

Czech Republic
Land of Stories



Sacred

Sights





Znojmo

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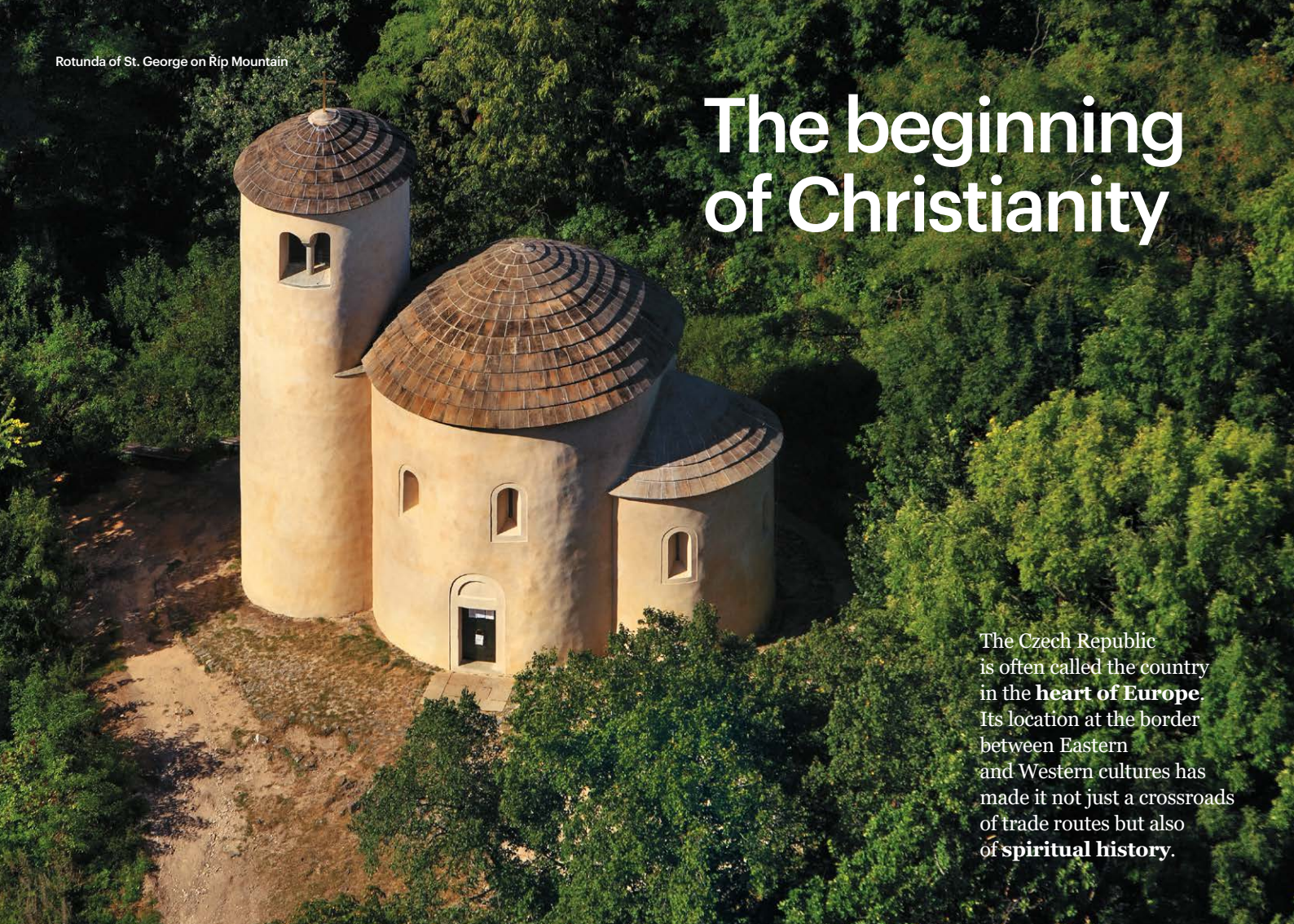
The Czech spiritual tradition

Within the borders of today's Czech Republic, a number of events took place whose impact reached beyond its frontiers. Many of them relate to the influence of Christianity, which as the dominant religious tradition figured into the decisions of rulers and monarchs. When travelling to sacred sights, you will encounter works of art from different eras that reflect the creativity and skill of our ancestors. Behind every work made by mortal hands is a story of inspiration, faith and the human desire to touch things that are greater than oneself.

