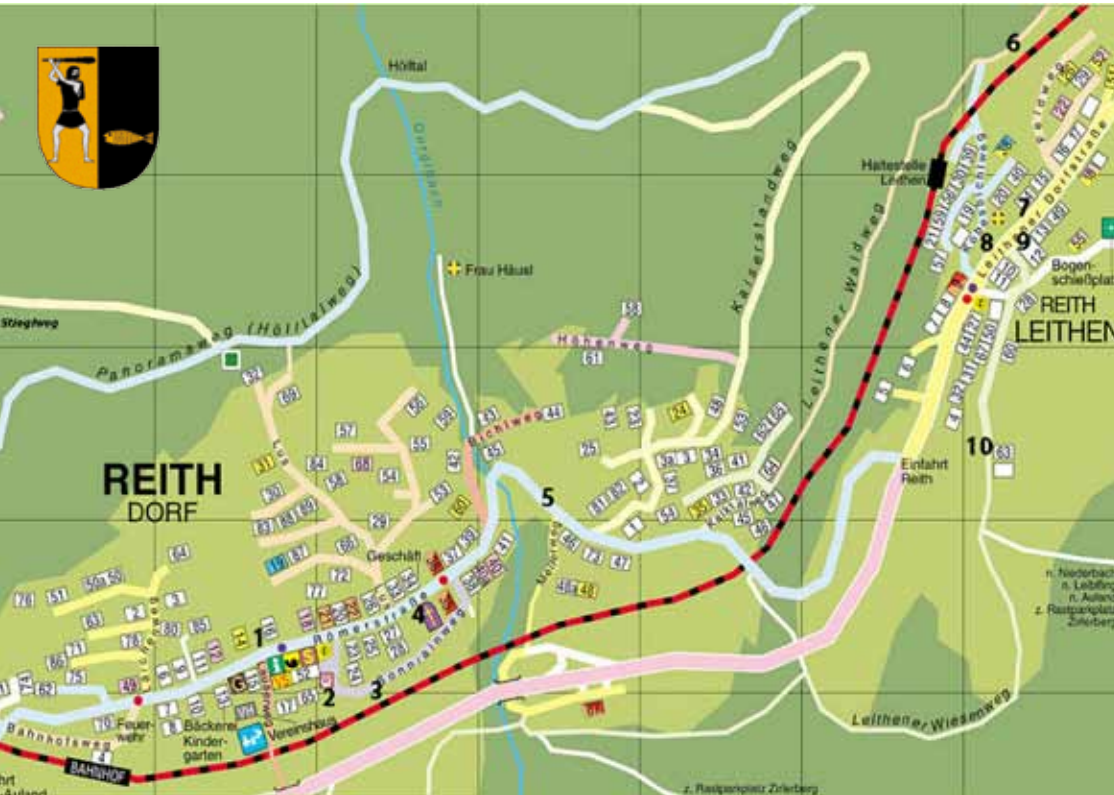




REITH
SEEFELD



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CULTURE HIKING TRAIL

Historical monuments
and culture in Reith



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Station 1: INFORMATION OFFICE REITH

Reith was first documented in 1095. Count Berchtold von Andechs donated part of the so-called Scharnitzwald, today's Reith, to the Benediktbeuren monastery in 1157. The monks started to clear (German: roden) the forest, from which activity the name Reith originates. A brief history of our municipality and an explanation of its Coat of Arms can be found on the information board next to the information office.

Station 2: MUSIC PAVILION

Between the years 1914-1918, all men fit for military service were sent to the front line. Thirteen men from Reith never returned home from World War I. During the Second World War (1939-1945) at least 15 men from our community were killed in action. Towards the end of the war, the village was utterly destroyed. Six heavy bombing raids were carried out over the area and destroyed the iron bridge over the Gurgelbach. The 'bombing year' 1945 was a genuine catastrophe for Reith. Twenty-two houses were completely destroyed. A further 12 houses, the church and the school were badly damaged. Only after reconstruction the form and shape of the village changed significantly, when some people were re-located outside the over-populated village.

