

MUNICH · BAVARIAN LAKES · TYROL · SALZBURG · SOUTH TYROL

From Munich Airport into the Alps

Why so many journeys to the Alps begin at Munich Airport, what makes Bavaria's lakes so special, and how long it really takes to reach Kitzbühel, Salzburg or the Dolomites.

GATEWAY MUC DRIVE TIMES THE LAKES MUNICH THE ALPS

Königssee, St. Bartholomä · Photo: H. Helmlechner, CC BY-SA 4.0



CHAPTER 1 · THE GATEWAY

Why the Alps begin in Munich

Look at a map and it seems odd. Kitzbühel is closer to Salzburg than to Munich. Innsbruck has its own airport. South Tyrol is in Italy. So why do so many travellers heading for the mountains land in Munich?

The short answer: choice. Munich Airport is Germany's second-largest airport and a hub for Lufthansa. The airports closer to the mountains are much smaller and mainly serve European routes.

43.4 m
passengers at Munich Airport in 2025

232
destinations in 72 countries

56
long-haul destinations

2 × 4 km
runways, built for the largest long-haul jets

1 **One flight instead of two.** From New York, Dubai or Bangkok there are nonstop flights to Munich. To reach Salzburg, Innsbruck or Bolzano from there, you need a connection, often via Munich, Frankfurt, Vienna or Zurich anyway.

2 **More flights, more options.** A hub offers many departures a day. If a flight is delayed or cancelled, there is usually another one.

3 **Door to door.** Two to two and a half hours from Munich Airport to Innsbruck or Kitzbühel is about what a connecting flight with a layover costs you. By car, you arrive at your hotel door, skis and luggage included.

AIRPORT	PASSENGERS 2025
Munich (MUC)	43.4 million
Salzburg (SZG)	approx. 1.8 million
Innsbruck (INN)	approx. 0.9 million
Bolzano (BZO)	approx. 0.13 million

What about Italy?

For the Dolomites, Verona and Innsbruck are closer, and plenty of travellers use them. Coming from overseas, though, Munich often saves you a connection. The drive over the Brenner Pass takes about 3.5 to 4 hours, straight through Tyrol.

Sources: Munich Airport Annual Traffic Report 2025; Salzburg Airport; Statistik Austria; Bolzano Airport

CHAPTER 2 · ON THE ROAD

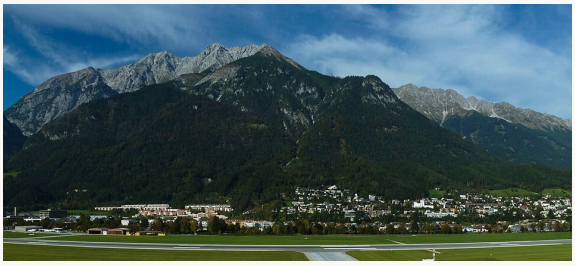
How long does it take?

Realistic drive times from Munich Airport, based on our own daily trips. Traffic, weather and season can add to them.

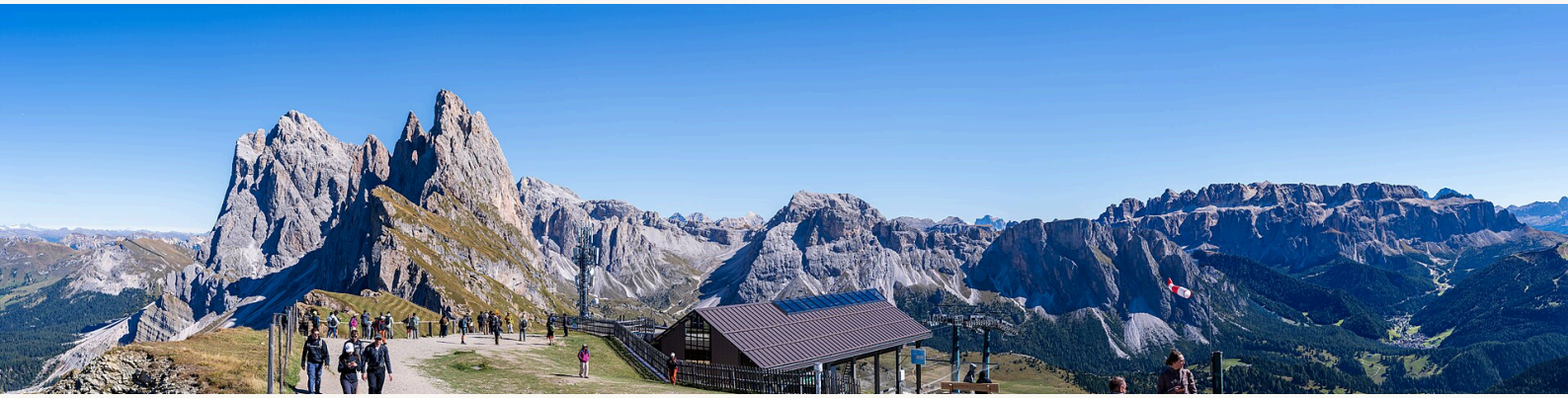
FROM MUNICH AIRPORT TO	DRIVE TIME
Bavaria	
Lake Starnberg	**50–70 min**
Augsburg	**55–75 min**
Lake Tegernsee	**60–90 min**
Regensburg	**1 h 15 min**
Nuremberg	**1 h 40 min**
Austria	
Salzburg	**1.5–2 h**
Innsbruck	**2–2.5 h**
Seefeld in Tirol	**2–2.5 h**
Kitzbühel	**2.5 h**
Switzerland & Italy	
Zurich	**3.5–4 h**
Bolzano, South Tyrol	**3.5–4 h**

Good to know

- **Saturdays in ski season** are changeover days in Tyrol and Salzburg. Expect slower traffic towards the resorts.
- **Friday afternoons and holiday weekends** are busy on the motorways south of Munich.
- **Motorway fees:** Austria and Switzerland require a vignette, and the Brenner motorway has its own toll. With a chauffeur, all of this is covered.
- **Passports:** Austria, Switzerland and Italy are in the Schengen area, but carry your passport or ID card.
- **Flight tracking:** if your flight is late, a good chauffeur knows before you land.