In this publication you will find information on the most significant and most beautiful religious monuments, interesting facts about their history, and tips for trips in their vicinity. In the walls of churches, chapels

and cathedrals, in the stones and bricks of monasteries, there are traces of historical events – just waiting to be explored. This publication should help travellers in their discovery, which also becomes a journey of self-discovery. It can serve as a pocket guide to places where history both major and minor was made, offering insight into the beginnings, high points and vestiges of historical epochs in which the Christian and Jewish faiths have played an important role.

We welcome you to a journey though the spiritual history of Bohemia and Moravia with wishes for good weather and an open heart.



Rotunda of St. George on Rip Mountain

The beginning of Christianity

The Czech Republic is often called the country in the **heart of Europe**. Its location at the border between Eastern and Western cultures has made it not just a crossroads of trade routes but also of **spiritual history**.



Velehrad

Velehrad

This small town in the southeast of Moravia is the most important place of pilgrimage in the Czech Republic. It is said that in the 9th and 10th centuries it was the capital of the once important Slavic state of Great Moravia. It is probably the burial site of one of the missionaries – Archbishop Methodius. In 1985, Pope John Paul II gave the basilica in Velehrad a “Golden Rose” – a precious gift which can be boasted only by Lourdes in France, Guadalupe in Mexico, and Częstochowa in Poland. www.velehrad.eu

The major Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage at Velehrad takes place every year on July 5, the name day of both saints.

Svatý Hostýn

The Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (a Basilica minor, completed in 1748), a shrine with a statue of the Virgin Mary, has made Hostýn the most visited pilgrimage site in Moravia. Noteworthy is its water chapel, with a spring of miraculous water, and an artistically valuable Stations of the Cross, designed by the renowned Art Nouveau architect Dušan Jurkovič. Hostýn is connected to Velehrad via a pilgrimage route, along which you can visit other religious monuments in the region.

Open-Air Archaeological Museum in Modrá

In the village of Modrá, near Uherské Hradiště, foundations were discovered of what was probably the first Christian church in the Czech lands. www.archeoskanzen.cz



St. Vitus Cathedral

Early Christianity in Prague



Historic Centre of Prague

Prague Castle

One of the largest castle complexes in the world, it was the seat of Bohemian kings, Roman emperors, and today houses the Office of the Czech President. A UNESCO World Heritage site, it is dominated by the Cathedral of Sts. Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert, the patrons of the Czech lands. Founded as a rotunda in the mid-10th century, a cathedral began to be built on the site in 1344, during the reign of Emperor Charles IV, and it was completed in 1299. Also worth visiting is the St. George Monastery with the nearby Church of All Saints. In the Chapel of the Holy Rood in the second courtyard is an exhibition of the St. Vitus Cathedral Treasury.

www.hrad.cz

Břevnov Monastery

This is the oldest monastery in the Czech Republic, founded in 993 by Prince Boleslav II together with the second bishop of Prague, Adalbert. From the old Romanesque church building, remains of the crypt beneath the Church of St. Margaret are preserved. Gothic modifications to the monastery and the local church disappeared during the Baroque reconstruction by Kryštof and Kilián Dientzenhofer in the early 18th century. In recent years, the whole complex has been undergoing restoration, including the gardens. www.brevnov.cz

Taste the Břevnovský Benedict beer from the monastery brewery. Its history dates to the 13th century. You will find the brewery in the former Baroque stables.

