

#VisitCzechia



Castles

and chateaux

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 Hotel	 Special offer	 Suitable for children
 Hire of premises for cultural and social events	 Weddings	 Chateau garden
 Restaurant	 Tours	 Chateau park
	 UNESCO	

Castles and chateaux

Czechia's "family silver"

The most valuable things Czechs have inherited from their ancestors are historical monuments. Anyone who visits Czechia for the first time is surprised by their abundance and their state of preservation, how impressively they are set in the surrounding landscape, the splendid design of the buildings, the **variety of architectural styles**, and their excellent operation. Visitors are charmed by the special energy they radiate, the **unique atmosphere** which greets them as they step inside. And those who are already familiar with this from previous visits know that the multitude of places worth visiting, photographing and enthusiastically telling friends about is almost inexhaustible – and the experience is always powerful and wondrous...

More than a millennium of Czech history has produced some **two thousand castles, chateaux, fortresses**, and their ruins. We invite you to come explore their remarkable stories and secrets.

In this book we present a selection of the most beautiful places that are made accessible to the public by their current owners. Guides will be on hand to tell you all about the fascinating fates of individual castles and chateaux and their inhabitants over the centuries. Let your imagination be swept away by these stories. You will tour sumptuous interiors, furnished with the refined tastes and practically unlimited financial resources of their bygone owners.

You will see a vast variety of collections and art works amassed with love and pride by generations of noble families. You will climb towers affording outstanding views of the surrounding countryside, lose yourself in the mysterious labyrinths of subterranean corridors, and inhale the fresh scent of **ancient parks** and lush, perfectly groomed **historical gardens**.

Czech castles and chateaux are not just sleepy museums where time has stood still. They also offer **historical festivals and markets, night-time tours, costumed guides**, displays of trained birds of prey, demonstrations of ancient crafts, and tastings of traditional Czech delicacies, as well as theatre and opera performances, fencing matches, concerts, art festivals, exhibitions and workshops – all announced in advance on their individual websites. And if that is not enough, you can experience a taste of castle life for yourself. Almost all of these monuments rent out their most attractive historical rooms for special occasions such as wedding ceremonies. So please step inside...



Bečov nad Teplou

Reason to visit

This chateau contains a **unique relic**, which after the Crown Jewels is the second most valuable treasure belonging to Czechia: A splendidly decorated golden box, commissioned in the 13th century by the Belgian monastery of Benedictines to hold the remains of St. John the Baptist and St. Maurus. It is among most beautiful examples of the goldsmith's art of the Middle Ages and is the only one of its kind in Central Europe.

Of historical interest

The last owners of the chateau, the de Beauforts, were ordered to leave the estate after 1945 because of their collaboration with the Nazis

in occupied Czechoslovakia. They buried **the Reliquary of St. Maurus** under the floor of the chapel in the hope that they would one day return for it. If a foreign merchant had not appeared some years later and started to negotiate with the Czechoslovak state over the purchase of an unspecified valuable object, probably no one would have learned of its existence. This tangled case, which top Czechoslovak criminologists worked to unravel, was solved in 1985 and became the inspiration for a detective novel.

zamek-becov.cz
Náměstí 5. května 13
364 64 Bečov nad Teplou



Bezděz

Reason to visit

The majestic ruin of this medieval castle is one of the dominating features of the Czech landscape. It has been a creative **inspiration for many artists**, including the composer Bedřich Smetana, who used motifs from the local legend about hidden treasure in his opera *The Secret*. The greatest Czech Romantic poet, Karel Hynek Mácha, made the castle famous in his epic poem *May*, a tale of tragic love. The nearby Mácha Lake, named for the poet, is today a centre for water sport and recreation.

Of historical interest

Ottokar II of Bohemia (Přemysl Otakar II), the “Iron and Golden King”, certainly could not have known that the sentry castle he built in the second half of the 13th century as a residence for his occasional stays would soon after his

death become a prison for his 7-year-old son Wenceslas (Václav) and his widowed queen for many long months. In the 17th century the castle was turned into a fortified monastery, and after its closure the castle deteriorated into a picturesque ruin.

📍 **The most valuable building is the chapel of the Royal Palace, a real jewel of Gothic architecture. To admire distant views of “Mácha’s region” from an even greater height, climb the massive 40-metre Great Tower, which was the last refuge for local inhabitants in the event of a siege of the castle.**

hrad-bezdez.cz/en
Státní hrad Bezděz
472 01 Doksy





Bitov

Reason to visit

In the previous century, the castle served as the family residence of its last owner, the somewhat eccentric Baron Haas, who built here what was at that time one of the largest private zoos in Europe. In addition to live animals, he also loved his **collections of taxidermied domestic and exotic animals**, especially his collection of dogs of 51 different breeds, including the extinct Stable Pinscher. Today the collection is listed in **Guinness World Records** as the largest of its kind in the world.

Of historical interest

The fortified castle on a headland near the confluence of the Želetavka and Dyje rivers in South Moravia guarded the frontier of the Bohemian Kingdom as early as the Middle Ages. Its current appearance is the result of Romantic-

style modifications in the 19th century, and it picturesquely complements the local landscape of forests, rivers and hillsides, where sunshine and the crisp Moravian wine reign supreme.

🚩 **The complicated story of one of the oldest royal castles and the lives of its inhabitants is told on four different tour circuits. In addition to the palace and the armoury with its singular exhibits, highlights include the castle prison, dungeon and torture chamber, equipped with replicas of torture devices which visitors can try out for themselves.**

hrad-bitov.cz/en
Státní hrad Bitov
671 07 pošta Uherčice



Blatná

Reason to visit

The characteristic white-and-red tower at the entrance to the stone water castle was built in the Late Middle Ages, during the reign of the Lords of Rožmítal. They held high state offices, they loved a luxurious lifestyle, and they were inspired by the **sophisticated culture of the nobility in western Europe**. Reconstruction of the old palace into a magnificent three-storey **Gothic-Renaissance chateau** was commissioned from the famous architect Benedikt Rejt, who worked in the service of the Crown.

Of historical interest

This representational residence in Blatná was often at the centre of political events in the Bohemian Kingdom. Jaroslav Lev of Rožmítal's sister Johana married King George of Poděbrady and became the queen of Bohemia.

Jaroslav, a highly educated and skilled diplomat, was an envoy for his brother-in-law, carrying the famous Treaty of the Establishment of Peace Throughout Christendom to the royal courts of Europe.

🚩 **The objects in the palace's interiors are predominantly from the family collections of the current owners, the Hildprandts, who have possessed the chateau since the 18th century. Of special interest is an exposition on the outstanding 19th-century Czech physician and naturalist **Jan Evangelista Purkyně**, who as a young man worked in Blatná as an educator.**

zamek-blatna.cz
Na Příkopěch 320
388 01 Blatná





Boskovice

Reason to visit

In this charming chateau, which is one of the purest examples of Empire architecture in Moravia, you will find exceptional curiosities. For example, you will see **one of the three copper globes in the world**, on which the starry sky is depicted with heraldic emblems, or a noteworthy **Rococo children's theatre**, which was presented to the owners of the chateau by the British Queen Victoria.

Of historical interest

On the site of this grand aristocratic residence there originally stood a Dominican monastery, which after its closure served briefly for the manufacture of dyes. It was rebuilt into its current form in the early 19th century.

Tip: The chateau's history is connected with the nearby romantic ruin of the Boskovice Castle (above) with its 26-metre well driven by a wooden treadle wheel.

🏰 The chateau's sumptuous ballroom was the setting for many balls and festivities, which were attended by the cream of society. In the Hall of Battles you will see paintings on buffalo hide with scenes from the Austro- and Russo-Turkish wars.

👶 Children will enjoy the set of miniature furniture and the Rococo children's theatre.

zamekboskovice.cz
Hradní 6
680 01 Boskovice



Bouzov

Reason to visit

If filmmakers are looking for the ideal location for a fairy tale or a historical story, Bouzov – with its battlements, bay windows, loopholes, gargoyles, drawbridges and trellises – is usually at the top of the list. Its **romantic medieval atmosphere** came about during a reconstruction of the castle at the turn of the 20th century on the orders of the chateau's owners at that time, the Teutonic Knights, who did not hesitate to pay more than 20 million gulden for the work.

Of historical interest

The castle, founded in the 14th century, is the likely birthplace of George of Poděbrady, who would grow up to become king of Bohemia.

🏰 The furnishings in the chambers of the Grandmaster of the Teutonic Knights, the secret passageways, and also a large stove and grill in the castle kitchen suggest that the virtuous knights did not deny themselves the creature comforts of the time. From the walkway of a 64-metre observation tower, the whole castle area and the beautiful forests of the Dražanské Highlands open up before your eyes.

hrad-bouzov.cz/en
Státní hrad Bouzov
783 25 Bouzov 8





Buchlov

Reason to visit

Lovers of the mysterious will like the local legend about the Lady in Black, Catherine, who, it is said, had her husband, the lord of the castle, murdered in 1582. At night, her ghost sets off from the gloomy chamber called the “**Room of the Dead**” to roam the castle. The truth, however, is that the impatient nobleman died in battle. And the room, where accused poachers once were judged, now displays the castle’s most valuable exhibit, an **Egyptian mummy** in a cedar coffin from the 3rd century BC.

Of historical interest

Construction of the royal fortress castle, which the sovereign endowed with the power of jurisdiction and so-called hunting rights, began in the 13th century. Almost all of the owners had extensive construction work done, therefore today

the castle is a textbook of architectural styles from the Early Middle Ages to the 19th century.

📍 **In addition to the rare Egyptology collections, don’t overlook the rich natural-history collections with a number of curiosities. There is also an extensive library founded in the late 16th century which contains more than 10,000 volumes. The castle tower, at an altitude of 545 metres above sea level, provides an excellent view of the gently undulating and welcoming Slovácko (Moravian Slovakia) region.**

hrad-buchlov.cz
Polesí 418
687 68 Buchlovice

Buchlovice

Reason to visit

This chateau nestled in a Baroque garden was a gift from the Earl Dětřich of Petřvald to his noble-born Italian wife. So that she would feel comfortable in her new home in Moravia, he had plans drawn up in the style of the so-called **villa rustica**, in which the building is set in the open rural landscape. The purest example of an **Italian Baroque villa** in Central Europe, it amazed contemporaries – and continues to do so today.

Of historical interest

The chateau gained international fame at the beginning of the 20th century, when its owner was Leopold Berchtold, who in 1912 became the foreign minister of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In this grand manor, leading politicians of the time made decisions about

the fate of Europe. Meetings were held here about the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austrian monarchy, which was the main reason for the outbreak of the First World War. Count Leopold was a great philanthropist: He built a modern public hospital at the chateau.

📍 **The luxurious rooms of a residence surrounded by greenery reflect the elegant lifestyle of the aristocracy at the turn of the 20th century. Here you will discover the collecting tastes and family history of the owners.**

zamek-buchlovice.cz
Státní zámek Buchlovice
687 08 Buchlovice





Častolovice

Reason to visit

The original chateau, set in the foothills of the Orlické Mountains, was rebuilt several times by the Šternberks (Sternbergs), who have owned it since the late 17th century until the present, with the exception of during the Nazi occupation and under the communist regime. They assembled an **extraordinary art collection** at the chateau, including original works by such important European painters as Karel Škréta, Lucas van Valckenborg and Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, and a series of portraits of Czech kings. The rarest paintings adorn the **Wallpaper Room** and the **Smoking Salon**.

Of historical interest

The Šternberks were lovers and patrons of the arts and sciences. They built up the Castle Gallery collection over 300 years. The leading figure of the family supported

the Czech National Revival movement in the 19th century and, among other things, significantly contributed to the establishment of the National Museum in Prague in 1818.

🏰 **Twenty rooms furnished in different historical styles illustrate the changes in lifestyle over the centuries. If you look up at the original Renaissance coffered ceiling in the Knight's Hall, an array of brightly coloured Old Testament scenes unfolds before your eyes.**

👨👩👧👦 **The tour includes a children's room with an exhibition of toys from the 19th century. In the chateau park, children can let off steam at the playground or visit the small menagerie.**

zamek-castolovice.cz
Masarykova 1
517 50 Častolovice



Červená Lhota

Reason to visit

The unusual red colour distinguishes this picturesque aristocratic weekend retreat from similar Renaissance chateaux in Czechia.

The graceful silhouette of the chateau mirrored on the surface of the surrounding water is most impressive from a **boat ride** around the chateau pond. The fairy tale atmosphere of this place is often captured by film crews.

Of historical interest

The summer palace, rebuilt in the 16th century from a Gothic fortress, was a place for entertainment, celebration and relaxation.

At the beginning of the 17th century it got a new red brick roof, and its original name of "New" Lhota was changed to "Red"; the same colour was later added to the façade.

Tip: There is a boat rental in operation whenever the castle is open.

