrounded by hay meadows and forests. Have a look at their [website](#) to see the accommodation and setting. On a south-facing slope, it perches above the attractive village of Heiligenblut, dominated by the striking Church of St Vicent. In the background is Austria's highest peak, Grossglockner, that rises to 3798 m (12,460 feet) OD. It is a truly spectacular base for our stay.

Good food is at the heart of our Retreats, from breakfast through to after-dinner chocolates, all made by Charlotte. We take the view that any day is made better by the prospect of a lovely meal at the end of it. We eat mainly vegetarian food at home but the range broadens to encompass all tastes on Retreat. Charlotte uses local ingredients, when they are available, in dishes that are delicious and imaginative without being fussy. Food allergies and intolerances are catered for sensitively when notified in advance on the booking form. Expect to eat well, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And in between times too.

Most of your evening meals will be taken at the Oberer Gollmitzer and it may be warm enough to eat outside from time to time. When our dawn destination is a little further than usual from our base, we will have a snack before we leave and eat breakfast on return. Since it's summer, we'll normally have lunch in. Either way, our meals are fitted in around our photography, not vice-versa!





**Price: GBP 2900 per person**

**starts: 17:00, 24th May 2025, finishes 09:00, 31st May 2025**

*What's included:*

- 7 nights' accommodation at Ferienhof "Oberer Gollmitzer", Untertauern 1, 9844 Heiligenblut am Großglockner, Austria
- All meals
- Transfer from and to Mallnitz Obervellach railway station
- Transportation and tolls during the Retreat
- Tuition from Niall

*What's not included:*

- Your travel to and from Mallnitz, from home
- Alcoholic drinks
- Travel insurance
- Any entry admissions.

### **To book**

Visit [www.foodandphotographyretreats.com](http://www.foodandphotographyretreats.com), click on the MAKE A RESERVATION button in the top right, scroll down to read our Terms and Conditions, then complete and send us the booking form below. At that point will you be invoiced for the deposit, amounting to 19% of the total. The balance is due 5 weeks before departure.

## Travel

Our pick up and return point for guests who are not driving is the Mallnitz-Obervellach Bahnhof (railway station), about one hour from our base. If you are flying to Austria, we recommend that you go into Innsbruck, take a taxi to the main railway station (Hbf), then a train to Mallnitz. But you can also do so from Salzburg. And there is a rail link from München to Mallnitz Obervellach. If you wish to drive, then set Waze or a sat-nav for Ferienhof "Oberer Gollmitzer", Untertauern 1. Once in the village, turn off towards the Panoramahotel Lärchenhof and follow the road past it (even although it looks like a dead end on approach). Zig zag through the forest on the single track road for about another few km, following the signs for Ferienhof Oberer Gollmitzer. Allow 10 - 15 minutes from the village.

## Where we will go

Most of our photography will be done within a 40 minute drive of our base. We will use sections of the famous Großglockner High Alpine Road to access spectacular views of the mountains, as well as the get to the alpine animals and plants this Park is famous for. So, there will be a combination of short drives and relatively easy walking, generally of less than two km.

We will make short trips on foot to the meadows around the house, as well as round the nearby village of Heiligenblut. There is plenty of scope for undisturbed hiking from our base.

We will visit two waterfalls and their woodlands each within ten minute's drive of the village. The climbs to the waterfalls are quite taxing, but the distances are short and there are riverside alternatives if you don't fancy the climb.

## The daily routine

Whatever we are shooting, it tends to look better in the early morning or late afternoon when low-angled light shows relief and colours better. With dawn at around 05:30 and the sun leaving the summits at just after 21:00, it's potentially a long day. But if we shoot at dawn, there will be a chance rest after breakfast. We will have lunch in, then set off again. If we are going out for an evening shoot, we will eat dinner early, at about 17:30.

The plan for the following day is published at dinner, outlining the weather forecast, the locations and ideas for the next day, drive times, walking distances, where and when we'll eat and what gear you'll probably need. Experience has taught that it's more productive, and satisfactory for you, to have a plan to follow than make it up as we go along. The dinner menu is published at breakfast time so that you have a chance to flag up if there is something planned that you can't manage to eat.

We've learned over the years, too, just how much guests value being able to discuss the work they are creating, with Niall and other guests and to this end, we'd urge you to bring a laptop.