Through Great Moravia with Cyril and Methodius

Coming from the east, from Byzantine Thessaloniki, the brothers Constantine (who later took the monastic name of Cyril) and Methodius arrived in the spring of 863 in today's Czech Republic, bringing Christian doctrine here at the request of Prince Rostislav of Great Moravia. Their mission was also successful because they began to serve mass in the new locally comprehensible language of Old Church Slavonic, instead of the usual Latin, and they created the new Glagolitic script.



Břevnov Monastery

Rotunda of St. Martin at Vyšehrad

The Rotunda of St. Martin at Vyšehrad, built in the 11th century, is the oldest preserved example of early Christian architecture in Prague. With a diameter of 6.5 metres, it is also the largest rotunda in Prague.

www.praha-vysehrad.cz

Near Prague

Stará Boleslav

Stará Boleslav went down in history as the location of the murder of the Bohemian Prince Wenceslas, who is regarded as a symbol of Czech statehood and the country's most important patron. The saint's murder is commemorated

at the St. Wenceslas complex. The centrally located Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Stará Boleslav is associated with the palladium of the Czech lands: a Marian icon which, according to legend, was given by St. Methodius to Princess Ludmila at her baptism and was part of the property of the murdered Prince Wenceslas.

www.staraboleslav.com

Říp

Říp Mountain is the symbol of Czech national history. At its apex is probably the most famous Romanesque monument in the Czech lands, the Rotunda of St. George. Říp is associated with the legend of the arrival of the Czechs' ancestors in the country. It is said that every Czech should climb this mountain at least once in their life.

www.rip.ceskehory.cz

Since the 11th century, the territory of today's Czech Republic has been part of the Western ecclesiastical tradition. New religious orders came to this country, bringing with them scholarship and new views on architecture. **Monasteries and cathedrals** were built, and the practice began of making pilgrimages to holy places.



Routes of pilgrims, monks and architects

Holy Hill near Olomouc



Monastery in Vyšší Brod

The Benedictines were the messengers of the Romanesque style, building rotundas, churches, basilicas and monasteries. They had aspirations for each of their abbeys to become an important place of pilgrimage. In addition to its decorative function, sculptural and painted ornamentation also took on an educational purpose – depicting the lives of saints and royal families. You can see this, for instance, in the St. Catherine Rotunda, which is part of the castle complex in Znojmo. On its walls, unique paintings with Christian and secular themes are preserved. From the mid-12th century, another important order was the Cistercians. Their monasteries came to symbolize the prosperity of the country, education, art, and care for the needy. Developments in mathematics and geometry gave rise to another new style – the Gothic. In addition to monasteries, majestic cathedrals were built whose stained glass windows told the stories of saints in an even more compelling manner.

8 Sacred Sights

Monasteries

Monasteries and beer

Monasteries in Bohemia and Moravia are interesting not just for their architecture and their genius loci, but also for their very close connection with beer. The history of monasteries was linked with brewing beer from the beginning. Indeed, beer brewing was inherent to the monastery foundation charters themselves. Until roughly the 12th century, beer was part of the daily diet, and its preparation was taken as a given, primarily in convent kitchens. The ingredients in beer diversified the diet, particularly in periods of fasting. Designated spaces for brewing gradually began to be established in monastery complexes, thus breweries. Today we are reminded of this connection by the names of some beers and breweries themselves: Opat (Abbot) from the Broumov Monastery, Klášter (Abbey) from Klášter Hradiště nad Jizerou, or St. Norbert from the Strahov Monastery in Prague.

Monastery in Vyšší Brod

The Cistercian monastery in Vyšší Brod near Český Krumlov was founded by the Rožmberk (Rosenberg) family in 1259 and was not inhabited by monks for a long time. Construction of the monastery took more than 100 years. The most valuable artefacts are the Vyšší Brod Madonna, one of the most beautiful surviving examples of Gothic panel painting in Bohemia, and the rich monastery library.

www.klastervyssibrod.cz

Zlatá Koruna (Golden Crown)

A few kilometres from Český Krumlov, on a promontory above the river Vltava, stands a lovely Cistercian monastery, which is considered to be one of the most valuable complexes of Gothic architecture in Central Europe. The picturesque monastery complex is a place of architectural treasures and other points of interest. For example, the local Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is the largest church in South Bohemia, and a gift the monastery received indirectly from French King Louis IX the Pious is said to be a thorn from Christ's crown, from which the monastery took its name.

www.klaster-zlatakoruna.eu

The Zlatá Koruna Monastery boasts a musical marvel. In 2012, it acquired a unique concert grand piano made by the renowned Berlin firm Carl Bechstein. It is the only instrument of its kind in the world, and it was originally made to order for the Imperial Palace in Saint Petersburg. The piano graces concerts at the monastery complex.

