

**Czech Republic**  
Land of Stories



# Guide

to Baroque  
Czech Republic

Edition 2017



Jiřetín pod Jedlovou

# Guide to Baroque Czech Republic

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An aerial photograph of a historic Czech town, likely Ceský Krumlov, showing a winding river through the center, surrounded by dense, colorful buildings with red-tiled roofs. In the foreground, a large, well-maintained park with geometric paths and green lawns is visible.

# Welcome to the Czech Republic

Ceský Krumlov

2 Guide to Baroque Czech Republic

**The Czech Republic** is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It is a member of the European Union. Since Jan. 1, 1993 it has been an independent state, previously it was part of Czechoslovakia. The territory of the Czech Republic consists of three historical lands – **Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.**

**Area:** 78,864 km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital City:** Prague

**Administrative Structure:**  
14 regions

**System of Government:**  
Parliamentary Republic

**Population:** 10.4 million

**Religion:** roughly two-thirds of the population are non-believers, Catholicism is the most widely followed religion

**Official Language:** Czech

## History

The beginnings of the independent Czech state date back to the second half of the 9th century. Between the 9th and 13th century it was ruled by the Kings of the Přemyslid Dynasty. In the early 13th century the Duchy of Bohemia was elevated to a **Kingdom**. During the reign of Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, the country developed rapidly with Prague becoming the **leading European metropolis**.

From 1526 to 1918 the Czech lands were part of the **Austrian Monarchy** with the Habsburgs on the Bohemian throne. Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II is considered the most important monarch of this House. At the end of World War One, the Lands of the Bohemian Crown joined together with the territory of today's Slovakia making up **the Czechoslovak Republic**.

In 1948 the Czechoslovak coup d'état opened the door to a communist regime. The **Velvet Revolution** of 1989 saw an end to totalitarian rule. In January 1993, the country split into two separate sovereign states – the **Czech Republic** and the Slovak Republic.

## Culture

For centuries, Czech culture has been an integral part of European culture. Urban and rural architecture, enhanced by works of art, has not escaped the attention of UNESCO – allowing the Czech Republic to boast **twelve listed World Heritage Sites**, as well as four traditions of a folklore and hunting nature inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

## Important Personalities

Charles IV, John of Nepomuk, Jan Hus, John Amos Comenius, Albrecht von Wallenstein, Antonín Dvořák, Bedřich Smetana, Leoš Janáček, Emmy Destinn, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, Alfons Mucha, František Kupka, Tomáš Baťa, Sigmund Freud, Karel Čapek, Jaroslav Seifert, Jiří Trnka, Václav Havel, Karel Gott, Miloš Forman, Jiří Menzel, Emil Zatopek, Ivan Lendl, Jaromír Jagr, Jan Železný, Pavel Nedved, Tomas Rosicky, Petr Čech, Martina Sáblíková, ...



Kroměříž

## Czech Republic, Land of Baroque

Despite the many influences that shaped the Czech landscape in the past two hundred years, its appearance today still bears a Baroque imprint. Quite possibly nowhere else in the world are Baroque buildings so picturesquely and intentionally harmonised with the landscape, as in the Czech Republic. The **scenic beauty and dynamism** of this landscape, so much admired by visitors from around the world, originated in Baroque giving the Czech countryside landmarks, dimensions and depth.

Baroque was a sudden eruption of emotions, dynamics, monumentality, lavish decorativeness, endless roundness, expressiveness and excitement, Baroque was drama,

Baroque was **faith put on show**. Silent humility was replaced with the love of God and man shouted from the rooftops in all directions. Then faith burst forth from the wide open gates of Houses of God and flooded the countryside. Churches adorning hills and mounds, shrines, wayside crosses, chapel shrines with deep niches carved in rock, crosses and Stations of the Cross, Plague and Marian Columns and obviously statues. But statues of quite a different ilk than before, now in full swing, overflowing with emotion and pathos, heading into the countryside and settling there, displaying beauty and numbers not to be found anywhere else in Europe.

Baroque awakened man's desire for beauty. The **phenomenon of rural Baroque** was born, adorning Czech villages with farms, granaries and charming houses full of curves and arches. The same transformation awaited towns and aristocratic residences. Building work boomed – new structures were erected, old ones rebuilt, the landscape became a huge well-designed and conceived garden. Fields were enlarged and balks appeared. Meadows had no grazing cattle but harvesters with scythes danced on them twice a year. Roads were lined with long alleys. Landscapes gazed through the eyes of thousands of ponds with raceways being built to service mills and saws.

Chateaux triumphantly exhibited **balance and ostentation** and gardens around them became artfully designed fantastic spots with gazebos, vistas and **perfectly symmetrical shapes** of flower beds and shrubs. The phenomenon of that time was water – ponds, fountains, cascades



Šonov

in parks, jets and water stairs ... Houses of God toyed with light and shadow, huge frescoes expanded space, material was no longer important, the importance lied in its effect on man, so gilding, painting and stucco decorating was in full swing. The Czech landscape became a great path full of beautiful stopovers and vistas. So let us together plunge into **Czech Baroque**.

Yet, Baroque is not only a time long gone by. Today Baroque sites represent the most attractive tourist destinations in the country sought after by tourists from all over the world. It is not just about urban conservation areas, churches, chateaux, palaces and minor sacral structures, but the landscape itself. On one hand there are designed **Baroque landscape complexes**, sadly some of the elements have disappeared over the centuries, but the idea is still evident and fascinating. On the other hand, there are **Protected Landscape**

**Areas**, where the state watches over the whole cultural landscape, that is to say the combined value of the landscape and the structures in it. Many of these places are of a Baroque nature and just walking or driving through them is truly amazing. Let us name a few – **Valečsko, Římovsko, Bečovsko, Čimelicko, Chudenicko, Lembersko, Plasko, Vranovsko-Bítovsko**, and of course, the **Lednice-Valtice Complex**. **Many Baroque sites** enjoy a dynamic life, offering various and often very unusual adventures, night and costume guided tours, tours with a story, theatre performances, concerts, fairs, carriage rides and trips to the underground, with museums focusing on Baroque thinking, architecture and lifestyle being set up with **festivals of Baroque music and gastronomy** thrown in. Baroque has remained one of the important dimensions of the country.



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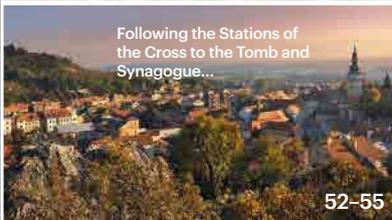
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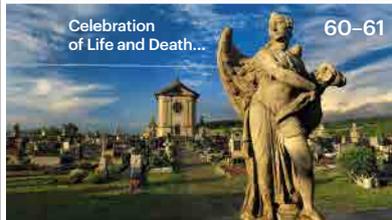
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# Prague

Baroque Heart  
of Europe

Prague, Lesser Town



# Prague

## Baroque Heart of Europe

In Baroque times Prague was one huge construction site, changing the city almost beyond recognition. The most noted European architects of that era built here churches, palaces with gardens, town houses and gateways and reconstructed monasteries embellishing everything with beautiful statues. It is no exaggeration to say Prague is still today the Baroque heart of Europe.

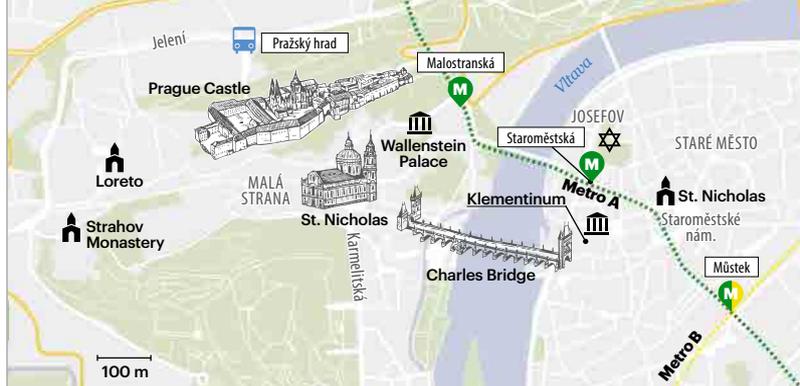
Early Baroque left **true gems** in Prague. Despite war raging nearby, Albrecht von Wallenstein decided to build a residence to rival or even overshadow Prague Castle itself. Twenty-three houses, three gardens, brickworks and one palace had to give way to the gigantic **Wallenstein Palace**, which is one of the most important Czech Early Baroque structures. Surrounding the Palace, the magnificent **Baroque Wallenstein Garden** is dominated by a **sala terrena** with a nearby **grotto** and features an artificial pond, fountains and a number of statues. Flanking the area, the **Wallenstein Riding School** hosts prestigious exhibitions organized by the National Gallery.

Not long after the picks and shovels fell silent on the left bank of the River Vltava, Jesuits decided to significantly expand their College, resulting in something more like a small town, called **Klementinum**, which is, after Prague Castle, the second largest architectural complex in Prague. As today it is the seat of the National Library, books are not surprisingly the main residents of

the most striking Klementinum Hall. Its **Baroque Library** was voted the world's most beautiful in several polls. Finished in 1722, its appearance has hardly changed since then. Soaking up its atmosphere is a truly unique experience. Talking about libraries, let us not forget the **Strahov Monastery** with its Theological and Philosophical Halls, as they represent not only notable examples of Baroque architecture, but also of arts and crafts.

One of the most precious treasures of the city is the stone **Charles Bridge**, which was also completely transformed by Baroque. Starting from 1683, statues and sculptures began making their way onto its balustrades. Early Baroque changed into High Baroque and the early 18th century witnessed the frenetic work of outstanding sculptors like Mathias Bernard Braun and Ferdinand Maximilian Brokoff. The **two lines of statues** adorning the bridge are the most ornate and varied compared to any bridge worldwide. Standing at dawn on the empty bridge at the foot of Braun's Saint Lutgardis is simply unforgettable.