🏠 **The reception, private and guest rooms, modified in the early 20th century, are equipped with authentic furniture and valuable works of art.**

zamek-cervenalhota.cz/en
Červená Lhota 1
378 21 Karčašova Řečice





Český Krumlov

Reason to visit

This extensive and artistically extremely valuable palace complex is the second largest in Czechia after Prague Castle. Its greatest heyday was in the 16th century under Vilem of Rožmberk (Rosenberg), a humanist, scholar and influential politician in the court of Emperor Rudolf II, and even a candidate for the Polish throne. His vast estate was transformed into a thriving business, and, enchanted by the spirit of Renaissance Italy, he rebuilt the ancestral castle into a beautiful **residential chateau**. At his court, not only artists thrived but also swindlers and charlatans.

Of historical interest

Over three centuries, the powerful Rožmberk family influenced the fate and the architecture not just of its residence but also of the town below the castle and almost all of South Bohemia, where they were the almost unchallenged rulers. While their wealth was enormous, it was not enough for both the costly Renaissance reconstruction and their luxurious lifestyle, resulting in debts and stagnation at the chateau, which then changed hands several times. Only in the 18th century did it see a new flowering and revival of a rich social life under the creative Prince Josef Adam of Schwarzenberg. He undertook another wide-ranging reconstruction of the complex, which at that time could compete with the pomp of the emperor's residence in Vienna.

Two tour circuits offer highlights of the richly decorated interiors of the vast and labyrinthine complex. The apex of the tour is the famous **Masquerade Hall**, on whose walls you'll see, through paintings, mirrors and optical illusions, a high-spirited carnival ball with Rococo ladies, their gallant gentlemen and their servants. An extraordinary monument of world importance is the **Baroque castle theatre**, complete with its historical equipment, and a beautifully decorated six-storey **Renaissance tower** offering an unrepeatable view of one of Europe's most beautiful historical towns (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Five-Petalled Rose Festival (VI) – for three days the town returns to the time of Renaissance knights, noble ladies, magicians and beggars. Chamber Music Festival (VI–VII), Český Krumlov International Music Festival (VII–VIII), Festival of Baroque Art (IX–X). Theatrical performances on a revolving stage in the chateau park (VI–IX).

zamek-ceskykrumlov.cz/en
Zámek 59
381 01 Český Krumlov





Český Šternberk

Reason to visit

This massive Gothic castle on a steep rock above a bend in the Sázava River is one of the best-preserved fortified settlements in Bohemia. The builders of its **original defence system** in the 14th century did not imagine the invention of firearms, and its defences completely failed in 1467 when the castle was attacked by the artillery troops of King George of Poděbrady. The painful experience led to a restoration of the castle and a sophisticated new defence strategy. The built-up **fortifications with steep walls** and a protruding bastion are a highlight of the medieval art of fortification.

Of historical interest

For eight centuries, and almost continuously since its establishment

around 1241, the castle has belonged to the old aristocratic Šternberk (Sternberg) family, the lords with an eight-pointed golden star on their coat of arms. With a little luck, you may meet the current owner, who during the communist regime worked as a miner and a theatre stagehand.

🚩 **Collecting has always been one of the family's interests. This is exemplified not only by the castle's extensive displays, a highlight of which is a unique collection of 545 prints on the history of the Thirty Years' War, but also by a monument to Kašpar Šternberk, a co-founder of the National Museum in Prague.**

hradceskysternberk.cz
Český Šternberk 1
285 08 Divižov



Cheb

Reason to visit

J. W. Goethe, who liked to stay in Cheb and also in neighbouring Mariánské Lázně, judged **the wondrous castle tower** of black volcanic rock to be the work of the ancient Romans. Although he was wrong, the tower is the oldest structure in the historical town. **A Romanesque castle** of the Palatinate type was built by Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa in the 12th century.

Of historical interest

This occasional seat of sovereigns was the site of important diplomatic negotiations and political events of European significance. The last of them was a conspiracy and guileful murder in 1634 of generals loyal to the Supreme Commander of the Austrian Imperial troops Albrecht von Wallenstein.

After that time, the castle fell into decline, as no one wanted to live in the place where such a brutal act took place.

A municipal museum was established in the medieval house on Cheb's main square where Albrecht von Wallenstein was murdered. It has an extensive exposition dedicated to the famous general.

🚩 **Today, only the old walls remind us of the opulent palace intended for festive occasions in the presence of the sovereign. Uniquely preserved, however, is a two-storey castle chapel, which is one of the most important Romanesque monuments in Czechia.**

hrad-cheb.cz
Dobrovského 2062/21
350 02 Cheb 2



Dětenice

Reason to visit

This chateau in a **romantic landscape** at the edge of Bohemian Paradise so captured the heart of the Spanish Queen Maria Christina on her visits here in the 19th century that she wanted to buy it. She was dissuaded only because of the inflexibility of the Viennese court in the strained relations between the Austrian and Spanish branches of the Habsburgs. At least the Spanish court received some of the renowned beer from the **chateau brewery**.

Of historical interest

The turbulent fate of the nobility in the Czech lands is reflected in the history of the chateau, which was forcibly seized several times, sold often, but also lost on the stock market. A distinct imprint on the building was left by the Knights of Malta,

to whom it was bequeathed by the prominent Austrian politician Baron Wessenberg, who in 1873 shot himself because he had been accused of treason. In the period of communist rule, the chateau served as a juvenile detention centre.

📍 **Classic, fairy tale, and ghost tour circuits lead through the Baroque interiors with period furnishings and decorations. The Order of the Knights of Malta left behind its exceptional collection of weapons originating from the Thirty Years' War, including unique ship canons from the battle for Rhodes in the 16th century.**

zamekdetenice.cz
Dětenice 1
507 24 Dětenice



Dobříš

Reason to visit

The attractive and ornate environment of this **Rococo chateau**, surrounded by a valuable **garden** with floral ornamentation, sculpted hedges and statues, evokes the atmosphere of Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace. Perhaps that is why it is so sought after by filmmakers of fairy tales, by concert organizers and for weddings and private parties.

Of historical interest

The splendid Rococo residence from the 18th century, thoroughly reminiscent of the times, tastes and style of the French King Louis XVI, was during the Second World War a favourite of the Nazis, who expropriated it from its aristocratic owners. For 50 years it then served as the "Home for Writers", offering residencies and recreation

for pro-regime authors and other prominent people.

📍 **The so-called Writers' Room recalls the times during the communist era when the family collections of the old-new owners, the Colloredo-Mansfeld family, were inaccessible to "mere mortals". Today they are accessible and much admired by the public.**

zamekdobris.cz
nám. Svobody 1
263 01 Dobříš





Duchcov

Reason to visit

If the ageing **Giacomo Casanova** had not settled here to manage the extensive Duchcov Chateau library at the end of his tumultuous life, who knows whether he would have written his famous autobiography, which revealed his scandalous adventures in the royal courts and in the bedroom. The hot-headed Italian spent 13 years in cold Bohemia and was not too fond of the country, even though he had his last love adventure here. He died in Duchcov and is buried here.

Of historical interest

The palatial seat of the powerful Wallenstein family was built by architects of great renown. Its prestige as a **cultural centre** in North Bohemia grew with stays here by famous **musicians and writers**, including

Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Chopin, Schiller and Goethe. A social lustre was added by visits of the Prussian and Austrian emperors and the Russian czar. The 20th century brought a tragic fate for the chateau: Part of it fell victim to coal mining, and the magnificent Baroque dome fresco of the hospital had to be transferred to a newly built pavilion in the **chateau park**.

📍 In addition to the reception rooms and the Wallenstein family gallery, you can also visit the servants' quarters and, of course, there is a museum dedicated to **Giacomo Casanova**.

zamek-duchcov.cz
Náměstí Republiky 9
419 01 Duchcov



Frýdlant

Reason to visit

The original castle, expanded in the 16th century with a Renaissance chateau, has been open to the public since 1801 and is **the oldest castle museum in Central Europe**. Architecturally, the chateau is a living textbook of artistic styles.

Of historical interest

The ambitious European politician and military general **Albrecht von Wallenstein** won his fabulous wealth in the Thirty Years' War, and his base was the prosperous Frýdlant estate, called Terra felix – a Latin expression meaning Happy Land. Nonetheless, the chateau and its surroundings were not spared the hardships of protracted war. After Wallenstein was assassinated, Swedish troops settled here.

📍 In new **armoury** you will find a thousand weapons, the oldest of which are from the 12th century and the newest ones dating from the First World War.

zamek-frydlant.cz
Zámecká 4001
464 01 Frýdlant v Čechách





Hluboká nad Vltavou

Reason to visit

White brickwork, battlements, loopholes, towers and turrets, oriel and pointed-arch windows, a mazelike floor plan – all of this brings to mind the romantic rural atmosphere of the English kings of Windsor. It was precisely on this model that the entire Hluboká complex and the surrounding land was rebuilt.

Of historical interest

Originally a **royal sentry castle**, it had a succession of important owners. The Schwarzenberg family lived here for a full three hundred years before the Second World War, when the castle was occupied by the Gestapo and the family emigrated overseas. The princely

residence came alive mainly during autumn hunting season, when it was visited by the cream of the European aristocracy.

🏰 **In terms of elegance and comfort, the interiors did not take a back seat to English and Scottish manors of the 19th century. Among the requisite amenities were a private chapel, its own theatre, and a library with about 12,000 volumes. The castle has some 140 suites, many of which are richly furnished with the Schwarzenberg family collections and are accessible to the public.**

zamek-hluboka.cz/en
Bezručova 142
373 41 Hluboká nad Vltavou



Horšovský Týn

Reason to visit

This typical **Renaissance chateau** from the 16th century, which has remained almost unmodified, is one of the most accessible monuments in Czechia: In high season it offers visitors five different tour circuits with a total time of over five hours!

Of historical interest

After a terrible fire in the medieval castle in the middle of the 16th century, a comfortable chateau was built from the ruins. The estate was confiscated from its owners, the famous Czech Lobkowitz family, because of their participation in an uprising against the Habsburgs. It was sold for a negligible sum to a member of the Styrian noble family of Trauttmansdorff, who held it for 300 years.

🏰 **The imperial diplomat Count Maximilian Trauttmansdorff was the main organizer of the peace negotiations that led to the end of the Thirty Years' War. In the castle library are rare documents relating to it and also a richly decorated goose quill with which he personally signed the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 on behalf of the Habsburg monarchy.**

zamek-horsovskytyn.cz/en
Náměstí Republiky 1
346 01 Horšovský Týn





Hořovice

Reason to visit

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the nationalized chateau was plundered by the Red Army, which temporarily quartered here. After that, the dilapidated building was used by all sorts of people until it had to be closed due to its precarious condition. For the past 25 years, it has been undergoing an incredible transformation back to its former glory. The once again beautifully furnished chambers are a testament to the history of the chateau. On the ground floor is a unique exhibition of **historic musical machines and jukeboxes**.

Of historical interest

In the distant past, the Czechs had an original method of solving political disputes: unpopular officials were simply thrown out the window. The cruel royal

governor Jaroslav Bořita of Martinic miraculously survived the defenestration at Prague Castle, however the owner of the Hořovice chateau, Jan Litvín of Říčany, who personally threw Bořita, did not fare so well. He not only lost Hořovice, which was confiscated and then acquired by none other than the Martinic family, but he also lost all of his other property. The event ushered in the Thirty Years' War.

📍 **With what kind of toys and games did young aristocrats play? The answer is to be found in an extensive display in the chateau's salons. Exhibits include old theatrical puppets and a panoramic theatre set piece.**

zamek-horovice.cz
Vrbovská 22
268 01 Hořovice



Hradec nad Moravicí

Reason to visit

The **White Chateau** has a tumultuous history as a strategic point in North Moravia near the frontier. Many times it found itself at the centre of wartime, diplomatic and cultural events that were fateful not only for the Czech lands but also for Poland, Hungary and Prussia. It acquired its current form as an elegant **Classicist chateau** in the 19th century. The **Red Chateau** was built in the style of an Old German medieval castle as an annex to house facilities for the operation of the household.

Of historical interest

In addition to rulers, dignitaries of European courts, and political and social figures, the castle also

hosted many musical greats, such as **Beethoven, Paganini** and **Liszt**.

📍 **Inside the comfortably furnished residence you will find an exhibition of historical carriages and hunting weapons. There is also an English park merging smoothly into the open countryside with a view of the Jeseníky Mountains.**

🎵 **The prestigious music festival and international performance competition Beethoven's Hradec is held in the Great Hall of the Red Chateau (VI).**

zamek-hradec.cz
Městečko 2
747 41 Hradec nad Moravicí





Hrádek u Nechanic

Reason to visit

Although this chateau tucked away in a forest park looks like an ancient English residence, it was built in the mid-19th century and is **one of the youngest chateaux in Czechia**. Count František Arnošt of Harrach built it to fulfil a romantic dream to revive his noble family's ancient glory and to recall its knightly past. He drew his inspiration on his trips throughout England.

Of historical interest

Even the furnishings of the chateau are meant to evoke chivalric deeds. Count Harrach imported antiques from abroad, especially from Austria and Italy, and he even bought entire portals, ceilings and complete room furnishings. His fairy tale dream soon

evaporated: During the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 the chateau became a military hospital, and after the Second World War it was confiscated from the Harrachs.

