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Press Releases Ötzi-Dorf & Ötzi Origin

Archaeological Open-Air Museum

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Ötzi-Dorf Umhausen

General profile and press information on the Euregio Interreg project 'Ötzi Origin'

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PRESS AREA



Bringing history to life: Ötzi-Dorf in Umhausen / Ötztal

The archaeological open-air museum offers a vivid, authentic and academically grounded insight into life in Ötzi's time - engaging all the senses

How did people live more than 5,000 years ago? How did they build their homes, make tools, hunt, light fires and prepare food? Ötzi-Dorf in Umhausen brings the Stone Age vividly to life for visitors of all ages.

The fully accessible archaeological open-air museum covers approximately 10,000 square metres and opened in 2000. Since then, Ötzi-Dorf has combined academically grounded interpretation with a varied programme of visitor experiences. Its displays are based on archaeological findings relating to Ötzi and life in the Stone Age. Since its inception, Ötzi-Dorf has benefited from the academic guidance of Associate Professor Dr Walter Leitner.

Reconstructed dwellings and utility huts, a craft area, a central village square and a ritual area featuring megalithic structures provide a vivid and authentic impression of everyday life in the past. Highlights include the exhibition 'Ötzi - an archaeological discovery of superlatives' and a faithful, full-scale reconstruction of the site where Ötzi was found at the Tisenjoch. The film 'A Village Comes to Life ...!' complements the tour and offers further insights into life more than 5,000 years ago.

Ötzi-Dorf does not see itself as a museum in the conventional sense. History is not simply there to be observed, but to be actively experienced. Regular guided tours, demonstrations and hands-on activities show how people made fire without modern tools, used bows and arrows, processed grain, baked flatbread on hot stone slabs and fashioned tools from natural materials.

Several times a week, 'A Village Comes to Life ...!' presents Stone Age skills such as fire lighting, stone working, heating water with hot stones and tanning hides. Visitors gain vivid insights into selected activities from everyday Stone Age life. In addition, Ötzi-Dorf guides offer several free guided tours of the site each day.

Guided visits to Ötzi-Dorf are also available via a multilingual audio guide featuring 33 stops. Visitors use their own smartphones, allowing them to explore the content independently and at their own pace.

Experience the Stone Age for yourself

During the main season, Ötzi-Dorf offers a range of introductory workshops. Visitors can try archery using a yew bow, learn different fire-making techniques or make a prehistoric knife with a flint blade and poplar-wood handle. The programme also includes making a leather pouch with bast-fibre cord. The workshops are delivered in partnership with Überlebensschule Tirol, the Tyrol Survival School. Bespoke workshops are also available on request.

A particular emphasis is placed on programmes for children, families and school groups. On the children's tour 'In Ötzi's Footsteps', young visitors explore the village with the museum educators and solve an entertaining Ötzi-themed puzzle. The 'Stone Age Experience Day for Kids' combines a guided tour with practical activities such as baking flatbread, making berry juice, applying Ötzi tattoos and spending time in the Stone Age children's play area.

Children's birthday parties can also be celebrated at Ötzi-Dorf. Alongside a guided tour and Ötzi puzzle, the programme includes a birthday snack, an introductory craft workshop and a small Ötzi souvenir. Dedicated age-appropriate programmes for schools bring lessons to life and make history accessible through all the senses.

Today, Ötzi-Dorf is a distinctive place for learning, discovery and shared experiences. Around 50,000 people visit each year to explore the close links between Ötzi's story, Umhausen, the Ötztal valley and the wider Alpine region. In August 2023, Ötzi-Dorf welcomed its **one millionth visitor**. Over the past 25 years, the museum has presented a total of seven special exhibitions. The Austrian Museum Quality Seal confirms its professional standards and the high quality of its educational work.

In 2026, Ötzi-Dorf is marking the 35th anniversary of the discovery of the Iceman. At the same time, new forms of digital interpretation represent the next stage in the open-air museum's development.

‘Ötzi Origin’ brings the original discovery site to Ötzi-Dorf

New cross-border Euregio Interreg project connects Umhausen, the Tisenjoch and Val Senales through innovative digital interpretation

On 19 September 1991, Erika and Helmut Simon discovered the glacier mummy Ötzi at the Tisenjoch. Located at an altitude of 3,210 metres, the site where Ötzi was found became the starting point for an international history of research and continues to connect Tyrol and South Tyrol to this day.

Thirty-five years after this extraordinary discovery, Ötzi-Dorf in Umhausen / Ötztal is opening a new chapter with ‘Ötzi Origin - Digital Interpretation of the Tisenjoch Discovery Site at 3,210 m’. The project aims to make the original discovery site at the Tisenjoch accessible to visitors in an authentic, academically grounded and digitally engaging way.

At the heart of the project is a complete interpretive and technical redesign of the faithful, full-scale reconstruction of the discovery site at Ötzi-Dorf. High-resolution panoramic images, a revised presentation of the circumstances in which Ötzi was found, an updated visual chronology and an integrated live webcam will create a direct visual link to the Tisenjoch.

A key new feature is an interactive digital map of the finds displayed on a 75-inch touchscreen. Visitors will be able to select individual original artefacts and access in-depth information through videos, images and academically prepared explanations. The content will be available in five languages: German, English, Italian, French and Dutch.

Central to the educational experience is an academically supervised explanatory film produced at the original discovery site on the Tisenjoch in summer 2026. The film is presented by Associate Professor Dr Walter Leitner, who has provided academic guidance to Ötzi-Dorf since its inception. His expertise is fundamental to presenting the circumstances of the discovery, its archaeological significance and the site’s cross-border history in a clear and academically rigorous manner.

‘With Ötzi Origin, we want visitors to experience the exceptional significance of the original discovery site more directly. They should not only learn where Ötzi was found, but also explore the connections between the site, the artefacts, the research and life more than 5,000 years ago in a contemporary way,’ explains the manager of Ötzi-Dorf.

The project has been conceived as a cross-border initiative. All media content created as part of the project will also be made available to archeoParc Val Senales. There, an immersive exhibition space is planned inside a reconstructed helicopter cockpit with projection technology. This will create an interpretive link between Ötzi-Dorf in Umhausen, archeoParc Val Senales and the original discovery site at the Tisenjoch.

The project will also produce a bilingual leaflet entitled 'In Ötzi's Footsteps'. It will connect the three sites and direct visitors to the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, where the glacier mummy and the original artefacts are preserved.

'Ötzi Origin' represents a new form of archaeological interpretation: academically grounded, digital, multilingual and conceived across borders. Historical reconstructions and personal interpretation will not be replaced, but purposefully enhanced through modern technology.

Through the project, Ötzi-Dorf is making a sustainable investment in the quality of its visitor experience and in digital educational content designed for long-term use. At the same time, 'Ötzi Origin' strengthens cooperation between the Ötztal and Val Senales valleys. The new content will be experienced in particular in the exhibition spaces at Ötzi-Dorf and archeoParc Val Senales, demonstrating that Ötzi's story does not end at political borders.

Thirty-five years after the discovery of the Iceman, the project is creating a new connection between origin and present day - from the original discovery site at an altitude of 3,210 metres to the exhibition spaces at Ötzi-Dorf and archeoParc Val Senales.