High Baroque continued on the dignified path of its predecessors, creating buildings so distinctive that they became known as "Prague Baroque". And which of the sites enjoys primacy among them? Undoubtedly, the magnificent **Church of St. Nicholas in Lesser Town**. Since its construction lasted the entire first half of the 18th century, it brought together two legends of Czech Baroque, father and son Dientzenhofer. The son Kilian Ignatius had a major input in the church construction and actually it was his very last project in his life. The main frontage won't let you



be still for a second, imparting the impression that you are moving, as the dynamic Baroque principle is so powerful here. The gigantic dome next to the intricately shaped bell tower enhances this remarkable impression. If you wish to understand Baroque in a glimpse, then enter and feast your eyes. [www.prague.eu](http://www.prague.eu)  
[www.klementinum.com](http://www.klementinum.com)  
[www.senat.cz/informace](http://www.senat.cz/informace)  
[www.strahovskyclaster.cz](http://www.strahovskyclaster.cz)  
[www.stnicholas.cz](http://www.stnicholas.cz)

### Tips for Trips

Baroque can be explored in Prague for hours, days or even weeks. As of yet we have not even mentioned Loreto in Hradčany, dozens of beautiful palaces such as, **Czernin Palace** and **Archbishop's Palace**, and more charming Baroque gardens, such as **Vrtba Garden**, for one. Just a stone's throw from Prague, there is the **Veltrusy Chateau**, **Skalka Pilgrimage Site** and, of course, **Santini's Kutná Hora**. [www.loreta.cz](http://www.loreta.cz)  
[www.vrtbovska.cz](http://www.vrtbovska.cz)  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/veltrusy-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/veltrusy-chateau)

### Experiences

Many of the churches host concerts with some of the most renowned being staged in both of the **Churches of St. Nicholas** – in Lesser Town and Old Town as well as the **Church of St. James** in Old Town. It is possible to take a guided tour around **Klementinum**, exploring the Library, Meridian Hall and Astronomical Tower, see the **Vyšehrad Codex facsimile** exhibition, experience a romantic dinner for two in a unique environment or take night photos of Prague from the Astronomic Tower. **Troja Chateau** offers tours of the interiors as well as the Baroque Garden and **Clam-Gallas Palace** holds opera performances during the **Opera barocca Festival**. The **National Gallery** and the **City of Prague Museum** present expositions dedicated to Baroque art. [www.operabarocca.cz](http://www.operabarocca.cz)  
[en.ghmp.cz/troja-chateau](http://en.ghmp.cz/troja-chateau)  
[www.ngprague.cz](http://www.ngprague.cz)  
[en.muzeumprahy.cz](http://en.muzeumprahy.cz)



Svatá Hora u Příbrami



Mníšek pod Brdy – Skalka

## Příbram

### Heading for the Silver Altar of the Virgin Mary of Svatá Hora (Holy Mountain)

A simple Marian chapel with a hermitage used to stand on a hill above Příbram as far back as the 14th century. Around that time a **wooden statuette of the Virgin Mary with the Baby Jesus** was carved. As fate would have it, later it appeared in this chapel. Being credited with miracles, the statuette drew crowds of pilgrims from all over Europe. In 1632, inspired by repeated revelations, the blind Jan Procházka accompanied by his grandson set out for the **Holy Mountain** to live here in the hermitage and serve the Virgin Mary. After three days on the mountain he regained his sight, bringing about a huge wave of interest in the Virgin Mary of Svatá Hora.

Having been gradually extended over the years, the chapel experienced a

real expansion in the Baroque period. Building activities commenced in 1648 headed by none other than the famous Italian Carlo Lurago. Obviously, in years to come the Svatá Hora complex would be adapted, improved, added to a process which would last to the 20th century. The latest renovations focusing solely on the reverent aspect along with historical correctness were implemented quite recently, leaving the whole complex newly reconstructed.

The list of some other masters contributing in the Baroque era to the splendour of one of the most renowned places of pilgrimage in Europe includes the sculptor Jan Brokof, painter Petr Brandl and architect Kilian Ignatius Dientzenhofer (who for example renovated Lurago's **Holy Stairs**, having created a beautiful 450 metre long covered corridor for them). The central House of God features an amazing altar made of Příbram silver with the crowned **statuette of the Virgin Mary of Svatá Hora** atop. The structure is surrounded by a cloister, entered through a magnificent

portal. Svatá Hora is the most treasured site of Czech Early Baroque. [www.svata-hora.cz](http://www.svata-hora.cz)

### Experiences

Just visiting Svatá Hora is an amazing experience. So why not book a guide and explore the whole area? That is, after you have climbed the stairs, but unlike Baroque worshippers you no longer need do it on your knees. Take a look at the collections of the **Svatá Hora Pilgrimage Museum** and the all year round exhibition of **Nativity Scenes**.

### Tips for Trips

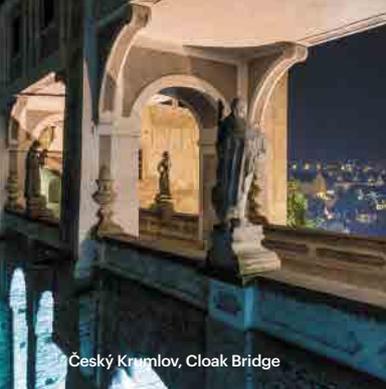
Situated a twenty-minute drive from Příbram and towering above **Mníšek pod Brdy, Skalka Hill** is home to another Baroque pilgrimage complex. It consists of a monastery, hermitage, Stations of the Cross and the cave evoking Church of Mary Magdalene, one of the most important Baroque structures in the Czech Republic. Its interiors are currently awaiting renovation. [www.mnisek.cz](http://www.mnisek.cz)



# Český Krumlov

Across the Cloak  
Bridge to the Baroque  
Theatre and Gardens





Český Krumlov, Cloak Bridge

## Český Krumlov

### Across the Cloak Bridge to the Baroque Theatre and Gardens

Český Krumlov is one of the most beautiful historical towns on Earth. A labyrinth of narrow and mysterious medieval lanes, proud Renaissance and Gothic houses, dignified monasteries and majestic churches, adding to the striking charm of the meandering Vltava River, is crowned by a **unique chateau complex**. One can say that here Baroque left gems that cannot be seen anywhere else any longer, such as one of the best preserved Baroque Theatres in the world, the remarkable eye-catching Cloak Bridge, and Baroque Gardens, which were actually a continuation of the theatrical stage into the landscape.

Perhaps wishing to please his art-loving wife, Jan Kristián of Eggenberg decided to build a theatre at the chateau. Until then performances had been held in the Masquerade Hall,

but from 1686 Thalia had its own dignified temple. Soon to follow was the construction of the Cloak Bridge connecting the Masquerade Hall with the theatre and the gallery with the garden.

Having entered the **Baroque Theatre** you will feel as if you have stepped back in time. There is the original building with the orchestra pit, stage and the whole complicated stage machinery, hundreds of costumes, props and lighting. Thanks to the sensitive reconstruction everything shines like new, making this spectacle so authentic. The Baroque legacy also encompasses the musical literature archive, eagerly sought after by researchers. Seeing a Baroque opera in this very theatre hall is an unsurpassable experience.

Regarded as another unique Baroque feature of the chateau, the intricately structured **Cloak Bridge** stands on supporting arches and has two floors of covered passages above it. As its brick balustrades are adorned with statues of saints, walking across is very uplifting. However, the most stunning views can be had from a distance. Towering to dizzying heights, the bridge rests on three levels of impressive load-bearing arches and floating on top are covered passages resembling a castle in the sky.

The **Baroque garden**, which in the spirit of Baroque style was itself a bit of a spectacle full of optical sensations, effects, vistas and secret symbols, completes the triple Baroque beauty of the chateau with great dignity. Over recent decades the Baroque nature of the chateau garden with three terraces has been significantly restored, displaying a beautiful cascading

fountain adorned with statues of water deities, nymphs and animals. The symbolic cherry on the cake is the quaint **Late Baroque Bellarie Villa** with a double spiral staircase, a Baroque kitchen and sala terrena as well as an inconspicuous, yet beautiful Rococo wooden arbour used as a **Music Pavilion**.

So Jan Kristián and his wife Marie Arnoštka could walk from the Masquerade Hall across the Cloak Bridge, pausing there for a moment looking at the twinkling town, and then continuing to their box in the Chateau Theatre. Afterwards they could have headed for an evening soiree in the charmingly lit gardens, and listen to the murmuring of the fountain or subtle tones of Corelli's sonatas floating from the Music Pavilion. Thanks to the well thought out guided tours of Český Krumlov Chateau and various special events you can relive their feelings yourself.

[www.zamek-ceskykrumlov.eu](http://www.zamek-ceskykrumlov.eu)  
[www.ckrumlov.info](http://www.ckrumlov.info)

#### Tips for Trips

Following the trail of Baroque from Český Krumlov is really not difficult. Set out for **Holašovice** to take a look at the triumph of Rural Baroque, or for **Lnáře** to see a Baroque chateau with numerous frescoes surrounded by ponds and forests, and if you want an absolutely secret tip, head for **Ohrada Chateau**, presenting fishing, falconry and trophy collections of the National Museum of Agriculture.  
[www.zamek-lnare.cz](http://www.zamek-lnare.cz)  
[www.nzm.cz/ohrada/](http://www.nzm.cz/ohrada/)

#### Experiences

The Baroque Chateau Theatre is alive! Why not come and check it out for yourself and visit some of the performances of the **Festival of Baroque Arts** or the **Chamber Music Festival**. The town also plays host to the prestigious **International Music Festival Český Krumlov**.  
[www.festival.krumlov.cz](http://www.festival.krumlov.cz)  
[www.festivalkrumlov.cz](http://www.festivalkrumlov.cz)

Exploring the whole chateau is fabulous, but requires plenty of time. Both tours will take you to the places you have just read about, including the **Cloak Bridge**. Apart from touring the **Baroque Theatre** and the **Chateau Gardens**, you can view a new exhibition in the **Horse Stables** or see the basements, climb the chateau tower or cast your eyes over the chateau collections at the **Castle Museum**.





# Holašovice



In Pursuit of  
Charming Houses  
of Rural Baroque





## Holašovice

### In Pursuit of Charming Houses of Rural Baroque

If someone took you blindfolded to the South Bohemian village of Holašovice, led you onto the village green and removed the blindfold, you would probably think you were just dreaming because appearing in a fairy tale isn't really possible, or is it? Once on the Holašovice green, absolutely everyone sighs in awe and amazement. How did it actually happen that instead of simple and pragmatic shapes of village homes, these houses boast picturesque façades with abundant building ornaments, arches and spirals? And why is the style of these idyllic homes referred to as **Rural Baroque**, when they were built long after the Baroque era departed?

