

Castles



Czech Republic

A touch of magic



Červená Lhota

Approximate flight time from selected European cities to Prague (in hours)

www.czech-airlines.com

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– official tourist presentation
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Europe:

Tschechische Zentrale für Tourismus

Friedrichstr. 206, 10969 Berlin - Kreuzberg
DEUTSCHLAND
tel./fax: +49 30 204 47 70
e-mail: tourinfo@czech-tourist.de

Tschechische Zentrale für Tourismus

Karlsplatz 3, 80335 München
DEUTSCHLAND
tel.: +49 89 54 88 59 14
fax: +49 89 54 88 59 15
e-mail: info@tschechieninfo.de

Tschechische Zentrale für Tourismus

Herrengasse 17, 1010 Wien, ÖSTERREICH
tel.: +43 1 533 21933
fax: +43 1 533 21934
e-mail: tourinfo-wien@visitczechia.at

Czech Tourist Authority

UK & Ireland, Money House 320,
Regent Street, London W1B 3BG
UK
tel.: +44 20 7631 04 27
fax: +44 20 7631 04 19
e-mail: info@visitczechia.org.uk

Tsjechisch Bureau voor Toerisme

Strawinskylaan 517, 1077 XX Amsterdam
NEDERLAND
tel.: +31 20 575 30 14
fax: +31 20 575 30 15
e-mail: ccamsterdam@czech.cz

Office National Tchèque du Tourisme

Tsjechisch Bureau voor Toerisme

BTTB
Boulevard Léopold II laan, 262
1081 Bruxelles, BELGIQUE
tel.: +32 2 414 20 40
fax: +32 2 414 17 37
e-mail: big.europe@skynet.be

Office National Tchèque du Tourisme

18, rue Bonaparte, 75006 Paris, FRANCE
tel.: +33 1 537 30 032, 34
fax: +33 1 537 300 33
e-mail: ont-tcheque@czech.cz

Oficina Nacional Checa de Turismo

C/ Madre de Dios, 45, 28016 Madrid
ESPAÑA
tel.: +34 91 345 7112, 13
fax: +34 91 359 2527
e-mail: turismocheco@telefonica.net

Ente Nazionale Ceco per il Turismo

Centro del Turismo Ceco
Via Cadamosto 8, 20 129 Milano, ITALIA
tel.: +39 02 20 47 680
fax: +39 02 29 40 6396
e-mail: czechtour@libero.it

Национальное туристическое управление

Чешской Республики
РОССИЯ, 125047, г. Москва
ул. 3-я Тверская-Ямская 36/40
т.: +7 095 978 52 05
т/ф.: +7 095 234 40 65
e-mail: centrala@mtu-net.ru

Tšekin matkailutoimisto

OK-Matkat Oy
Sörnäisten rantatie 27 A, 00500 Helsinki
SUOMI – FINLAND
tel.: +358 9 615 555
fax: +358 9 615 55600
e-mail: myynti@okmatkat.fi

Tschechische Zentrale für Tourismus

Cedok Zurich
Am Schanzengraben 11, 8002 Zürich
SCHWEIZ
tel.: +41 1 2873344
fax: +41 1 2873345
e-mail: travel@cedok.ch

Cseh Idegenforgalmi Hivatal

CK Fischer Hungária Kft.
Teréz krt. 25, 1067 Budapest, HUNGARIA
tel.: +36 1 374 1070
fax: +36 1 312 7861
e-mail: info@fischer.hu

Česká centrála cestovního ruchu

CK EuroAgentur
Záhradnícka 72, 821 08 Bratislava
SLOVENSKO
tel.: +421 2 55 645 335
fax: +421 2 55 645 336
e-mail: euroagentur-sk@euroagentur.cz

Oficina Nacional do Turismo Checo

SFC – Consultores de Turismo
e Comunicação
Calçada de Palma de Baixo 15
1600-175 Lisbon, PORTUGAL
tel.: +351 21 7237799
fax: +351 21 7237798
e-mail: sfc@sfc.pt

Czeska Centrala Ruchu Turystycznego

ul. Koszykowa 18, 00-555 Warszawa
POLSKA

America :

Czech Tourist Authority

1109 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10028
USA
tel.: +1 212 288 08 30
fax: +1 212 288 09 71
e-mail: travelczech@pop.net

Czech Tourist Authority

401 Bay Street, Suite # 1510
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2Y4, CANADA
tel.: +1 416 363 99 28
fax: +1 416 363 02 39
e-mail: ctacanada@iprimus.ca

Asia:

Национальное туристическое управление Чешской Республики ЯСОН ТРАВЭЛ

УЗБЕКИСТАН, 700047, г. Ташкент
ул. С. Азимов 67
т.: +998 71 1394992
т/ф.: +998 71 1394977
e-mail: jason@globalnet.uz

Czech Tourist Authority MSI Education, Ltd.

Hatsudai-Suzuki Bldg. 201
1-39-9 Hatsudai, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 151-0061, JAPAN
tel.: +81 3 3375 3751
fax: +81 3 3379 4753
e-mail: cta_japan@ybb.ne.jp

CASTLES AND CHATEAUX

Introducing Twenty Selected Castles, Chateaux and Historical Towns in the Czech Republic
www.pruvodce.com

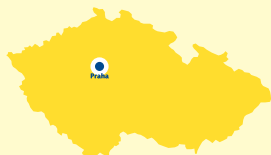
1. PRAHA	6. ZVÍKOV	11. TROSKY	16. ŠPILBERK
2. KARLŠTEJN	7. ČERVENÁ LHOTA	12. HRÁDEK U NECHANIC	17. SLAVKOV
3. KŘIVOKLÁT	8. ŠVIHOV	13. KUNĚTICKÁ HORA	18. BUCHLOVICE
4. KONOPIŠTĚ	9. LOKET	14. PERNŠTEJN	19. OLOMOUC
5. HLUBOKÁ NAD VLTAVOU	10. BEZDĚŽ	15. VRANOV NAD DYJÍ	20. HELFŠTÝN





1.

