

Welcome to the Czech Republic – the UNESCO Country





THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Picturesque Heart of Europe

People say the Czech Republic is not a country, but a garden. In the centre of a chain of mountains on the border, with deep and meditative forests covering the slopes, we find the land of Bohemia, strewn with the silver coins of lakes and criss-crossed with the threads of rivers, or rippling with wavy highlands. In the east lie the historical lands of Moravia and Silesia, brightened with the endless plains of golden fields. History, recent as well as ancient, has left its mark on this blissful landscape, with many valuable and astonishing treasures in the form of historical towns, castles and chateaux, churches and ca-

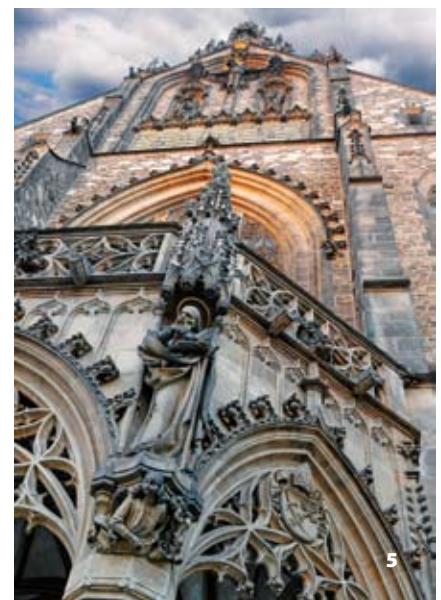
thedrals – true architectural and urban masterpieces of all the eras that came before us.

Prague, the Mother of Cities

The undisputed crown and the mother of Czech cities is Prague, the beauty of a hundred spires and one of the most charming human settlements on the planet. But if you limit yourself only to Prague, you will miss a lot. There are so many interesting and unique treasures to be found across the country that it would be difficult to see them all in one's lifetime. There are many keys to the gates of the Czech Republic. The brochure you are holding in your hands

unlocks these gates with the key of UNESCO world cultural heritage. The key rattles in the lock, the gate swings open and you can enter the land of wonders and beauty.

1. Courtyard of Český Krumlov Chateau
2. Bohemian Switzerland
3. Lesser Town Bridge Tower, Prague
4. Singing Fountain of Mariánské Lázně
5. St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Brno





PRAGUE *The Centre of a Magical Labyrinth*

No other Czech town has had so much written and spoken about it as the capital city, Prague. Standing on one of the most beautiful stone bridges in the world, the Charles Bridge, and looking past the silhouettes of silent statues and the Old Town full of winding alleys and picturesque squares up toward the hill where Prague Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral glisten in the sunlight is an experience that even those who have spent their whole life here never tire of.



The city of a hundred spires is a mysterious labyrinth where the past is interwoven with the present, a magical place where the most powerful men of Europe, rulers, generals, alchemists and Jewish scholars met... It was here that Rabbi Loew breathed life into the Golem made of clay; where Arcimboldo painted his opulent portraits composed of fruits and vegetables; and here that the alchemists at the court of Emperor Rudolf II struggled to find the Philosopher's Stone in their crucibles and Franz Kafka wrote his dark and oppressive works. It was here that Smetana and Dvořák, as well as Mozart and Liszt, enjoyed standing ovations from their enthusiastic audiences; that church reformer Jan Hus preached, and Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Giordano Bruno, and Tycho de Brahe spent their time bent over their telescopes...

Genius loci

Walking through this city now means being a part of all the magic and mystery of its past. Prague's atmosphere is unmatched by that of any other city in the world. The list of all its monuments, museums, galleries, amazing spots and buildings, even in its briefest form, far exceeds the size of this small book. Prague is a city you have to blend with, let it grow on you, become a part of it at least for a while – and then the city may be persuaded to reveal some of its secrets to you.



1. Prague Castle
2. Jewish Cemetery

3. Vladislav Hall, Prague Castle
5. Old Town Square
4. Prague bridges



Three Jewels in the Very Centre of Bohemia

In three cardinal directions from Prague, there lie three of the country's historical treasures. All are less than an hour's drive away. Three witnesses of the ancient and recent past, protected by UNESCO.

