

## INFORMATION ON AMENDMENTS TO THE TOURIST TAX REGULATIONS FOR THE MUNICIPALITIES OF LEUKERBAD, ALBINEN, INDEN AND VAREN

The canton of Valais' new Tourism Act came into force on 1 January 2015. This new Act includes a number of amendments. Last year, the municipalities of Leukerbad, Albinen, Inden and Varen tasked the Regions und Wirtschaftszentrum Oberwallis AG with supporting the implementation process of the new Act in the destination of Leukerbad. A working group was appointed for this purpose, consisting of representatives from the four municipalities, hotel and non-hotel accommodation providers, the local trade association, major service providers, key partners, Leukerbad Card Plus and Leukerbad Tourismus.

The working group held various workshops and meetings to draft the documents for ratification by the Valais Council of State: **Strategic guidelines, a financing plan and tourist tax regulations.**

### A) STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

The strategic guidelines were formulated on the basis of the existing strategy of the destination of Leukerbad. The guidelines include the following points:

- The tourism promotion tax (*Tourismusförderungstaxen*) regulations specific to each municipality will remain unchanged until further notice. Only the structure of the tourist tax and Leukerbad Card Plus will be adjusted/combined.
- The four municipalities of Leukerbad, Albinen, Inden and Varen have all decided to refrain from introducing second home taxation.

(You can find the destination strategies, tourism promotion tax regulations, and other documents at <http://www.leukerbad.ch/services3/about-us/other-documents/>)

### B) THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE TOURIST TAX

#### 1. Tourist tax rate

Until now, tourist tax for most accommodation types has stood at CHF 2.50 per night. Those who used the Leukerbad Card Plus had to pay an additional CHF 2.70 (including VAT) per night. As the introduction of the new tourist tax regulations means that the Leukerbad Card Plus is now included in the tourist tax, and as the catalogue of included services is being expanded even further, the new tourist tax rate is CHF 6 per night. Children up to six years of age remain exempt and children up to 16 years of age pay half the adult rate.

(You can find a full listing of services currently included in the Leukerbad Card Plus at [www.leukerbad.ch/lbc](http://www.leukerbad.ch/lbc))

#### 2. Collection methods and billing

There are now two collection methods for the tourist tax – effective rate and flat-rate invoicing. In the resort of Leukerbad, hotels, group accommodation facilities, camp sites and clinics charge an effective rate of CHF 6 per overnight stay. *Berghotels* and group accommodation facilities in the Gemmi and Torrent areas charge an effective rate of CHF 3 per overnight stay. Holiday apartments and huts on low-level pastures (*Maiensässe*) will now pay an annual flat rate.

Type of accommodation	Price per overnight stay	Collection method
Hotels	CHF 6	Effective
Group accommodation facilities	CHF 6	Effective
Camp sites	CHF 6	Effective
Berghotels and group accommodation facilities in the Gemmi and Torrent areas	CHF 3	Effective
Clinics	CHF 6	Effective
Holiday apartments	CHF 6	Flat rate
Maiensässe	CHF 3	Flat rate

Children aged 0 to 6: No charge

Children aged 6 to 16: Half the adult rate

The tourist tax flat rate introduced for holiday apartments and *Maiensässe* are intended to simplify the system. The amount is based on the average occupancy of holiday apartments and *Maiensässe* in the municipalities of Leukerbad, Albinen, Inden and Varen. In Leukerbad the occupancy rate is 50 nights, in Albinen 40 nights, and in Inden and Varen 30 nights. That gives the following flat-rate tourist tax calculations for holiday apartments and *Maiensässe*:

## Holiday apartments in Leukerbad

Bed coefficient x tourist tax rate (CHF 6) x average occupancy (50)

Category	Bed coefficient	Annual flat rate
With up to 2.5 rooms	2 beds = coefficient of 2	CHF 600.00
With up to 3.5 rooms	4 beds = coefficient of 4	CHF 1'200.00
With up to 4.5 rooms and more	6 beds = coefficient of 6	CHF 1'800.00

For *Maiensässe*, the flat rate is charged for each property (assuming two beds). The annual flat rate for apartments in *Maiensässe* within the Leukerbad municipality is therefore CHF 300. For *Maiensässe* that are not accessible year round, the flat rate is halved, giving CHF 150 per apartment each year.

