

Escape Travel | Culture | Adventure



**FUN FACT**  
Men are said to outnumber women here by around nine to one – leading some to call it 'St Manton'



Three nights with Scott Dunn's Ski Weekends, including half-board accommodation, flights, transfers and champagne, costs £995, [scottdunn.com](http://scottdunn.com)

**Top that:** Four new lifts, in St Anton above, have made Arlberg the world's fifth largest ski area

# LIFT OFF!

With new ski-lifts opening up more piste, Austria's St Anton just got bigger and better says **Abigail Butcher**

**M**Y legs are exhausted. After a day jumping off every little cliff and cornice, it takes all my strength to turn. Despite the fact it hasn't snowed in three or four days, our guide Frank finds fresh powder that

finally makes those painful turns easier. We're on the last run of a magnificent off-piste day, aiming for St Anton's famous MooserWirt, which is basically a nightclub on the slopes.

Sensing his group is shattered, Frank puts on a spurt of speed, pushing us to the very end.

It's a fitting finale to the past four days. We've been staying in St Anton and skiing around the Arlberg region, now Austria's largest linked ski area following the installation of four new lifts that connect St Anton and St Christoph with Lech, Zürs, Stuben and Warth-Schröcken.

A day's skiing costs a reasonable £44 and the project itself cost a cool £38million. But Arlberg will reap the benefits – at 305km, it is now the fifth largest ski area in the

world (on a par with Tignes-Val d'Isère in France) and the lifts mean they've been able to cut 120 daily bus journeys between resorts.

With its swanky new black gondolas – expect to queue, though – the Arlberg has also created a new 'Run of Fame' around the whole area – a 65km route from the southernmost point in St Anton to Warth in the north and back again, which is doable in a day.

The new lifts have also made access to the area's incredible, world-famous off-piste even easier. I spent three days hooning around the slopes with friends before dipping my ski tips into the off-piste powder on the last day of a four-day break. Frank equipped me with an avalanche transceiver, shovel, probe and backpack before giving me a run for my money

down couloirs – big, open powder fields – and between trees.

As a newcomer to St Anton, I was blown away by the skiing and the scenery – wherever you are on the mountain, the views along the Arlberg valley are breathtaking.

As is the nightlife. Getting home before getting drunk in this resort is an art form and something I didn't manage (see sidebar). So beware of expending too much energy on the slopes – you'll need just as much for the bars.

One of the most exciting aspects of skiing in St Anton, though, is its accessibility. Innsbruck airport is just over an hour's drive away and because of this short transfer, the resort is ideal for a weekend away, staying in typical Austrian B&Bs, luxury Scott Dunn catered chalets or the cool new Andes-Alps four-star Hotel Andino (from £94 per night, [andinohotel.at](http://andinohotel.at)).

I may have to go back before the season is out – the Arlberg region has been experiencing some of the best conditions in the Alps this winter and it's bang-on for high-adrenaline fun.



**Weekender:**

Hotel Andino

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## INSIDER'S GUIDE ST ANTON NIGHTLIFE

### Dance in your ski boots

The MooserWirt has Europop, Jägerbombs and dancing on tables. Beers from £5.43, [mooserwirt.at](http://mooserwirt.at)

### Soak up the beer

The burgers at Galzig Bistrobar are a must and your bill will be attached to a witty take-home postcard. Burgers from £13, [galzigbistrobar.at](http://galzigbistrobar.at)

**Drink** Moose (themoosedrink.com, £34.99), a herbal alpine spirit made in St Anton, is an



**Eat, drink and dance:** St Anton upmarket version of Jägermeister launched this season.

**Wear** Anything except your ski boots after 8pm, when bylaws prevent bars from allowing them.

### Eat something different

Food On Fire, serves up charcoal-grilled Tyrolian-Peruvian cuisine. Mains from £8.90, [andinohotel.at](http://andinohotel.at)

### Party till dawn

Try Piccadilly on Dorfstrasse, which has live music after 9pm – then things get messy. Beers from £4.16, [hotel-post.co.at](http://hotel-post.co.at)

### Fine dining

Enjoy the tasting menu at Hotel Tannenhof in Nasserein, with chef of the year James Baron. Three courses £72, [hoteltannenhof.net](http://hoteltannenhof.net)