Bandwith-permitting, we set up a Zoom meeting within the room to share our pictures; it's a convenient way to create a temporary network.

### **Safety**

We take your safety seriously during our Retreats. At locations with known risks, such as drop-offs, slippery tree-roots, busy roads etc., we will draw your attention to them before we leave the vehicle. Thereafter, you are responsible for your own safety. We provide guests with a hi.-vis. vest to attach to their camera pack; it makes you, and it, easier to locate. We also issue guests with two-way radios in order that we all may keep in touch in town or in other areas where the group scatters. This also makes it easier to access help or guidance from Niall. We do not recommend leaving any equipment in our vehicle when parked up away from our guest house. While there is a little more walking than on some of our Retreats, we take it at a comfortable pace.

### **COVID**

As of early 2024, most parts of the world are judged to be in a "post-pandemic" phase and we reflect the more relaxed attitudes towards the virus. Nevertheless, should any problematic new variants emerge, we ask guests to respect new measures to limit its spread and may ask for evidence of fresh vaccinations.

### **Spending money**

You can use your credit card to withdraw €'s in the local towns.

### **Insurance**

*It is a requirement of booking that guests provide evidence of personal travel insurance to cover cancellation and curtailment, medical and emergency expenses (including repatriation), personal accident, injury and death in addition to loss of/damage to luggage and possessions, personal possessions and flight cancellations/ delays. We recommend you speak to your travel insurer to determine what COVID-related cover they provide.*

### **Passport and visa requirements**

A passport valid for at least six months beyond the length of stay is required. No visa necessary for EEA/ Swiss citizens. UK citizens should check on the latest requirements for travelling to mainland Europe. If you are a British driver, you may need an international driving permit. And all non-Austrian drivers need to display a vignette on their car windscreen.

### **Language**

The German-speaking Austrian owner of the guest house also speaks English well.

## Climate

We're arriving near the start of the official "summer" season but owing to the altitude, and in spite of the often sunny conditions, we can expect daytime temperatures not to exceed 20°C

## Clothing

It will certainly be cool in the early morning and in the woods so bring an extra, lightweight layer of clothing. In addition to your normal casual clothes:

- Lightweight trousers or shorts
- A thermal under-layer
- Long sleeved shirt/tee-shirt
- Light wool jumper
- Lightweight waterproof jacket and trousers
- Walking boots in addition to trail shoes
- Sun hat and sun screen
- Light-weight warm hat
- Pair of light gloves
- Light scarf or buff to protect your neck from the sun
- Slippers for the house

## Photographic equipment

Bring as much of your photographic equipment as practical. You could end up using any of it, although realistically, a macro lens and mid-range zoom and longer telephoto will receive most use. For wildlife photography, bring the longest lens you have (although both the choughs and marmots are approachable, snow finches less so). Also:

- Ideally, a laptop with your usual processing software
- A tripod: there's no avoiding it!
- If you can, a beanbag to support a long lens for wildlife photography
- A remote release
- A means of backing up your images, such as a large capacity memory stick
- A head torch in case we're out after dark
- A rain-cover and towel to dry the camera.

## About us

After many years leading tours and workshops for other companies in the UK and abroad, we incorporated Food and Photography Retreats in 2018. Our offer combines the cultivation of your creativity in attractive locations with great hospitality, conversation and food.



Niall has been a professional photographer, writer, designer and guide for 31 years with a massive publication record including seven books and hundreds of articles. He has been involved in several of the biggest outdoor photographic initiatives of the last 15 years, including Meet Your Neighbours, Wild Wonders of Europe and 2020VISION.

For 28 years, Charlotte combined a career in the Civil Service with freelance catering and hosting roles before coming to work with husband, Niall. Guests value not only her expertise in the kitchen and dining room but her attention to detail and her warmth. She has a keen eye for a picture too. She is a trained chocolatiere.

**Contact Niall and Charlotte:**

Telephone: +33 6 03 67 81 26 or +33 7 52 62 06 00

e-mail: [office@foodandphotographyretreats.com](mailto:office@foodandphotographyretreats.com)

Food and Photography Retreats Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland: SC596219.

VAT registration 424 9805 79



*with the Benvies*



**NIALL  
BENVIE**  
artwork