🏰 **Knightly armour in the entrance hall, antique furniture, rare paintings and gilded wallpaper from calf leather on the walls of the Golden Hall, the largest and most beautiful room in the chateau – all of this was skilfully used by the Viennese architect Karl Fischer to create the impression of a medieval residence.**

zamek-hradekunechanic.cz/en
Zámek 66
503 15 Hrádek-Nechanic



Hukvaldy

Reason to visit

In Hukvaldy you will encounter traces of the famous native son, the composer **Leoš Janáček**, at every step. His musical legacy is also connected with the monumental castle ruin on a steep hill in a beautiful old game park with deer and mouflons. It is said that he liked to sit at a lookout point along the castle's former fortifications, where he drew inspiration for many of his works. In the forest below the castle there is even a statue recalling his most famous opera, The Cunning Little Vixen.

Of historical interest

One of the largest castles in Czechia, it was founded in the 13th century. It was **never conquered**, but 500 years later it was completely destroyed by a major fire. The romantic

ruins have been a popular place for outings since the 19th century.

🏰 **From the courtyard at the core of the castle you can access the partially roofed palace, cellars, dungeon, and former prison. The biggest problem for the castle was always a shortage of water. A well dug in the 16th century to a depth of 150 metres reportedly cost more than the construction of the castle itself.**

hradhukvaldy.eu
Hukvaldy 37
739 46 Hukvaldy





Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou

Reason to visit

The well-travelled and educated art patron Jan Adam of Quostenberk decided in the late 17th century to create a “**small Versailles**” out of an inherited residence. Then he filled every corner of this monumental Baroque chateau surrounded by a **French garden** with music, which he also actively performed. He accepted into service only those who could play a musical instrument or sing.

Of historical interest

The **first Czech opera**, The Foundation of the City of Jaroměřice, was created at the chateau and had its debut here in 1730. It was written by the famous Baroque composer and court band

master Antonín Miča, who organized a wealth of musical and theatrical events at the chateau.

Tip: You can taste quality Moravian wines from the local wine shop in the romantic garden or beneath the historical vaulting of the chateau cellar.

👉 **The chateau's interiors reflect the artistic orientation of its owner. An integral part of the representative area of the chateau are a **theatre, a music and dance hall, a library and a gallery.****

zamek-jaromerice.cz
Náměstí Miru 1
675 51 Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou



Javorník – Janský Vrch

Reason to visit

This chateau on a rocky hill above the town was for many years **the centre of education and culture** for the northernmost tip of Moravia near the Polish border. It also is noteworthy for its advanced technical appointments: already at the turn of the 19th century it had running water, and in the years 1906–1932 the interiors and the main courtyard shone with gas chandeliers and lamps.

Of historical interest

For 600 years the chateau and its extensive grounds belonged to the bishopric of what is today Wrocław, Poland (formerly Breslau). The bishops and archbishops gradually created from the medieval castle

a monumental Baroque chateau, which they used as a summer residence. In honour of their patron saint, John the Baptist, they renamed it Janský Vrch (John's Hill).

👉 **An interesting highlight of the tour through the rich interiors is the **largest collection of pipes and smoking accessories on display in Czechia.** A separate tour leads through the parts of the chateau dedicated to the household's day-to-day operation.**

zamek-janskyvrch.cz/en
Zámek 60
790 70 Javorník





Jindřichův Hradec

Reason to visit

Italian masters brought **Mediterranean lightness and grace** from the cradle of the Renaissance to the picturesque rolling countryside of South Bohemia, a landscape of quiet forests and ponds. The old castle **fortress** was turned into a magnificent chateau, with shaded arcades connecting it to the palace. An extensive complex of buildings, courtyards and green spaces creates a harmonious whole with the adjacent town, which is an urban conservation area.

Of historical interest

A catastrophic fire in 1773 destroyed the city and a substantial part of the Renaissance interiors along with their art collections. Given a temporary roof and

abandoned by its owners, the complex then fell into disrepair. The splendid **garden music pavilion** with brilliant acoustics, a pearl of Renaissance architecture, served as storage for timber, for hunted animals, and even as a cowshed. Only in the 20th century was the importance of the chateau fully appreciated, and a nearly 20-year reconstruction returned it to its former beauty.

📌 **Radical reconstruction based on Italian models was carried out under Adam II of Hradec. His name is carried by the most beautiful palace, which has exemplary Renaissance interiors.**

zamek-jindrichuvhradec.cz/en
Dobrovského 1/1
377 01 Jindřichův Hradec



Kačina

Reason to visit

The pure white beauty of this **Empire-style castle**, built in the 19th century on an unusual floor plan in the shape of an archer's bow, rises up against the backdrop of another work of art – a **naturally landscaped park**.

Of historical interest

The chateau of the noble Chotek family was, in its time, the paragon of a neoclassical aristocratic residence. It perfectly represented the wealthy and politically influential family and showcased the good taste of its owners, whose passions were culture, art and nature. The most beautiful parts of the chateau are the theatre and the library with a dome like that of the Roman Pantheon.

Tip: Romantics at heart will enjoy the picnic baskets prepared by the chateau's café. A blanket can be spread anywhere in the park, where you can spend undisturbed time relaxing with good food and drink.

📌 **In addition to the chateau's expositions, you will see exhibits from the **Museum of the Czech Countryside**, such as 400 historical ploughs and 140 historical tractors, in parts of the interior and also outside.**

nzm.cz/navstivte-nas/nase-muzea/
nzm-kacina
Svatý Mikuláš 51
284 01 Kutná Hora





Kámen

Reason to visit

Can one live in a tower, as in a fairy tale? At Kámen Castle, inhabitants had all the amenities: On the ground floor was a pantry and armoury, on the first floor were residential and reception rooms. The stone walls were insulated with wood panelling, the rooms were heated by tiled stoves, and small arched windows offered stunning views of the countryside. Of course there was also a privy – **a medieval toilet**.

Of historical interest

The castle, solid as the rock on which it was built in the Middle Ages (kámen means “stone”), was an important **strategic point** for Hussite troops during the religious wars of the 15th century. Later, peace talks between the opposing sides were held here under

the direction of the non-Catholic Bohemian King George of Poděbrady.

📌 **An exposition on life at a noble residence at the turn of the 20th century blends very well with a collection of 46 motorcycles and bicycles produced in the Czech lands around the same time.**

hradkamen.cz
Kámen 1
394 13 Kámen



Karlova Koruna

Reason to visit

The originality and genius of the Czech Baroque architect of Italian origin **Jan Santini-Aichel**, who designed the plans for the castle, fortuitously met with the outstanding talent of another prominent architect, **František Maximilián Kaňka**, who oversaw the construction work. The chateau, with an unusual floor plan recalling a **royal crown**, was named Karlova Koruna (meaning “Charles’ Crown”) by its owner, Count Kinský, in honour of a visit by the Emperor Charles VI soon after his coronation as king of Bohemia.

Of historical interest

The Kinskýs were great connoisseurs of horses, and at the end of the 18th century they established an excellent stable for their own breed.

The founder of the Octavian Kinský breed was also a founder of the Great Pardubice cross-country steeplechase, still the most difficult and most prestigious horse race in continental Europe. It is said that he loved his horses so much that he even had his favourite ones brought to his deathbed.

📌 **On a tour of the chateau, you will learn about the turbulent history of the Kinský family in connection with the history of their horse-breeding activities.**

karlovakoruna-zamek.cz
Pražská 1/IV
503 51 Chlumec nad Cidlinou





Karlštejn

Reason to visit

The Bohemian King and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV could not have chosen a better place to keep **holy relics** and the Imperial Crown Jewels. He gave the royal treasures a resting place under the gilded dome of the **Chapel of the Holy Cross**, which is covered in glass disks to create the illusion of a starry sky. Like silent witnesses, they watch over the panel paintings of dozens of saints by Master Theodoric, a leading representative of medieval European painting.

Of historical interest

Charles IV personally supervised the completion of the imperial residence and the decoration of the interior, even conferring with his stargazers. The castle's appearance today, after a thorough reconstruction at the turn

of the 20th century, is quite different from that of the original Gothic structure, and the architect Josef Mocker faulted the repairs for making the castle too beautiful and perfect. **The most significant Bohemian royal castle**, surrounded on three sides by high forested slopes, still retains its special magic today.

Tip: If you do not wish to climb the steep hill to the most-visited Czech monument, you can be taken by horse-drawn carriage from the village below the castle.

hrad-karlstejn.cz/en
Karlštejn 172
267 18 Karlštejn



Kašperk

Reason to visit

To protect the gold-bearing Kašperské Mountains and the newly built trade routes linking the Czech Kingdom with Bavaria, the Czech King and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV had a sentry castle built close to the border. As a gesture of friendship, he pledged it to his loyal and wise adviser Jan Očko of Vlašim, the second archbishop of Prague and the first Bohemian cardinal. He even entrusted him with the education of his young son, the future sovereign Wenceslas (Václav) IV.

Of historical interest

The fact that the sovereign took **the protection of the region** and the Golden Trail trade route seriously is evidenced by the **massive fortifications of the castle**. With the exception of oriels, the side towers

were built without openings – in case the castle should be bombarded with dangerous projectiles and hurled weapons.

🏰 The massive castle towers offer vistas of the mysterious Šumava forests.

kasperk.cz
Žlíbek 55
341 92 Kašperské Hory





Klášterec nad Ohří

Reason to visit

When at the end of the 18th century the castle administrator J. N. Weber experimented with the kaolin that had just been discovered in the area, he could not have known that **porcelain** from Klášterec would become famous throughout the world. His first primitive creations were a far cry from the snow-white, translucent porcelain produced Asia. He overcame these setbacks with sustained effort, and in 1794 he founded the Thun factory, named for the owners of the chateau. It has been in continuous operation since that time.

Of historical interest

The Renaissance chateau was acquired cheaply by the Thun family in 1621 after its confiscation from the previous owner,

who had participated in the uprising of the Czech aristocracy against Habsburg rule. The Thirty Years' War, however, affected them, too: Swedish troops twice plundered and devastated the chateau. It required costly rebuilding, this time in the Baroque style.

👉 **The way in which contemporary tastes were reflected in the design of porcelain products is evidenced by a large exhibition devoted to the development of Czech porcelain. A walk in the park is enlivened by the sculptures of Jan Brokoff, such as his statues of the continents. Australia, however, is missing – it had not yet been discovered at the time.**

kultura.klasterec.cz/zamek/
Chomutovská 1
431 51 Klášterec nad Ohří



Kokořín

Reason to visit

The castle, set in a picturesque region of sandstone rocks, lakes and half-forgotten villages, is located just 40 kilometres from Prague. When in the late 19th century it was bought by Prague businessman Václav Špaček, it had long been an abandoned ruin. Under the supervision of four leading art historians, he thoroughly reconstructed it and made it accessible to the public. In the valley below the castle he built a swimming pool and tennis courts, thereby making the Kokořínsko region **a popular recreation and tourist destination.**

Of historical interest

After the Thirty Years' War, the Austrian Emperor Ferdinand rated the abandoned medieval residence as a "cursed castle" that was not worthy of repair. It became a refuge for robber barons and highwaymen, who threatened the surrounding area. The romantic 19th-century ruins were "discovered" by young patriots, and many writers and artists have drawn inspiration here.

👉 **The castle walkways and massive cylindrical tower offer magnificent views of the Kokořínsko Protected Landscape Area.**

hrad-kokorin.cz
277 23 Kokořín





Konopiště

Reason to visit

In the **romanticizing reconstruction** of the palatial residence of the heir to the Austrian throne **Franz Ferdinand d'Este**, nothing was left to chance.

The chateau was equipped with all the creature comforts of the time – flushing toilets, a lift, central heating and electricity generated by its own hydroelectric plant. The archduke lived there happily with his family, at arm's length from the outside world. The idyll ended with his assassination in Sarajevo in 1914, where he died along with his beloved wife.

Of historical interest

In Czech terms, it is an unusual castle. Built in the late 13th century on the model of French castle fortresses,

it was protected by seven massive towers, which formed a separate fortress, and it had five gates and two drawbridges. Even though it was considered one of the strongest in the Kingdom of Bohemia, it was looted by Swedish troops during the Thirty Years' War.

👤 **Franz Ferdinand d'Este was an avid hunter and a passionate art collector. He amassed everything he could with the motif of St. George – pipes, coins, weapons, swords, vessels, banners, tombstones, sculptures, paintings. He wanted to outdo the king of England, who had the same hobby and to whom he liked to boast about his collection. His assassination defeated this aim.**

zamek-konopiste.cz
Konopiště 1
256 01 Benešov



Kost

Reason to visit

Kost Castle lies in an attractive landscape of forests and sandstone rocks, which because of its charm is rightly called Bohemian Paradise. It stands on a low promontory above ponds whose dams were released in times of danger, turning the castle into a water fortress. In times when war threatened, the lord of the castle retreated with his family to the top floor of the solidly built **White Tower**.

