

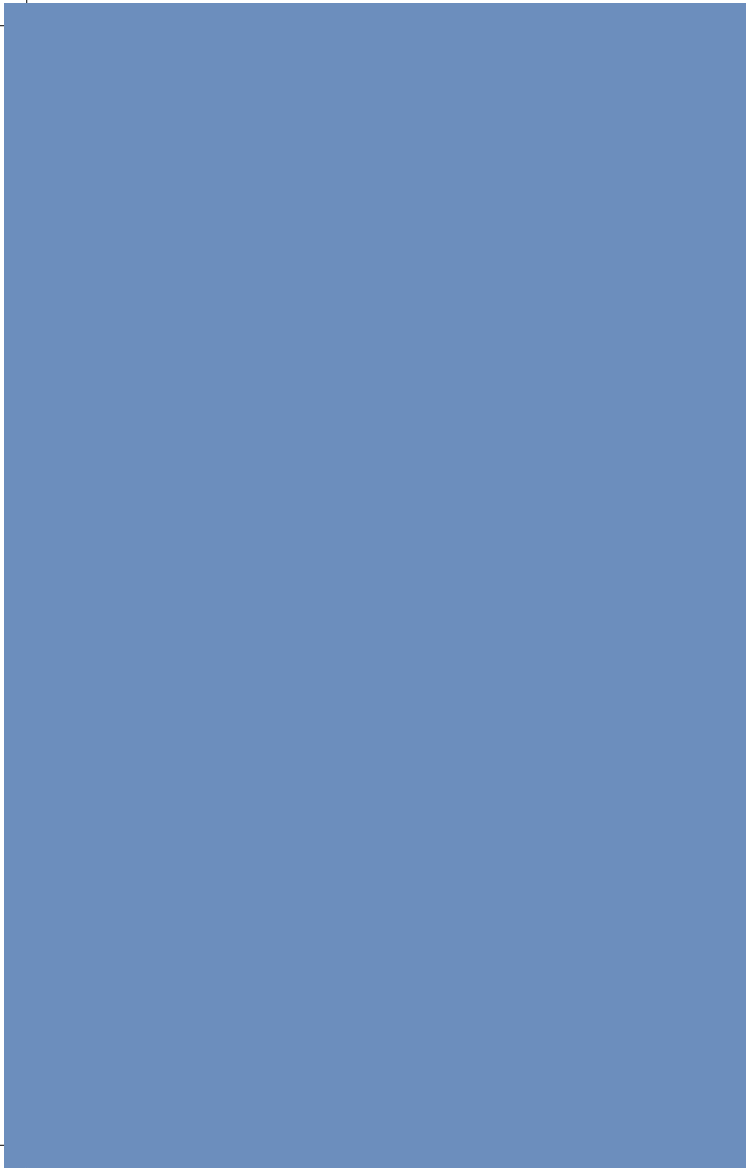


Karlovy Vary
Region



UNESCO

in the Karlovy Vary Region



What could a group of spa towns, a collection of mines and one very old photograph possibly have in common? Well, in the Karlovy Vary Region these pieces of heritage are all listed by UNESCO, and in the following pages we would like to extend an invitation to you to visit them all. Experience the Belle Époque era and recharge your batteries in elegant spa towns. Or be amazed by the rugged mining landscapes of the Krušné Mountains where centuries of mining history and coin striking are set against a backdrop of natural beauty and nature's wonders everywhere you look. The Karlovy Vary Region is one place that truly deserves its status as a UNESCO world cultural heritage site, just as you deserve to see all that this intriguing region has to offer visitors.

I. Spa Triangle

Health, rest and culture – these and much more have drawn people to the so-called Spa Triangle as long as anyone can remember. Along with Baden-Baden, Bad Ems and Bad Kissingen in Germany, Spa in Belgium, Vichy in France, Montecatini Terme in Italy, Baden near Vienna in Austria and the City of Bath in England, the Czech trio of Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně and Františkovy Lázně are now part of UNESCO's world cultural heritage list under the joint title "The Great Spas of Europe". All of these towns have played a major role in the phenomenon that is spa culture. They have contributed to the image and history of Europe abroad and have been relished by the general public, powerful rulers, famous artists and men of letters. Echoes of the spas' golden era come in the form of wedding-cake architecture and countless tried-and-tested spa treatments.



Karlovy Vary

This celebrated spa town was established as far back as the 14th century, but it was the Belle Époque era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that left the most obvious mark. The town's special ambience is best enjoyed during a stroll along one of the five grand colonnades and in spa buildings constructed by world-renowned architects in every "neo" style going, as well as in the empire, functionalist and even brutalist styles (represented most notably by the Hotel Thermal). Must-sees include the Mill Colonnade designed by Josef Zíték with its allegorical statues; the Vřídelní Colonnade with its popular pavilion containing the Vřídelní spring; and the Market Colonnade sporting images depicting how the town was established by King Charles IV.