Station 3: 'SUNNROAN' TRAIL

The Karwendelbahn was built after the plans of the Innsbruck architect Josef Riehl and is still considered to be a masterpiece of engineering skill today, taking its place among the great bridges and tunnels of the era. Our village is in the immediate vicinity on the so-called 'Sunnroan' - the sunny slope. Enjoy the splendid view over the Inntal...

Station 4: PARISH CHURCH

Since 1391 the church in Reith is known as 'St. Nikolaus Kirchlein'. Our patron saint, St. Nikolaus, has long been treasured by the local inhabitants. A statue dedicated to him was erected by the side of the road. The nave and tower were newly built between 1832 and 1835. Unfortunately, a large fire completely destroyed the church and the rest of the village in 1892. Particularly beautiful wall paintings were added during the reconstruction between 1911 and 1921. After the bombing raids in 1945, it was re-built again, and completed in 1950. The interior of the church was comprehensively renovated in 1989/90 and now appears in its full splendour once more.

Station 5: MILESTONE

In 1703, Bavarian soldiers plundered the village, toppling the statue of St. Nikolaus from its pedestal and smashing it. Ever since then, the milestone here stands as a memorial and a warning. The milestone is beside the village road in the direction of Leithen where the road forks to the right, to Meilerhof.

Station 6: VOTIVE SHRINE TO OUR LADY

Right at the upper border between Zirl and Leithen, a votive shrine with a beautiful carved statue of Our Lady stood for centuries. After 1900, the wood of the shrine began to deteriorate, so the young farmers from Leithen erected the plaster columns which can be seen today. It is said that someone tried to examine the carved statue with a knife and blood began to flow from the wood, so he immediately stopped. The Madonna and Child statue was stolen in 1972.

Station 7: ST. MAGNUS CHAPEL

The St. Magnus Chapel in Leithen used to be in the middle of the village next to a milestone and, according to legend, is even older than the church in Reith. The chapel was dismantled in 1980 and re-built in its original form just 50 meters to the north, on a small hill. St. Magnus's Day, 6 September, has always been Leithen's Church Day.

Station 8: 'GASTHOF HIRSCHEN' - INN

In Reith, there are several traditional inns. One of them is Gasthof Hirschen in Leithen. It is a genuine old Tyrolean inn, which offers products from its own farm on the menu.

Station 9: HOUSE OF THE 'GIANT'

Legend says that the giant Thyrsus was gravely ill at the time of the plague. In order not to pass the infection on to his neighbours, he allegedly hid in the vaulted cellar of his house. (When the road was widened after World War II, such a cellar was dismantled in the House of the Giant on the village main road.) His food was brought to him by passing it through the cellar window. He recovered, and according to legend, Leithen was protected from the plague for that reason.

Station 10: PLAGUE COLUMN

A column dating from 1637 can be found at the village border of Leithen in the direction of Reith. It is possible to recognise pictures showing the painful crucifixion and Saints protecting people from the plague. It is a memorial of the Thirty Years War (1618-48), when troops passing through brought the plague into the country, and which was the scourge of the population for three years. A prosperous Innsbruck businessman escaped from the city and came to Leithen with his family. He, too, became gravely ill and feared he had been infected with the plague. He swore to erect a column if he recovered.



MUNICIPALITY COAT OF ARMS

A shield divided in gold and black, the golden field on the left shows a giant dressed in black with his arm raised to strike. A golden fish facing to the left appears in the lower right part of the black field. The coat of arms depicts the legend according to which the armour-clad giant Haymon, who came from the southern part of the country, killed the giant farmer Thyrsus in a duel. While he was dying and his blood was spreading over the mossy ground of the forest, he is said to have shouted: 'When blood spurts, it's good for beast and man!' The inhabitants of the area link this legend to the existence of oil shale found around Reith and Scharnitz. The golden fish represents the oil shale and petrified marine animals deposited in the geologic Mesozoic, Trias and Jura eras, and are the basic substance of the oil-containing parts of the rock. The sulfonated and refined distillate extracted from the oil shale is used today in various forms of medication, and exported worldwide under the name of Ichthyol.