

OLOMOUC AND SURROUNDINGS

Bouzov Castle, located in the village of the same name near Mohelnice, was built at the turn of the 13th and

14th century and is one of the most beautiful and most visited castles in the country. Since 1999 it has been a national cultural monument. Visitors to the castle can admire paintings, art objects and historical furniture. The castle is unique in that it has two working drawbridges and a drawbridge. In addition to traditional tours, the castle grounds are the venue for various fairs, carnivals, openings and festivals. An interesting fact is that Bouzov Castle has appeared in many Czech fairy tales (e.g. About Princess Jasněnka and the Flying Shoemaker, Arabela Returns or Rumburak the King of the Fairy Tale Empire, Rumpelcimprcamp, Princess Enchanted in Time and many others).

[1]



The ruins of the Helfštýn Castle date back to the beginning of the 14th century and are located near the town of Lipník nad Bečvou. Helfštýn has been protected as a cultural monument of the Czech Republic since 1963. It is a giant castle complex, one of the largest castle complexes in Europe. Four courtyards are open to visitors. On the third (Kravařský) forecourt there is the so-called Hussite tower, which offers a beautiful view of the castle surroundings after climbing 77 steps. It is also possible to visit several expositions: the Exposition of Archaeology, the Exposition of the Historical Mint, the Exposition of the Palace and the Exposition of Artistic Blacksmithing. Every year, Helfštýn attracts visitors to the Sword Festival, the Hefaiston Artistic Blacksmiths' Meeting and various fairs and markets.

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Šternberk Castle is located in the town of the same name near Olomouc. It was built in the middle of

13th century. Over the years, it was rebuilt in the Renaissance style, then it acquired a Neo-Gothic look for a while until it was rebuilt in the Romantic Historicism style. In 2001 it was listed as a national cultural monument. In addition to the castle itself, the adjacent forest park, which was created by the Viennese architect Albert Esche at the beginning of the 20th century, is also worth a visit.

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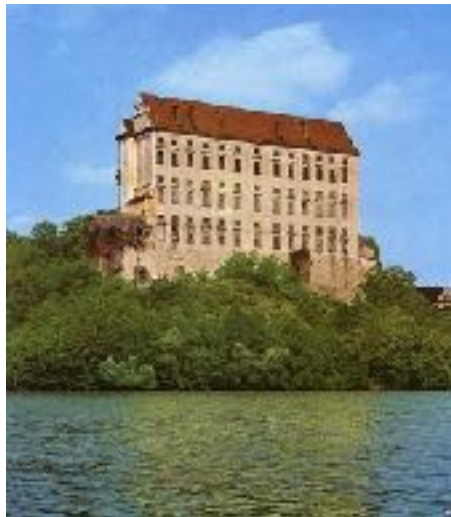
The Čechy pod Kosířem Chateau is also a popular place near Olomouc. It is a classicist castle surrounded by a huge English park. Originally built in the style of a baroque garden, the park offers ponds, a garden gazebo, a greenhouse and a lookout tower. The Czech painter Josef Mánes is associated with the chateau and often visited and created his works here. The largest collection of his paintings can be seen at the chateau. In addition to Josef Mánes' drawings, the castle offers visitors the Film Exposition of Zdeněk and Jan Svěrák and the Exposition of Historical Bicycles.

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A short distance from Prostějov lies **Plumlov Castle**, which was built on the site of a medieval castle from the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries. The castle itself was built at the end of the 17th century. The old castle buildings were demolished at the beginning of the 19th century. Today, visitors can only see the remains of the original castle, but the castle is open to the public after a partial reconstruction. The beauty of the castle is underlined by the Podhradský pond, which surrounds it and makes it an unmissable landmark.

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The Renaissance **chateau Tovačov**, located in the town of the same name, is also worth seeing. Its main landmark is the so-called Spanila Tower, which offers a view of the wide surroundings from 96 metres. The castle is surrounded by an English park from the 18th century. Klement Slavický (1910- 1999), author of, among other things, song and choral cycles, was born in Tovačov. In the castle you can visit an exposition which presents his existence and work.

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In the town of Zlaté Hory, a visit to the **Gold Diggers' Open Air Museum** should not be missed. The tour of the open-air museum includes the Mining Settlement and the Golden Ore Mills. In the Mining Settlement there is a replica of a wooden mining cabin, a bell tower, a wooden replica of a watchtower, which also serves as a lookout. The Golden Ore Mills are replicas of water-powered medieval mining mills. The tour also includes a demonstration of gold ore crushing and a smelting furnace. Visitors can use the nature trail, which even takes them to a place where the water flows "uphill".