Mysterious KUTNÁ HORA

In the east lies the medieval town of Kutná Hora, charming and mysterious. Its secrets include cathedrals, cloisters, houses of the aristocracy, mysterious passageways, vaulted cellars and masterpieces of Gothic and Baroque architecture, urban planning, and sculpture. In the Middle Ages, silver was mined here and coins minted; trade flourished, and even the Czech king had his seat here.

You can stand in silent admiration under the arched ceiling of one of the most

beautiful Gothic cathedrals in Europe, dedicated to Saint Barbara, walk through the courtyards and chambers of the Italian Court, the former palace of Václav IV, or hold your breath as you descend into the Ossuary of the Cistercian Monastery and with awe and unease see the altars, coats of arms, chandeliers, pyramids and obelisks made of the bones of plague victims. Then enter the unique Gothic Stone House and, for a while, become a medieval craftsman or even a cook...

www.kutnahora.cz



1. St. Barbara's Cathedral
2. St. Barbara
3. Karlštejn Castle
4. Konopiště Chateau



Proud KARLŠTEJN

West of Prague lies one of the symbols and landmarks of the Czech Republic, the majestic Karlštejn Castle, built of stone, that is the pride of Czech Gothic craftsmanship. It is as if Time itself was sitting in the corner, not daring to disturb the air full of history. Palaces and chambers, long and spacious corridors, impenetrable castle walls and austere towers, and most importantly, the jewel of jewels, the Chapel of the Holy Cross with a unique collection of one hundred and twenty-nine Gothic paintings by Master Theodoricus.

www.hradkarlstejn.cz

KONOPIŠTĚ of Fairy Tales

In the south, in the middle of a beautiful park with forests and lakes, we find a fairy tale chateau. But the spirit of this place is that of court etiquette of the early 20th century, the dress uniforms of the imperial court, hunting jackets, and the first automobiles. The last person to transform the chateau to suit his liking was Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. His

marvellous hunting trophies, armoury, pompous drawing rooms and bedrooms, studies, as well as his private dining room, all retain the spirit of the man whose death in faraway Sarajevo sparked the First World War.

www.zamek-konopiste.cz





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ČESKÝ KRUMLOV

A Medieval Pearl on the Banks of the River

One of the most beautiful historic European towns, inscribed on the UNESCO list of world cultural and natural heritage sites, is located in South Bohemia. From the walls of its castle, Český Krumlov offers a lovely view of the forest-covered Šumava mountains and the 'Czech sea' – a large reservoir created by the Lipno hydroelectric dam.

The labyrinth of narrow and mysterious medieval alleyways has grown within the grip of uncompromising rocky slopes, on a plain as large as the hand of a friendly giant. The Gothic town of alchemists and stonemasons, court jesters and proud aristocrats, crowned with a beautiful Renaissance chateau – the largest in the Czech Republic after Prague – is full of mysterious magic and secrets. The winding alleyways run from the charming square and are directed by the omnipresent Vltava river, winding its way through the town criss-crossed by its many bridges.

Like in a Dream

It is wonderful to lose yourself in the maze of proud Renaissance and Gothic houses, sombre monasteries and dignified churches, as there is a new surprise and a new secret around every corner. The town seems like a dream that changes with each journey. And if you get tired of being lost, take a seat in the revolving chateau theatre, walk through one of the city's many galleries and museums, or board a boat and enjoy the views of the town from the river.

www.ckrumlov.cz/info



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1. Český Krumlov Castle and Chateau
2. Masquerade Hall, Český Krumlov Chateau
3. Červená Lhota Chateau
4. Holašovice

Standing in the centre of its spacious village green and looking at the houses and farmyards is like being transported into a fairy tale. The façades are gleaming white and the many round gables soothe your soul. You feel as if you are in a land of gingerbread houses covered in white marzipan. On the surface of the pond in the centre of Holašovice, you can see a reflection of one of the best preserved groups of buildings constructed in the Rural Baroque style and protected by UNESCO – houses that have for centuries kept their original, medieval, and Baroque character.

The Land of Castles and Chateaux

And if you are not ready to leave the fairy tale world just yet, nearby is the beautiful Hluboká Chateau built in the Tudor Gothic style, a white mirage floating above the woods of Southern Bohemia, or the naiad of rock, the scarlet Červená Lhota chateau on a rocky island in the middle of a lake. And the South Bohemian fairy tale does not end there...

www.unesco-czech.cz

HOLAŠOVICE

A Fairy Tale Village

Southern Bohemia, a hospitable landscape of lakes, rivers, forests and meadows, water castles, splendid chateaux, historical towns and picturesque villages, a paradise for water-lovers and fishermen. Here, close to the town of České Budějovice, lies the most charming of all Czech villages, Holašovice.