Monastery in Želiv

The monastery was established in 1139. It was first inhabited by Benedictines from the nearby abbey in Sázava, then later by the community of Premonstratensians from Steinfeld in the Rhineland. Over its history it underwent a number of changes. After many fires, it was restored several times – most notably in 1713–1720 in the spirit of the Baroque Gothic by the architect Jan Santini Aichel. During the communist totalitarian period of the second half of the 20th century, the monastery

became an internment camp for spiritual leaders. It lies in the midst of nature in the scenic Vysočina region and can be reached via a variety of hiking and cycling trails.

Part of the monastery complex is the Želiv Monastery Brewery, which produces six kinds of beer using traditional methods. You can also arrange accommodations in the monastery. Whoever wants to escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life can spend some time in the calm environment of the monastery in contemplation and prayer with the Premonstratensian brothers.

Abbey in Teplá

This Premonstratensian abbey was founded in the early 12th century in the picturesque countryside near Mariánské Lázně. The oldest surviving part is the Romanesque-Gothic hall church of the Annunciation of the Lord. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the abbey was rebuilt in the Baroque style by Kryštof Dientzenhofer. The abbey library contains 100,000 volumes and is one of the oldest and most important historical libraries in the Czech Republic. The abbey complex includes a historical park with a pond and a Stations of the Cross.

www.klastertepla.cz

Just beyond the abbey walls is a nine-hole golf course. During the tourist season, from Easter to the end of October, you can stay at a hotel in the Teplá Abbey.



St. Barbara Cathedral in Kutná Hora



St. Wenceslas Cathedral in Olomouc

Cathedrals



The Historical Town Centre with the Church of St. Barbara and the Cathedral of Our Lady at Sedlec

Kutná Hora

The city of Kutná Hora boasts two cathedrals. The first one is located in the former Cistercian monastery complex in Sedlec (more on page 21), and the second one, the **Cathedral of St. Barbara** (Chrám sv. Barbory), dedicated to the patron saint of miners, is located on the west side of the city. Both of these buildings are a testament to the prosperity of the silver mines and the Kutná Hora burghers in the Middle Ages. The foundation stone of the Cathedral of St. Barbara was laid in 1388, but it took 500 years for it to be completed. The leading artists of the time contributed to the building's creation. During the Baroque period, the administration

of the cathedral was taken over by the Jesuits, whose former college now serves as the Gallery of the Central Bohemia Region (GASK). destinace.kutnahora.cz

The most artistically notable part of the Cathedral of St. Barbara was not intended for the gaze of humans, and its precision can be appreciated only with binoculars. The walkways are composed of diverse creatures, including daemons, harpies and winged rams. The excellent interior acoustics provides a pleasant atmosphere not just for contemplation and prayer but also for regular organ concerts.

The GASK Gallery attracts visitors interested in visual art of the 20th and 21st centuries. Take advantage of a combined ticket that allows you to visit GASK, the Sedlec Ossuary, the Cathedral of St. Barbara and the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. www.gask.cz

Cathedral of Sts. Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert in Prague

The dominant building of Prague Castle, it was dedicated to three major Czech saints, Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert. Construction began in 1344, when Prague was elevated to an archbishopric, and it was finished in 1929.

www.hrad.cz

Cathedral of St. Wenceslas in Olomouc

Construction of the cathedral (Katedrála sv. Václava) began in 1100, and it was consecrated 31 years later. It is among the jewels of Central European medieval architecture. With the height of its main tower spanning to 100.65 metres, it has the second largest church tower in the Czech Republic. The largest bell in Moravia is located in the cathedral.