Of historical interest

At the time of the religious wars of the 15th century, the castle presented a problem for the invincible Hussite leader Jan Žižka. It is said that he did not conquer the castle because its walls were as hard as bone (*kost* in Czech), and he withdrew disappointed. The truth is a bit different: The castle simply was

overlooked by his troops because, unlike other medieval palaces, it does not stand atop a hill, but in the valley.

Tip: A 10-kilometre route leads from below Kost Castle through the picturesque Plakánek valley to Humprecht Castle near Sobotka.

👤 **The exhibition presents the Kinsky family in the Czech lands, to whom the well-run castle still belongs. In the cellar you can visit a medieval torture chamber with illustrative examples of “interrogation methods” which reliably brought about a confession.**

kost-hrad.cz
Podkost 1
506 01 Libošovice-Jičín





Krásný Dvůr

Reason to visit

At the end of the 18th century, the first and probably the biggest **English park** in the country was established at this **Baroque chateau**. Count Černín was an avid botanist and he also travelled a lot. In Western Europe he became excited by a new method of bringing the natural landscape all the way up to buildings. Part of his conception was also a series of romantic pavilions modelled almost down to the last detail after the French palace Versailles.

Of historical interest

The history of the estate is linked with the history of the Černín family, who owned the chateau up until the Second World War, when the Nazis usurped it as a resort for the elites of the Third Reich. Since 1945 it has been in the possession of the Czech state.

📍 The charm of the 18 accessible rooms in the chateau competes with a visit to its singular naturally landscaped park. Many beautiful moments were spent here by **J. W. Goethe**, who set up a **makeshift study in one of the pavilions**.

🎵 **Krásný Dvůr**
late-summer concerts (IX).

zamek-krasnydvur.cz/en
Zámek č. 1
439 72 Krásný Dvůr



Kratochvíle

Reason to visit

Vilém of Rožmberk (Rosenberg), awash in wealth and good taste, had Italian architects build for his and his friends' pleasure a charming water summer palace for moments of fun and relaxation (kratochvíle means "pastime"). There was probably no significant personality in the Czech lands, including Emperor Rudolf II himself, who did not visit this **Renaissance gem**.

Of historical interest

Jakub Krčín acquired a small fort along with some land near Netolice in 1569 as a gift for good service in administering the assets of the Rožmberks. With his admirable managerial skills and his strictness towards the subjects of the dominion in southern Bohemia, he significantly improved economic conditions, including through the building

of productive ponds, and managed to fully fund the expensive lifestyle of his master. The donated manor prospered so much that Vilém of Rožmberk realized that its location was absolutely ideal for the leisure of Renaissance society, and at great cost he reacquired it and built his own villa.

🎨 A colourful array of murals with hunting and religious scenes and gilded stucco shines in its full splendour after extensive restoration work. The administration of the state-owned chateau is gradually returning period furnishings to the chateau in accordance with the original purpose of the rooms.

zamek-kratochvile.eu
Státní zámek Kratochvíle
384 11 Netolice





Kroměříž

Reason to visit

The historical gardens, especially the **Flower Garden**, are the pride of the chateau. The unique conception to link the world of plants and water with art and architecture, together with its unaltered appearance, earned it a place on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**.

Of historical interest

From the Middle Ages, Kroměříž was the summer residence of the bishops of Olomouc and is a reflection of their power and wealth. In the Baroque period, it was spoken of as the “**Moravian Athens**”. The magnificent buildings were supplied with equally splendid furniture, glass, porcelain, books and art works. Its permanent house musicians surpassed in number and repertoire the court musicians of the Austrian emperor and the French king.

Tip: Do not miss a visit to the vaulted medieval Archbishop's Cellars, where you can sample sacramental wine that is lovingly made and decanted.

🏰 This grand palace is home to a **collection of Central European paintings** from the 15th to the 18th century that is famous throughout Europe. Here you will find original works by Titian, Van Dyck, Cranach the Elder and Dürer. The 84-metre tower of the chateau provides a beautiful view of the historical heart of Kroměříž and the outlying area.

[zamek-kromeriz.cz](#)
Sněmovní náměstí 1
767 01 Kroměříž



Křivoklát

Reason to visit

Rising up from wooded hills is the high white cylindrical tower of this ancient castle with extensive fortifications. Due to its **excellent location**, surrounded by forests full of game, it was popular with many Czech rulers. The castle halls were witness to much joyous feasting and drinking, but also to many serious political negotiations and fateful diplomatic talks.

Of historical interest

The royal residence was built in the 13th century as the foothold of the ruling Přemyslid dynasty. Later it served as a state prison. For example, Edward Kelley, a court alchemist of Emperor Rudolf II, spent three years here for murdering an imperial official in a duel.

🏰 The castle experienced many fires and subsequent reconstructions, which were completed in the 20th century. The only room with its original decorations is a **Gothic chapel** with a richly carved altar. Traces of the Czech kings and the splendour of their lifestyle, however, are found at every turn. This is thanks in part to conservationists, who have successfully sought out and returned to the castle historical collections which had been removed.

[hrad-krivoklat.cz/en](#)
Křivoklát 47
270 23 Křivoklát





Kuks

Reason to visit

A fascinating set of **Baroque sculptures** decorates the stone terrace in front of the monumental church and adjacent monastery on a hill above the river Elbe. **The Allegory of Virtues and Vices** and other groups of sandstone sculptures are the work of the “Czech Michelangelo” – Matyáš Bernard Braun, who created them in an incredibly short amount of time for Count František Antonín Špork. A sharp contrast to the humble work of the Brothers of Charity in the monastery hospital for the poor was his magnificent life of luxury, balls, theatre, hunting and other pastimes at the sumptuous spa residence on the opposite slope. The direct view from the count’s bedroom of the eternal light flickering on his ancestral tomb was a reminder that all worldly pleasures come to an end.

Of historical interest

The founder of the Kuks complex and other excellent buildings, libraries and art galleries, Count Špork was a large and contradictory personality of the Czech Baroque era who suffered all his life from a complex about the humble origins of his father. All the more, he tried to turn both slopes of the Elbe into a grand centre of elite aristocratic society, providing his guests with all kinds of amusements and comforts. His fame lasted a mere 40 years. Many of the buildings, including a chateau, are irretrievably gone, but the remarkable energy of the place remains.

hospital-kuks.cz
433 Hospital Kuks
544 43 Kuks



Kunětická hora

Reason to visit

In the fertile plain of the Elbe valley in East Bohemia, the **ruin of a hilltop Gothic castle** majestically rises above the horizon. It was once higher, but stone was excavated from the hill over the centuries, to be used, for example, in building the nearby city of Pardubice. Finally, the quarry collapsed and took part of the castle complex with it. An extensive reconstruction in the 20th century was organized by the Museum Association in Pardubice according to plans by the outstanding architect Dušan Jurkovič.

Of historical interest

The castle became very famous during the religious wars of the 15th century. It was seized by the acclaimed Hussite commander Diviš Bořek, who,

with the help of local people, built an **ingenious system of fortifications** in just two years’ time.

🚩 **Among the most interesting objects in an exhibition of archaeological finds are dice that are more than 500 years old. And what would any self-respecting castle be without an exhibition of medieval torture devices? But one thing you will not find anywhere else is the executioner’s price list, from which it is evident that the executioner earned a decent sum for practising his profession.**

hrad-kunetickahora.cz
Ráby 6
533 52 Ráby





Kunín

Reason to visit

One of the most valuable **Baroque palaces** in northern Moravia and Silesia, it experienced its heyday at the turn of the 19th century under Marie Walburga (née Harrachová), Countess of Truchsess-Waldburg-Zeil. The beautiful and intelligent countess had a tragic fate: Three of her children died here and her husband left her, taking their last son. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, she managed to bring happiness to hundreds of children of different social strata and faiths. At the chateau she built and co-funded an educational and instructional institute that was one of the most modern in Europe in its day.

Of historical interest

This once enlightened centre of education and culture was plundered at the end of the Second World War by the Soviet Army. Soldiers rode horses through the chateau interiors, they used furniture and books as heating fuel, and they amused themselves by cutting rare paintings to ribbons. It was dealt the mercy blow in the communist era. In 1999 the dilapidated chateau became the property of the town of Kunín, which set out to rescue this Baroque pearl.

📍 **In addition to tours of the chateau classrooms, it is also worth making a trip up to the chateau loft to see a unique system of Baroque chimneys.**

zamek.kunin.cz
Zámek Kunín 1
742 53 Kunín



Kynžvart

Reason to visit

Kynžvart Chateau with its **unique collections** is among the most important monuments in Europe. With help from the European Union, it was reopened to the public in 2000 after a quarter-century, and gradually the rare manuscripts from **the library of Chancellor Metternich** are being digitalized.

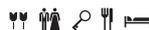
Of historical interest

Having lived most of his life in the Czech lands, the unpopular and feared Austrian state chancellor Prince Metternich devoted loving attention to his chateau in the West Bohemia spa region. For the extensive renovation of the dilapidated residence he even borrowed from the Rothschild bankers the breathtaking sum of 900,000 guildens. The loan benefitted

both parties: The prince built a luxury residence corresponding to his position and still was able to buy jewellery, coins and art, while the Rothschild family was raised to the rank of nobility for their service.

📍 **An avid collector, Metternich built up at the chateau his unrivalled cabinet of curiosities, which is one of the oldest publicly accessible museums in Europe.**

zamek-kynzvart.cz
Zámek Kynžvart
354 91 Lázně Kynžvart





Landštejn

Reason to visit

This hulking royal castle set in the unspoilt countryside of Bohemia's most southerly tip, which because of its harsh climate is called "Czech Canada", is one of the most important Romanesque monuments in Central Europe.

It was built in the 13th century to protect an important trade route and the border between the Czech lands and Austria. Although all that remains of it is a **monumental ruin**, its austere architecture, secondary to its defensive function, still elicits admiration.

Of historical interest

The overland trade route brought great wealth to the owners of the castle.

Its course was the cause of constant conflict with equally powerful neighbours, the Lords of Hradec.

The conflict erupted into a regular war,

and ultimately led to a personal duel between irreconcilable opponents, in which Vilém of Landštejn was mortally wounded. The route was diverted, and the castle lost its importance.

🚩 **Thanks to extensive archaeological research and display of the findings, you can get an idea of the luxurious lives of the castle's inhabitants in the 13th and 14th centuries. They were among the period's cream of society and led a sumptuous existence, which they made more pleasant with luxury utility objects, artistically crafted artefacts, and the technological conveniences of the time.**

hrad-landstejn.cz
Státní hrad Landštejn
378 81 Slavonice



Lednice

Reason to visit

This chateau and its **French garden** with a unique greenhouse, along with a vast park set in a loosely modified landscape extending all the way to the Valtice Chateau, is one of the high points of **European High Romanticism**.

Of historical interest

Since the Early Middle Ages, generations of the Liechtenstein family acquired and developed expanses of land extending across both sides of the present Czech–Austrian border. In the 19th century, Prince Alois II decided that the chateau in Lednice would be more appropriate than sultry Vienna for summer gatherings, celebrations and balls for the European aristocracy, and he had it ostentatiously rebuilt in the spirit of the English Gothic Revival.

🚩 Four castle tour circuits offer an idea of the social and private lives of the aristocracy across the centuries. A unique feature is a beautiful park called the "**Garden of Europe**" with many uncommon trees, ponds with rare nesting water birds, and a range of interesting small structures, such as a 60-metre **Turkish minaret**, a lookout point called the Temple of the Sun God Apollo, and an artificial ruin called John's Castle, all of which the owners hoped would enrich the seemingly unattractive landscape.

zamek-lednice.com
Zámek 1
691 44 Lednice







Lipnice nad Sázavou

Reason to visit

Seven centuries of Czech history are written on the walls of **one of the biggest Czech aristocratic castles**. Starting in the 14th century, this castle on a rocky ridge between two hills withstood incursions and, like a sentry, watched over the surrounding silver mines and the trade routes lacing across the region around the Sázava River on the border between the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Margraviate of Moravia.

Of historical interest

In 1869, the entire castle and the settlement below it was devastated by a catastrophic fire, which was watched with horror by the whole region. The burnt ruin remained abandoned for half a century. After the First World War, the

Czechoslovak Hiking Club purchased it for 100 crowns, and its gradual recovery continues till the present.

Tip: Lipnice is inextricably linked with the name of Jaroslav Hašek, who in a house below the castle (now a museum) and in the pub U České koruny (At the Czech Crown) wrote most of his world-famous novel The Good Soldier Švejk. The writer is also buried here. Every summer a festival of humour and satire called Hašek's Lipnice takes place in a natural amphitheatre (VII).

👤 **An unguided tour of the monumental and rugged medieval castle with singular views of the surrounding area is complemented by a visit to the extensive maze of castle cellars.**

hrad-lipnice.cz
Státní hrad
582 32 Lipnice nad Sázavou



Litomyšl

Reason to visit

This arcaded chateau from the 16th century is one of the most important **Renaissance monuments** north of the Alps. You can stand for hours in front of the facades and gables in the shape of swallow tails looking for duplicate designs among the hundreds of sgraffito “love letters” carved into the plaster – you won’t find any.