During the Baroque period village folk had to struggle to make ends meet and various trends and styles were of no interest to them. They lived for their work, family and especially faith. Faith

in Baroque was associated with large and spectacular religious festivals and fetes, which villagers loved and looked forward to the whole year. When Emperor Josef II banned fetes, a silent defiance rose up in South Bohemian peasants. Baroque was slowly coming to an end, but villagers did not care. They wanted back the era of spectacular festivities as well as the oval and charming beauty. Trying to get round the Imperial Edicts as much as possible they relentlessly continued to take part in pilgrimage processions. Central Europe was already ruled by Classicism, but village folk did not relish giving up pomp and exuberant beauty. So they started turning their houses and farms into ornate and picturesque "manors".

Ordinary bricklayers grasped the baton from famous architects and didn't care what they borrowed from what style. From Baroque they adopted decorativeness, roundness, dynamism and intricate building elements. It is still mind boggling how, lacking any education, they were able to imitate the complicated and geometrically sophisticated ornamentation. In the

mid-19th century Rural or in other words Folk Baroque culminated. At that time Holašovice witnessed the construction of eye-pleasing, heart-warming houses, cottages and farm buildings on its medieval ground plan. Holašovice is not an open-air museum with actors, it is a living village with inhabited houses, which makes the experience of visiting it even stronger.

You will be able to see twenty-three listed homesteads representing one hundred and twenty buildings, including listed stables, sheds, barns, annexes for retired homesteaders, granaries, gates and even fences. When you get here, start your tour at the Information Centre. They will provide you with everything you need and you can head for the **Museum of the South Bohemian Village in the Farmhouse**. Then stroll around and marvel at the beauty of individual houses and small sacral structures. Departing will be difficult because you won't like leaving behind the idyllic, pristine beauty.  
[www.holasovice.eu](http://www.holasovice.eu)

### Experiences

If you wish to enhance your impression of Holašovice even further, why not come here in summer during the **Holašovice Country Festivities?** The three-day long folk festival will carry you into the hustle and bustle of a period fair with craftsmen and stall holders. Some of the crafts have almost slipped into oblivion, but here they are able to resurrect them. You will witness the blending of historical attributes, as tablets are used to film people minting coins, stitching shoes, forging horseshoes, turning a jug or carving the infant Jesus for a Nativity Scene. You can even try some of these

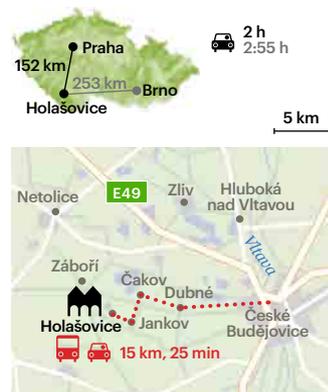
crafts in the creative workshops on the village green while listening to South Bohemian helicon music or medieval fair songs...

If you find yourself in Holašovice at any other time, don't worry, they'll take good care of you – for example in the local restaurant or in the traditional family pottery workshop producing the original Holašovice pottery.

### Tips for Trips

Whether by car or bike (it is difficult to find a friendlier or more picturesque terrain), continue your search for other examples of Rural Baroque. In the **Českobudějovicko** and **Třeboňsko** regions you can see them in every other village.

Be sure to treat yourself to a trip to **Český Krumlov**, **Hluboká Chateau**, **Netolice Arceopark** or take a look around you from the oldest Czech observation tower made of stone on **Klet Hill**.





Mariánská Týnice



Plasy

## Plzeň Region

### West-Bohemian Baroque Gems

The Plzeň Region is full of gorgeous Baroque sites, enjoying dynamic life. At the **Mariánská Týnice** pilgrimage site, you can admire Santini's Church of the Annunciation of Our Lady with Provost's residence and a cloister, along with a remarkable museum and the Baroque Centre, closely focusing on Santini's work. Santini's Monastery in **Plasy** rests on more than five thousand oak piles driven into the swamp. Other fascinating structures include the convent building as well as four of Santini's beautiful self-supporting staircases. The next stop is in **Manětín** and its High Baroque chateau standing out due to its unusual disposition, where the chateau frontage actually forms the southern side of the square. You will be able to view the chateau exposition, oratory of the Church of St. John the Baptist, chateau garden and more than thirty Baroque statues in the chateau and town.

In **Nepomuk** you can **admire** the church where John of Nepomuk was baptized, Pilgrimage Church of St. John of Nepomuk and St. John's Museum.

In nearby **Lnáře** you can discover a majestic Baroque chateau with the Chapel of St. Joseph famed for its fresco decorations.

In **Klatovy**, the Baroque trail is tied to the Jesuit Order, starting with the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception and St. Ignatius' Church, continuing into church catacombs with forty mummified bodies of monks and the exposition of Baroque Klatovy in the Jesuit era and ending in the beautiful Baroque White Unicorn Pharmacy with an exposition full of rarities.

The Baroque route leads via **Přestice**, with the church worked on by Kilian Ignatius Dientzenhofer, to **Nebílovy Chateau**, regarded as an absolutely unique structure in the Czech Republic, perfectly representing Viennese Baroque.

[www.turisturaj.cz/en](http://www.turisturaj.cz/en)  
[www.marianskatynice.cz](http://www.marianskatynice.cz)  
[www.klaster-plasy.cz](http://www.klaster-plasy.cz)  
[www.nepomucko.cz](http://www.nepomucko.cz)  
[www.zamek-manetin.cz](http://www.zamek-manetin.cz)  
[www.czechtourism.com/t/klatovy](http://www.czechtourism.com/t/klatovy)  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/nebilovy-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/nebilovy-chateau)

**Experiences**  
**"West Bohemian Baroque"** is a never ending series of events and festivals dedicated to Baroque thinking and lifestyle. In fact a **Summer Baroque Festival** takes place in all of the places above. Klatovy has actually one more to boast of – the **Baroque Jesuit Festival of Klatovy**. A very unique experience can be had at the **Centre of Building Heritage in Plasy**.  
[www.zapadoceskebaroko.cz](http://www.zapadoceskebaroko.cz)  
[muzeum-plasy.cz](http://muzeum-plasy.cz)

**Tips for Trips**  
 Extend your journey exploring Santini's work – visit Mladotice, Hubenov, Kalce and Kladruby. This trip will be the shortest – just turn the page.



1:36 h  
 1:00 h  
 2:50 h  
 1:00 h

10 km





Kladruby



## Kladruby

### Uncompromising Beauty

Standing near the majestic three-aisled Romanesque basilica, Maurus Fintzguh, Abbot of **the Benedictine Monastery in Kladruby**, frowned. It was nearly three hundred years since the Hussites had wrecked it. Later adaptations were not very auspicious leading to the perimeter walls being overloaded. Surely he wouldn't allow the church to collapse in 1701, the very year he was made Abbot. He called on the finest architects working in the Czech lands and let **Christopher Dientzenhofer** and **Jan Blažej Santini** compete for the chance to construct a dream temple. With God's help he would choose one of their designs.

Santini set about his project uncompromisingly, producing a design needing considerably more finances

than Dientzenhofer's. And yet, Abbot Fintzguh decided on his project titled "al modo gotico" – in the Gothic style. So in 1711 Santini got down to work. He would build a new three-aisled nave and then crown it with an astonishing dome, making it look as if this huge yet delicate crown was floating high above the floor of the church, having been lifted onto the roof by none other than angels. He devoted most attention to the chancel. Standing here even today, one gazes in awe at the magical play of lights, shadows, reflections and twilight.

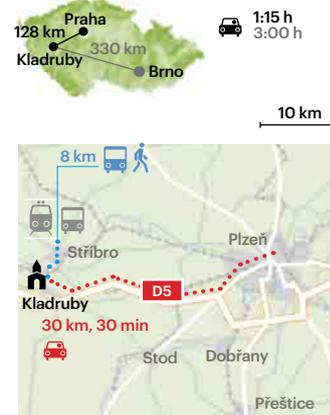
After twelve years the construction was completed. Then there was **the convent** with a daring triangular floor plan. However, the Abbot died and his successor chose a different design – one offered by Kilian Ignatius Dientzenhofer, the son of the man defeated many years before. So one architectural giant replaced another resulting in a stunning spectacle. [www.klaster-kladruby.cz](http://www.klaster-kladruby.cz)

### Experiences

**Guided tours of the Kladruby Monastery**, in many aspects one of the most notable Baroque complexes worldwide, will take you to the **Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, St. Wolfgang and St. Benedict**, but also to the **monastery** – the cloister, winter refectory, Abbot's apartment, exposition of Matthias Bernard Braun's sculptures and the exhibition about St. John of Nepomuk. You will be truly amazed.

### Tips for Trips

Embarking on the six-kilometre **Natural and Historical Sightseeing Trail** that starts and ends at the monastery, you will be able to appreciate the perfect setting of the structures in the surrounding landscape. On your way through the town of Kladruby, pop in to the **Kladruby Regional Museum**. [www.muzeumkladruby.cz](http://www.muzeumkladruby.cz)





Karlovy Vary

## Karlovy Vary

### Baroque Soul of an Art Nouveau Town

Cleansing and curing of both body and soul fitted nicely into the Baroque outlook of the world. Established in many places around the country, spas were constructed and run by townsfolk and aristocracy as well as religious orders. Soon they became a phenomenon of the Baroque period. Obviously, the interest in spa activities affected the **oldest Czech spa**, Karlovy Vary.

By the mid-16th century the town featured up to forty public bathhouses. However, the real boom of spa treatments came with Baroque. It was largely influenced by the spa physician **David Becher**, who pushed through new spa procedures, introduced a variety of new treatment methods, such as drinking water at springs, walking as part of the therapy and balancing drinking and bathing

treatments. He was also very active in planning spa building development.

The town experienced an explosion of construction work. Visiting Karlovy Vary became fashionable for European high society. At that time the **Saxon and Bohemian Halls** were erected, extensive building work was seen around the Vřídlo Spring, Kilian Ignatius Dientzenhofer designed the wonderful **Church of St. Mary Magdalene**, consecrated in 1736. Karlovy Vary increased in size.