PRAHA



The capital's historical core, formed by four medieval residential areas called the Old Town, the New Town, the Lesser Quarter and Hradčany, is the largest urban monument reserve in the Czech Republic, with the greatest concentration of national cultural monuments. This is why the reserve has rightfully been entered into the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage.

For those who visit Prague, exploring Prague Castle, its greatest treasure, is a must. A dominant feature of the town, the castle is virtually a showcase of architectural styles. Practically every stone here has its own colourful history. Apart from this, however, the city boasts interesting chateaux, castles and strongholds.

Leaving Prague Castle, you will certainly find your way towards the ancient Charles Bridge, named after its founder and one of the most important figures of Czech history, Emperor Charles IV. From there you can continue to the Old Town Square, a mute witness to many historic events in Czech history, or to the former Jewish Town with a number of synagogues and one of the oldest and most beautiful Jewish cemeteries in the world. Apart from serving as a shrine for cultural relics, all year round Prague is a focal point of social activities where everyone can select, according to their taste, from a wealth of cultural, sports and other events.

Thanks to its long, eventful history, Prague - the capital city of the Czech Republic - is the destination most frequented by foreign visitors.



Prague – Hradčany

Location: 50 degrees latitude north, 14 degrees longitude east. | **Sights:** The Infant Jesus of Prague – one of the greatest sacred sights to be found in the Catholic world. | **Culture:** The Prague Spring – an international festival of musical culture and its latest trends. | **Sport:** The Prague Marathon – a unique annual sports event bringing together hundreds of sports enthusiasts from all over the world. | **Information:** www.pis.cz; www.festival.cz; www.pim.cz



2.

