

HOLIDAY WITH DOG: HOTEL BOOM IN AUSTRIA

Pets and especially dogs play an important role in the everyday life of many people. In the Austrian region Carinthia some hotels and businesses specialize in holiday packages with dogs – the demand proves them right.

Theme hotels for certain target groups are not really new: there are children's hotels, adult hotels from 16 years of age, wellness hotels or sports hotels. There are specially tailored offers for almost every class of guests. **The demand for establishments that have special offers for pets is correspondingly high.** Because more and more holidaymakers want to take their pets with them on holiday and not leave them in the hands of an animal sitter or pet boarding house.

Holiday with Dog Is Unique

With the Resch family from Lustenau in Vorarlberg, it was clear that Bulldog James would come to Lake Wörthersee – no matter what the cost. Franz Resch: "First of all, the corona crisis was the decisive factor, because we are normally holidaying in Italy, but now, thank God, we have to go on holiday in Austria. There was no question at all for us, we simply had to take the dog with us. He is still a pet, and we do not want to exaggerate that either, but what is necessary will be done."

Ten euros a day without food is the cost of James' stay. Six of the 32 rooms in the hotel are designed for "dog families", with their own garden and a welcome package for the four-legged friends.

Fixed Bathing Times for Dogs

According to an internet booking platform, the hotel is one of the most popular dog hotels in Carinthia. For the benefit of all guests, humans and dogs, there are special rules here, says hotelier Marie Sager: "We have special bathing times for dogs in the high season so that you don't collide with other bathers. In the morning and in the evening, there are fixed dog bathing times where the four-legged friend can then go into the water".

30 establishments in Carinthia have specialized on guests on holiday with the dog. Twice as many are at least dog-friendly, according to the Chamber of Commerce. Further offers are to follow, says Wolfgang Kuttinig from the Carinthian Chamber of Commerce: "In the hotel sector there are already excellent showcase models, but in the area of excursion destinations and spas there is still room for improvement. We know this from neighboring countries, where beach sections or separate loungers are available explicitly for the dogs".

Holiday with Dogs as an Economic Factor

It is not possible to carry the animals everywhere at the moment and it often costs something: 3,50 Euro for the trip to the Gerlitzten per dog, for the increased cleaning effort. The trend towards family holidays with dogs is also noticeable in other hotels. There are always peak times when several dogs are accommodated in the same hotel. **About five per cent of families travel with a dog.**

Not only relaxation but also shared experiences are required during the stay. So the walks and excursions organized by the hotel are gladly taken up by the guests with their four-legged friends.

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