Walking on the promenade along the River Teplá, you are surrounded by Art Nouveau houses, which replaced Baroque buildings, but the town layout has remained the same. Some Baroque buildings have survived until today with the **“Beautiful Queen”**, **“Peter”** and **“Seven Planets”** ranking among the oldest. Strolling through the town, you may say to yourself: so this is where Beethoven, Goethe, Paganini, Chopin, Gogol, Mozart, Freud, Franz Josef I and Purkyně used to walk holding their spa cups.  
[www.karlovyvary.cz](http://www.karlovyvary.cz)

### Experiences

Being in Karlovy Vary at the time of the prestigious **International Film Festival** is a completely unique experience. The town is filled with excited film fans, Hollywood stars parading around and film projections shown all over the place...

[www.kviff.com](http://www.kviff.com)

If you are a golf lover, Karlovy Vary can offer you the oldest Czech **golf course**, a beautifully rugged eighteen-hole park-type course.

[www.golfresort.cz](http://www.golfresort.cz)

### Tips for Trips

Set out for the Pilgrimage **Church of the Holy Trinity at Angel Mountain**. The three-sided Early Baroque structure will most definitely enchant you. More Baroque gems can be explored in **Bečov nad Teplou**, **Loket**, **Chyše** and **Valeč**.

[www.zamek-becov.cz](http://www.zamek-becov.cz)

[www.loket.cz](http://www.loket.cz)

[www.chyse.com](http://www.chyse.com)

[www.zamek-valec.cz](http://www.zamek-valec.cz)





Mariánské Lázně



Teplá Monastery, Library



## Mariánské Lázně

### Expedition to Cross Spring

The Baroque history of Mariánské Lázně, the youngest spa of the West Bohemian triangle, is in reality more of a pre-history. In the second half of the 18th century the place where an idyllic and imposing town is situated today was still covered in dense, almost impassable forests and marshes. The existence of healing springs was then known only by monks from the **Teplá Monastery**.

It was Baroque that witnessed the onset of the fame of the spa to be. The monks made a small log hut above the strongest spring referred to as Cross Spring and started using mineral water for extracting salt with laxative effects. The breakthrough came with the monastery doctor Josef Jan Nehr, who in 1781 convinced the then Abbot about the strong healing effects of the spring.

The first spa bath house was built by Dr. Nehr in 1808.

Gaining in size and having received spa status in 1820, Mariánské Lázně was ready to welcome its first truly famous guest, the poet **Goethe**. He felt here like in America, where a town could spring up from the wilderness. A year later Mariánské Lázně became a new hit. Goethe visited again and it was here he met the seventeen year old Ulrika von Lewetzov, who despite the age difference of fifty five years was the last love of his life.

The town kept growing with its centre still being the almost miraculous **Cross Spring**. Eighty years after Goethe's first visit nobody would have believed that the place was covered in forests and swamp. Beautiful spa and residential houses, promenades, hotels ... Famous Europeans strived to be seen here; the town reached its height of popularity. Its glory has never really been interrupted, and so

to this day this town of parks, romantic colonnades, charming pavilions and pleasant cafés still ranks among the most popular spas of Europe. Come and see for yourself – the serenity and friendly atmosphere are unforgettable. [www.marianskelazne.cz](http://www.marianskelazne.cz)

### Tips for Trips

Some unmissable sights located nearby include **Kladská** peat bog, **Kynžvart** and **Bečov nad Teplou** Chateaux (with the world-renowned St. Maurus Reliquary), **Teplá Monastery**, cycle routes and hiking trails in the **Slavkov Forest**. And Baroque destinations? Try **Kladruby**, **Plasy** or **Manětín**.  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/kynzvart-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/kynzvart-chateau)  
[www.zamek-becov.cz](http://www.zamek-becov.cz)  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/tepla-monastery](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/tepla-monastery)  
[www.zamek-manetin.cz](http://www.zamek-manetin.cz)

**Experiences**  
 Obviously, the spa care. A hundred healing mineral springs, perfect treatments, but also peace and quiet, pleasant walks, culture, restaurants, cafés.





## Teplice

### Pop over to Little Paris

At the time, when Baroque began to control spiritual and social life, Teplice, the second oldest Czech spa, had just one stone house where spa care used to be provided. But it was Baroque that completely transformed the town and the spa. Well, Baroque on its own would hardly have managed it, but it received a large helping hand from the Clary-Aldringen family who resided at **Teplice Chateau** from 1634 until the end of World War II.

The investments of Clary-Aldringen triggered frenzied construction activities, resulting in the erection of spa houses and hotels, reshaping the chateau and garden to suit Baroque tastes with the newly added **Garden House** and Baroque aviary with a garden staircase. Nonetheless, the most significant deed of Count

František Karel Clary-Aldringen was entering into a contract with **Matthias Bernard Braun**. On its basis the legendary Czech sculptor created very probably his most beautiful work – the breathtaking twenty metre **high Plague Column of the Holy Trinity**.

Over the 18th century the popularity of the Teplice Spa increased, it was soon to become one of the most fashionable seasonal destinations in Europe, welcoming artists, rulers, military leaders, politicians and nobility. Anyone who was anyone just had to be seen here. In the early 19th century Teplice was referred to as **Little Paris**, staging unique meetings – like Beethoven's with Goethe, or political discussions at the highest level held in its salons. Much of the atmosphere of those times has magically remained in the Teplice streets, squares and gardens to this day.

[www.czechtourism.com/t/teplice](http://www.czechtourism.com/t/teplice)

### Experiences

The **Regional Museum** situated in the **Teplice Chateau** along with a beautiful garden and the stunning **Chateau Square** crowned by **Braun's Plague Column** and the snow-white **Baroque Church of St. John the Baptist**, as well as the remarkable **Botanical Garden**, spa streets and parks – simply have to be seen. And of course, one must not forget spa treatments. Let yourself be spoiled and pampered in Teplice. [www.muzeum-teplice.cz](http://www.muzeum-teplice.cz) [www.botanickateplice.cz](http://www.botanickateplice.cz).

### Tips for Trips

Take a short trip to **Dubi** to see the northernmost **Venetian Church** in the world and **The House of Porcelain with Blue Blood**, or head for **Krupka** to visit the **Baroque Pilgrimage Basilica** with a cloister or to **Chlumec** with its stunning three-sided **Baroque chapel**. [www.infocentrum-dubi.cz](http://www.infocentrum-dubi.cz)



	1:35 h
	1:05 h
	3:00 h
	1:08 h

200 m



# Kutná Hora

Cathedral  
of Two Worlds





Kutná Hora

## Kutná Hora

### Cathedral of Two Worlds

The Hussite hordes moved on, leaving the Sedlec church in ruins, a picture of doom and gloom. The oldest cathedral in Central Europe was looted, burned and desecrated. For 279 years there was no one courageous enough to set about repairing it, and yet this “wreck” was officially recognised as **Splendissima Basilica** (the most splendid basilica) in 1681. The amazing monument aroused respect even in its crippled state.

In 1700, the Abbot of the Cistercian Monastery, Jindřich Snopek, was standing on the site of the church ruins fierily talking to Master Builder Bayer about the new cathedral. Finally, someone plucked up courage and managed to gather finances. The church was rising from the ashes ... when a problem appeared. The Gothic

House of God was such a unique structure that it was not possible to apply the then common practice of dismantling old walls and using the stones for the erection of the new Baroque church. So Abbot Snopek sent a letter to Abbot Lochner at Zbraslav, asking a favour – “You’ve got that young Santini constructing your convent. They say he can build in a Gothic way. Can you spare him for a while?” Subsequently, in 1703 Jan Blažej Santini came to Kutná Hora and took over the construction of the **Church of the Assumption of Our Lady and Saint John the Baptist**. Having actually created a new style in Kutná Hora, Santini would continue improving and bettering it all his life. **Baroque Gothic**. Santini’s genius had awoken.

What is Santini’s greatest contribution to this cathedral? Santini added a graceful entrance complete with sculptures to the gigantic front window giving a stunning impression. With a Latin cross ground plan, the church interior required unusual and monumental height and in-depth solutions. Anyone walking down the nave of the cathedral feels as if the walls were rising up to heaven, and they were standing in a remarkable, narrow rocky gorge. However, Santini played such an unusual rhythm with the vaults and wall decorations that the space is not at all unfriendly – austere Gothic humility is combined with Baroque emotion, symmetry, and oval shapes all around. As two world firsts, Santini created a self-supporting vault and built a magnificent self-supporting **spiral staircase** displaying curves and swirls along with incredibly dynamic vistas.

Abbot Snopek was elated and straight away took Santini to the nearby **Cemetery Church of All Saints**. Having descended to its underground chapel, Jan Blažej stood motionless in fascination at the sight of huge pyramids of skulls and bones. The early 14th century plague and Hussite raids had seen about 40,000 people buried in the nearby cemetery. Later after shutting down the church, there were only piles of nameless bones left, which day by day were arranged by a half-blind Sedlec monk into eerie pyramids. Having launched the reconstruction of the church, Santini couldn’t get the bones in the chapel out of his mind. He started dreaming up decorations using bones as building material. In 1870 his idea was seen through by Master Builder František Rint. After disinfecting and bleaching the bones, he arranged them into decorative patterns. This macabre spectacle of bone chandeliers, monstrances, candelabra and vases as well as whole walls of bones and skulls is still here today to “enjoy”.

[www.ossuary.eu](http://www.ossuary.eu)  
[www.destinace.kutnahora.cz](http://www.destinace.kutnahora.cz)

### Experiences

**Make sure not to miss the loft area newly open to the public and the visitor tour, which will also take you to the Church Treasury boasting the world’s oldest surviving Gothic monstrance. You can pop into the church cinema and watch a documentary about the cathedral. If you fancy something completely out of the ordinary, set out on a candlelit night tour of the church and ossuary!**

### Tips for Trips

The most obvious tip is Kutná Hora itself. There is another cathedral, this time consecrated to **St. Barbara**, the **Italian Court**, a stone fountain, churches, monastery, Gothic houses – including one of the oldest in the country, the **Stone House**, featuring a museum with an exposition of stone artefacts ... and this is still just the beginning.