tourism.olomouc.eu

Cathedral of St. Bartholomew in Plzeň

This magnificent Gothic building (Katedrála sv. Bartoloměje) was founded together with the city in the late 13th century. It stands in the centre of Plzeň. The most valuable and famous artistic artefact in the church is a centuries-old statue of the Virgin Mary (called the Pilsen Madonna) from around 1390.

www.katedralaplzen.org

Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Brno

The cathedral (Katedrála sv. Petra a Pavla) is located on a site where there probably once stood a castle and a Romanesque church. On those foundations, an early Gothic church was built in the 13th and 14th centuries, which became a cathedral in 1777, after the establishment of a bishopric in Brno.



Infant Jesus of Prague

Pilgrimage routes and places

Svatý Kopeček (Holy Hill) near Olomouc

Pilgrimages to sacred places used to be an integral part of life. On the outskirts of Olomouc is one of the architectural gems of central Moravia – the Basilica Minor of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary with a Premonstratensian monastery on Holy Hill. The large 17th-century complex towers over the entire region and is the most beautiful example of Moravian Baroque architecture. To this day, crowds of pilgrims come here for contemplation and prayer. The basilica is one of the most visited sites in the region.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II visited Holy Hill, where he met with young people.

 The Holy Trinity Column in the centre of Olomouc is one of the key works of the Central European Baroque and is a UNESCO monument.

Svatá Hora (Holy Mountain) near Příbram

Rising above Příbram in Central Bohemia is Svatá Hora (Holy Mountain), which probably got its name because of the legend that it was once inhabited by a hermit – a holy man. It is also said that a chapel was originally founded here in the 13th century by a knight of the house of Malovec. The first preserved record of its ground plan, upon which the present basilica was based, dates from 1658.

svata-hora.cz

Pilgrims also stream to Holy Mountain to see the Virgin Mary of Svatá Hora, a famous Gothic wood carving which is said to guide and heal.

Infant Jesus of Prague

The small statue of Jesus housed in the originally Lutheran Church of Our Lady Victorious in Prague is perhaps more famous abroad than in the Czech Republic. Every day this shrine is visited by hundreds of pilgrims from all corners of the world. The Christ Child raises his right arm in blessing, while in his left hand is an orb with a cross as a symbol of the world, which he symbolically holds in his hand.

The Infant Jesus statue came to Prague from Spain. It was given to Duchess Maria Manrique de Lara as a wedding



Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary in Hejnice

gift from her mother in 1556, when the noblewoman married into a Bohemian noble family. Maria's daughter Polyxena of Lobkowicz then donated the wooden infant dressed in a long gown to the Carmelites. During the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, the statue of Jesus lost both of its hands when it was carried off by Saxon troops. Father Cyril later had new hands made for the statue.

Karmelitská 385/9, Praha 1
www.pragjesu.info

The statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague is credited with a wide variety of miraculous cures, and supposedly saved Prague from the Swedes in 1639. In 1655 the statue was crowned by the bishop of Prague, which is commemorated with an annual celebration on the first Sunday in May.

Via Sacra

The Via Sacra, Latin for Holy Road, is 550 kilometres long and traces an old trade route leading through three

countries – the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. You can meet up with its Czech section in the town of Hejnice, where you'll find one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in the Liberec region: the Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary with the Baroque Franciscan monastery from the first half of the 18th century.

Other points on the Via Sacra are Český Dub, Mnichovo Hradiště and Jablonné v Podještědí.

www.via-sacra.info

Legend has it that on the site of the basilica in Hejnice, a tree once stood. When a poor craftsman hung a statue of the Virgin Mary on it, angels appeared to him.

It is a short distance from Hejnice to the Lázně Libverda Spa, which has a beautiful colonnade from the 19th century. Nearby is a restaurant built in 1931 inside a giant barrel.