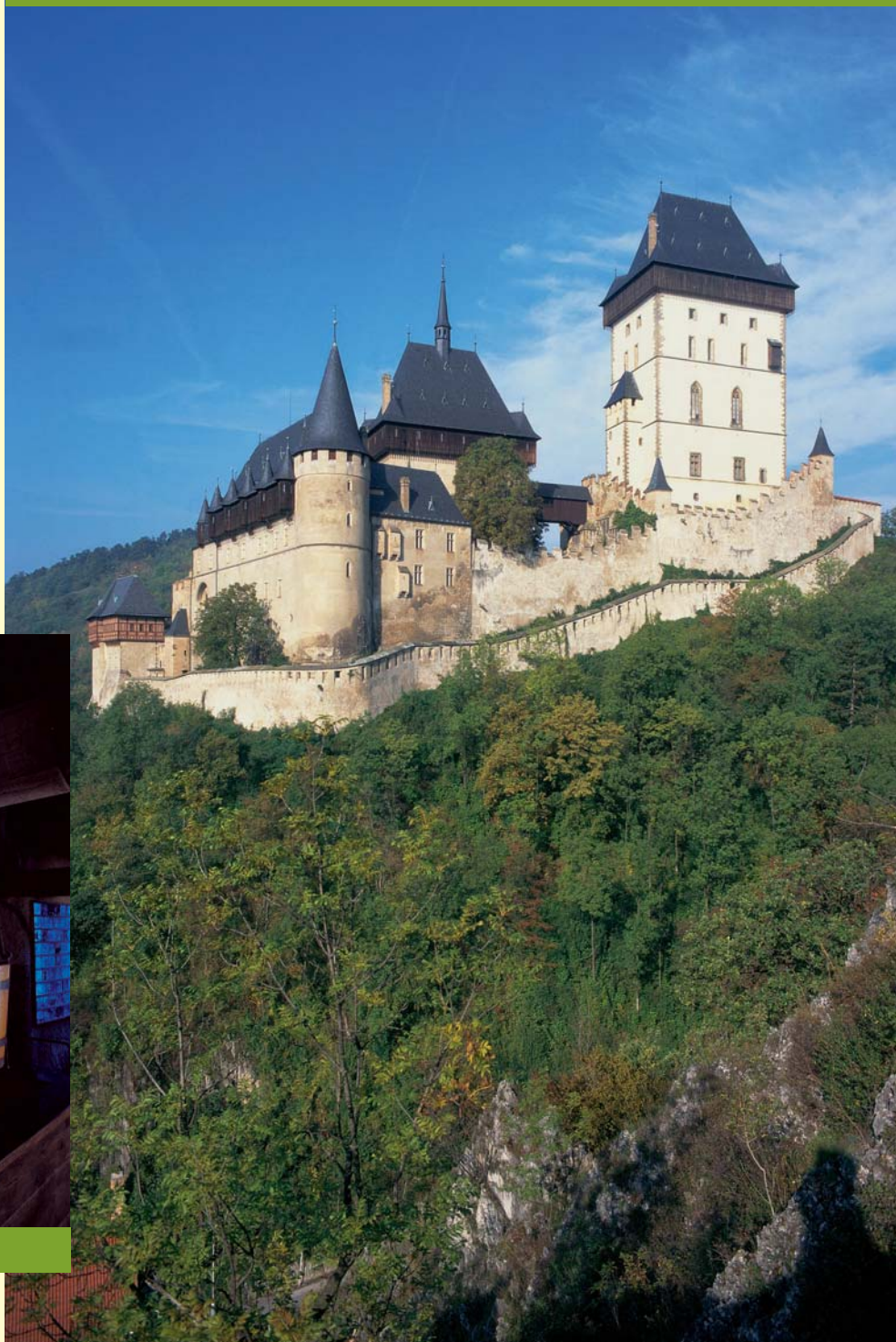
KARLŠTEJN



Praha – Karlštejn 39 km

Ever since its foundation, this castle has been a symbol of Czech statehood itself. It is found not far from Prague in the Český Kras area on the banks of the River Berounka and is the second most-visited monument in the Czech Republic. A visit to the castle will not only afford you the perfect aesthetic impression of this significant monument, which is located amidst some outstanding natural scenery, but will also provide you with a better understanding of life in the Middle-Ages and the development of historic trades.

Karlštejn Castle is an imposing Gothic castle that was built by Charles IV. to protect the crown jewels.



Karlštejn



Karlštejn – the well tower

Location: 39 km south-west of Prague | **Sights:** Display of historical crafts, medieval combat, regular Karlštejn grape harvest celebration | **Culture:** Regular concerts of classical or medieval music | **Sport:** Golf course, water sports, hiking, and cycling | **Surroundings:** The extensive cavern complex known as Koněpruské jeskyně, the largest in Bohemia | **Information:** www.hradkarlstejn.cz



3.

KŘIVOKLÁT



Praha – Křivoklát 52 km

With origins going back to the 12th century, the structure has practically preserved its late Gothic appearance. In bygone days, the castle was extremely popular with Czech princes and monarchs who would come here for relaxation, as well as distraction while indulging in hunting in the surrounding woods. The Royal or Great Hall of the castle is the second largest Gothic space of its kind to be found in the Czech Republic.

Visitors to the castle particularly admire the Royal and the Knights' Halls with exhibitions of Gothic paintings and sculpture, the Fürstenberg Museum, the hunting display, the castle library featuring approximately fifty-two thousand volumes, the ill-famed castle prison and the torture chamber with instruments of torture.



Točník

Křivoklát

Location: 52 km west of Prague | **Sights:** Visit the medieval prison and torture chamber, medieval blacksmith's shop, the candle workshop, the medieval weapons workshop | **Culture:** Year-round programme of theatre, musical, and film performances | **Sport:** Educational hiking path, water activities, cycling | **Surroundings:** The castles of Žebrák and Točník – displays of medieval battles, traditional fairs, Zbečno – a well-preserved village settlement from the 16th century | **Information:** www.krivoklat.cz

4.

KONOPIŠTĚ



This magnificent chateau of descent to the Austrian throne Franz Ferdinand d'Este was based on the ground plan of a French chateau.



Praha – Konopiště 47 km

It is found in an expansive landscaped park that is enhanced by numerous areas of water and rare species of tree. Among other things, the chateau boasts extensive collections of weapons and hunting trophies (from the period of the Hapsburg dynasty).



Chateau chamber

Konopiště

Location: 47 km south-east of Prague | **Sights:** Collection of almost 200 thousand hunting trophies, Glasshouses with tropical plants, Bear breeding, displays of falconry | **Culture:** Concerts, performances of dancing | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, carriage rides and horse-riding, golf course | **Surroundings:** Jemniště Chateau – magnificent Rococo-style chateau



5.

HLUBOKÁ NAD VLTAVOU



Praha – Hluboká nad Vltavou 145 km

This grand, romantic chateau, built in the English neo-Gothic style, is one of the most frequently visited architectural historical monuments in the Czech Republic.



An interior decorated with unique wood-carvings

The chateau acquired its current appearance during the 1800s and is rightfully considered the most magnificent aristocratic residence to be found in the Czech Republic. Its splendidly furnished interiors boast rare woodcarvings and massive art collections. The library, one of the largest spaces in the chateau, contains twelve thousand volumes of books in several languages, including a priceless first edition of Diderot's Encyclopedia.

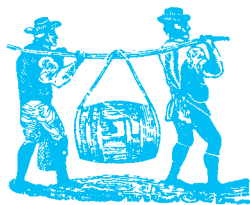
The former riding school, the stables and the coach sheds now serve as a picture gallery presenting a permanent art exhibition as well as seasonal displays.

The chateau is surrounded by a large, natural landscape park, which smoothly blends with the surrounding area, adapted in the Baroque style and featuring characteristic long alleys of trees and large fishponds.



Hluboká nad Vltavou

Location: 145 km south of Prague | **Sights:** Zoo, displays of folk crafts | **Culture:** Concerts and exhibits, theatre, The Aleš South Bohemian Gallery | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, golf, water sports | **Surroundings:** České Budějovice, Holašovice – UNESCO monument – South Bohemian country baroque | **Information:** www.hluboka.cz



6.

ZVÍKOV



Praha – Zvíkov 106 km

An impregnable royal castle that stands on the high projection of land above the confluence of the rivers Vltava and Otava.



A major attraction is the training of birds of prey

Thanks to its unique natural defences, the castle managed to resist all attacks and invasions throughout the course of its history. When the Orlická Dam was built, the surface of the water rose almost to the castle's foundations, and some parts of the castle settlement were flooded. The result of this was that Zvíkov lost its commanding position. The castle has undergone major reconstruction and is once again open to visitors.



Zvíkov

Location: 106 km south of Prague | **Sights:** Non-traditional types of beer, view of the Orlická Dam, displays of traditional crafts and falconry | **Culture:** Concerts, period fairs | **Sport:** Rides in motorboats and boats, cycling, hiking, horse-riding | **Surroundings:** Orlik Castle, boat trips



7.