For our next tip head to nearby **Kladruby nad Labem**, home to one of the **oldest stud farms in the world**. The stables and the chateau area have been newly renovated and you can take a guided tour round the stud farm, have a closer look at the local pride and joy – Kladruber Old White horses, belonging to the Baroque Horse category or take a ride in a carriage or on horseback...

[www.nhkladruby.cz](http://www.nhkladruby.cz)



# Kuks

Following the Grand  
Dream of Count Špork





Kuks

## Kuks

### Following the Grand Dream of Count Špork

Baroque lies many generations in our past. The ravages of time aided by human stupidity have sadly done away with much of the mystical splendour of Baroque visionaries. One of the most renowned among them was **Count František Antonín Špork**. His grandiose dream that materialised in Kuks has survived only in parts, but it is so fascinating that anyone wishing to understand the thinking of Baroque man simply must come here.

For a long time Count František was toying with an idea of creating something between Utopia and a gigantic theme park. Everything was based on two thoughts – building a home for elderly war veterans and founding a modern spa. And since Count Špork was a very enterprising man with no regrets about spending money on his ideas, his plans grew like a tree, with a crown spreading in

all directions, making visitors gasp in amazement. The whole complex of Kuks encompassed not only the **Count's residence and Hospital**, but spilled into the countryside, featuring hunting lodges, summer houses, artificial caves, tree alleys with images of saints carved into tree bark, reliefs, hermitages and **sculptures in various surroundings** – lined like soldiers on the terrace or “living” wildly amidst the woods...

The Count was a great lover of arts and theatre, in particular. Not only did he build a **theatre**, which witnessed vital chapters in the history of Czech Baroque puppet and dramatic theatre, but he conceived the whole area as a large theatre. In the countryside guests would meet actors representing various characters. Enjoying the greatest popularity among them, the hermits not only acted their roles, but also used to secretly switch fountains and other water features on and off at the right moment. Many visitors left the Kuks area believing they had really talked to a holy man in a forest hermitage. Kuks became a reflection of the Baroque world – on one hand secular entertainment, theatrical trickery and pomp, and on the other religious mysticism and symbolism, care for body and mind in the spa as well as humility and compassion for those in need.

Count Špork was more than lucky in choosing his collaborators, such as architects, actors, painters and sculptors. Nonetheless, the brightest star of his team was none other than **Matthias Bernard Braun**, who created for the Count a unique **collection of statues of the Virtues and Vices**, as well as other parodic,

heroic and purely religious sculptures. And as if this was not enough, he also worked in the countryside (Nový les) at a place now called Braun's Nativity Scene, carving statues from solid sandstone. The results of his work are still stunning to this day.

Due to the actions of Old Father Time, today we can no longer perceive the complex in its entirety, but it is still exciting to stroll along the corridors of the Hospital, through the terraces, **Baroque herb garden** and the thoughtfully preserved **pharmacy** and then head into the woods for Braun's sculptures and narrow your eyes while trying to take in all the beauty, lavishness and the dimensions of the former monumental landscape through your inner vision. Not long ago, the Hospital received an extremely demanding and costly renovation, making for even greater visitor experience.

[www.hospital-kuks.cz](http://www.hospital-kuks.cz)  
[www.braunuvbetlem.cz](http://www.braunuvbetlem.cz)  
[www.ceska-apatyka.cz](http://www.ceska-apatyka.cz)

### Experiences

Today Kuks offers **four sightseeing tours**. The first will take you to the Hospital, which sadly Count Špork did not live to see open. But he certainly would have been pleased that it was in use until 1938. The second route encompasses the Špork Family Tomb, while the third and fourth explore the phenomenon of Baroque pharmaceuticals. The unique exhibition sheds some light on the actual production and sale of drugs in the Baroque era. The authentic pharmacy features for example pharmacy bottles originally containing “Dragon's blood”, crayfish eyes or powder made from the skull of a hanged man. An expedition

to the “Nativity Scene” area is an experience you do not come across very often.

The atmosphere of Baroque festivities can be experienced during concerts and performances at **Kuks Summer Music Festival**.  
[www.hudebniletokuks.cz](http://www.hudebniletokuks.cz)

### Tips for Trips

To be frank, just walking around Špork's former estate, the Hospital, Nový les (forest), and the opposite bank will provide you with a meaningful way of passing so much of your time that there will probably be none left over for other trips. But if there is, head for **Velká Bukovina**, where you will find a **Baroque Jewish cemetery**, or for the **walled town of Josefov** near **Jaroměř** or the **African Safari in Dvůr Králové ZOO**.  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/josefov-fort](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/josefov-fort)  
[www.zoodvurkralove.cz](http://www.zoodvurkralove.cz)



# Broumovsko

Churches Like Beads  
on a String



Hvězda (Star), Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows



Broumov

## Broumovsko

### Churches Like Beads on a String

In the dark times of the 15th century, a group of Benedictines led by Abbot Nicholas II arrived at **the Broumov Monastery** ending their flight from Hussite gangs. Their home monastery in Břevnov, Prague, was burned down and plundered, however, monks managed to save the most significant sacral treasures. From that point Broumov began turning into a major centre of the order, gaining importance all the time. Two centuries later, Abbot Sartorius was succeeded by Otmar Zinke in his office. The new Abbot was determined not only to improve the monastery itself but also to throw the doors, in the spirit of Baroque ideas, wide open, and let the monuments of faith scatter around the countryside. His predecessor had an **old wooden church in Martínkovice** rebuilt, employing the architect Martin Allio.

Abbot Zinke invited the brightest star of Czech Baroque architecture, **Christopher Dientzenhofer**, to Broumov engaging him to breathe life into one of the most audacious Baroque visions in the Czech lands.

In just twenty-four years (1719–1743) the Broumov area witnessed the erection of **eight new churches**. Master builder Christopher invited his son **Kilian Ignatius** to help him and together they planned, calculated, designed and oversaw the construction work. They were involved in converting and completing the Broumov Monastery, mainly constructing the **convent**, and can probably be credited with some of the small religious structures in the nearby landscape.

The most interesting thing about the Broumov group of churches from today's point of view, which was also remarkable in Baroque times, is that they were all built by one family, sharing one architectural language. They are not overly complicated or excessively embellished, but perfectly match the surrounding countryside with its undulating surface and rock towns.

Dominating the landscape, individual churches make up part of the beautiful scenery, playing a leading role. Wandering from one church to another is fascinating, especially if you think what you have managed to achieve in twenty-four years of your life. If you wish to travel following the time line of their origin, you must start at the **Church of St. Anne in Vižňov**, continue through **Ruprechtice**, **Vernéřovice**, **Heřmánkovice**, **Bezděkov**, **Otovice** and **Sonov** to the youngest of them, the **Church of**

**Mary Magdalene in Božanov**. The Vižňov church is a perfect example of “dynamic” Baroque, while the one in Sonov is the most expressive of the entire group, the Božanov church is the most scenic, the one in Vernéřovice crowns a large cemetery with an ancient wall and the main entrance of the St. Barbara Church in Otovice features a commemorative plaque with a monogram of Abbot Otmar Zinke, the father of the idea of a group of churches.

[www.broumovsko.cz](http://www.broumovsko.cz)  
[www.klasterbroumov.cz](http://www.klasterbroumov.cz)

### Experiences

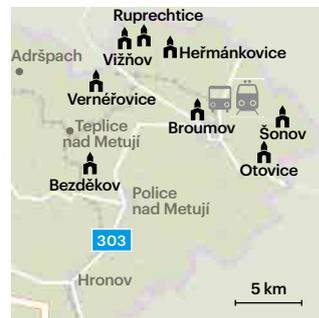
If you fancy seeing the Broumov group of churches from the inside, visit some of the concerts of the **Treasures of the Broumov Region Festival**, which is held each summer holiday. After exploring all of the churches, make sure to return to Broumov to take a tour round the **monastery**. You will see a Shroud of Turin replica from 1651, which was not discovered in the Church of St. Adalbert until 1999. The underground area will take you by surprise with its thirty-four mummies and the beautiful library will leave you speechless. You can spice things up by taking a musical or night tour!

You can explore the Broumov group of churches by bike. The 22 km route of the **southern part of Broumovsko**, starting in Broumov, showcases four of them.

### Tips for Trips

The town of **Broumov** itself is definitely well worth seeing. Its **conservation area** includes the remains of walls, historical urban houses, Baroque Marian Column, three wonderful Baroque churches and a remarkable wooden cemetery church. You certainly won't regret taking time to explore the Episcopal Brewery in the Broumov Quarter of Olivětín and treating your taste buds to the local beer.

Since you are in the region of rocks, you should definitely visit the nearby **Broumov Walls**, or one of the most beautiful rock towns in the Czech Republic, **Adršpach-Teplce Rocks**. **Hvězda (Star) Peak** of the Broumov Walls features the stunning **Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows**, designed by Kilian Ignatius Dientzenhofer.





# Zelená hora

Santini's Ingenious  
Epilogue





Zelená hora

## Zelená hora

### Santini's Ingenious Epilogue

A hillock above **Žďár nad Sázavou** was originally called Black Forest and actually used to be a forest. Elected as Abbot of the local Cistercian monastery in 1705, Václav Vejmluva was a great admirer of **John of Nepomuk**, whose beatification was at that point only talked about. The Abbot yearned to build a pilgrimage church on that hilltop and infuse it with the symbolism of John of Nepomuk. When he met **Jan Blažej Santini**, he found a kindred spirit. But in the meantime, there was a lot of work to be done in the monastery itself, so Santini designed and supervised the renovation of the monastery church and convent. In addition he built the completely unique **Lower Cemetery**, with a ground plan resembling the shape of a skull and then erected the Lyra

Farmyard on a lyre shaped ground plan.

The discovery of the apparently intact tongue of John of Nepomuk in St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague, played into the hands of the two men in pursuing their grand plan. The hillock forest was cut down and renamed Zelená hora (Green Mountain) (matching the name of the monastery near John's birthplace). This name is today inherently connected with the most ingenious and most mysterious of Santini's work.