Holy Hill in Mikulov

The Way of St. James pilgrimage routes

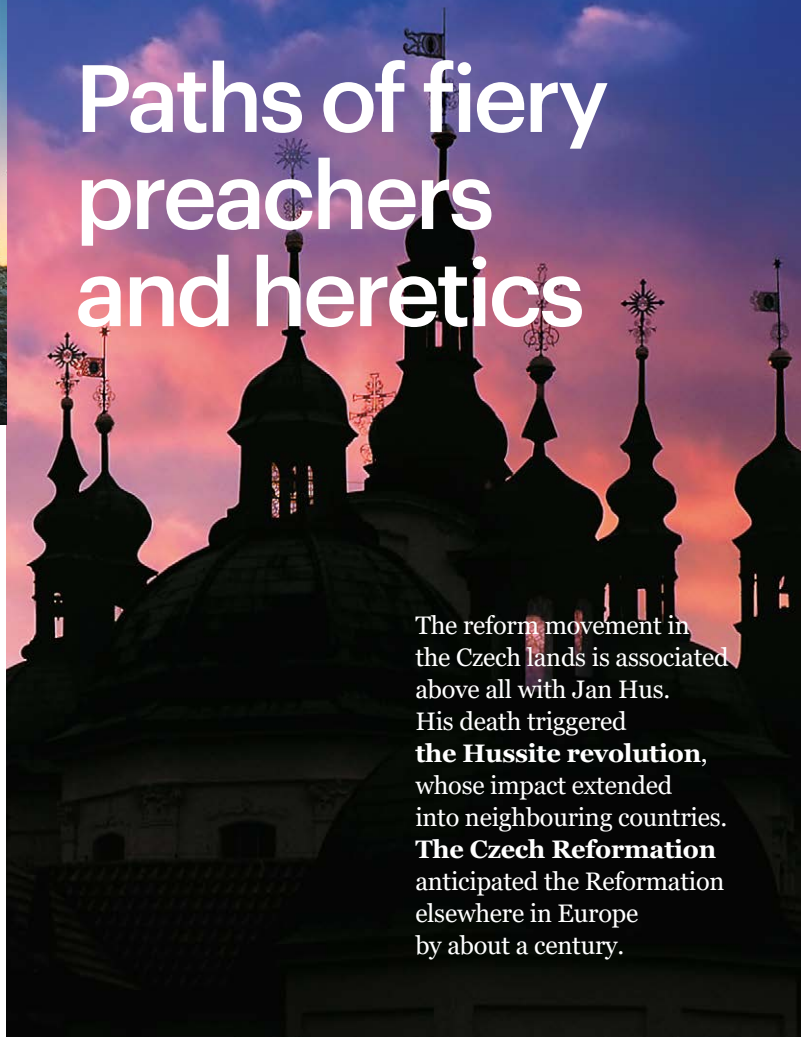
Even from the Czech Republic it is possible to set off towards Santiago de Compostela along the increasingly popular Way of St. James to take part in a journey pilgrims have been experiencing for centuries. Several Way of St. James routes lead through the Czech Republic, linking up with routes in Germany and Austria.

The northern branch comes from Zbraslav near Prague and continues through Karlštejn, Beroun, Plasy, Krkavec hill and Stříbro to Kladruba. Then it leads through Bělá nad Radbuzou to Železná, where it crosses the Czech-German border near the Park of Reconciliation and connects with a route leading to Nuremberg.

The southern branch leads from Karlštejn through Mníšek pod Brdy, Dobříš, Příbram, Nepomuk, Klatovy and Kdyně to the border crossing of Všeruby/Eschlkam, and then continues along the East Bavarian Way of St. James in the direction of Regensburg.

The first marked segment along the **Way of St. James in Moravia** is the route from Brno to Mikulov. It connects with the Austrian route leading through part of the Weinviertel (meaning “wine quarter”) region in Lower Austria. The route was extended in the direction of Olomouc and up to the Polish border, and thus traverses all of Moravia.
www.jakubskacesta.cz
www.ultreia.cz

Paths of fiery preachers and heretics



The reform movement in the Czech lands is associated above all with Jan Hus. His death triggered **the Hussite revolution**, whose impact extended into neighbouring countries. **The Czech Reformation** anticipated the Reformation elsewhere in Europe by about a century.