Extending along the valleys of the Teplá and Ohře rivers, this spa town is surrounded by forested mountains that are simply perfect for brisk walks in the fresh local microclimate which itself has curative effects. Carlsbad's medicinal springs are sought by people from all over the world and once upon a time famous personalities such as Franz Joseph I, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Niccolò Paganini, Sigmund Freud and countless others were drawn here. World-class spa care has been perfected over centuries and is based entirely on thermal springs, naturally occurring gas and peat. Rising from a depth of 2500m, the local spring water is used for the drinking cure, baths, inhalation and enemas. Procedures on offer can treat problems with the digestive system, metabolism, musculoskeletal system, respiratory system and circulation, oncological and periodontal diseases as well as psychological issues, nervous conditions and tens of other complaints. The spa still welcomes famous visitors today, mostly during

a plethora of film stars each year. The Carlsbad Symphony Orchestra has been giving concerts since 1835 and the town's theatre puts on an intriguing programme against a backdrop of interior decoration by famous artists Gustav and Ernst Klimt. The municipal museum focuses on the town's history, the spa industry and traditional crafts, while the local art gallery has exhibitions of Czech and Slovak modern art.

More active recreation can be enjoyed on the golf course and at the horse racing track, or on countless trips you can make into the surrounding area. This could be to the Svatoš Rocks, Bečov nad Teplou or Loket Castle. And no visit to Karlovy Vary would be complete without a trip up to the Diana viewing tower, the famous Moser glassworks, the Thun porcelain factory or the Jan Becher Museum where you can sample the famous “thirteenth spring”, Becherovka herbal liqueur.







Mariánské Lázně

This town on the southern edge of the Slavkovský Forest captivates visitors with its historical ambience as they stroll along the main colonnade, past empire-style and neo-Classical spa houses and through the Cross Spring pavilion. Naturally occurring water and gas is used here to treat a whole variety of illnesses, from musculoskeletal issues and kidney problems, neurological and cardiological diseases to respiratory disease and metabolic complaints. The spa tradition here reaches back to the early 19th century, the town's golden era coming at the turn of the 19th century. This left its mark on the architectural style of the spa houses, churches, parks and idyllic viewing points. The Singing Fountain adds audible ambience as it plays world-famous classic songs as well as pop-music hits and even numbers from film soundtracks.

Some of the spa procedures based on the use of natural CO₂ gas aren't found anywhere else on earth. The gas from the Maria Spring is one of a kind, as are the peat and mud used in procedures and the local microclimate itself which you can savour to the full on a trip into the Slavkovský Forest. In and around the town rise cold hypotonic mineral springs that are used for the drinking cure, inhalation and for mineral baths. In their day, illustrious individuals such as Eduard VII King of England, the composer Fryderyk Chopin and poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang Goethe came here to seek the cure. The spa town continues to draw an international clientele to this day. And what about cultural life here? As in Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně has its own orchestra (dating back to 1821) that performs on a regular basis. The Municipal Theatre offers a packed program - in addition to plays it also hosts exhibitions and concerts. The town's museum and gallery have superb

permanent exhibitions on the local spa industry and famous visitors to the town, as well as special exhibitions on a wide range of themes. The Royal Golf Club was established by King Eduard VII in 1905 and its long golfing tradition was recognised in 2003 when the course was awarded the title “Royal”.



Františkovy Lázně

A visit to the neo-Classical spa town of Františkovy Lázně is like a journey back in time. Surrounded by extensive parkland laid out in the English style, this pretty little town once hosted such illustrious guests as emperors Franz I, Charles I and Franz Joseph II. Božena Němcová wrote some of her prose here and Johann Wolfgang Goethe even explored the local volcano called Komorní hůrka just outside the town which lies in a volcanic region. An ascent of Komorní hůrka provides a fine opportunity to take a peek under the earth's crust.

Well-known for treating infertility, the symbol of the town is the small statue of a child named Franz. However, the traditional cure here can also relieve joint pain and even help with heart, circulation and skin problems. Musculoskeletal problems, oncological issues, nerve complaints and much more are also treated here. Cold mineral springs, gas from the springs and mud with a high iron and sulphur content are used in procedures. On a stroll through the town you can admire neo-Classical pavilions containing the springs historical spa buildings (for instance the Glauber Springs Hall) and well-maintained spa parks that are wonderfully relaxing green spaces. The Božena Němcová Theatre and the Municipal Museum take care of cultural life in the town. Trips into the surrounding area include to the Salinburg viewing tower, Amerika Park, Seeberg Castle and the Soos National Nature Reserve, often nicknamed the Czech Yellowstone.







II. Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region



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Geology in all its forms plus 800 years of human history are what you encounter in the Krušné Mountains. A dense network of well-preserved mining heritage sites and the dramatic history associated with critical scientific discoveries make this mining area in the border region between Bohemia and Germany a popular destination for fans of culture, history and wild natural beauty. There are 22 UNESCO-listed sites, 17 of which can be found on the Saxon side of the mountain range, five on the Czech side. Visit places that left an indelible mark on the medieval mining industry and international science as you admire the dramatic landscapes of the Krušné Mountains.