**The Pilgrimage Church of St. John of Nepomuk on Zelená hora** is a true masterpiece of architecture. The cunning way the shapes intersect in space and the incredible subtlety and dynamics of the building create the impression of light and fragility, spiced up with a fascinating play of light and shadows and omnipresent symbolism drawing on the Catholic faith as well

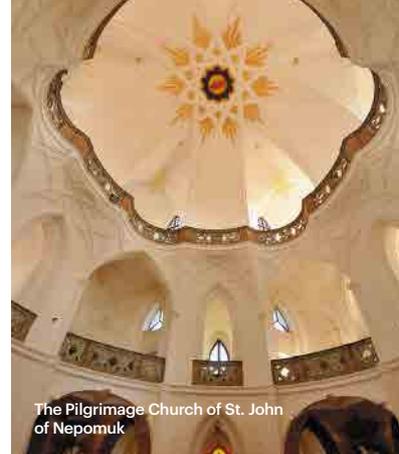
as Kabbalah. The top of the dome features John's symbolic tongue. Leaving the sacred geometry and symbolism aside, the feeling invoked by the church interior is indescribable. The gorgeous **ten-pointed cloister** around the church was finished after Santini's death. Not many people can claim that their last work was their most important and beautiful.  
[www.zelena-hora.cz](http://www.zelena-hora.cz)

### Experiences

You simply must not miss the new exposition in the **Žďár Monastery and Chateau**. Its name – Museum of the New Generation is anything but misleading, as here you will be able to perceive Santini and Baroque through all of your senses and very definitely in a way other than you are used to in other museums.  
[www.zamekzdar.cz](http://www.zamekzdar.cz)



Obyčtov



The Pilgrimage Church of St. John of Nepomuk



500 m

### Tips for Trips

Not enough Santini? Head for **Obyčtov**, to view his **turtle-shaped church**.



	2:23 h
	1:09 h
	1:47 h
	1:05 h
	1:25 h

# Vranov nad Dyjí

Chateau in the Sky





Vranov nad Dyjí

## Vranov nad Dyjí

### Chateau in the Sky

A perfect example of the aristocratic desire for secular pomp and splendour is the **beautiful chateau** in Vranov nad Dyjí. Not surprisingly, it has an excellent location as it was rebuilt from a castle towering on a steep rock, some 80 metres above the level of the Dyje River. When Baroque began its rule, the proud **Althanns** decided to convert their family residence into a modern chateau able to rival the gems of European architecture.

In their desire to glorify the family, literally creating its apotheosis in the ancient sense of the word, they built one of the most interesting structures of Central European Baroque, **the Hall of Ancestors**. Its ellipsoid shape with a daring dome resembling a decorative chocolate praline sitting on a high rock is magically entwined with its environs, uniquely crowning them.

The Althanns approached one of the two most noted Viennese architects, **Johann Bernard Fischer of Erlach**, a man admired even by Santini. Apart from the Hall of Ancestors, Fischer also built here the magnificent **Chateau Chapel of the Holy Trinity** with the Althann Tomb.

Let us stay a little longer in the Hall of Ancestors as its interior space is truly impressive. The lavish murals created by the Imperial artist Rottmayer are breathtaking. One can stand here for ages, with head tilted back, feasting the eyes on the Althanns, transformed into gods here. The gallery is like a frame and the dome is its canvas. In years to come a three-wing chateau building and a Baroque double staircase leading onto the Court of Honour would be added... All conceived in the spirit of the family glorification, everything beautiful, radiant. Hard to describe, it must be seen.

[www.zamek-vranov.cz](http://www.zamek-vranov.cz)



Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou



### Experiences

**The three guided tours** will acquaint you with everything of interest. The **Hall of Ancestors**, **southern terraces**, **twenty-two furnished rooms** with opulent painting and wall paper decorations, the **chateau chapel** and finally, an exhibition of European pottery including products from the famous **Vranov Manufactory**. The popular resort – **Vranov Dam** with beaches and water sports is literally within sight.

### Tips for Trips

Start at the nearby **Bitov Castle**, take a look at the massive ruins of **Cornštejn Castle**, pay a visit to the Baroque Church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary in **Lechovice** and obviously the chateau in **Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou** renovated in the Baroque style by Austrian architect Jakob Prandtauer. In the Late Baroque period it was a site of vibrant cultural activities. The first opera in Czech language “How the Town of Jaroměřice Was Founded” by František Antonín Míča, the Court Bandmaster of the Questenbergs, was first performed here in 1730. The local cemetery is the final resting

place of the poet Otakar Březina, who held the post of teacher in Jaroměřice from 1901 until his death in 1929, and created some of his outstanding poetic work here.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/bitov-castle](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/bitov-castle)  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/jaromerice-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/jaromerice-chateau)



🚗 2:30 h  
1:20 h  
🚗 1:37 h

# Mikulov

Following the Stations  
of the Cross to the  
Tomb and Synagogue





Mikulov, Svatý kopeček

## Mikulov

### Following the Stations of the Cross to the Tomb and Synagogue

In recent years Mikulov has been ranked among the very trendy places of the Czech Republic, drawing in more and more people wishing to explore its beauty and unique atmosphere of special serenity, no matter how many people are around. Streets, squares, cafés, wine bars, shops... All this, of course, in a mighty historical frame, as Mikulov is abundant in sites reflecting bygone times. One such is Baroque, which left visible imprints on the town. The most noticeable is obviously the **Mikulov Chateau**. Its Early Baroque makeover of the 18th century was behind its modern day appearance. This period also saw the construction of a **riding school** and the **Court of Honour** with a beautiful wrought-iron gate and sculptural decoration by Ignatius Lengelacher.

From time immemorial the chateau was tightly connected with the town and with the square, sloping towards the Baroque **Church of St. Anne** sheltering a Loretto **Holy Hut** with the **Black Madonna of Mikulov**. No one knows why Mikulov used to be hit so often by devastating fires. Having wrecked many buildings, the fire of September 1784 also destroyed the Church of St. Anne, leaving just the presbytery, the damaged perimeter walls and luckily also the breathtaking two-tower frontage decorated with sculptures and built in the early 18th century in the spirit of Roman Baroque, by Johann Bernhard Fischer of Erlach. František Josef Dietrichstein is the man we can thank for salvaging this remarkable sight as the Baroque ruins of the church were converted into the famous High **Classicist Dietrichstein Tomb**, one of the historical gems of Mikulov.

Regarded as one of the oldest of its kind in the Czech Republic, the Stations of the Cross leading to **Svatý kopeček** (Holy Hill), another of Mikulov's landmarks, enjoyed their

greatest heyday in the Baroque period. The erection of the first structure of the Stations of the Cross began on a bare hill in 1623, a year after Mikulov recovered from a dreadful plague. The Chapel of St. Sebastian, completed in 1630 and built with Renaissance ideals in mind, was meant to be a miniature reflection of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Soon after, a bell tower and the Holy Sepulchre were added, followed by the construction of shrines at individual stations. In 1644 the new pilgrimage site was ready to welcome the first pilgrims. Baroque brought about a remarkable increase in its significance. Building adaptations and extensions were carried out, with seven new chapels added to make up the number of fourteen stations, as set by Baroque.

Although Baroque ruled mainly Christian culture, the gradually developing architectural and decorative style quite obviously became established also in Jewish communities. In the Baroque era the Mikulov Jewish community was the largest in Moravia and also of great significance as the town was the seat of the Chief Rabbi of Moravia. Not surprisingly, the local **Jewish cemetery** is a highly regarded vast burial ground, as you will see when strolling among four thousand Matzevah – Renaissance, Classicist as well as Baroque headstones. The recently renovated **Mikulov Synagogue** was once again imparted with its Baroque appearance. The *Almemor*, i.e. a platform for reading the Torah, is crowned with a vault supported by a central four-post pillar, representing the Polish or Lviv type synagogue, the last to survive in the country.

[www.mikulov.cz](http://www.mikulov.cz)