ČERVENÁ LHOTA

This picturesque, romantic “water” chateau, built in the Renaissance style, derived its name from its red plaster at the end of the 16th century.



Praha – Červená Lhota 125 km

The chateau was built on the site of an original Gothic stronghold built on a granite rock. When the local stream was dammed up and a fishpond was created there, the rock became an island. Visitors to the chateau can inspect sixteen extremely cosy, intimate interiors that illustrate the lifestyles of the nobility from the Renaissance period to the 1800s. One of the most renowned and photogenic chateaux, Červená Lhota has been very popular with filmmakers, as it provides ideal exteriors for fairy-tale film stories.

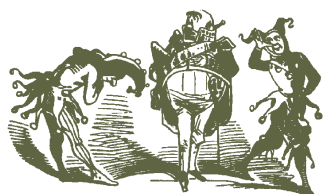


Chateau interior



Červená Lhota

Location: 125 km south of Prague | **Sights:** Boat rides, displays of medieval weapons
Culture: Concerts | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, horse-riding, swimming | **Surroundings:** Jindřichův Hradec
– beautiful historic town



8.

ŠVIHOV



Praha – Švihov 124 km

At the same time, however, it holds a unique place among Czech fortifications. Two residential wings enclose the inner regular courtyards that form the core of the castle. Some parts of the castle have preserved murals dating from the 16th century.

In the past a moat surrounded the inner castle, and the whole castle complex was lined by another wall with bastions that was enclosed by yet another moat. Thanks to its ingenious water fortification system, Švihov was one of the most powerful fortresses of its time. Enchanted by its charm, filmmakers frequently choose the castle as a setting for fairy-tale films.

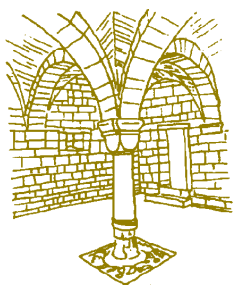
This picturesque, well-preserved Gothic “water” castle, situated in an alluvial valley plain on the outskirts of the small town of Švihov, is one of the youngest structures of its kind in the Czech Republic.



Visitors are able to witness the storming of the castle

Švihov

Location: 124 km south-west of Prague | **Sights:** Night-time tours, display of historic battles – ransacking the castle | **Culture:** Concerts, theatre performances, folklore performances | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking | **Surroundings:** Klatovy – historic town



9.

LOKET

One of the best-preserved Gothic castles in the country, Locket sits on the high projection of land that stands above the River Ohře.



Praha – Locket 146 km

The view from the river quite literally takes your breath away. The castle was built on the site of an older Slavonic fortified settlement and in its time, it was thought of as one of the strongest castles in Central Europe. The castle interior houses a collection of porcelain and today you can find an exhibition of ghosts and apparitions and other interesting features.



A carver

Locket

Location: 146 km west of Prague | **Sights:** Night-time tours of the castle, fairs and displays of traditional crafts, medieval banquets | **Culture:** Concerts and festivals, opera performances in the amphitheatre | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, swimming | **Surroundings:** Karlovy Vary, Františkovy Lázně | **Information:** www.loket.cz



10.

BEZDĚŽ

This early Gothic royal castle, built as a fortress with the use of the best expert knowledge available in the late 13th century, is one of the most valuable and magnificent structures of its kind to be found in the Czech Republic.



Praha – Bezděz 67 km

The castle once boasted a robust fortification system consisting of walls two metres thick and nine metres high and a 30 metre-high tower, which has remained the dominant feature of the surrounding area to this day. The castle's Devil Tower is associated with a legend that explains its name. It says that devils settled in the tower and disturbed divine services held there. After they were forced out, the chapel was consecrated to St. Michael. The most valuable part of the complex, however, is an early Gothic chapel.

From the mid-1600s to the end of the 1700s, the castle served as a monastery.

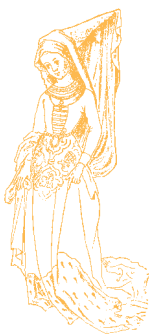
In the past, Bezděz Castle provided inspiration for many romantic Czech poets.



Mácha's Lake

Bezděz

Location: 67 km north of Prague | **Sights:** During summer, displays of archery and historic swordsmanship | **Culture:** Exhibitions, castle festivities, concerts | **Sport:** Cycling, yachting, swimming, bungee jumping | **Surroundings:** Máchovo jezero (Mácha's Lake) – a resort for recreation and water sports



11.

TROSKY

This ruin of a practically impregnable castle, built at the end of the 14th century, now forms the most famous silhouette of a scenic area called Český Ráj (Bohemian Paradise). At the same time it is the symbol of the whole region.



Praha – Trosky 78 km

The impregnability of the castle - ensuing from the steepness of the two rocks on which it was built and the inaccessibility of the surrounding terrain - was further strengthened by three walls and a system of gates that prevented entry to its interior spaces. Residential buildings were situated on a crest between the rocks. From the end of the Thirty Years' War onwards, the castle was abandoned to the ravages of time and it was not until the 19th century that its remains were salvaged, as in the case of other such structures, because of renewed interest during the Romantic period.



Bohemian Paradise
– the Prachovské Skály rocks

Trosky

Location: 78 km north-east of Prague | **Sights:** Viewing platform, underground corridors and caves | **Culture:** Medieval fairs, displays of medieval weapons and shooting, concerts | **Sport:** Hiking trails in the Bohemian Paradise area, cycle paths | **Surroundings:** Jičín – historic town with Baroque chateau, Hunting chateau of Humprecht, Kost – one of the best-preserved Gothic castles | **Information:** www.trosky.cz



12.