KARLOVY VARY

The Seductive Beauty of Spa Colonnades

The most famous Czech spa, the importance of which far exceeds the borders of the country, lies in the westernmost part of Bohemia, in the charming Teplá river valley. According to legend, the now-famous spa springs were discovered by accident in the 14th century by a hunting party of the Emperor and King Charles IV.

Karlovy Vary is a magical place. It is difficult to resist the worry-free and ceremonial feeling of strolling on the quiet promenade between the rich fronts of noble houses, among the columns of richly decorated colonnades. Knowing that from the same springs at the foot of Corinthian columns of the fascinating Mlýnská Colonnade, hot healing water was poured into the delicate china cups of Peter the Great, Maria Theresa, Bach,

Goethe, Casanova, and Beethoven is something that uplifts the soul and makes a journey through the town of many springs an unforgettable experience.

Magic Hidden in a Bottle

And if you sample not only the healing water but also Becherovka, the famed local herbal liquor, the city will look even more attractive than before. And it is just as magical to climb one of the many trails leading through the forest slopes above the town and see the beauty far below you. Karlovy Vary will take a place in your heart, and you will always be happy to return here.

www.karlovyvary.cz

1. Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad)
2. Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad)
3. Healing Springs
4. Statue of František, Františkovy Lázně



CZECH SPAS

Health Springs from Below the Ground

In the Czech Republic, healing springs bubble up like golden thread on a precious tapestry. Poděbrady in Central Bohemia, Luhačovice in Moravia, Jánské Lázně in the north... But the most healing springs can be found in the famous "spa triangle" in West Bohemia.

All spa towns have grown into beauty as places with a rich social life, and today we can admire the gleaming buildings of Františkovy Lázně that look like they were made by a skilled confectioner to decorate a wedding cake. At the same time, we can draw on the health to be found in the local peat spa, the oldest in Europe. Let yourself be enchanted by the dignified calmness of the Classical palaces of Mariánské Lázně, particularly knowing that in this modestly-sized

town there are more than forty healing springs and another sixty in the vicinity of the town. The town of Jáchymov, not far from here, is home to one of the most unique spas in the world – providing treatments using the beneficial effects of powerful radioactive springs. Karlovy Vary, with its twelve healing springs and the famous geyser with a jet reaching up to fifteen metres, is the shiniest jewel in the crown of Czech spas.



PLZEŇ

The City of Beer and Culture

All Czechs will proudly agree that the best beer in the world has been brewed since 1842 in Plzeň, the largest city of West Bohemia. The beer capital, however, is also famous for its cultural tradition, culminating in its being awarded the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2015.

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Being in Plzeň and not visiting the local brewery or tasting the world-renowned Pilsner beer would be an unforgivable sin. But it would also be a mistake not to get to know the real soul of the city. This soul can be felt with every step, in the walls of the houses, in the streets, and on the squares. For Plzeň has the soul of an artist, a joyful soul, and one that the city wishes to share with everyone.

Art on Every Corner

Several major theatres, the local philharmonic orchestra, galleries, cultural cafés, the many music, theatre, and folklore festivals, all of this together with the living artistic craft still seen in the streets. Budding artists show their skills, crossing many genres – be it in the shade of St. Bartholomew's cathedral or on the busy main street, in the parks or in underground clubs. And should you tire of culture, there is still that marvellously cold beer with a white, foaming head...

www.plzen.eu



THE CZECH SOMETIMES CALL BEER THE “LIQUID BREAD”

A famous Czech saying says that a government that raises the price of beer will fall. The Czechs’ relationship to beer is delicate and intimate. Having a lot of beer to choose from, they are true connoisseurs. All over the country, there are hundreds of regional brands made in large as well as small family breweries.

Czech beer is a geographical indication protected by the European Union. And such an honour is not just handed out – everyone brewing beer in the Czech Republic does their best to maintain this prestige. While beer from Plzeň is considered the true national treasure, there are excellent and original golden brews to be found in all regions of Bohemia and Moravia.