Church of Our Lady Before Týn

Hussite Prague

Church of Our Lady Before Týn

On the site of a Romanesque hospital church, construction of the Týn Church (Kostel Matky Boží před Týnem) began in the mid-14th century. The church was completed during the reign of King George of Poděbrady. On the shield was a statue of King George, known as the Hussite king, and a large chalice, the symbol of communion in both kinds. In 1626, the sculpture of the king was replaced by one of the Virgin Mary, and the chalice was melted down and made into a halo. **Celetná 5 / Staroměstské náměstí Praha 1 – Staré Město**
www.prague.eu

The illustrious Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe is buried in Týn Church.

Bethlehem Chapel

Bethlehem Chapel (Betlémská kaple) was built in the 1950s on the site of the original 14th-century chapel, which became famous as the pulpit where Master Jan Hus preached and was designated as a place for sermons in the Czech language. Everything that was preserved from the original chapel was put into the new building, designed by the architect Jaroslav Fragner. Valuable vestiges of the chapel's original decoration are fragments of treatises by Jan Hus. The contemporary frescoes copying illuminations from the Jena Codex harken back to the original atmosphere.

**Betlémské náměstí 255/4
Praha 1 – Staré Město**

Reform movements in the late 14th and early 15th centuries in Bohemia and Moravia were associated with the work of Jan Hus, a university professor and theologian who was influenced by the ideas of the English reformer John Wycliffe. For his convictions, Hus was persecuted by the Church and finally was burned at the stake as a heretic at the Council of Constance in 1415. His death triggered the Hussite Revolution in the Czech lands, which also impacted neighbouring countries. The symbol of the reformation was the chalice, which became a typical emblem of Protestant churches and prayer houses. The Czech Reformation came about a century before the European Reformation, which was led by another university professor, the Augustinian monk Martin Luther.



Tábor

Traces of the Reformation in South Bohemia

Tábor

The Hussite town of Tábor was founded in 1420 and became the headquarters of the radical Hussites. The name of the city was based on the New Testament story of the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, and was also a reference to the Hussite pilgrimages to the mountain. Today, Tábor is a picturesque town with a pleasant historical atmosphere.

www.taborcz.eu

Klokoty

Near the centre of Tábor is the Baroque pilgrimage site of Klokoty, which in the Hussite period became famous as the

place where Jan Žižka had Adamites burnt. They are commemorated here by a statue by František Bílek, whose artistic interpretation of the Hussite movement can be seen throughout the town.

Besides the Church of the Transfiguration, another noteworthy stop in Tábor is the Hussite Museum inside the former Town Hall. The exhibition acquaints visitors with the Hussite movement and the history of the Hussite town. Also interesting is a trip through the Tábor catacombs.

Baroque is the most visible architectural style in Prague and throughout the Czech Republic. The impression of a picturesque landscape punctuated with elements of **Baroque architecture** is still characteristic of the Czech countryside today.

Baroque art in the service of the Catholic Church

St. Nicholas Church in Prague's Malá Strana (Lesser Quarter)



Church of St. John of Nepomuk on Zelená Hora (Green Mountain)

Czech Baroque is a specific form of Baroque culture, created here between the 16th and 18th centuries. Baroque has its roots in Italy and Spain, but in Bohemia it was enriched with new elements by local artists and craftsmen. Not only were churches, monasteries, palaces and chateaux built in this style, but it changed the character of the Czech countryside with small churches, chapels and rural farms. Buildings blended perfectly with their surroundings, and the impression of a picturesque landscape punctuated with elements of Baroque architecture is characteristic of the Czech countryside today. Significant architects who were active in the Czech lands include Kryštof Dientzenhofer, his son Kilián Ignác Dientzenhofer and Jan Santini Aichel, who was the originator of a style that is unique in the world: Baroque Gothic.