HRÁDEK U NECHANIC



Praha – Hrádek u Nechanic 91 km

Built in the mid-1800s, the castle is a fine replica of a medieval castle. A design drawn up - but never implemented - for the rebuilding of Crewe Hall manor house in Cheshire in England served as a blueprint for the chateau.

The chateau interior boasts massive and rare paintings and period furniture illustrating the lifestyle of the aristocracy at the end of the 19th century. It may be interesting to note that the furnishings of the chateau halls and drawing rooms - including furniture, coffered ceilings, paintings, ceramic objects or weapons - all come from different chateaux located throughout Europe.

In terms of its architectural value the chateau, the youngest neo-Gothic structure of its kind in the Czech Republic, is an exceptional historical monument in Central Europe.



It is possible to play golf in the chateau park

Hrádek u Nechanic

Location: 91 km south-east of Prague | **Sights:** Tours of the castle given by guides in period swordsmen's costumes, archery, falconry, carriage rides, period tavern | **Culture:** Concerts, theatre and opera performances, puppet theatre | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, horse-riding, golf | **Surroundings:** Pardubice, Hradec Králové – historic cities



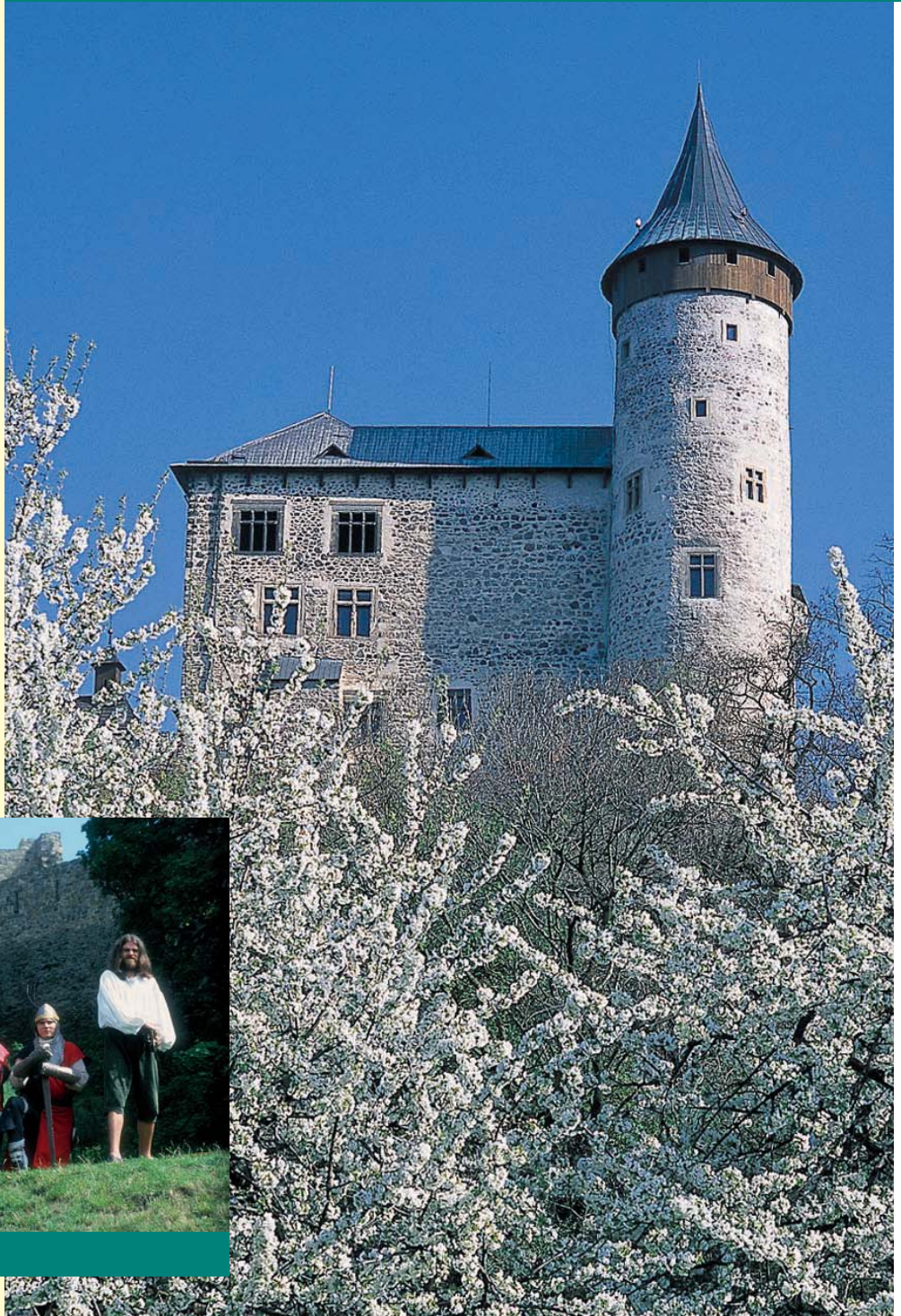
13. KUNĚTICKÁ HORA

Once a Hussite fortress and now the dominant feature of the central part of the Polabí area, Kunětická Hora took its name from the hill on which it was built.