Innsbruck Airport sits in a narrow Alpine valley. Its runway is 2,000 m long; Munich has two runways of 4,000 m each. Photo: Rifl89 / W!B:, CC BY-SA 3.0



Seceda, Dolomites, South Tyrol · Photo: Norbert Nagel, CC BY-SA 4.0

Drive times: PRIMELANE, normal traffic conditions

CHAPTER 3 · THE LAKES

Why everyone talks about Munich's lakes

Ask people in Munich where they spend a sunny Sunday, and most will name a lake. Starnberg, Ammersee and Tegernsee are less than an hour from the city, with the Alps as a backdrop. Kings came first. The wealthy followed.



25 KM SOUTH-WEST OF MUNICH · 56 KM²

Lake Starnberg

The royal lake. Empress Elisabeth of Austria, better known as Sisi, spent her childhood summers at Possenhofen Castle on the western shore. King Ludwig II was found dead in the lake near Berg in 1886, and the mystery still draws visitors. Today the shores are lined with villas: the district of Starnberg tops Germany's purchasing-power ranking.



50 KM SOUTH-EAST OF MUNICH · IN THE BAVARIAN ALPS

Lake Tegernsee

Right at the foot of the mountains. Rottach-Egern, Bad Wiessee and Gmund line the shore, and the former Benedictine abbey, now Schloss Tegernsee, houses one of Bavaria's best-known breweries. Tegernsee is where Munich goes for a long weekend and where many successful Munich families keep a second home.



SOUTH-WEST OF MUNICH · GERMANY'S 6TH LARGEST LAKE

Ammersee

The relaxed sister of Lake Starnberg. Sailing boats, historic paddle steamers, Dießen with its rococo church and, on the hill above Herrsching, Andechs Abbey, famous for the beer its monks have brewed for centuries.



BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK · NEAR SALZBURG

Königssee

Germany's third-deepest lake lies like a fjord between rock walls up to 2,700 m high, beneath the Watzmann. Only electric boats have been allowed since 1909, which keeps the water among the clearest in Germany. The boat to the pilgrimage church of St. Bartholomä is a classic.

Photos: Carsten Steger (CC BY-SA 4.0), Akveniam (CC0), PtrQs (CC BY-SA 4.0), H. Helmlechner (CC BY-SA 4.0) · Purchasing power: Acxiom 2026



CHAPTER 4 · THE CITY

Munich: more than a stopover

Many travellers only see Munich from the motorway. A night or two in the city is worth it. Munich combines a historic old town with a strong economy: BMW, Siemens and Allianz are headquartered here, and the trade fairs at Messe München attract visitors from all over the world.

The city's grand hotels sit within walking distance of Marienplatz and the shops of Maximilianstrasse. On clear days with Föhn wind, the Alps seem close enough to touch from the city's towers.

- **Englischer Garten:** 375 hectares, larger than New York's Central Park.
- **Oktoberfest:** around seven million visitors a year, a record 7.2 million in 2023.
- **Beer gardens,** the Viktualienmarkt and the Glockenspiel at Marienplatz: Munich at its most Bavarian.

CHAPTER 5 · BEYOND THE BORDER

The Alps, two to four hours away

1.5–2 H

Salzburg

Mozart's birthplace and home of the Salzburg Festival every summer. The old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2.5 H

Kitzbühel

Tyrol's most glamorous ski town, famous for the Hahnenkamm race in January and busy summer weeks on the golf courses.

2–2.5 H

Innsbruck

An Alpine city that has hosted the Winter Olympics twice, in 1964 and 1976. The Nordkette cable car starts almost in the old town.

2–2.5 H

Seefeld in Tirol

A sunny high plateau above Innsbruck and the Nordic venue of both Innsbruck Olympics. Cross-country skiing in winter, hiking in summer.

3.5–4 H

South Tyrol

Italian lifestyle, Tyrolean tradition and the Dolomites, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2009. Bolzano is the gateway.

3.5–4 H

Zurich

Switzerland's largest city, on the shores of Lake Zurich. Many business travellers combine it with meetings in Munich.

Photo Marienplatz: Guido Radig, CC BY 4.0 · Oktoberfest figures: City of Munich via Wikipedia · Englischer Garten: munich.travel



PRIMELANE

WHO WE ARE

Your chauffeur from Munich Airport

PRIMELANE is a chauffeur service based in Grünwald, just south of Munich. We pick up guests at Munich Airport and take them to every place in this guide: the lakes, Salzburg, Kitzbühel, Innsbruck, South Tyrol or Zurich.

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Sources: Munich Airport Annual Traffic Report 2025 · Salzburg Airport, results 2025 · Statistik Austria, civil aviation 2025 · Bolzano Airport (Wikipedia) · Acxiom purchasing power 2026 · munich.travel · Wikipedia. Drive times are typical values, not guaranteed. As of November 2026.