

Trauttmansdorff

One Place, Two Experiences

Strolling through colorful garden landscapes, relaxing under palm trees while admiring snow-capped peaks, listening to world-famous musicians at the Water Lily Pond, or playing the world's largest tourism pinball machine – all of this makes Trauttmansdorff a place full of fascinating experiences.



© Karlheinz Sollbauer

From afar, Trauttmansdorff Castle shines in a luminous yellow with impressive majesty. It stands amidst a 12-hectare garden filled with plants from all over the world. Inside the castle, the Touriseum – the Provincial Museum of Tourism of South Tyrol – hosts a lively and entertaining exhibition that recounts 250 years of tourism history with a touch of irony.

The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle

Stretching over 12 hectares with a 100-meter elevation difference, the Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle offer spectacular views of over 80 garden landscapes, the surrounding mountains, and the city of Merano. Winding paths lead through four distinct garden worlds featuring plants from all over the globe. Along sun-drenched terraces and bubbling streams, a unique panorama unfolds. The exotic Sun Gardens on the southern slopes exude a Mediterranean atmosphere with olive trees, cacti, aloe, and

agave. The Water and Terraced Gardens display a rich variety of geometric flower beds connected by stairways and waterways that lead to the Sensory Garden. The Water Lily Pond at the foot of the terraces is surrounded by more than 200 palm trees, camellias, and azaleas.

On the north side of the castle, the Forests of the World with miniature forests from East Asia and America invite visitors on a journey of discovery. Tropical utility plants and a terrarium can be found in the greenhouse. Finally, the cultural landscapes of South Tyrol complete the experience: orchards with historic apple and pear varieties, a traditional farmer's garden, and a vineyard provide insight into the local flora.

Beyond the spectacular botanical variety, artistic pavilions and interactive stations enrich the Gardens. Whether exploring the inside of a cactus or crossing an adventurous suspension bridge, visitors embark on an exciting journey

of discovery. Animals such as alpacas, Racka sheep, and goats also roam the Gardens.

Awards

The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle are among South Tyrol's top attractions. Thanks to their innovative concept, which combines botanical diversity with recreational offerings and uniquely merges nature, art, and culture, they have received multiple international awards. In 2021, they were awarded the „Ecological Gardening“ prize by the „*Natur im Garten*“ committee for their outstanding commitment to ecological gardening. Their „Diversity“ project surpassed 11 high-level competitors from Germany, Austria, Russia, and the Netherlands. In 2013 they were named „International Garden of the Year.“ Other accolades, such as „Italy's Most Beautiful Park 2005“ and their ranking among Europe's most beautiful parks in the „Briggs & Stratton's Best Parks“ competition, further testify to their prestige.

Touriseum – Provincial Museum of Tourism of South Tyrol

Above the Gardens stands Trauttmansdorff Castle, home to the Touriseum – the first museum in the Alpine region entirely dedicated to the history of tourism. The interactive exhibition takes visitors on a journey through 250 years of Alpine tourism. Alternating perspectives from locals and guests vividly illustrate the development of tourism in Tyrol. In a fun and engaging way, the exhibition shows how the concept of travel has changed over time. The tour begins with a spectacular rocky gorge containing the remains of an overturned carriage – a reference to the difficult Alpine crossings of past centuries. At the end of the journey, visitors encounter the world's largest tourism pinball machine, the „South Tyrol Game,“ where they can explore the region in a playful manner.

Trauttmansdorff Castle

After visiting the museum, it is worth taking a tour through the carefully restored historic rooms of the castle. From the medieval fresco hall to the sumptuous Neo-Rococo salon, the castle tells its eventful history, shaped by its

illustrious inhabitants. The permanent exhibition pays tribute to these personalities with fascinating displays.



© Kartheinz Solbauer

Empress Sissi

The most famous guest of Trauttmansdorff Castle was undoubtedly Empress Elisabeth of Austria, better known as Sissi. During the winter months of 1870 and 1889, she stayed in the rooms on the castle's second floor. Her entourage, consisting of more than 100 people, was accommodated in various residences in the surrounding area. When Viennese newspapers reported shortly after her arrival that her daughter Marie Valerie's health had significantly improved thanks to Merano's mild climate, the town suddenly gained fame as a spa destination.