Praha – Kunětická Hora 102 km

Over the centuries, the structure underwent a series of adaptations, the most extensive of which were carried out throughout the 1400s and the 1500s, when the castle was gradually converted into a chateau residence. At the beginning of the 20th century, the chateau underwent thorough renovation according to a design by the architect Dušan Jurkovič. Today visitors to Kunětická Hora can explore the exhibition in the castle museum, the Knights' Hall, cellars with an archaeological display and the castle chapel. Apart from this they can climb the observation tower. All year round the chateau plays host to many cultural events, concerts and theatrical productions. People with romantic hearts can get married in the Knights' Hall or the castle chapel.



Fencers displaying their art to visitors

Kunětická Hora

Location: 102 km east of Prague | **Sights:** Historic swordsmanship, exhibitions and displays of medieval army training, horse parades | **Culture:** Concerts and theatre performances | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking | **Surroundings:** Pardubice, Hradec Králové – historic cities



14.

PERNŠTEJN



Praha – Pernštejn 180 km

Many legends and mysteries have been woven round this castle. It is said that the apparition of the White Lady of Pernštejn used to appear in the dark passages of the wall system. If she came out in a black garment, it was an omen of bad things to come. Visitors can admire a centuries-old yew tree located close to the entrance gate to the castle. Legend has it that the tree grew from a stick which St Methodius, one of the missionaries, wedged into the ground on his arrival in the local region. It was believed that castle would exist as long as the yew-tree remained green.

Worthy of note is a large collection of 16th-century inscriptions that grace the walls of the palace interiors. They are composed of astrological signs and various mysterious symbols.

The castle has preserved its authentic Gothic cum Renaissance appearance, which it acquired in the Middle Ages under the Pernštejn aristocratic family.



Combat displays using period weapons

Pernštejn

Location: 180 km to the south-east of Prague | **Sights:** The spaces of the inner castle are interconnected by a system of twisting passages and spiral staircases. During the summer months fencing displays are staged in the castle. | **Culture:** concerts | **Sport:** cyclo-tourism, hiking, horse riding | **Surroundings:** The Žďárské vrchy – the most spectacular part of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands



15.

VRANOV NAD DYJÍ



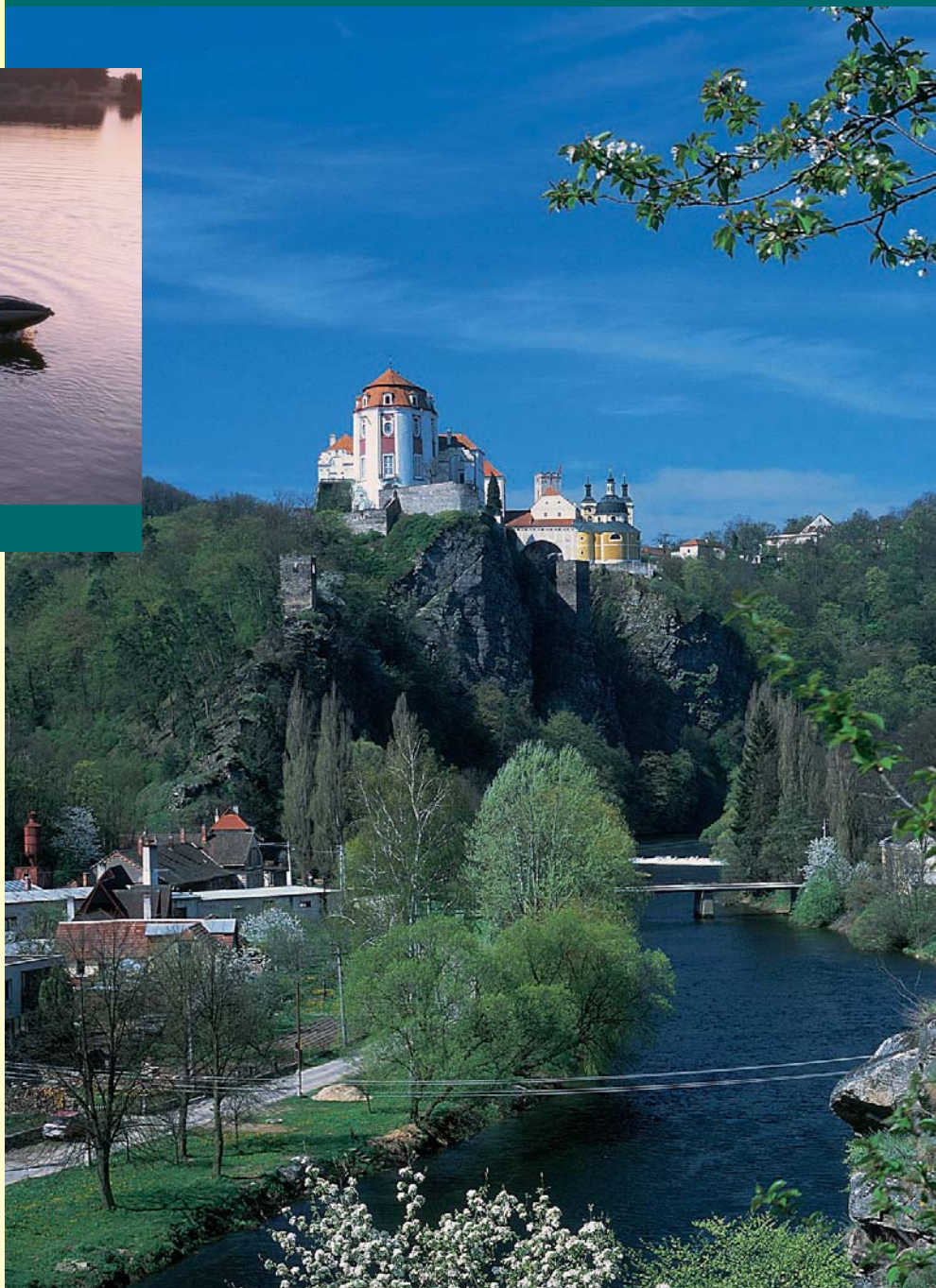
Praha – Vranov nad Dyjí 196 km

This monumental Baroque chateau, rebuilt from a Gothic castle, is perched high on a rock overlooking the River Dyje.