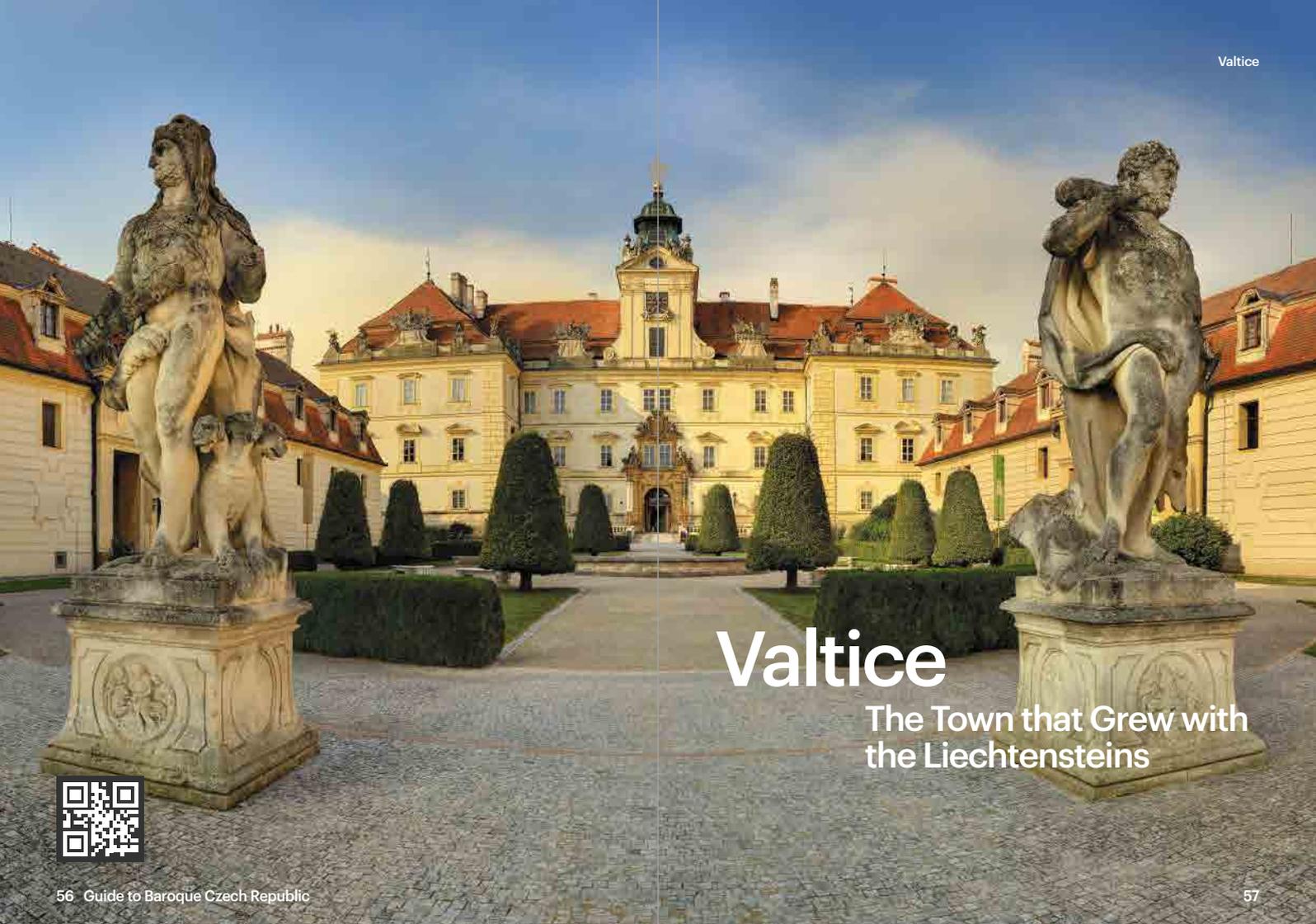
### Tips for Trips

**Pálava**. Fabulous hills rising up from the shores of Nové Mlýny (New Mills) dam, abundant in vineyards, villages, wine cellars – even those dating to Baroque times! The next trip destination is even closer – **Turold Cave** and **Fox Hole Cave** with a 3 km labyrinth of corridors formed in the Jurassic limestone massive featuring an amazing emerald coloured lake. [www.palava-lva.cz](http://www.palava-lva.cz)

### Experiences

Mikulov is an experience in itself – its atmosphere is unique. Besides wine bars and cafes, be sure to head for the **Regional Museum** located in the chateau, presenting the country's largest wine making exposition, Dietrichstein Library and Gallery. Then head for the **Dietrichstein Tomb**, to enjoy for example an evening costume guided tour or some of the concerts. [www.rmm.cz](http://www.rmm.cz)





# Valtice

The Town that Grew with  
the Liechtensteins





## Valtice

### The Town that Grew with the Liechtensteins

When in 1387 the then not very significant noble family of Liechtenstein bought the town of Valtice, Lower Austria (which became part of Czechoslovakia in 1920), they hoped they would have a long and successful future there. And indeed they did – for 558 years. In time they made Valtice their main residence and rebuilt the original castle into a Renaissance chateau. At that time, Karl I, Prince of Liechtenstein became head of the family. A truly remarkable man, it was he who instigated the rapid rise of the family and Valtice. Having gained a princely title, an important position in the country, he embarked on rebuilding Valtice Chateau. Prince Karl was an enlightened man. One could say he helped Baroque on its way to the Czech lands. Although the

building work was still inspired by Mannerism, a style, saying farewell to Renaissance and anticipating Baroque, the generosity of the designs was thoroughly Baroque. His descendants continued, where he finished, and the importance of Valtice kept growing, welcoming artists – both renowned and newly discovered as the Liechtensteins were very good at talent hunting. So the chateau continued to grow and beautify. The more significant the family was, the more impressive residence it needed.

The Liechtensteins invited Viennese architect Johann Bernard Fischer of Erlach, who constructed a single-storey building, magnificent sala terrena and large stables. Afterwards the Italian Domenico Martinelli completed the Baroque makeover of the chateau, resulting in a stunning **four-winged building with a hundred rooms**. Soon after a French garden and theatre building were added. Architecturally ingenious, harmonious and enclosed, the complex merges with the town, which also witnessed building work, such as the Parish **Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary**, one of South Moravia's largest churches, and a monastery with a church built by the Brothers Hospitallers, who were brought here by the Liechtensteins. The family thrived and their importance grew, so at the end of the Baroque era they started setting up an extensive landscape park. Gaining in importance, the Baroque **summer residence in Lednice** received a new appearance (in the then fashionable Tudor Gothic revival style), with remarkable structures erected near ponds, streams and floodplain forests – such as the 1802 Lednice minaret – an example of early

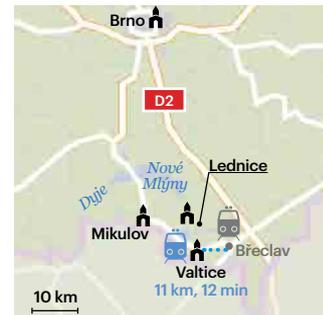
Romanticism, **Temple of Apollo** in the Classicist and Empire styles, **Temple of the Three Graces**, **the close-by Belvedere** and the remarkable **Reistna Colonnade**. This was the start of the charming and attractive huge woodland park, today known as **the Lednice-Valtice Complex**.

The Liechtensteins managed to recognise another potential of Valtice and began to develop it. The soil, combined with the weather conditions, seemed ideal for wine growing. Today Valtice is the Czech Republic's second largest vineyard village. The chateau also houses **historic wine cellars**. The one dating from 1430 ranks among the oldest and largest in the country. For centuries wine has been maturing here in huge oak casks and today it is sold in bottles proudly labelled with the Valtice Chateau brand. A large 1640 cross-vault cellar stands witness to the Baroque viticulture expansion. And "wherever wine is drunk, life is good" – as a Czech proverb goes. [www.zamek-valtice.cz](http://www.zamek-valtice.cz)

### Tips for Trips

Tips are almost endless. The whole **Lednice-Valtice Complex** is literally at your fingertips. **Lednice Chateau** round the corner, **Mikulov** nearby and so is **Pavlov** with Baroque wine houses. You can stroll around with or without a guide or cycle along the wine trails. Wine is always worth travelling for, even to the edge of the world. And here you are actually inundated with fine wine.

[www.zamek-lednice.com](http://www.zamek-lednice.com)



### Experiences

**Valtice Chateau** offers ten ways of exploring the area. More than twenty rooms illustrating the aristocratic lifestyle, Baroque Theatre, princesses' suite, chateau chapel, herb garden, a special exposition for children and obviously the **chateau wine cellars with the Wine Salon of the Czech Republic tasting exposition**, where every year you can treat your palate to samples of hundreds of rigorously selected best wines from all over the country. Make sure to pay a visit to **Valtice Underground**. The labyrinth of cellars hosts tasting events – Night of Open Cellars, grape harvests and new wine tasting... [www.vinarskecentrum.cz](http://www.vinarskecentrum.cz)



Stržilky

## In and around Brno

### Celebration of Life and Death

Death was seen by Baroque man as a set part of life – he measured his life against it. **Memento mori** – remember death. Having descended below the **Church of St. James** in the heart of Brno, you will find yourself in Europe's second largest ossuary after the Paris catacombs. The walls are literally lined with bones, skeletons in robes stand in portals made of skulls, skulls are arranged to form stairs, columns...

A little further, under the **Church of the Finding of the True Cross**, a few steps from the Green Market (with the wonderful Baroque Parnas Fountain) there is another crypt, this time of the Capuchins. Here you will find an unusually large number of preserved Baroque coffins and mummies of buried monks. If you

haven't seen enough bones, head for the small town of **Křtiny**, in the **Moravian Karst area**, where a crypt with an ossuary was discovered under a church. Here the mystique culminates and is enhanced by unsolved mysteries – six of the twelve skulls painted on with a mixture of charcoal and animal fat are displayed in the crypt. The paintings represent laurel wreaths with the letter Tau in the middle of the forehead.

**The Church of the Name of the Virgin Mary** above Křtiny crypt is a true jewel born in the head of the great Santini. The beautifully shaped church building with a central tower is flanked on the right by the chapel, connected with the church via a circular cloister. Situated less than an hour's drive east, **Buchlovice** boasts another Baroque wonder – a chateau of Italian Baroque villa style, surrounded by a French garden. Resembling two hands clasped around the Court of Honour, it features magnificent interiors with astonishing stucco decoration.



Křtiny

A good place to end our Baroque wandering around South and East Moravia is in **Stržilky** – and once again we will remember death. Without exaggeration, **the cemetery** is a true work of art, due to its remarkable layout and architecture as well as the beautiful sculptures. [www.gotobrna.cz](http://www.gotobrna.cz)  
[www.ticbrno.cz](http://www.ticbrno.cz)  
[www.krtiny.cz/o-krtinach](http://www.krtiny.cz/o-krtinach)  
[www.baroknihrbitovstrilky.cz](http://www.baroknihrbitovstrilky.cz)  
[www.zamek-buchlovice.cz](http://www.zamek-buchlovice.cz)

### Experiences

Take a stroll through the Brno centre following the **Brno Baroque Sightseeing Route: Forget the Dark Ages**. It is definitely worth it as you will see the ossuary, Capuchin crypt, Town Hall and churches.

### Tips for Trips

Apart from the places near Brno named above, you can explore all of the Baroque treasures of South Moravia, so why not visit some – such as **Mikulov**, **Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou**, **Vranov nad Dyjí**, and the **Lednice-Valtice Complex**...



2:30 h  
2:00 h  
2:40 h



# Kroměříž

Gardens and Other  
Wonders of Athens  
of Haná





Kroměříž

## Kroměříž

### Gardens and Other Wonders of Athens of Hana

Nicknamed “Athens of Haná”, Kroměříž is a beautiful historic town with a **chateau**, **art gallery**, **mint**, **wine cellars**, **world renowned gardens** and compelling genius loci. Unlike other places where it is necessary to trace the origin of their fame and splendour over several centuries, with Kroměříž we know it to the exact day. The turning point to steer the town towards today’s beauty and grandiosity, was March 12, 1664, the day when Karl II of Lichtenstein-Kastelkorn, a determined and very capable man, was elected Olomouc Bishop. One of his main concerns was to improve the **Episcopal seats** badly damaged by the Thirty Years’ War – and the Kroměříž summer residence was one of the most important.

Bishop Karl II set to work – not leaving it all to the architects and master builders, he checked and signed plans, and the construction of the spectacular Early Baroque chateau became a matter of prestige for him. He invited the Vienna Imperial Court architect, Filiberto Luchese, and after his death, Giovanni Pietro Tencalla. The majestic two-storey building with corner risalits and an 84 metre high tower which they created is really beautiful. The sumptuous rooms still rank among the most remarkable chateau interiors in Central Europe – **the Hunting, Assembly and Throne Halls**, along with **the Pink Salon and Tsar’s Room** are probably the most magnificent among them.

