

Enjoy UNESCO's Heritage: Visit Olomouc!

Prague, January 2012 Religious monuments, places of pilgrimage and other interesting religious destinations attract more and more tourists. That is precisely why we would like to invite you to the Olomouc region. The city of Olomouc itself has one of the 12 monuments that the Czech Republic is especially proud of: the sights included in UNESCO's world heritage list. However, there are many more reasons to visit the region.



Olomouc Holy Trinity Column

The Holy Trinity Column, situated in the Upper Square ("Horní náměstí") in Olomouc, was registered in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage list in 2000. Its height of 35 metres makes it the tallest sculptural group to be found in the Czech Republic. Together with the Marian Column, located in the Lower Square ("Dolní náměstí"), and a group of six baroque fountains, it has been a national cultural monument since 1995. It was built between 1716 and 1754 and has become a monument that local inhabitants have been immensely proud of since its erection. The fact that it was built in Olomouc speaks in favour of the historical importance of the city, once the capital of the Moravia region and a seat of bishops since 1063. The idea of building a column was conceived by a stonemason and a privileged architect called Václav Render who managed to push his project through the city council, developed it and contributed to its funding. Originally it was supposed to be a plague column but the project was changed in the course of time and the monument was eventually dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Gold-plated copper sculptures representing the Holy Trinity dominate the three-storey monument which also

features an additional 18 statues of Saints and 14 reliefs as well as a small chapel enclosed by them. It is only when you stand in front of the monument that you feel its genuine atmosphere and you can appreciate its architectural and artistic value and pay tribute to its creators.

Olomouc Astronomical Clock

Another rarity to be found in Olomouc is located just a few steps from the UNESCO monument: an astronomical clock. It was probably built at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries and has undergone several renovations that have gradually changed its appearance. It was heavily damaged at the end of the 2nd World War, in May 1945, and a national artist named Karel Svolinský, a native of nearby Svatý Kopeček ("St. Hill"), was asked by the city to repair it. It was he who re-built it in 1955 in the shape as we know it today: the mosaic of the astronomical clock in the spirit of socialist realism embodies the life and work of the region's people. It is a truly unique monument that is probably unparalleled throughout the world.

Olomouc has many more sights to offer!

The Olomouc panorama is inseparable from the towers of St. Wenceslas' Church. It got its neogothic appearance as we know it today, with the tallest tower to be found in Moravia - and the second tallest in the whole of the Czech Republic - at the end of the 19th century. You should definitely take a stroll there when visiting the city. And don't forget to visit the Romanesque palace of Moravian bishops at the Premyslid castle, which is sometimes incorrectly referred to as the "Premyslid Palace". It is the most outstanding architectural monument of Central European importance to be found in Olomouc that was built in the first half of the 12th century and features unique Romanesque arched windows decorated with relief ornaments that are unparalleled in the Czech Republic.

Aviation Museum features many interesting attractions!

You might think that the Moravian city of Olomouc is too far to travel to when visiting the Czech Republic. However, it is not that difficult: the cities of Prague and Olomouc are connected with a motorway but you can also take a plane and land at one of five Czech international airports. When getting from plane in Olomouc, do visit its Aviation Museum, which features different technology, including military jet planes, many exhibits from the history of air transport, a large collection of flight simulators and aircraft engines.

Svatý Kopeček

Situated just eight kilometres from the city centre is the most popular tourist destination and a place of pilgrimage in the region, Svatý Kopeček ("Saint Hill"). This part of the foothills of a mountain range called Nížký Jeseník is dominated by a baroque Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, rising majestically above Olomouc and offering a beautiful view of the region. Since 1956 the surrounding forests have encompassed a zoological garden, spreading over an area of 40 hectares. When visiting the zoo, you can enjoy a sightseeing tour on board a mini-train or a view from an observation tower. It offers nice relaxation and new knowledge at the same time. You will find more than 350 animal species and many of them are very rare. The whole region enjoys a network of hiking paths and cycle routes. If you have had enough of strolls in the countryside, why not go back to the city and take a cruise along the river Moravia! You can choose one of the one to three-hour cruises on comfortable eight-seat inflatable boats. Don't worry: each boat has its own skilled instructor on board! Night cruises on boats decorated with Chinese lanterns along illuminated sights are especially romantic, and more experienced canoeists can take a longer trip on a raft or a canoe to a nearby picturesque natural reserve called "Litovelské Pomoraví".

Flora Olomouc

The metropolis of the Haná region is inseparable from the traditional international gardening exhibition called "Flora Olomouc". Whether you visit its spring or summer stage, you will definitely be fascinated by a wide range of flower species coming in countless colours. Various flower arrangements displayed in many corners of the city will call your attention to the exhibition that just takes place in Olomouc. The Olomouc Exhibition Grounds hosts 15 exhibitions and fairs every year and its staff take care of 47 hectares of parks including greenhouses, a rosarium and a botanical garden.

Another opportunity to relax is provided by Olomouc's renowned restaurants. If you visit one of the places labelled with the "CzechSpecials" mark, you can be sure it offers national and local specialities. Try "hrstková polévka" (Haná mixed soup), "syrečky" (local ripened round cheese with bacon) or Haná traditional pear scones. After a good hearty meal you can take a trip on to a different part of the Olomouc region.

Olomouc Region

The symbols of the Olomouc region include traditional ceramics, the dialect of Haná, Haná dances, songs, music, ornamental costumes and many folk ensembles, folk festivals and shows. And of course several castles including probably the most beautiful among them, Bouzov. If you prefer chateaux to castles, there are also plenty to choose from: Náměšť na Hané, Plumlov, Tovačov or Velké Losiny, which is one of the oldest functional hand paper mills to be found in Europe. The region also features a technical rarity: the Dlouhé Stráně pumped-storage hydro power station. Last but not least: we should definitely not forget to mention hot and cold healing springs, baths and colonnade concerts you can visit in several spa towns renowned for their high-quality care.

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