



## Excursion 2

### **Can Berchtesgaden National Park defy climate change? An excursion to Germany' s only alpine national park – trip to the „Eiskapelle“ between Watzmann and Königssee**

The excursion to Berchtesgaden National Park starts with a 45 minute cruise across the Königssee. Along the way to the peninsula of St. Bartholomä the captains of the Bavarian Lake Shipping Company will let the famous echo of the Königssee resound across the water. Having arrived at St. Bartholomä, we will first take a look at the world-renowned chapel and then begin the hike with a visit to the information center of the national park. The following section of the road will take us steadily uphill, through the „Eisgraben“ and past the little chapel of St. John and Paul. Having walked for 90 minutes and ascended 250 meters, we will reach the mighty head of the valley and the „Eiskapelle“ at the foot of the Watzmann.

The „Eiskapelle“ is a snow and ice field which is situated at a low sea level (of approximately 800 to 1000 meters) and lasts all year long. The snow from the east wall of the Watzmann accumulates at the foot of the wall and piles up huge masses, creating an impressive geotope. Hikers are surprised at the chill of the downslope winds at the „Eiskapelle“ even during the summer months. Even though many alpine glaciers are shrinking due to the climate change, the „Eiskapelle“ keeps expanding and undergoes a constant transformation. After a rest, we will descend back down to the Königssee.

The excursion will be accompanied by a ranger as well as the director of the national park, Dr Michael Vogel. The expert will elucidate the special phenomenon of the „Eiskapelle“ and, as well as presenting numerous animal and plant species encountered along the road, will also report on the tasks and goals of Berchtesgaden National Park.