

## Czech Republic

The Czech Republic lies in Central Europe – it is called the heart of Europe. It is an inland country, covers an area of nearly 79 thousand square kilometres and has a population of 10.3 million. Our republic has four neighbour states. In the North it is Poland and in the South Austria. Slovakia is in the East and Germany in the West. The country consists of three main regions: Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

**Geography.** The Czech Republic doesn't have any seacoast, but it has many rivers. The largest river is the Elbe – it has its source in the Giant Mountains and leads into the North Sea. The largest and most important tributary of the Elbe is the Vltava. Several huge dams have been built on this river, for example Lipno, Orlické or Slapy. South Bohemia is known for its large and numerous ponds. Freshwater fish are farmed here, especially carps. Also two glacial lakes can be found in CR – Černé and Čertovo in the Šumava Mountains.

The terrain of our country is rather hilly. The Krušné Mountains and Šumava form the Western border. Šumava is a paradise for nature lovers. It is a very old mountain range, for which rounded shapes of mountains, numerous rivers and lakes are typical. The highest mountains in the CR are the Giant Mountains, which host the highest Czech mountain – Sněžka (1602 metres high). The Jizerské and Orlické Mountains lie on the border with Poland. Other mountain ranges often visited by tourists are Beskydy and Jeseníky in Moravia.

**Monuments.** In Bohemia there are many places of interest, such as the Gothic Křivoklát Castle, which was first mentioned in 12<sup>th</sup> century. Castle collections include Gothic and Renaissance paintings on wood and sculptures. Charles IV founded another famous castle Karlštejn as a treasury for the Crown Jewels. It also became a king's favourite castle. Lázně is a Renaissance chateau which in 1921 bought the Czechoslovak government for President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk who was later buried there. Since then the chateau has been the representative residence of Czech presidents.

### **Karlovy Vary The biggest Czech spa**

When Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, founded what is now Karlovy Vary in about 1350, he surely did not anticipate that the spa was to later gain an international reputation.

The present shape of Karlovy Vary was most influenced by the late 19th-century developments deriving from historicism and the approaching Art Nouveau. Thanks to its hot healing springs, the fame of Karlovy Vary has spread all around the world. Twelve out of roughly 100 springs of various yield have been captured to be used for drinking cures. Mineral waters are similar in terms of composition, but they have varied effects based on

different temperatures and content of carbon dioxide. Colder springs usually have a slightly laxative effect, while warmer ones have inhibiting effects and reduce bile and gastric secretions.

### **Spa treatments**

Twelve healing springs rise in the spa. The strongest and best-known spring is Vřídlo, rising from the depth of approximately 2,000-3,000 meters. Its temperature reaches 73 degrees Celsius. The temperature of other springs is about 40 degrees Celsius. The springs cure mainly metabolic disorders; nevertheless, they are used for inhalations and baths alike.

### **Janské Lázně**

Janské Lázně is a world-famous spa town and, at the same time, the second best-rated skiing resort in Czech Republic.

This tranquil spa town of extraordinary history spreads on the south slope of the Krkonoše Mountains (Giant Mountains) at the foot of Černá hora (Black Mountain, 1299 meters), the peak of which can be reached by a cable car starting right in the town. Thanks to newly built cableways, ski lifts and cross-country skiing trails, the town has become a top-quality sports and recreation destination and an ideal starting point for both skiers in winter and cyclists and hikers in summer on their way to the country's highest mountains, the Krkonoše.

### **Natural healing source**

29,6 °C plain mineral water springs, used for tub and pool baths (in combination with rehabilitation methods)

### **Town Františkovy Lázně**

is the smallest spa of the West Bohemian spa triangle. The spas here were founded in 1793 and they continue to maintain the atmosphere of spas from the turn of the century. Its charm stems from the unified classical architecture of the spa houses and pavilions. A mild climate, surrounding forests and well-kept parks and orchards all contribute to the healing effects of the famous local acidulous water, and make visiting the spas and the town all the more pleasant.

### **Treatments**

Twenty-three healing mineral springs of excellent-quality acidulous water, sulphur-ferric peat, and natural hot springs of gas have been used for the treatment vascular diseases and heart and gynaecological disorders.

### **Active relaxation**

Golf and mini-golf, fitness, solarium, tennis, mountain bike rentals, fishing

### **Culture**

Theater, cinema, colonnade concerts, the orthodox Church of St. Olga  
Spa Music Summer festival, literary festival  
"Literární Františkovy Lázně"