## Holiday apartments in Albinen

Bed coefficient x tourist tax rate (CHF 6) x average occupancy (40 nights)

Category	Bed coefficient	Annual flat rate
With up to 2.5 rooms	2 beds = coefficient of 2	CHF 480
With up to 3.5 rooms	4 beds = coefficient of 4	CHF 960
With up to 4.5 rooms and more	6 beds = coefficient of 6	CHF 1,440

For *Maiensässe*, the flat rate is charged for each property (assuming two beds). The annual flat rate for apartments in *Maiensässe* within the Albinen municipality is therefore CHF 240. For *Maiensässe* that are not accessible year round, the flat rate is halved, giving CHF 120 per apartment each year.

## Holiday apartments in Inden and Varen

Bed coefficient x tourist tax rate (CHF 6) x average occupancy (30 nights)

Category	Bed coefficient	Annual flat rate
With up to 2.5 rooms	2 beds = coefficient of 2	CHF 360
With up to 3.5 rooms	4 beds = coefficient of 4	CHF 720
With up to 4.5 rooms and more	6 beds = coefficient of 6	CHF 1,080

For *Maiensässe*, the flat rate is charged for each property (assuming two beds). The annual flat rate for apartments in *Maiensässe* within the Inden and Varen municipalities is therefore CHF 180. For *Maiensässe* that are not accessible year round, the flat rate is halved, giving CHF 90 per apartment each year.

In future, the owners/hosts of holiday apartments and *Maiensässe* will be billed for their tourist tax flat rate in several installments per year. The annual flat rate covers all overnight stays and now also all the benefits of the Leukerbad Card Plus, usable by owners, their family members and all their guests.

### **3. Leukerbad Card Plus for owners, family members and occasional guests (not commercially let holiday apartments)**

In order to enjoy the benefits of the Leukerbad Card Plus, owners, family members and occasional guests must register via their holiday apartment login. Owners obtain login details from Leukerbad Tourismus. Upon registration, a personal Leukerbad Card Plus is generated for owners, family members and occasional guests for the duration of their stay (max. 20 days per registration). They are then able to enjoy the benefits of the Leukerbad Card Plus at no cost.

Owners can also obtain a Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Pass from Leukerbad Tourismus for each bed taxed on a flat-rate basis. These Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Passes based on the number of beds in the holiday apartment are personalised passes. The owner names the holders of the One-Year Passes. If desired, owners and their family members can upgrade their personalised Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Pass to a personalised Leukerbad Card 365 at a price of CHF 550 per year (CHF

440 for young people aged 16 to 19 / CHF 220 for children aged 9 to 15).

#### **4. Leukerbad Card Plus for guests (commercially let holiday apartments)**

For commercially let holiday apartments, which remain subject to the tourism promotion tax, the owners/hosts collect tourist taxes from their guests as hitherto on the basis of actual overnight stays (effective rate). They enter guests in the electronic registration system via the registration client. Upon registration, a personalised Leukerbad Card Plus is generated for each guest. The owner/host provides the guests with their cards for use throughout the duration of their stay. The annual tourist tax flat rate also covers these overnight stays and Leukerbad Card Plus cards. The owners/hosts keep all tourist taxes they have collected from guests. With a good occupancy rate, owners/hosts should find a favourable difference between the annual flat rate they pay and the amount they collect.

The same rule applies to commercially let holiday apartments: owners can also obtain a Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Pass from Leukerbad Tourismus for each bed taxed on a flat-rate basis. These Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Passes based on the number of beds in the holiday apartment are personalised passes. The owner names the holders of the One-Year Passes. If desired, owners and their family members can upgrade their personal Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Pass to a personal Leukerbad Card 365 at a price of CHF 550 per year (CHF 440 for young people aged 16 to 19 / CHF 220 for children aged 9 to 15).

#### **C) INTRODUCTION OF NEW TOURIST TAX REGULATIONS**

The new tourist tax regulations will be introduced on 1 July 2016.

Under the new tourist tax regulations, the first invoices will be sent out in June/July 2016 for the subsequent half year (July to December 2016). Along with their first invoice in accordance with the new tourist tax regulations, all owners will receive the login details referred to under point 3 in this letter to enable them to register for the Leukerbad Card Plus in future. All owners who pay a tourist tax flat rate for the year 2016 (currently CHF 75) will be reimbursed for half the amount (CHF 37.50). Holders of the Leukerbad Card Plus One-Year Pass will be reimbursed half of the money for 2016, i.e. CHF 54 per card.

Representing the members of the tourism tax working group:

**Municipality of Leukerbad**

**Municipality of Albinen**

**Municipality of Inden**

**Municipality of Varen**

**Leukerbad Tourism**

(This is summarised information from the tourist tax regulations. In case of doubt, the German original version applies.)

Leukerbad, 1st January 2018