The Gourmet Paradise

And often it doesn’t end with beer, as Czechs are also known to be fond of their food. The local cuisine won’t likely win any prizes for being the healthiest, but it is hard to resist. A key component is always soup, without which no meal is considered complete. The most famous local speciality is dumplings, a typical Czech side dish served with meat and sauces; the most well-known specialities are roast beef in creamy Svičková sauce or roast pork or duck with cabbage and, of course, dumplings. And something sweet to finish off the meal? Delicious cakes and again dumplings, but this time filled with fruit...



1. Plzeň
2. Pilsner beer
3. Cheers!
4. Roasted pork with dumplings and sauerkraut
5. Lunch outdoors in the summer



LITOMYŠL

A Renaissance Treasure Trove Filled with Music

In the rolling Eastern Bohemian landscape full of sun is the small town of Litomyšl, which surrounds a castle inscribed on the UNESCO cultural heritage list. History has created a marvellous urban complex here, enchantingly harmonic and picturesque.



In the arcades of the Renaissance houses on Litomyšl square, warm air shimmers lazily. Litomyšl is a white pearl in a Renaissance necklace. The majestic complex of historical houses, churches, and cloisters is topped off with a lovely chateau, where the sun pours on the sgraffiti and wind blows through the airy loggias. Inside, there is a charming courtyard, a Baroque theatre, opulent halls, an exhibition of historic pianos, a mysterious basement as well as the chateau tower reaching to the sky. The chateau is surrounded by a fascinating English-style park and a French garden. And there is music in the air. Bedřich Smetana, one of the most important Czech composers, was born here in 1824 and the city, proud of its native son, has hosted the prestigious Smetana's Litomyšl opera festival for six decades.

www.litomysl.cz

1. Litomyšl Chateau
2. Litomyšl square
3. Sheet music
4. Dvořák Prague Festival



CZECH MUSIC

Every Czech is a Musician

Czechs love music. The heritage of Czech music is rich, beautiful and varied, just like the country's landscape. Its charm and rawness can be heard in the symphonies and operas, are reflected in the colourful and passionate folklore, and resonate in dreamy jazz melodies.

The treasure box of Czech music has been filled by composers, many of whom form an unforgettable part of the world concert stage. Antonín Dvořák, Bedřich Smetana, and Leoš Janáček are the three most famous. But right behind them is a long list of other musical geniuses – Bohuslav Martinů, Josef Suk, Josef Mysliveček, Jan Václav Stamic, and Jan Dismas Zelenka, as well as Gustav Mahler who was born and raised close to Jihlava, in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. Czech performers have also achieved worldwide renown – conductors Václav Talich, Václav Neumann, Karel Ančerl, Jiří Bělohlávek, and Libor Pešek, the brilliant opera singers Emma Destinová, Magdalena Kožená, Dagmar Pecková, and Eva Urbanová, and the many Czech virtuosos of classical and jazz music... Music clearly has a home in the Czech Republic.



BRNO

A Living Architectural Treasure

The second largest city in the Czech Republic is located in the fertile lowlands of South Moravia. The Moravian capital has always played an important part in the life of the country, with each era leaving its architectural mark. Its most famed monument is not even one hundred years old.

Brno is a city where you never feel lost, because despite its size it is an intimate and friendly town. Its two main features are the Gothic castle of Špilberk and the neo-Gothic St. Peter and Paul cathedral – even though the two buildings were built 650 years apart.

ings, and one of the most fascinating villas in the world, is Tugendhat Villa. The UNESCO-protected villa was built in 1930 by the world-renowned architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and is a wonderful example of modern architecture.

Meetings across Centuries

Enchantment abounds as you can see, next to each other, opulent Baroque churches and modernist exhibition palaces (Brno is the trade fair centre of the Czech Republic), plague monuments, fountains and palaces of the nobility, a monumental neo-Renaissance theatre, and many jewels of functionalism. One of the most valuable of the functional build-

www.ticbrno.cz

1. View of Brno with St Peter and Paul Cathedral
2. Brno Exhibition Center
3. Inside the Tugendhat Villa
4. Tugendhat Villa
5. Moravian vineyards
6. Lednice Chateau
7. Wine tasting



THE LEDNICE-VALTICE LANDSCAPE

Traces of History in the Land of Wine

In the very south of Moravia, in a romantic landscape where the carpet of forests meets the golden expanses of fields, where all slopes are lined with vineyards and silvery lakes bloom with white lilies, there is a unique complex of historic buildings beautifully set in natural surroundings.