Of historical interest

The chateau also has a French garden, an English park and many outbuildings, including its own brewery. In 1824, a great celebration took place there and beer flowed freely. The brewer’s 11th child had just been born – a son at last. His name was **Bedřich Smetana** and he grew up to be a great composer.

👤 **Two tour circuits include the representational rooms with the **Baroque chateau theatre** and the aristocratic residential rooms with the possibility to gaze out from the **55-metre tower** and explore the chateau cellars. The acoustically superb courtyard with a unique retractable roof comes alive with period music, a reminder that every year a first-rate music festival along with related exhibitions and other events takes place at the chateau and in the picturesque town around it.**

🎭 **International opera festival Smetana’s Litomyšl (VI–VII).**

zamek-litomysl.cz
Jiráskova 93
570 01 Litomyšl





Loket

Reason to visit

The Czech name of the **royal castle** and the eponymous town below it dates to the Early Middle Ages, thanks to a graceful meander in the Ohře (Eger) river recalling the bend of a human arm (loket means “elbow”). The legendary King Charles IV liked to stay here and would alternate his state duties with hunting in his game reserves. It is said that while on a hunt his retinue discovered a hot spring which healed the king’s ailing leg. At the site of the miraculous spring he founded the town of *Teplé lázně* near Loket – today’s Karlovy Vary.

Of historical interest

Charles IV loved Loket, even though his royal father had him imprisoned here with his mother for several months as a young boy. When he was 3 years

old, he was separated from his mother, whom he never saw again. Aristocrats were held in the prison here many times throughout history, but from the 18th century until 1949 the castle served as an ordinary county jail.

👉 **The most impressive part of the tour are places where torture was practised. In the cells of the four-storey former prison there are moving life-sized figures on which various methods of torture are demonstrated with a heart-wrenching background soundtrack.**

🏰 **Medieval Festival (VIII).**

hradloket.cz
Zámecká 67
357 33 Loket



Manětín

Reason to visit

This chateau harmonizes with an unobtrusive little town into an exceptional whole, nicknamed the “**Baroque pearl of West Bohemia**”. After a devastating fire in the early 18th century, Count Lažanský invited the leading architects of the Czech High Baroque to completely restore his residence here.

Of historical interest

Manětín owes its singular atmosphere to the sculptures scattered throughout the town and even lining the main road to Plzeň (Pilsen). Stone statues of saints, atlantids, and allegories of the elements and human qualities look down from their pedestals at the chateau, in the cemetery, in the middle of fountains; they gaze up from the terrace into the chateau’s windows. This tradition was started in the late 18th century,

when the local gentry sent a young stone mason to Prague to learn from the famous Jan Brokoff.

👉 **A tour presents life at the castle under the Lažanský family, particularly Marie Gabriela, who had an unusual group of 13 paintings made of her servants.**

zamek-manetin.cz
Záček 1
331 62 Manětín





Mělník

Reason to visit

A visit to this castle with its spectacular view of the confluence of the Elbe and Vltava rivers below the ancient vineyards and the sacred mountain Říp on the horizon is like a trip to the roots of Czech history. Two legendary Slavic families, the Pšovans and the Čechs (Czechs), were united in a princely marriage here. Princess Ludmila, the first Czech saint, with her husband, Prince Bořivoj, then brought Christianity to the Czech lands and founded the ruling **Přemyslid dynasty**.

Of historical interest

From the Early Middle Ages, the castle was inhabited by the widows of Czech kings and princes, and during the reign of Emperor Charles IV the town became part of the dowry of Czech queens. Later the chateau was owned by various noble

families, and since the 18th century it has belonged to one of the oldest surviving Czech aristocratic families – the Lobkowicz family.

📍 **The high point of the accessible ceremonial and residential rooms of the Early Baroque chateau is the Great Hall with its unique collection of 17th-century maps of all major European cities along with illustrations of the places. They are a testament to the excellent work of the cartographers, graphic artists and printers of that time.**

lobkowicz-melnik.cz
Svatováclavská 19/16
276 01 Mělník



Mikulov

Reason to visit

The town of Mikulov is located in the heart of South Moravia's winemaking region, in the beautiful Protected Landscape Area of Pálava. Besides visits to local and family **wine cellars and tastings** at wineries and wine shops, also worth a stop is the historical chateau cellar with an exhibition on traditional winemaking. A richly decorated giant Renaissance wine cask able to hold 101,400 litres and weighing 26.1 tonnes is the largest in Czechia.

Of historical interest

This **Baroque chateau** towering high above the town became the victim of fateful fires. Most recently, it burned to the ground a few days before the end of the Second World War, as the German Army was retreating. Thanks to an initiative by local residents,

it was not long before it was sensitively restored and its interiors adapted to house a regional museum.

📍 **The museum expositions present not only the local winemaking tradition but also the history of the chateau and the noble Dietrichstein family. There are also archaeology displays and seasonal short-term exhibitions.**

📍 **Since 1994, one of the highest-quality collections of contemporary art in Czechia has been forming in the chateau's "Workshop" as the result of the annual summer art symposia held here.**

rmm.cz
Zámek 1
692 15 Mikulov





Milotice

Reason to visit

This pearl on a string of Baroque chateaux in Moravia is located amidst fertile vineyards and wine cellars in the Slovácko (Moravian Slovakia) region along the Moravian wine trail. It acquired its current appearance, including a **French Baroque garden**, a pheasantry, an orangery, a riding school and stables, in the 18th century under the Serényi family, after the old residence was twice ravaged by foreign marauders.

Of historical interest

Count Serényi, whose origins were Hungarian, spent most of his time at the imperial court in Vienna, but he often invited select members of Viennese society to his Milotice estate, particularly to show off his singular collection of noble thoroughbred horses

in the sumptuous castle stables. Portraits of his 32 most precious stallions are displayed at the chateau.

👉 **A tour of the interiors with period furnishings, precisely recreated on the basis of contemporary photographs and recollections of living eyewitnesses, offers insight into the lifestyle of the last owners of the chateau, the German family Seilern Aspang.**

👉 **A sales gallery of wine and a wine bar.**

zamek-milotice.cz
Zámecká 1
696 05 Milotice



Mnichovo Hradiště

Reason to visit

In the western spur of the beautiful countryside known as Bohemian Paradise, the Wallenstein family built a luxurious residence exactly corresponding to the family motto: **“In spite of envy!”** (Invit invidia!).

Of historical interest

The chateau's founder, the prominent Protestant politician, writer and patriot Václav Budovec, was executed in 1621 as one of the main leaders of the Bohemian uprising against the emperor. His confiscated chateau along with the entire estate was awarded to the emperor's military leader **Albrecht von Wallenstein**, becoming part of his vast and ever-growing holdings. A few years later, his life also came to a premature

end when he was killed by assassins to stop his plans to top off his stellar career with coronation as king of Bohemia. His body, after many transfers, was laid to rest 150 years after his death in the St. Anne Chapel near the chateau.

👉 **Several circuits through the rich interiors of the **Baroque chateau** take visitors back to the aristocratic lifestyle of the 18th century. At that time 22,000 volumes of books were moved here from another chateau belonging to the powerful Wallensteins, Duchcov, where the ageing lothario and diplomat-machinator Giacomo Casanova lived in exile, managing its library until his death.**

zamek-mnichovohradiste.cz
Státní zámek
295 01 Mnichovo Hradiště





Náchod

Reason to visit

When the Italian general Ottavio Piccolomini received this chateau and the extensive surrounding estate in 1634 as a gift from the emperor for his part in dispatching General Albrecht von Wallenstein, he was only 35 years old. However, he already had behind him distinguished military service in the Thirty Years' War.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first alteration to his new residence was to modernize the **fortifications**. In the 150 years that the Piccolomini family reigned over the dominion the chateau acquired its current essentially Baroque and Rococo appearance.

Of historical interest

Albrecht von Wallenstein's mother came from the Smiřický family, the longtime owners of the Náchod

estate. In the 17th century, they owned the greatest area of land in the Bohemian Kingdom, including dozens of castles and towns. However, the emperor confiscated the property from the last heiress, who had supported the uprising of the Czech nobility in 1620.

It was soon also confiscated from the new owner, Adam Erdman Trčka, Albrecht's brother-in-law and confidant, who was assassinated together with the general in 1634 in Cheb to scuttle the so-called Wallenstein conspiracy.

🚩 **The chateau offers six different tour routes through its beautifully decorated interiors. The newest circuit features a unique collection of orders of merit and decorations, most notably jewels on grand cordons and order stars from the old chateau vault.**

zamek-nachod.cz
Zámek 1282
547 01 Náchod



Náměšť na Hané

Reason to visit

The splendid carriage of the Olomouc archbishop had a star turn in Miloš Forman's film *Amadeus*, but it is not the only remarkable one in the chateau's **collection of historical carriages**. Particularly noteworthy are three one-of-a-kind richly gilded coaches used for ceremonial occasions. Their velvet, gold-embroidered seats are filled with eiderdown and the curtains are sewn from precious brocade. The total length of the carriage with a team of six thoroughbred horses was up to 15 metres, with the biggest of the carriages measuring more than 3.5 metres in height and weighing over two tonnes.

Of historical interest

The iron wholesaler František Otáhal bought the manor with a chateau

in the French style in 1916 from its last aristocratic owner, Count Kinský. It cost him 2.3 million Austro-Hungarian kronen plus other major investments in the modernization of the residence intended to increase the property's value. The chateau, approached from four sides by alleys of centuries-old linden trees, was lost by the family a few weeks after the end of the Second World War. It was one of the first seizures under the decrees ordered by Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš to confiscate the property of ethnic Germans.

🚩 **Part of one of the tours is an exhibition of more than 50 historical prams.**

zamek.namestnahane.cz
Hrad 1
783 44 Náměšť na Hané





Náměšť nad Oslavou

Reason to visit

The chateau rose to fame in the late 18th century as an important **centre of musical life in Central Europe**.

The large chateau band was made up of teachers and folk musicians from the area, but mainly of the Haugwitz family's servants – anyone who could not play an instrument well was dismissed. The repertoire and the artistic quality were excellent, and they played as many as three times a week. Famous composers and musicians were often guests at the chateau. The musical tradition continues today.

Of historical interest

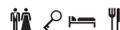
The rebuilding of the no-longer-suitable castle into a large Renaissance chateau in the 16th century was carried out under

the Žerotín family. The cream of the Moravian aristocracy gathered here to be entertained and to further their political and family ambitions. At that time Moravia was a land of prosperity, religious freedom and tolerance. The Protestant Unity of the Brethren had a printing press here, which in 1578 was transferred to nearby Kralice, where one of the most valuable early works of literature in Czech originated – the Kralice Bible.

📍 **A highlight of the tour is a renowned collection of 24 large historical tapestries from the Renaissance to the 19th century.**

🎵 **The international multigenre summer culture festival Folk Holidays (VII), concerts at the chateau.**

zamek-namest.cz
Zámek 1
675 71 Náměšť nad Oslavou



Nelahozeves

Reason to visit

The chateau holds a significant part of the Lobkowicz collections, which are among the oldest, largest and best-preserved **private collections of art and architecture** in Czechia.

Of historical interest

The original fortress and also later the Renaissance chateau built in the Italian style by Italian artists frequently changed hands, and no owner stayed here for long. From the 17th century, the palatial residence was used only as offices and for storage, and it gradually deteriorated. An active new chapter began in the late 20th century, when the chateau was restituted to the Lobkowicz family, which opened it to the public.

The famous composer **Antonín Dvořák** was born in Nelahozeves.

There is a museum located at his family's home, and the chateau hosts a series of concerts of classical, jazz and alternative music from spring till autumn.

📍 **The view into the aristocratic interiors of the Lobkowicz family illustrates how an old and influential noble family lived in one of their eminent chateaux in the countryside. Hunting was the main entertainment of the autumn months, which is shown by trophies of the chase, a collection of firearms and stag horn furniture.**

lobkowicz.cz/en/nelahozeves-castle
Nelahozeves 1
277 51 Nelahozeves





Nové Město nad Metují

Reason to visit

At the beginning of the 20th century, a wealthy owner of a textile factory, J. Bartoň, bought this dilapidated **Baroque chateau** to become his future family home. The renowned architects Dušan Jurkovič and Pavel Janák converted it into a modern residence, equipped with all the amenities of the time, such as running water, central heating, electricity, a telephone line, and a passenger lift and dumbwaiter.

Of historical interest

In the 17th century, the chateau with the entire estate was granted to the Scottish sergeant Walter Leslie, who was elevated to the rank of field marshal and made an imperial count. This was a reward for his participation in the assassination

of Albrecht von Wallenstein and other Czech nobles accused of conspiring against the emperor.