The Vranovská dam

The oldest surviving parts of the castle date from the 13th and the 14th centuries. The lavishly furnished chateau interiors document the culture of the lives of the nobility at the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century. The numerous examples of stoneware, manufactured by a local works founded in the 18th century, are another interesting attraction. Also noteworthy is the monumental Chateau Chapel of the Holy Trinity, the work of the famous Austrian architect Jan Bernard Fischer of Erlach. Set in an extraordinarily valuable natural environment, the chateau forms an impressive sight indeed.



Vranov nad Dyjí

Location: 196 km south-east of Prague | **Sights:** Museum of Historic Weapons | **Culture:** Concerts, theatre and opera performances, folklore performances | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, water sports | **Surroundings:** Vranovská Dam – popular place for recreation and water sports



16.

ŠPILBERK



Praha – Brno 200 km

This originally Gothic castle of the so-called cloaked type, was later rebuilt into a Baroque fortress with an infamous prison.

The castle, one of the dominant features of the town of Brno, became notorious as the “Prison of Nations”. Many prominent delinquents as well as political prisoners of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy served their sentences within its walls. Today, Špilberk Castle is home to a permanent exhibition documenting the fortification architecture and the penal system in the reign of Emperor Josef I.



A concert in the Macocha cave



Špilberk

Location: 200 km east of Prague | **Sights:** Visit the historic underground area, tours of the medieval prison, displays of period crafts, annual firework festival | **Culture:** Concerts and exhibits, theatre and opera performances, museums, galleries | **Sport:** Brno offers a full range of sporting activities | **Surroundings:** Moravský Kras | **Information:** www.bрно.cz



17.

SLAVKOV

This town, which is known throughout the world as Austerlitz, became famous mainly thanks to the Battle of the Three Emperors that was fought here in December 1805.



Praha – Slavkov 225 km

The battle, in which the French army led by Napoleon defeated the allied Russian-Austrian forces, is regarded as one of the French Emperor's most significant victories. For this reason there is a reverent memorial event to commemorate the anniversary of the battle organised here every year in December.

Slavkov, with its attractively laid-out historical centre, lies on the River Litava and boasts a magnificent chateau with unique collections that are dedicated to the Battle of the Three Emperors at Slavkov. This monumental Baroque chateau is enhanced even further by a typical French, geometrically divided garden, which was partially altered in the English style at the end of the 19th century.



Slavkov

Re-enactment of the Battle of the Three Emperors (1805)

Location: 225 km east of Prague, 13 km north-east of Brno | **Sights:** Museum of the Battle of the Three Emperors at Slavkov, reconstruction of the battle | **Culture:** Concerts and festivals | **Sport:** Horse-riding, golf, swimming, cycling | **Surroundings:** Mohyla míru (Mound of Peace) – a monument at the Slavkov battleground | **Information:** www.zamek-slavkov.cz



18.

BUCHLOVICE

This extraordinarily valuable Baroque chateau, modelled on the Villa Colona near Naples, is rightfully referred to as the jewel in the crown of Moravian architecture.



Praha – Buchlovice 266 km

The chateau complex consists in fact of two chateaux that face each other. The two structures form a single grand whole with lavishly embellished facades. Its halls and rooms are distinguished by their splendid stucco decoration and ceiling paintings. The chateau is surrounded by one of the most glamorous parks to be found in Moravia. Despite later alterations in the French style, the Italian-style garden has preserved its original character, mainly thanks to its intimate quality and terrace-like arrangement. Somewhat later, the garden was expanded to include an English park. Close to the chateau, the medieval Buchlov Castle overlooks the landscape.

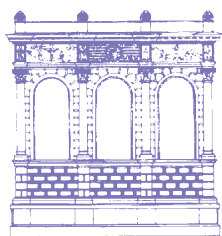


Velehrad



Buchlovice

Location: 266 km south-east of Prague, 54 km south-east of Brno | **Sights:** Chateau wine cellar and wine tasting, performances of swordsmanship | **Culture:** Concerts, theatre performances, folklore performances | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking | **Surroundings:** Buchlov Castle, Velehrad – Christian place of pilgrimage | **Information:** www.zamek-buchlovice.cz



19.

OLOMOUC

Olomouc is one of the most important places in the Czech Republic.



Praha – Olomouc 240 km

Thanks to its rich history, ancient university, traditions of culture and trade, and above all its central position in Moravia, this has always been an attractive place for tourists and visitors to the region. Settlements have been documented on the site of the modern-day city since Neolithic times. The most recent discovery of a Roman camp on the outskirts of Olomouc has cast new light on the legend of the establishment of the town by the Romans, but there are also archaeological documents that date back to the times of the Great Moravian Empire. The Royal Town was founded in the year 1253.