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A unique place to soak up the Haná culture is the **Haná Museum in Nature or the Haná Open Air Museum** in Příkazi, which can be found in the immediate vicinity of Olomouc. It is a unique example of clay architecture in the region. There are three pallet barns from the first half of the 19th century and one barn from 1987. There is also a complete Haná farmhouse with a residential and farm part and a garden from 1876. Craft fairs, concerts, theatre performances and other cultural events are regularly held in the open-air museum.

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The town of **Velké Losiny** can offer its visitors several interesting places. First of all, there is the National Cultural Monument **Velké Losiny Handmade Paper Mill, which was** founded at the end of the 16th century. In the Paper Museum, visitors can see traditional papermaking and a wide range of original products. It is also possible to arrange a workshop during which you can make your own paper.

In addition, the Velké Losiny Chateau is located in the town. It is known mainly for the witch trials that took place here in the 17th century and which became the basis for the book (and later the film) *The Witches' Hammer*.

If visitors would like to spend a relaxing day in Velké Losiny, the **Velké Losiny Thermal Park**, **the** only one of its kind in the Czech Republic, is certainly worth mentioning. It uses natural healing resources from the Velké Losiny Spa. In addition to nine thermal pools, you can also visit saunas, massages or water attractions.

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For smaller and larger visitors to Olomouc, we also recommend a visit to the **Olomouc Zoological Garden**, located in the local part of Svatý Kopeček. The zoo is easily accessible by public transport Olomouc. It offers several pavilions and exhibitions, including a walk-through enclosure for kangaroos and macaques, a pavilion for bats and a modern exposition dedicated to the breeding of baribal bears and Arctic wolves. Another interesting feature of this zoo is the 32-metre high tower, which offers a beautiful view of the city of Olomouc and, in good weather, a view of the Jeseníky Mountains with Praděd.

If you visit Svatý Kopeček, you should not miss a visit to **the Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary**. It is a magnificent Baroque building, one of the most important monuments of the Olomouc Region.

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For fun lovers, we can recommend the **Hrubá Voda Resort**, located in Hlubočky, just a few kilometres from Olomouc. The resort can be easily reached from Olomouc by train, it is located near the train station. This leisure area offers a wealth of activities not only for children. Among the most interesting summer activities are the Hrubik's nature trail, Kamzik's trail in the treetops, mini golf, disc golf and a bobsleigh track more than 800 metres long, reaching speeds of up to 40 km/h.

There are also several caves in the Olomouc Region. The **Javoříčské Caves**, located about 10 km from Bouzov Castle, are considered to be one of the most beautiful in the Czech Republic. Visitors often combine these places into one trip. The Javoříčské Caves have beautiful stalactite decorations. It is possible to see stalagmites over 4 metres high as well as thin straw-shaped stalactites. The symbol of the caves is a long sinter curtain.

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The Mladeč Caves are located in Litovelské Pomoraví. Part of the caves is also a small archaeological exhibition, the so-called Dome of the Dead, where you can see a sample of a prehistoric hearth and some archaeological and paleontological findings. Skeletal remains of humans and animals have been excavated in these places. The caves themselves offer beautifully coloured sinter flows and stalactite formations.

The Zbrašov Aragonite Caves and the **Hranice Abyss** are located in the Hranice Karst, more precisely in the village of Teplice nad Bečvou. The caves offer beautiful views of geyser stalagmites or a rock wall covered with aragonite. There is also the so-called Marble Hall, where occasional exhibitions and chamber concerts are held in the summer months. The Hranice Abyss is the deepest flooded freshwater cave in the world. Its exact depth is still unknown, as the Hranice Lake is located at its bottom. The maximum measured depth of the flooded part is 404 metres, but according to the latest findings it can reach up to 1 km. We recommend ending your visit to the village in the spa itself, where you can taste the warm mineral water with a high carbon dioxide content, admire the architecture of the spa buildings or bite into a fresh spa wafer.

Other possibilities of visiting the **cave** are the **Cave on the border** (near the village of Lipová-lázně) or the **Cave Na Špičák** (near the village of Písečná).

Image sources:

[1]

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[2] <https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helf%C5%A1t%C3%BDn#/media/File:Helf%C5%A1t%C3%BDn.jpg>

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