📌 **The modernized historical interiors, both the representational rooms and also the private residential rooms of the industrialist's family, were boldly decorated by leading Czech artists in the period's prevailing styles of Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Cubism and Functionalism.**

zameknm.cz
Husovo náměstí 1201
549 01 Nové Město nad Metují



Olomouc

Reason to visit

The importance for Czech history of the Přemyslid castle in Olomouc is comparable only with that of Prague Castle. The remnant of the 12th-century **Bishop's Palace** with its magnificent **stone windows** is considered to be one of the most significant monuments of **Romanesque residential architecture** in Europe. It stands in stark contrast to the ultramodern reconstruction of the entire complex into an attractive art museum, which has won many prestigious awards for the young architects who designed it.

Of historical interest

Before he became the first Czech king, Prince Vratislav II established a bishopric in Olomouc in 1063 – its seat was directly in the castle. Inside these walls in 1306, one of the first Czech crime mysteries

played out, which has yet to be solved: The murder of the 16-year-old King Wenceslas III, who was resting here before heading to Poland on a military campaign, has never been fully understood. It meant the definitive end of the only Czech royal dynasty, the Přemyslids. Thirty members of the dynasty ruled for more than 400 years. The castle was then left to the clergy.

📌 **The permanent exhibition of the Archdiocese Museum presents art treasures from the 12th to the 18th century – one of the best Central European collections of old paintings – along with objects from the vault of the Olomouc archbishops. The number of items and their well-organized display makes this the second most important Czech art institution after the National Gallery in Prague.**

muo.cz
Václavské náměstí 3
771 11 Olomouc



Opočno

Reason to visit

At first it seemed as though Jan Rudolf Trčka of Lípa had it made. He had inherited a magnificent **Renaissance chateau** and a profitable estate and had married Marie Magdalena of Lobkowitz, a woman not only beautiful and intelligent but also vibrant and business-minded. Perhaps too a fault. Her subjects nicknamed her “evil Manda” because of her selfishness, greed and cruelty. After 1620, when the Czech nobility was defeated in its revolt against the emperor, she became the richest woman of her time through property speculation, intrigues, and her contacts on both the losing and winning sides. She dreamed of a military followed by a political career for her son, but the dream ended with his death and the loss of honour along with all the family’s property.

Of historical interest

Fateful for Trčka of Lípa was his alliance with Albrecht von Wallenstein. Previously the emperor’s favourite commander, in 1634 Wallenstein was accused of conspiracy, deposed and assassinated along with his friends and advisers, among whom was the young officer Adam Erdman Trčka – his brother-in-law. The family died out with him, and Opočno fell into the possession of the Italian noble family Colloredo, who remained here until the Second World War.

zamek-opocno.cz
Trčkovo náměstí 1
517 73 Opočno



Orlík

Reason to visit

Like an eagle’s nest, a wooden castle was built in the 13th century on a steep cliff overlooking the Vltava River. It was later transformed into a **Gothic stone castle** for the royal garrison. Even though the castle’s high perch and the area below the castle were engulfed by a dam in the 20th century, it retains its impressive appearance as well as the name Orlík (which means “eaglet”).

Of historical interest

Orlík experienced its heyday after 1802, under Karl Philipp Schwarzenberg. Already at the age of 16, the young prince set out on a brilliant military career, first in the bodyguard of the Austrian emperor, then within four years as a colonel, and soon after as a marshal and chief commander of the anti-Napoleonic troops. His 237,000 men

decisively crushed Napoleon’s French Army in the crucial Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in 1813.

 **The diplomatic talent of the Schwarzenbergs is attested to not only by a unique collection of orders of merit but also by the salons with Empire-style furniture imported from Karl Philipp’s ambassadorial residence in Paris – and perhaps additionally by the post formerly held by the current owner, Karel Schwarzenberg, as minister of foreign affairs of Czechia.**

zamekorlik.cz
Zámek Orlík
398 07 Orlík nad Vltavou





Pernštejn

Reason to visit

This marble castle with a **silvery access path** (made from mica stones) and splendid architecture rises from a **rock above** deep green forests like the mysterious abode of the Lord of the Rings. Oriels attached to the upper stories like swallows' nests ingeniously enlarged the living space of the castle.

Of historical interest

The castle bears the name of a famous noble family, one of the richest in the Czech lands, for whom large loans from the emperor became fateful. When the Pernštejns could not repay them, they were forced to sell off their vast estate. The castle has retained its Gothic-Renaissance form, unchanged since its completion in the 16th century. Its underused

interiors have been significantly marred by the ravages of time and by vandals.

🏰 **Thick walls, small windows and impressive vaulting, a dungeon and chapel – this is the Gothic core of the castle. But also spiral staircases and narrow corridors with many authentic medieval inscriptions – excerpts from Ovid as well as lascivious drawings of military guards from long ago. It is a sharp contrast with the comfortably furnished rooms of the last owner.**

hrad-pernstejn.cz
Státní hrad Pernštejn
592 62 Nedvědice



Ploskovice

Reason to visit

For this sumptuous **Baroque chateau**, which could equal the residences of foreign nobles, the ambitious Anna Marie Franziska, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, paid the unheard-of sum of over a million guildens. The “little Versailles” was of enormous importance to her, and she personally oversaw its construction and paid the workers each week. To hide the extent of her extravagance from her husband, she burned all the bills, so neither the construction details nor the identity of the architect are known.

Of historical interest

In the late 15th century, an uprising of serfs took place at the chateau and the estate. Its main protagonist was the knight Dalibor of Kozojedy, an advocate for the oppressed.

As punishment, he was thrown into the new dungeon at Prague Castle as its first prisoner and then executed. His story was revived in the Romantic era of the 19th century, when, thanks to the patriotic opera Dalibor by Bedřich Smetana, it became a symbol of Czech music.

🏰 **The 19th-century interiors evoke the atmosphere of the summer residence of the retired Austrian emperor and last crowned king of Bohemia, Ferdinand V of Habsburg. The Baroque artificial water caves should not be missed.**

zamek-ploskovice.cz
Státní zámek
411 42 Ploskovice 1





Prague – Prague Castle

Reason to visit

It is difficult to decide which Prague panorama is more captivating: the one from the river, looking up at the unmistakable silhouette of Prague Castle, or the **view from the terraces** and windows of Prague Castle, looking down at the magical city with its **hundreds of towers** and monuments dotting the hills on both banks of the Vltava River, spanned by a procession of **historical bridges**. In any case, Prague Castle with St. Vitus Cathedral is a national treasure, the symbol of Czech statehood, and the place that most contributes to Prague's reputation as a city of unparalleled beauty.

Of historical interest

Whether you choose to enter Prague Castle through the monumental ceremonial gates, just as kings and emperors once did with their processions and presidents now do in their limousines, or through the “back servants’ entrance” – the more romantic Old Castle Steps along the castle’s terraced South Gardens, you will be impressed by the size and splendour of this ancient place of Czech rulers. Even today it is the seat of the head of state. The castle is a textbook of architecture, with first-rate **monuments in every style**, from the Romanesque Old Royal Palace, the Gothic St. Vitus Cathedral, and the Renaissance Queen Anne’s Summer Palace (Belvedere) to the Baroque Picture Gallery, the Classicist ceremonial halls and the high-tech hothouse in the gardens designed by the world-renowned architect Eva Jiřičná. It is like walking through a 3D film about Czech history and national identity.

Tip: Every hour there is a **changing of the guard** at the castle gates, and at noon in the **First Courtyard** it is accompanied by fanfare and a **flag ceremony**.

↑ The entire castle complex is freely accessible. Tours of the interiors include the **Old Royal Palace**, the permanent exhibition “The Story of Prague Castle”, **St. George’s Basilica**, the **Prague Castle Picture Gallery**, the **Powder Tower**, **St. Vitus Cathedral** with the tomb of Czech kings, **Rožmberk Palace**, the **South Tower** of the cathedral, and the **Golden Lane** with the castle walls. The ceremonial halls of Prague Castle are accessible **two days a year**, usually on the first Saturday after May 8th and the first Saturday after October 28th. Throughout the year, many areas of the castle hold temporary exhibitions and cultural events.

🏰 **Summer Shakespeare Festival** – the oldest and biggest open-air Shakespeare theatre festival in Europe (VI–IX).

🧸 The Supreme Burgrave’s Palace houses one of the largest private **collections of toys** in the world, with numerous unique objects from Europe and North America.

hrad.cz/en/prague-castle-for-visitors
Pražský hrad
119 08 Praha 1





Prague – Troja Chateau

Reason to visit

The atmosphere of the “Eternal City” Rome captivated the young Czech Count Václav Vojtěch of Šternberk (Sternberg) so much that he decided to bring a piece of it home. In selecting the site and the artists to carry out his dream of a magnificent Baroque suburban **villa full of art works** in the middle of endless gardens, he had extraordinary good fortune.

Of historical interest

An oasis of merriment and relaxation, surrounded by picturesque vineyards and a sparkling river, it was not intended as a permanent residence but for festivities. The main theme of the chateau’s beautiful painted decorations was an ode to the power and glory of the Habsburg dynasty,

and the count had hopes of playing host to Emperor Leopold I and his hunting party here. Soon after the building began, however, the sovereign permanently abandoned Prague. It was not until 23 years later that the count was able to at least welcome Leopold’s son, Emperor Joseph I.

📌 **The story of the chateau’s construction is told by the exhibition “Eternal Summer in a Roman Villa”. It is complemented by a unique selection of historical images of dogs, horses and other animals from the collections of noble residences and the City Gallery Prague.**

ghmp.cz/zamek-troja
U Trojského zámku 1
170 00 Praha 7



Prague – Vyšehrad

Reason to visit

The rock above the Vltava River crowned by a pair of slender church towers is shrouded in **ancient legends** and is infused with the genius loci of the destiny of the Czech nation. Away from the crowds of tourists flooding the old quarters in the heart of Prague, Vyšehrad provides an **uncommon view** of the magnificent city and a quiet respite in a graceful park.

Of historical interest

Vyšehrad is **the oldest Czech royal seat**, the residence of the first crowned Bohemian king, Vratislav I. It is inseparably connected with the Přemyslid dynasty and the origins of the Czech nation in the 11th century – and reaches back even further

in ancient legends. The main monuments at Vyšehrad (the Neo-Gothic Church of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Baroque casemates) are much newer. Of the many Czech legends, which have been rendered artistically numerous times, the most popular is about the mythical **horse Šemík**, who saved his rider from execution by jumping over the ramparts and across the river. Another is about Princess Libuše, the mythical seer, who chose to establish a ruling dynasty with the ploughman Přemysl and is said to have prophesied Prague’s undying fame and stellar future at this site.

praha-vysehrad.cz
V Pevnosti 159/5b
120 00 Praha 2-Vyšehrad





Rábí

Reason to visit

Nearly 3 kilometres of ramparts and walls encircle **the largest Czech castle ruin**, which boasted one of the most sophisticated defence systems in Europe in its time. The attractive medieval environment is **beloved by filmmakers** shooting fairy tales and historical narratives. It was here in 1967 that the director František Vláčil filmed the famous Czech art film *Markéta Lazarová*.

Of historical interest

The most famous event in the extremely rich history of the castle was the siege by Hussite troops in 1421. The legendary military commander and folk hero Jan Žižka lost his one healthy eye here, apparently with an arrow shot by one of the defenders of the castle. This scene was once carved on the castle gate,

but local residents dismantled the stone from the deteriorating castle, which was abandoned in the 18th century, to use as building material.

🚩 **What was the story with Žižka's eye? What kind of view does the castle tower offer? Is the well in the courtyard really bottomless? You will learn the answers to these questions and more on two guided tours.**

hrad-rabi.cz
Státní hrad Rábí
342 01 Sušice



Ratibořice

Reason to visit

The educated, independent and attractive Katharina Wilhelmine, Duchess of Sagan (in Czech Kateřina Zaháňská), with her charm and wit was for years a darling of Europe's highest social circles, enchanting prominent men of the early 19th century, from the Russian czar to the Austrian chancellor Metternich. She travelled throughout Europe and was in her element at the Viennese court, but she considered her real home to be her **summer residence** in the beautiful countryside of East Bohemia.

Of historical interest

The Hall of the Three Emperors is a reminder that in 1813 the duchess' elegant mansion was the site of secret meetings among Austria, Russia

and Prussia to form a coalition against Napoleon, which contributed to the French leader's downfall and the realignment of Europe.

🚩 **A tour through the salons of the chateau vies successfully with a walk through its park and adjacent "Grandmother's Valley", where everything is connected with the famous Czech novel *Grandmother* by the popular 19th-century writer Božena Němcová.**

zamek-ratiborice.cz
Státní zámek Ratibořice
552 03 Česká Skalice





Rožmberk

Reason to visit

The best view of the monumental medieval castle and romantic landscape of South Bohemia opens up before you from the **English Tower**. However, it requires a climb of almost 200 steps.

Of historical interest

This castle from the mid-13th century is one of the oldest castles belonging to the Vítkovci, the predecessors of one of the most important Czech noble families – the Rožmberks (Rosenbergs), to whom the king used to give the most powerful offices in the land. Despite the plethora of educated and enterprising family members, probably the most popular figure is Perchta of Rožmberk, who after her death, according to legend, began appearing in the ancestral residences as **a mournful ghost**.