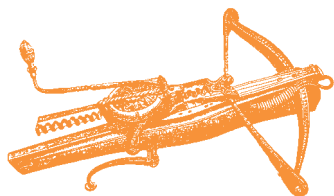
Olomouc – Column of the Holy Trinity

A number of Gothic monuments have been well-preserved in Olomouc, but the face of the city later changed considerably during the Mannerist period and particularly in the Baroque period. Medieval development gave way to large church complexes and palaces in many places. The collection of six fountains and the monumental column of the Holy Trinity are unique. This has been included in the register of UNESCO world cultural monuments since 2001.



The Cathedral of St. Wenceslas

Location: 240 km east of Prague, 67 km north-east of Brno | **Sights:** Botanic gardens and zoo, museums | **Culture:** Concerts and festivals, theatre performances | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking, "farm tourism", horse-riding, golf, swimming | **Surroundings:** Svatý Kopeček – place of pilgrimage, Helfštýn – ruins of a medieval castle, a centre of medieval crafts | **Information:** www.olomouc-tourism.cz



20.

HELFŠTÝN



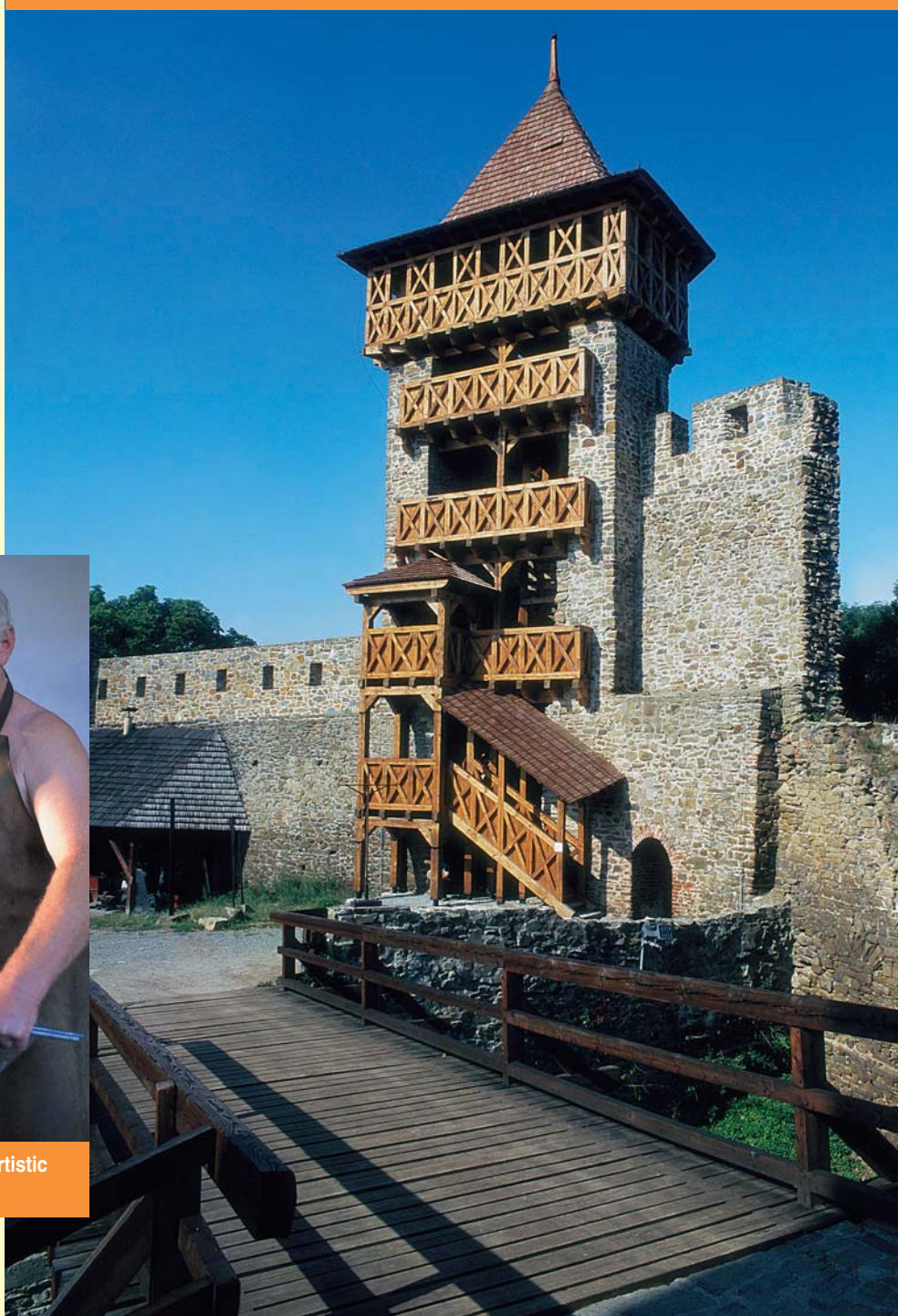
Praha – Helfštýn 266 km

It is also fortified all the way round with ramparts and towers. In the adapted ruins of the late-Renaissance palace you will find a display of artistic smithery. In fact, an international meeting of artistic blacksmiths takes place here every year.

The preserved ruins of this mighty and, in terms of area, the largest castle in Moravia stand on a high hillock above the Moravská brána (Moravian Gate), which it protected in the past.



Hefaiston – the international convention of artistic blacksmiths



Helfštýn

Location: 266 km east of Prague, 90 km north-east of Brno | **Sights:** Displays of smithery and ancient crafts, presentations of medieval sword-fighting, look-out tower | **Culture:** Concerts and theatre performances | **Sport:** Cycling, hiking | **Surroundings:** Olomouc – important historic town | **Information:** www.helfstyn.cz