Blooms and Scents Through the Seasons

A visit to the Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle is always a new experience, as the floral landscape changes from week to week. Spring begins with a sea of tulips, followed by rhododendrons, peonies, and roses. In summer, fields of sunflowers and vibrant summer flowers create lively accents, while autumn colors the landscape in warm hues. Beyond the floral spectacle, scents also enchant the senses: hyacinths and daffodils announce spring, lavender evokes a

Mediterranean atmosphere in summer, and autumn is wrapped in the fragrance of Sweet Osmanthus in the Palm Forest.

Guided Tours of the Gardens and Castle

What do wild papaya, walking bamboo, and the chocolate flower have in common? The answers can be found on a guided tour of the Gardens at Trauttmansdorff. Expert guides share their knowledge of botanical rarities, fragrant Mediterranean plants, and artistic garden landscapes.

The castle and the Touriseum can be explored individually, with 20 richly designed rooms that bring the history of tourism to life through interactive elements, films, and models. Thematic group tours are available upon request.

Events – Experiences for All Senses

There is always something happening at Trauttmansdorff, especially in summer when evening concerts at the Water Lily Pond transform the Gardens into a magical stage. The „Trauttmansdorff After Hours“ series offers a relaxed atmosphere with live music and culinary delights. In autumn, the Touriseum's „Vintage Market“ invites visitors to search for historical treasures. Numerous seasonal initiatives and family-themed days complete the event program.



© Marion Lafogler



© Alexander Pichler

Sustainability – Green Trauttmansdorff

The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle are not only a visual delight but also a biodiversity hot-spot. With 344 documented pollinator species, including 111 wild bee species, the Gardens actively contribute to nature conservation. Since 2019 the team relies on natural methods to strengthen soil and plants, instead of chemical pesticides. With its own composting facility, an eco-friendly woodchip heating system, and targeted resource conservation, Trauttmansdorff is doing its part for a sustainable future.

2025 Highlights

The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle are delighted to host the 18th edition of IG POTY in 2025, presenting a selection of the latest winning images. In 2025, the Gardens will once again serve as the stunning backdrop for the prestigious „**International Garden Photographer of the Year**“ (IG POTY) competition. This open-air exhibition takes visitors on a journey into the fascinating world of garden photography, showcasing breathtaking images from around the globe. The award-winning photographs, selected by an international panel of experts, will be displayed throughout the Gardens,

offering new perspectives on nature. IG POTY provides fresh perspectives on nature, highlighting not only its beauty and diversity but also its importance and vulnerability. This exhibition is more than just art—it is a bridge between people, plants, and the environment.



© Philip Unterholzner

How will travel change in the future? What will a journey of the future look like, and where will it take us? These questions are the focus of the stairwell exhibition „**Future of Travel.**“ Using AI-generated images and illustrations, the Touriseum offers a glimpse into the future of travel—bringing it to life in a way that inspires visitors to reflect and dream.

The special exhibition „**Boom 70**“, launching in early June, takes a look back at the past. It explores the tourism boom in South Tyrol during the 1970s, highlighting both its bright and dark sides. At the heart of the exhibition are interviews with contemporary witnesses, based on findings from the research project „Tourism in South Tyrol 1961 to 1983.“

Between 1960 and 1980, overnight stays in the region soared from three to 17 million—marking the birth of modern mass tourism. This rapid growth drastically transformed the living environment and daily life of South Tyrol's population. In the exhibition, key figures of that era share their experiences of this pivotal period of change.

From November 20 to January 6, 2026, the Gardens will once again open their gates to showcase the breathtaking **LUMAGICA** light installation.

Trauttmansdorff: Key numbers

- 1 castle with museum
- 12 ha of garden area
- 100 m elevation difference
- Over 80 garden landscapes
- 4 garden worlds
- 10 art pavilions
- 10 experience stations
- 7 km of paths
- 35 gardeners
- 250 years of history of tourism

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