 A portrait of the famous **White Lady** is the highlight of the Rožmberk Hall on the first tour circuit, which takes visitors back to the time of the last Rožmberks, Vilém and Petr Vok. The Buquoy family, which owned the castle from 1620 until the end of the Second World War, is presented mainly on a second tour circuit of the private family rooms on the castle's second floor.

hrad-rozemberk.cz/en
Státní hrad Rožmberk
382 18 Rožmberk nad Vltavou



Slavkov (Austerlitz)

Reason to visit

This monumental **Baroque chateau** is famous for its connection to **the battle of Slavkov** (Austerlitz), which was fought in 1805 between the French Army and the allied armies of Russia and Austria. After his victory, Emperor **Napoleon** stayed overnight at this chateau several times and began peace talks here.

Of historical interest

The chateau enjoyed the peak of its fame in the second half of the 18th century under Wenzel Anton, Prince of Kaunitz-Rietberg, a member of the old Moravian family which had owned the estate for four centuries. The prince moved in the highest imperial circles and helped to form policy for the Habsburg monarchy, frequently welcoming Empress Maria Theresa to his

magnificent home. He was a lover of art and books, and, despite censorship, he ordered the latest “subversive” books on the Enlightenment and new revolutionary currents directly from France.

Tip: Every year in early December a re-enactment of the battle in which Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the numerically superior allied army led by the Austrian emperor and the Russian czar takes place on the Slavkov battlefield. You can organize a visit to this site, with the notable Art Nouveau memorial called the Cairn of Peace, with the chateau administration, or you can visit on your own at any time of year.

zamek-slavkov.cz
Palackého náměstí 1
684 01 Slavkov u Brna





Sychrov

Reason to visit

The spirit of the French countryside infuses not just this chateau, which is a fine example of 19th-century **historicizing architecture**, but also the surrounding landscape, which has been transformed into a work of art in its own right. The reconstruction work that gave the chateau its fabulous Neo-Gothic form was performed exclusively by local artists and artisans, notably by the ingenious woodcarver Petr Bušek, who imprinted the chateau interiors with high artistic value and an **unforgettable atmosphere**.

Of historical interest

The estate, after its seizure from Czech aristocrats, was acquired by a French knightly family for service to the Austrian emperor in the Thirty Years' War. Its heyday was in the 19th century,

when the Breton princes of Rohan took refuge here. As first cousins of the French kings of the Bourbon dynasty, they fled to Sychrov after the French Revolution, and they liked North Bohemia so much that they stayed here, even though they were later invited to return to their homeland.

👉 Besides a tour of the aristocratic rooms with unrivalled carved decoration and a portrait gallery of the Rohan family, which survived the French Revolution hidden in the attic of a Parisian palace, you can also see numerous interesting details and secluded corners of the rambling chateau, including the pink bathroom of one of the Rohan princesses.

zamek-sychrov.cz
Státní zámek Sychrov
463 44 Sychrov



Špilberk (Brno)

Reason to visit

Over the centuries, this **stone castle** high above the city has caused feelings of both security and fear in Brno residents. This once-important seat of Czech kings and Moravian margraves gradually grew into a huge Baroque **military fortress** with the harshest prison in the Austrian monarchy – the notorious “**prison of nations**”. Later it was used as army barracks. Today it is the seat of the Brno City Museum and is one of the most important venues in Brno for exhibitions, theatre performances, concerts, and historical and sporting events.

Of historical interest

The prison has been part of the fortress since the Thirty Years' War. Its cells have seen the most hardened criminals and military and political prisoners

of all regimes, including Hungarian Jacobins, Italian patriots and Polish revolutionaries from the Kraków Uprising in 1846. During the Second World War it was a transfer point to other prisons or concentration camps.

👉 In addition to a tour of the casemates, inside the castle you can visit several permanent **exhibitions** and temporary exhibitions from the Brno City Museum's collections. **The observation gallery of the corner tower** offers a singular view of Brno and its surroundings.

🎭 Summer Shakespeare Festival (VII–VIII), Špilberk Philharmonia Brno Festival (VIII), fencing festival (IX).

spilberk.cz
Špilberk 1
662 24 Brno-střed





Šternberk

Reason to visit

This sprawling castle with rich decorations in a **range of styles**, from Gothic to Art Deco, is a textbook example of one approach to restoring old historical monuments in the Romantic spirit of the 19th century. The luxurious furnishings were largely brought here from inaccessible chateaux in North Moravia.

Of historical interest

The history of the Šternberk (Sternberg) family seat is intertwined with troubled periods in Czech history, especially wars, during which the castle and the town below it suffered greatly. For a long time it lay in ruins. It was only in the late 19th century that the owners decided

to perform a general reconstruction. The upgrades included the installation of running water, hot-air heating, bathrooms and a private lift.

Tip: In the entry building, the Museum of Clocks displays 500 timepieces dating from the 2nd millennium BC to the present day, from sundials and hourglasses to mechanical clocks and pocket watches.

 **At the heart of the two tour routes are the collections of the last owners, the Liechtensteins.**

hrad-sternek.cz
Horní náměstí 6
785 01 Šternberk



Švihov

Reason to visit

This magnificent **water castle** was built by the rich and power-drunk Půta Švihovský of Rýzmbek. Tales are still told about his pride and cruel treatment of serfs and craftsmen, for which, **legend** has it, the devil took him to hell. To this day, there is a strange hole in the vaulting of his bedroom which defies all attempts to repair it.

Of historical interest

The perfectly protected medieval fortress had sophisticated technical equipment that could flood the surrounding area with water at a moment's notice (including the castle's inner courtyard) and then drain it before the building sustained any damage.

It is considered to be **the last real castle built in the Czech lands** – after Švihov, only chateaux were built.

 **A tour of the rooms where nobility lived and enjoyed themselves and also the part of the castle where the staff toiled provides a tangible picture of life here in the 16th century.**

 **What do dragons look like? You can learn all about dragons and how to deal with them in the summertime exhibition “Dragons”.**

hrad-svihov.cz/en
Žizkova 1
340 12 Švihov



Telč

Reason to visit

The chateau and town square in Telč are among the most important gems of the **European Renaissance style** outside its birthplace in Italy.

It was there that Zacharias of Hradec, one of the richest and most powerful princes of his time, became enthralled with the new artistic style while on his diplomatic missions. He invited the leading Italian builders, craftsmen and artists to his homeland and gave them free rein to rebuild his old ancestral seat. The **opulent interiors** are decorated with furniture made of gilded silver, tapestries, jewels and precious stones; outside you'll find sgraffiti, courtyards linked by arcades, and a magnificent park with an **orangery** surrounded by ponds. It is all a testament to the influence of **Italian art in the Czech lands**.

Of historical interest

The luxurious residence rebuilt in the second half of the 16th century from the original Gothic castle lived on its fame for centuries. The wealth of one of the most lucrative Moravian estates dwindled and then passed into the hands of other noble families.

The Renaissance appearance of the chateau and the adjacent square, lined with arcaded townhouses with pastel-coloured façades, has remained almost unchanged and thus retains its original character, which is why it was **inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List**. This exceptional Renaissance treasure nestled between ponds almost seems like a fairy tale film

set. Indeed, films are often shot here, and the locals have become proficient film extras.

📍 A tour of the **chateau's rooms** is almost like a textbook of Renaissance art techniques. You'll see painted coffered ceilings, wood carvings and curious hunting trophies. A true gem is the huge **Golden Hall**, named for the gilded coffered ceiling with scenes from ancient mythology. A tour of the private salons of the last owners of the chateau, the Podstatzky-Liechtensteins, includes the count's bathrooms and a dressing room with a **collection of historical clothing and accessories**.

zamek-telc.cz
Náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 1
588 56 Telč





Točník and Žebrák

Reason to visit

The ruins of two closely neighbouring medieval castles – **the best-preserved pair of castles** in Czechia – are the dominant feature of the deep forests of the Křivoklátsko region.

Of historical interest

The older castle, Žebrák, was used from the 13th century by Czech nobles and kings. Emperor Charles IV stopped here frequently on his journeys out into the world. A lot of time was also spent here by his successor, Václav IV, an avid hunter who brought his large hunting parties here. After a devastating fire, he had the castle Točník built on a neighbouring hill. For its time, the comfortable new castle with two palaces represented unprecedented

luxury, reflecting the status of a king who reigned over ten countries. This is recalled by the entrance gate with their coats of arms, including a favourite symbol of Václav IV – a kingfisher in a twisted veil.

🚩 **Unguided tours are very frequently enhanced by various celebrations, medieval markets, music festivals and fencing duels.**

tocnik.com
Hradý Točník a Žebrák
267 51 Zdice



Trosky

Reason to visit

The two towers of this ruined Gothic castle (trosky means “ruins”) are called **Bába and Panna** (Granny and Maiden), and they stand against the horizon as the symbol of the region known as Bohemian Paradise. In turn, they offer stunning views of this spectacular landscape. After the Thirty Years’ War, the abandoned castle gradually crumbled into picturesque ruins, which to this day are loved by poets, painters, photographers and all romantics at heart.

Of historical interest

Building the castle on **two steep volcanic peaks** made it an impregnable fortress, which remained unconquerable even during the wild Hussite Wars. As extra insurance, under the castle there are said to be vast cellars and escape

routes in the surrounding maze of sandstone rocks and underground caves. This was once used by 200 robber barons, who had taken the castle with their cunning, to deflect a large number of land troops, even though they were greatly outnumbered.

🚩 **On an independent tour, you can admire not only the distant views from the top of the tower Bába, but also the restoration work which is uncovering the sophisticated technical design of the castle.**

hrad-trosky.cz/en
Státní hrad Trosky
512 63 Rovensko pod Troskami





Třeboň

Reason to visit

Not even 30 alchemists led by the famous Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley, who were invited to Třeboň by Vilém of Rožmberk, could create a potion that would guarantee him offspring. He died childless, and his enormous estate, as well as his debts, were inherited by his younger brother Petr Vok. Vok gradually sold off some of the ancestral residences, then he and his entire court relocated to the chateau in Třeboň, which he had rebuilt in the **Renaissance style** for his comfort and also as a place to house a **unique archive and collections** which could nearly rival those of Emperor Rudolf II at Prague Castle.

Of historical interest

Petr Vok, an educated and art-loving prince who was very charming and

appealing to women, could sire no children. And so with his death in 1611, the noble Rožmberk family's 400-year journey through Czech history came to an end. Their presence in South Bohemia is recalled above all by a large number of breeding ponds, which provided a substantial part of their profits and imprinted the local landscape with its unique atmosphere.

Tip: In an English park on the banks of the huge pond called The World there is an unusual stone tomb with 26 coffins of members of the Schwarzenberg family. Because of its excellent acoustics, in the past it was used for concerts.

zamek-trebon.cz/en
Zámek 115
379 01 Třeboň



Valtice

Reason to visit

At the southernmost point of Czechia, the powerful and wealthy Liechtenstein family had a 185 km² area of marshes and swamps around the Dyje River drained. On this land, situated between their beautiful chateaux in Valtice and Lednice, they created an artificial landscape with ponds full of water lilies, shaded forests, scented meadows and flowering parks. To surprise and delight their guests, they invited the best Viennese architects to build a number of marvellous little buildings here.

Of historical interest

Valtice historically belonged to Austria, and from the Middle Ages until 1945 it belonged to the Liechtenstein family. A succession of 13 ruling princes gradually built an epic residence whose splendour,

furnishings and **rich collections** could compete with those of the Viennese imperial court in the 18th century.

👉 In the summer season, a tour of the princely chambers of the Liechtenstein family can be combined with a visit to nearby points of interest, such as the hunting lodge called **Rendezvous**, a classical colonnade offering beautiful views, and the **Chapel of St. Hubert**, the patron saint of hunters, where masses to give thanks would take place after aristocratic hunts.

zamek-valtice.cz
Zámek 1
691 42 Valtice





Velhartice

Reason to visit

The romantic atmosphere of this ancient castle with its **unusual defence system** is enhanced by the surrounding wooded hills of one of the most beautiful valleys in the Šumava region.

Of historical interest

One of the first owners and builders of the castle, Bušek of Velhartice, and also his son were favourite and faithful chamberlains of the King and Emperor Charles IV. Perhaps every Czech remembers from school the poem about the ruler and his friend who often sat together at a stone table and hoisted many a wine goblet together.

📍 While it is possible to visit the original medieval sections of the castle and the interiors from the Renaissance era, when aristocratic living conditions became much more comfortable and pleasurable, you will be most impressed on an unguided tour during which you can explore the grounds in detail and enjoy **spectacular views of the surrounding nature reserve and open-air museum of folk architecture below the castle.**

hrad-velhartice.cz/en
Hrad Velhartice
341 42 Kolinec



Velké Březno

Reason to visit

One of the youngest and smallest Czech chateaux, it was built in the mid-19th century by Count Chotek as a place to spend the autumn of his life. In his youth he travelled throughout Europe and mingled in the social circles of great cities, but once he retired from public life as a leading politician he retreated to the Czech countryside.