The majestic Baroque chateau of Valtice is on one side and the stately Lednice chateau built in the Tudor Gothic style is on the other, surrounded by a system of artificial lakes and river canals. In between, there are Chinese gazebos, bridges, romantic summer houses, hunting lodges in the Empire style, a colonnade with beautiful vistas, and even a minaret from which there is a splendid view of the countryside; this is the Lednice-Valtice complex, part of the UNESCO world cultural heritage.

Taste the Landscape

And all around are vineyards, wine cellars, and the unique Moravian wine. The Znojmo, Mikulov, Velké Pavlovice, and Slovácko regions are all places where, for example, on the vineyard cycling trails you can meet hospitable and friendly winemakers who will be happy to share their pride: white wines with an interesting spectrum of scents and spicy flavours, combined with the fullness of the fertile Moravian soil, the earthy red wines, or the fresh and light rosés...







OLOMOUC

The Thousand-Year-Old Spiritual Centre of Moravia

In the heart of Moravia, in the centre of the most fertile fields in the country in a region known as Haná, stands the proud and ancient city of Olomouc, one of the most important centres of the Bohemian Kingdom for as long as anyone can remember. The city maintains its dignity and spiritual strength; a city full of history, Baroque beauty, and reverence for God.

Visiting Olomouc is like meeting a wise and respected old man who has been down many roads and whose single word is worth a stack of books. With each step, you are surprised by the large number of important and majestic monuments – imposing and picturesque churches, rich palaces of the burghers, monumental monasteries. The awe-inspiring Bishop Palace, one of the pinnacles of European Romanesque architecture, Gothic churches and the cathedral,

Renaissance palaces with richly decorated façades, but most importantly the Olomouc Baroque. Beautiful fountains, the Archbishop Palace, the Hradisko Monastery known as the “Moravian Escorial”, the pilgrimage basilica on the Holy Hill and above all – the impressive column commemorating the end of a plague, protected by UNESCO and the largest group of Baroque sculptures in Central Europe. And one curiosity as well – the Workers’ Astronomical Clock from 1955.

www.tourism.olomouc.eu

1. Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc
2. Annunciation of Virgin Mary Basilica, the Holy Hill
3. Rest in the garden below the chateau
4. Flower Garden

KROMĚŘÍŽ

The Heavenly Gardens of the Athens of Haná

In the fertile Moravian Haná close to Olomouc lies Kroměříž, the city in the middle of gardens. The noble Archbishop Chateau built in the early Baroque style is the centre of a fascinating labyrinth of perfectly kept gardens that maintain to this day their historic park architecture.

You almost feel out of place here if you don’t have a powdered Baroque wig. Rather than saunter, you will pass excitedly through the exquisitely and finely decorated halls of the chateau, valuable library, and the chateau gallery featuring the works of Titian, Cranach, Veronese, and Breughel (incidentally the second most valuable collection in the Czech Republic). And let’s not forget the outdoors and many fantastic gardens – the Podzámecká, a large English-style park, or Květná, with

perfectly symmetrical and sophisticated flower patterns, garden beds and shrubberies of the uniquely preserved system of a French garden with mazes, fountains, summer houses and an unusual eight-sided rotunda where a Foucault’s pendulum measures the time. UNESCO is protecting this marvellous city, and for good reason.

www.mesto-kromeriz.cz



Three Cities, Three Diamonds between the Hills

Between Bohemia and Moravia in the south of the country, in the charming landscape of small hills where, as the saying goes, the bread ends and the rocks begin, lie three fascinating towns that UNESCO has taken under its wing.