A major renovation and makeover was received also by the **Chateau Garden** closely adjoining the chateau buildings. Today’s appearance came about much later and changed the previous concept into a unique and rugged English style landscape park – while the typical French Baroque garden was preserved at the west wing of the chateau. But one garden didn’t seem to be enough. Bishop Karl II decided to turn the inhospitable swamp beyond the town borders into a wonderful place of idyllic relaxation, an amazing **Pleasure Garden**. He enthusiastically shared his vision with architects who had already seen in Italy and Holland the principle of a garden as a separate entity, not directly adjoining any residence. The result is absolutely stunning even today. The Bishop had a Latin inscription installed in the completed garden: “Enter, valued guest, and see the laborious transformation of once marshy and desolate land. Use in good health the harmless pleasures of the

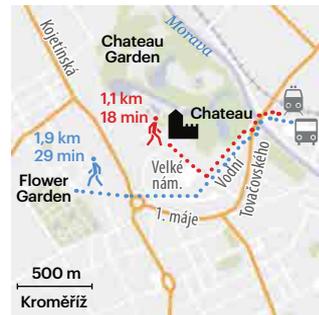
garden, designed and built for you, myself, and our descendants, after ten years of care and at significant cost by Karl, Count of Lichtenstein, Bishop of Olomouc 1675.” **The Flower Garden** as we know it today boasting perfect symmetry, abundant statues, fountains and water jets, with high hedges and the staggering 244 metre long **Colonnade** is the only surviving representative of its type in Europe. A masterpiece and a gem.

Bishop Karl II was also behind the foundation of the colossal and extremely valuable **Kroměříž Chateau Picture Gallery**. To be honest – if he had never bought anything else, but **Apollo and Marsyas**, a late work by Titian, he would still have guaranteed himself immortality in Kroměříž. However, his collections were far more extensive, so today you can marvel at paintings by **Cranach, Bruegel, van Dyck and Veronese**. These paintings make up the second most significant collection in the country, while the absolutely most important Czech collection is the coins exhibited in the former Episcopal Mint.

[www.zamek-kromeriz.cz](http://www.zamek-kromeriz.cz)

### Experiences

In the Archbishop's Chateau you can choose from several guided tours leading to the historical halls, picture gallery, sala terrena, the chateau tower or you may embark on a separate tour of the Archbishop's wine cellars. Located at a depth of six and a half metres, the cellars with historical barrels stretch over a thousand square metres, with the oldest one dating from 1805 and the largest holding 19,100 litres. Of what? Excellent communion wine, which you can



sample during the tour. An absolute must is a visit to the Flower Garden and Chateau Garden, which have unique experiences in store for you.

### Tips for Trips

If you are tuned to a Baroque note, you should definitely set out for the wonderful **Pilgrimage Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** on Svatý Hostýn, regarded as a landmark of Hostýn Hills. Not far from here lies **Holešov**, featuring one of the lesser known Baroque treasures of the Czech Republic, a beautiful **chateau** with a French garden, as well as remarkable Jewish sites – the Shakh **Synagogue** and **Jewish cemetery**.  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/holy-hostyn](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/holy-hostyn)  
[www.holesov.info](http://www.holesov.info)

# Olomouc

Heading for the  
Largest Sculpture  
and Svatý Kopeček





Olomouc

## Olomouc

### Heading for the Largest Sculpture and Svatý Kopeček

In Baroque times, Olomouc was the most significant city of Moravia, holding spectacular celebrations. Having just been appointed, a new Bishop would ride in a gold carriage drawn by six pairs of horses adorned with gold, bringing the whole excited town an unforgettable display.

As other places, Olomouc experienced rapid building activities, resulting for example in the magnificent 35 metre high UNESCO listed **Plague Column of the Holy Trinity**, the largest sculptural group in the Czech Republic. It even includes a small chapel with six windows and its consecration was attended by Empress Maria Theresa. Nearby, a somewhat smaller and older, **Marian Column** was designed and carved by

the architect and stonemason Václav Rindler. Magnificent houses of God were erected – such as the **Church of St. Michael** with three domes, the **Church of Our Lady of the Snows**, a part of the Jesuit school buildings, drawing inspiration from the Church of St. Nicolas, Lesser Town, Prague. Olomouc witnessed the construction of palaces (such as the lavish **Salm's Palace**), houses and fountains, as well as large-scale rebuilding and adaptations to the greater glory of God and greater comfort of the nobility and clergy.

The importance of the city was further emphasized by being home to the second oldest **university** in the Czech lands, the seat of bishops and then archbishops from 1777. Not surprisingly, the **Archbishop's Palace** is still one of the most treasured Baroque buildings in the country with walls which will take your breath away whether you are standing inside or outside, as you can actually see for yourself. Recovering from the Thirty Years' War the town put on a brand new coat, a stylish, shining, golden coat of lavish Baroque. Let's talk about fountains again. Olomouc's set of **six large Baroque stone fountains** with sculptural decoration is unique and perfectly symbolizes the proud resurrection of the town which was severely damaged by Swedish troops. Named after ancient heroes, each of the fountains also represents a brilliant work of art.

It is more than logical that the steeped-in-legend **relief of the Virgin Mary of the Holy Hill**, which various miracles were attributed to, received a new and truly dignified temple in the time of Baroque. The then simple

**chapel on Svatý Kopeček** (Holy Hill) near Olomouc was replaced with the monumental and spectacular Church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary (in 1995, its status was raised to Minor Basilica). The Moravian Baroque masterpiece was built to the design of the Imperial architect Giovanni Pietro Tencalla, who had been behind renovation projects on other Olomouc gems, such as the Church of St. Michael, Archbishop's Palace and Klášterní Hradisko. The Baroque church with a two-tower frontage with side wings, a parapet with statues, cloister and a chapel of the Virgin Mary is one of the most distinctive landmarks of Moravia, harmoniously complementing and crowning the landscape profile exactly as required and desired by Baroque ideals.

[www.tourism.olomouc.eu](http://www.tourism.olomouc.eu)  
[www.czechtourism.com/c/olomouc-svaty-kopecek](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/olomouc-svaty-kopecek)  
[www.olmuart.cz](http://www.olmuart.cz)

### Experiences

Just a simple walk through Olomouc can provide an utterly exciting experience. Its genius loci, to a large extent influenced by the Baroque era, is very powerful here. **The Archbishop's Palace** offers a guided tour exploring impressive halls which feature abundant decorations and period furniture. Recently, the recovered painting "Franz Joseph I ascending the Austrian throne in Olomouc in 1848" has been added to the tour for you to admire. **Being the only one in the country to focus exclusively on spiritual culture, the Archdiocesan Museum** displays gems of Baroque fine art in its picture gallery. **On Svatý Kopeček** make sure to pay a visit to the Basilica. If you are lucky



500 m



enough to witness here some of the pilgrimages, masses or church events, you will cherish it as an unforgettable experience.

### Tips for Trips

Once on Svatý Kopeček, head to the nearby **Zoo**. If you are after a wonderful trip, try **Javoříč, Mladeč** or **Zbrašov Caves**. For relaxation, set out for **Slatinice Spa**. And Baroque? **Kroměříž** is just a short distance away and our secret tip is **Náměstí na Haně**, with its Baroque chateau exhibiting porcelain collections and carriages. [zamek.namestnahane.cz](http://zamek.namestnahane.cz)



Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou



Wandering in Search of

# Baroque Ambience



Ploskovice

## Secret Tips

Baroque left countless historical sites in the Czech Republic. Ranging from simple crosses in fields to chateaux, churches and palaces. How about setting off to five places that might not rank among the top visited sites, but are still stunning and have a Baroque soul?

### Ploskovice

**Ploskovice Chateau** is a delicate Late Baroque one-storey structure built on the edge of a terrain fracture, adapted as a terrace with open arcade galleries in the shape of lobster claws, with unique artificial grottos on the level of an extensive Baroque park, crowned with the chateau. Here every woman feels like a Princess and every man like a courteous knight.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/ploskovice-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/ploskovice-chateau)

### Nebílovy

Two opposite buildings, forming a Court of Honour. A unique structure in the Czech Republic, perfectly representing Viennese Baroque. The chateau shelters various gems, such as the oldest Central European Baroque still life paintings – large canvases by German painter Gottfried Libalt. You will be captivated by the main hall with paintwork depicting a tropical forest.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/nebilovy-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/nebilovy-chateau)

### Duchov

The list of world Baroque personalities should undoubtedly include Giacomo Casanova, who spent the last thirteen years of his life at **Duchcov Chateau**.

Looking after Count Wallenstein's library, he was reminiscing and writing. For example the world's first science fiction novel. Searching for his tracks in the chateau and the gardens is exciting. The chateau itself cherishes several of them (such as the mechanism for the secret entry into his study) and in the Baroque garden you might hear the silent echo of his footsteps.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/duchcov-castle](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/duchcov-castle)

### Krásný Dvůr

Count Franz Josef Czernin had the family residence in Krásný Dvůr rebuilt into a **splendid Baroque chateau**, logically incorporating the surrounding landscape. The three-winged chateau embraces the Court of Honour, where a trio of still quite visible tree alleys used to fan out further into the countryside. The beginnings of the famous and unique **English park** date back to the Baroque period.

The biggest draw of the chateau **exposition** is a collection of dog portraits – quite a rarity in Europe.

[www.krasny-dvur.cz](http://www.krasny-dvur.cz)

### Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou

The fabulous **Jaroměřice Chateau**, together with **the Church of St. Margaret** are the impressive

Baroque garden are often referred to as **Moravian Versailles**. You will see beautiful interiors of the Baroque aristocratic residence, as well as guest rooms and the chateau kitchen, followed by the magnificent interior of the church ... and there is more to come – because antique toys await you in the loft.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/jaromerice-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/jaromerice-chateau)

12 historical sites on the UNESCO Heritage List

selected baroque sites



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### Guide to Baroque

#### Czech Republic

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[www.czechbaroque.com](http://www.czechbaroque.com)



CzechRepublic  
Land of Stories

# In Pursuit of Baroque Gems by Train

Take a train ride and discover the most beautiful Baroque sites in the Czech Republic

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