Of historical interest

From the outside the building is reminiscent of a railway station, yet it was equipped with all the amenities of its time for the comfort of the freshly retired count and his charming wife, Princess Adelheid, as well as their numerous guests, including Franz Liszt.

📍 Inside the chateau you can explore the mysteries of aristocratic living in detail, including his and hers bedrooms. Surprising is the number of accoutrements for daily hygiene, showing that good grooming was just as important and time-consuming for men as it was for women.

zamek-velkebrezno.cz/en
Zámecká 63
403 23 Velké Březno





Velké Losiny

Reason to visit

One of the most beautiful **arcaded Renaissance chateaux** north of the Alps, in the late 17th century it became infamous as the scene of witch trials. The cruel inquisitor used trumped-up accusations to have more than 50 innocent women and men – mostly wealthy burghers whose property was the real reason for their persecution – tortured and burned alive at the stake.

Of historical interest

For more than three centuries, the chateau was owned by the Žerotíns, one of the richest families in Moravia. The original small water fortress could not meet their high standards, and therefore they had it rebuilt on a grand scale in the 16th century.

✚ Although visitors' interest is most riveted by the **Hall of Justice**, the tragic site of the interrogations of those accused of witchcraft, the most valuable room in the chateau is the austere **Knights' Hall**, with walls decorated in leather and a towering Renaissance stove made of colourful tiles. The chateau also has an important collection of **art works, weapons, and a wonderful group of tapestries – the second largest in Moravia.**

zamek-velkelosiny.cz/en
Zámecká 268
788 15 Velké Losiny



Vizovice

Reason to visit

One of the most beautiful chateaux of the **Late Baroque** period in Moravia, it stands in the centre of the town at the foot of the Vizovické Highlands in Wallachia (Valašsko) – a region of distinctive folk traditions and whose local speciality is the plum distillate called **slivovice**. You can learn about its illustrious four-century tradition at a small museum inside the chateau.

Of historical interest

The insolvent manor, destroyed by Turkish raids, was bought at auction in the mid-18th century by the 30-year-old Count Heřman Hannibal of Blümegegen, who later became a bishop. He had it levelled to the ground and built here a grand, ultramodern residence in the French style. It is preserved in its unaltered form,

including the original stone and parquet floors, frescoes, and doors and windows with Baroque metal fittings, locks and shutters.

✚ Two tour routes present the reception areas of the chateau including the chapel and also the private rooms for family members, guests and servants.

zamek-vizovice.cz
Náměstí Palackého 376
763 12 Vizovice





Vranov nad Dyjí

Reason to visit

This sumptuous chateau built on a promontory in the picturesque valley of the Dyje River was one of the most renowned **noble residences of the Baroque era**. The main reason for its fame was its charming owner, Maria Anna, Marchioness of Pignatelli, whom Count Althann – a favourite of Emperor Charles VI – brought home to his family residence from Spain. It was an open secret that the real reason for the monarch's frequent visits from nearby Vienna was the vivacious and intelligent lady of the manor.

Of historical interest

The present appearance of the residence was imprinted on the castle – which had been devastated by a fire in 1665 – by the counts of Althann in the late 17th century. They called upon one

of the greatest figures of the Central European Baroque – the Viennese court architect Fischer von Erlach. Throughout the 19th century the chateau was in the hands of the noble Polish family Mniszek, which led the renowned Vranov stoneware factory to prosperity.

👉 **The richly furnished interiors reflect the refined culture of aristocratic life at the chateau. The monumental oval ancestral hall of the Althann family from the late 17th century is a gem of the builder's art in Europe. The chapel is the work of the same architect.**

zamek-vranov.cz
Zámecká 93
671 03 Vranov nad Dyjí



Zákupy

Reason to visit

Ferdinand I of Austria, the last crowned king of Bohemia (as Ferdinand V), liked to stay at this chateau after he abdicated the Austro-Hungarian throne in 1848. He virtually never reigned alone and was regarded as a kind-hearted but intellectually deficient scion of a closely related coalition of European aristocrats (he was derisively called “der arme Trottel Nandel” – the poor idiot Nandel). Against all odds he lived to a ripe old age, and he took good care of his **summer residence**, which had been thoroughly modified for him.

Of historical interest

After the fall of Napoleon, Zákupy was designated in 1815 as a refuge for the general's son, widely known as “the Eaglet”, from the emperor's marriage with Marie Louise of Austria, daughter

of Emperor Franz I. The young duke died of tuberculosis without ever having seen his new residence.

👉 **The interiors of the chateau were gloriously adapted for the retired emperor in the fashionable style of the Rococo Revival. For his maximum comfort, a Baroque lift was restored, whose technical equipment is part of the tour.**

zamek-zakupy.cz
Borská 1
471 23 Zákupy





Zvíkov

Reason to visit

The core of the fortifications of this royal castle is a **massive residential tower** with a highly unusual structure. The tower's 3-metre-thick walls made of blocks of black stone were reinforced with a sharp edge to repel projectiles, which slid down without doing any serious damage to the masonry. The castle was **never conquered**, not even in medieval times or during the Thirty Years' War. Some claim that this is due to mysterious protective symbols carved in the bottom 11 rows of the tower's stone blocks. Although they do resemble runes, historians view them as the marks of the stonemasons who worked on the royal buildings. But who knows for sure?

Of historical interest

A **seat of the first Czech kings**, situated along a strategic trade route at the confluence of the Vltava and Otava rivers, it often changed owners. Its greatest fame came in the 14th century, during the reign of the beloved Bohemian King Charles IV. He had it thoroughly repaired and liked to stay here, even keeping the Crown Jewels here until Karlštejn Castle was built. A full stop to its ancient history came in the 20th century, when a dam was built that engulfed the high rock and the fortified settlement below the castle.

hrad-zvikov.cz
Státní hrad Zvíkov
397 01 Písek



Žďár nad Sázavou

Reason to visit

One of the most resplendent ecclesiastical residences of the early 18th century, it was designed by the enlightened and art-loving abbot Václav Vejmluva together with the ingenious architect Jan Santini-Aichel. The monastery's stables and other outbuildings are just as magnificent as the halls of the prelatore, the mystical pilgrimage **Church of St. John of Nepomuk at Zelená hora** (meaning Green Mountain), and the cemetery with a ground plan in the shape of a skull – all gems of the original artistic style known as the **Baroque Gothic**.

Of historical interest

In the beginning, a group of Cistercian monks built a log cabin in the wild forest near the Sázava River in the 13th century, little by little constructing a modest monastery with their own hands. Five centuries later, its extensive Baroque reconstruction was one of the most expensive building projects of its time. The triumphant completion of the 30-year building effort was celebrated in 1735. Just two years later the monastery burned down, and Vejmluva died the following year. At the end of the 18th century, Emperor Joseph II closed the monastery, and its use became residential and agricultural.

zamekzdar.cz
Zámek 11
591 02 Žďár nad Sázavou 2





Žleby

Reason to visit

In the 19th century, the romantic and somewhat eccentric Vincent Karel Auersperg, inspired by the traditions of old England, transformed his chateau into a **knight's residence** like something from a novel by Sir Walter Scott.

Of historical interest

The **Neo-Gothic reconstruction** was designed in the very spirit of the saying "My home is my castle". The count searched throughout Europe for sumptuous antiques, from furniture and paintings to rugs, dishes, glassware and historical weapons, not neglecting the tiniest detail. However, for the day-to-day operation of his "medieval" home – where he liked to dress in knight's armour – he did not hesitate to use the most modern amenities.

Tip: The **chateau park** links to a unique game preserve where white deer are bred.

Two tour circuits present the luxurious living chambers, the **chateau theatre**, the **lookout tower**, and the **chateau armoury**, with one of the largest **collections of weapons** in Europe, including a complete set of knight's armour on horseback. You will gain interesting insights into the daily operation of the household from the technically well-appointed kitchen to the ingeniously designed sanitary facilities, and you will also visit the labyrinthine old castle cellars.

zamek-zleby.cz
Zámecká 1
285 61 Žleby



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Trosky

The official tourist presentation of Czechia
visitczechia.com

Published by: CzechTourism, Prague 2025 ©

Štěpánská 567/15, 120 00 Praha 2

Written by: Titanic Publishing

Translation: Mimi Fronczak Rogers

Photo on the cover page: Loket, photo by Ladislav Renner

Photographs: © Ladislav Renner, Jirí Strašek, Libor Sváček, Martin Mařák, Aleš

Motejl, Michal Vitásek, Dagmar Veselková, Aleš Motejl, Jiří Jiroušek, Jarmila

Sajtlova, MARK BBDO, CzechTourism, shutterstock.com/Michal Kalasek, Pecold,

Tatiana Popova, bikemp, Olaf Ludwig, Jan Danek jdm.foto, honzik7, Peteri, Pecold,

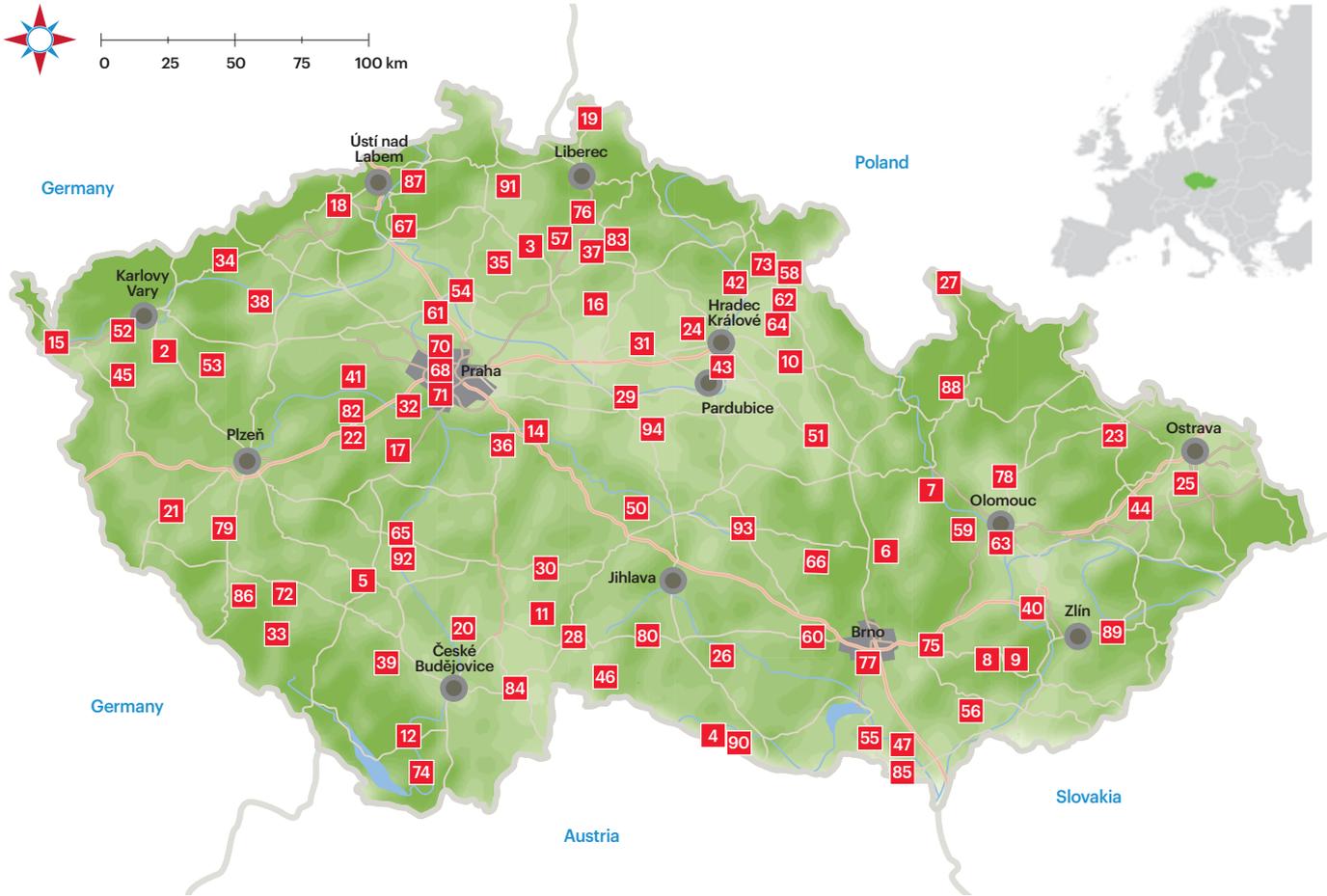
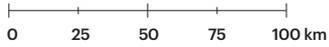
mareksaroch.cz, Vysočina Tourism – příspěvková organizace.

Production: Vydavatelství MCU, mcumedia.cz

2015, 3rd edition (reprint 2025)

The data given cannot be guaranteed in spite of meticulous research.

ISBN: 978-80-7513-285-7



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