ŽĎÁR NAD SÁZAVOU

The City of Santini's Brilliance

At some point in 1706, the abbot of the Žďár monastery invited the young architect Jan Santini to the town for the first time. Santini came and started working on his own style that brought him fame worldwide, the Baroque-Gothic. The pinnacle of his extraordinary inventiveness is the chapel of St. John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora, a unique chapel that seems to have been sent

from another world. A beauty of precise geometric splendour and lightness that is impossible to describe. It is not a church, but the most delicate lacework. Santini's brilliance can also be seen in the town – the Plague Cemetery built in the shape of a human skull, the interior of a church, a horse stable, an inn, a hospital, and the monastery's prelatore.

www.zdarns.cz





TELČ

The town of Inspiration

A town that was made for artists and dreamers, a town with a touch of Italy, fragile and lovely. The handsome square with decorative façades of Gothic and Renaissance houses, delicate sgraffiti of the chateau reflected in the surfaces of town ponds, the perfect coffers on the ceilings of chateau halls, the austere beauty of the churches, sunny gardens, and the hospitable nature – even a bank clerk would start writing poetry here.

www.telc-etc.cz

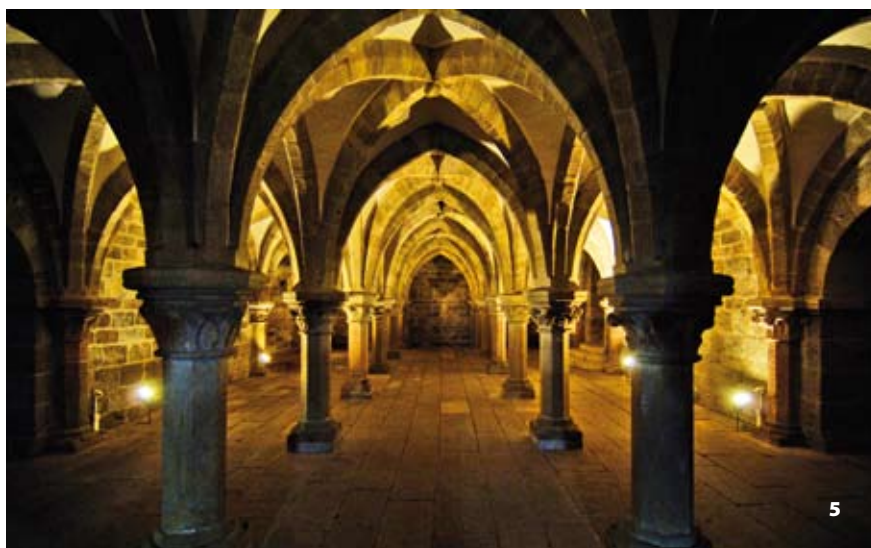
TŘEBÍČ

The City of Tolerance

Jews and Christians together, calm and peaceful neighbours of a different faith but the same fate. That is the history of the town of Třebíč, as illustrated by its two jewels – the Basilica of St Procopius with a monumental rose window and unique vaulted crypt that is seven hundred years old, and the Jewish quarter with over a hundred and twenty houses, a town hall, school and a rabbinate, synagogues and a large cemetery with some three thousand tombstones.

www.visittrebic.eu

1. Baroque statue of a saint
2. Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk on Zelená Hora
3. Square in Telč
4. Rear Synagogue in Třebíč
5. Crypt of St Procopius Basilica





NATURE

*Thousands of Beautiful Spots in a Country
As Big As the Palm of Your Hand*

It is almost impossible to believe how much beauty there is in this small country. The Czech landscape is surprisingly varied – and the greatest proof of this are four national parks, each different and unique.

Šumava, the mountain range in Southern Bohemia that can be both charming and rough, is a landscape of silent forests, highlands, and blossoming meadows and is, most importantly, the kingdom of water. Mysterious peat bogs, wild rivers full of gigantic boulders, glacial lakes...

On Mountain Ridges and among Rocks

Krkonoše, the highest Czech mountain range in the north of the country with the 1,602 metre Sněžka Mountain, is home to numerous diverse and rare animals and plants living in a land shaped by glaciers, a land of majestic mountain meadows and waterfalls. Podyjí in southern Moravia is a canyon of the Dyje river with deep

meanders, rock cliffs, and stone seas. České Švýcarsko in the northwest is a romantic landscape of breath-taking sandstone formations, tall towers, and vaulted gates, and a land of unique treasures of folk architecture. But there are more rock towns in Bohemia – such as the beautiful Bohemian Paradise, the Adršpach-Teplice Rocks, the Kokořín region...

www.krkonose.eu
www.sumava.com
www.nppodyji.cz
www.ceskesvycarsko.cz

1. Šumava Mountains
2. Pravčická brána, Bohemian Switzerland
3. Mount Sněžka, Krkonoše Mountains

1



2



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