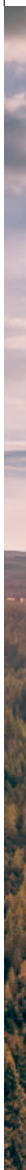
Jáchymov's Mining Landscape

It's no exaggeration to say that without Jáchymov our world would be a different place. This small town on the border with Germany altered the history of the mining and spa industries, as well as making a huge impact on Europe's coinage. In addition to a range of discoveries of global importance, it was here in 1716 that the first mining college was established and the local mining industry was an example and inspiration for mining areas across the world. The local "silver fever" in the 16th century led to a boom in spiritual and cultural life, a fact showcased at the Latin School.

You can spend several days exploring Jáchymov. Exhibitions on the history of silver mining, coin production (including the tolar from the times when the Schlick family owned the mines – a coin which developed into today's US dollar) and the radon spa industry can be found in the Royal Mint, now the town's museum. You can follow this with a tour of the 260m-long Mine No. 1, home to the Mining Museum with its displays of period mining equipment and examples of mining techniques. Another mining heritage site is the Astoria Mine with its film providing fascinating information on the history of the Svornost Mine and the curative properties of radon-rich water.

Apart from silver and other metal ores, Jáchymov is infamous for the mining of uranium. Marie Curie-Skłodowska and her husband first isolated the elements radium and polonium from uraninite from Jáchymov. When the curative effects of radon-rich water were realised, the world's first radon spa soon appeared here. The Svornost Mine, the oldest functional mine in all Europe, still supplies the spa with radon-rich water. After WWII the situation went quickly downhill, the communist

regime building several prison camps in the area where political prisoners mined uranium ore in cruel conditions. Radioactive elements led to loss of life instead of saving it. Jáchymov has had a turbulent history to say the least, but the town is honest about its past, another good reason to head here.





Abertamy / Boží Dar / Horní Blatná Mining Landscape

This is a landscape defined by the mining of tin, iron and other ores from the 16th century onwards. Three mining districts have been joined into one entity boasting heritage sites in both its towns and in the landscape. The highlight is the historical centre of Horní Blatná where a Renaissance church dating from 1594 has survived along with several richly-adorned 18th-century townhouses. A short way outside the town rises a hill called Blatenský vrch where you will find the remnants of mining activity, a viewing tower and Vlčí jámy, a collapsed tin mine. A trail leads from Horní Blatná to all of these places. In the nearby Bludná mining area you will encounter many reminders of the tin mining past, the most memorable being the Zuzana Mine. A much bigger feature of the landscape is the collapsed Červená jáma mine between Bludná and Hřebečná. The Blatno Canal also flows through Bludná, a waterway that once supplied water to the mines around about. The canal is a unique piece of industrial heritage and a trail with 23 stops traces its 12km-long length. Other interesting spots are tin panning sites and hundreds of hills covered in heather dotted around the landscape to the west of Boží Dar, an atmospheric destination for some scenic walks.

The highlight of a visit to the area must be a journey underground. The well-preserved Mauritius Mine at Hřebečná boasts a 400m-long tour route that leads visitors to places where ore was extracted by hand and others where the rock has been cracked from heat caused by another mining technique. Another fascinating experience awaits at the Johannes Mine in Zlatý Kopec where during a two-hour tour you can explore 500 years of mining in the area and see just how dangerous the

miners' job was. There are several tours to choose from that take you through a labyrinth of interconnected chambers, via rock faces and to passageways the miners could only crawl through.

Red Tower of Death

A complete contrast to the mining heritage and spa pampering comes in the form of a brick building near the town of Ostrov – the Red Tower of Death, a place with a dark and sinister past. This was where uranium ore was processed before it was exported to the USSR for the Soviet nuclear program. The work was carried out by political prisoners, many of whom died from the effects of radioactive dust and heavy labour in inhumane conditions, as well as from the ruthlessness of the guards. Today there are guided tours of the tower and you can also visit the Museum of the Third Resistance (resistance movement against communism) featuring period clothing and objects made by the prisoners.



III. Kynžvart's daguerreotype

The invention of the daguerreotype is generally regarded as the beginning of modern photography. The Kynžvart daguerreotype, an item UNESCO has included in its Memory of the World Programme, is a very rare object indeed. One of the most precious photographs on earth shows an artist's studio. The image was created by the inventor of the process, Louise Jacques Mandé Daguerre himself. He gave it to Prince Metternich as a gift and on the back of the photo there is a hand-written note on its significance. Daguerre worked for 23 long years on his invention. To make a daguerreotype he used metal plates covered in a thin layer of silver and a mix of chemicals. The photographer exposed the plate in a camera obscura, the forerunner of today's cameras, before developing the image and fixing it. Kynžvart Chateau has a new display on the daguerreotype but is also well worth a visit for its huge exhibition of collectors' items from across the globe, most given to Prince Metternich by illustrious friends. These include Egyptian mummies, a curiosities cabinet and an exhibition of weaponry and drawings.



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Tourist Information Centre

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Františkovy Lázně

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