In the footsteps of the Dientzenhofers

Church of St. Nicholas in Prague

The Church of St. Nicholas (Kostel sv. Mikuláše) is one of the foremost Baroque buildings in Europe, and it is often described as the most beautiful building of the Czech Baroque. Its massive dome and slender tower are an integral part of the Prague panorama. **Malostranské náměstí Praha 1 – Malá Strana**
www.stnicholas.cz

An unforgettable experience is climbing up to the bell tower of the Church of St. Nicholas, which offers impressive views.



Church in Sedlec

Broumov's Baroque churches

Unique in all of Europe are the Baroque churches in the Broumov region, near the border with Poland. They were built on the grounds of the Broumov Monastery according to designs by the famous architects Kryštof Dientzenhofer and his son Kilián Ignác. The churches were built in a relatively short time, between the years 1709 and 1743. The group consists of a monastery in Broumov and small churches in nine surrounding municipalities: Martínkovice, Vernéřovice, Ruprechtice, Otovice, Heřmánkovice, Bezděkov, Vižňov, Šonov and Božanov. www.broumov.net

A cycling route (22 km) goes past the churches in the Broumov area. The circuit covers the southern part of the Broumov region, setting off from Broumov and following secondary roads or pathways through Šonov, Otovice and Božanov to Martínkovice and then circling back to Broumov.

Taste the local Opat (Abbot) beer, whose history is closely intertwined with the history of the Broumov monastery.

Good transport to the region is ensured by a train between Náchod and Broumov via Meziměstí (route No. O26). Driving time from Prague is about 3 hours.

In the footsteps of Santini

The architect Jan Santini Aichel managed to connect the dynamism of the Baroque with the Gothic tradition. Thanks to important commissions, his buildings are indelibly inscribed in the character of the Czech countryside.



The Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora

Zelená Hora (Green Mountain)

Santini's most famous work is the pilgrimage **Church of St. John of Nepomuk on Zelená Hora** (Kostel sv. Jana Nepomuckého na Zelené Hoře), directly above Žďár nad Sázavou. The building is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ground plan is in the shape of a five-pointed star, symbolizing Christ's five wounds of martyrdom and also the five stars which appeared above the place of Nepomuk's martyrdom. The church is designed on the basis of mathematical symbolism and creates a well-illuminated space of perfectly balanced interwoven shapes. www.zelena-hora.eu

Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Sedlec

Part of the oldest Cistercian monastery in the Czech Republic and located in Kutná Hora–Sedlec is a monumental work by Jan Santini Aichel: the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. On the site of an earlier Romanesque church, a Gothic basilica was built in the 13th century. The building was extensively damaged during the Hussite Wars, and the monastery was devastated by fire. The restoration of the church was finished in the early 18th century, according to plans by the architect Pavel Ignác Bayer. He was soon replaced by Jan Santini Aichel, who at the age of 25 showed a greater degree of sensitivity and respect towards the original Gothic structure. destinace.kutnahora.cz

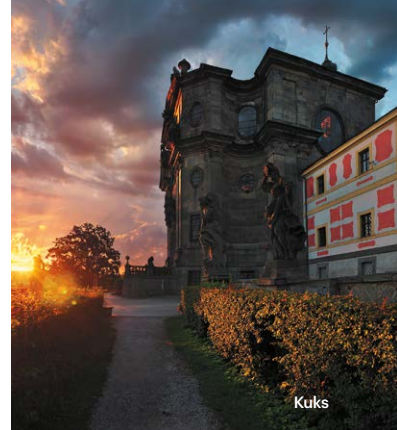
The church was deconsecrated in the 18th century, and in the early 20th century it was even used as a tobacco factory.

Monastery in Kladrubby

Jan Santini Aichel was also invited to build at other monasteries. The Benedictine monastery in Kladrubby is the joint work of Santini and Kilián Ignác Dientzenhofer.

Monastery in Plasy

This magnificent Cistercian monastery complex was established in the Baroque period. By using an ingenious oak construction, the architect Jan Santini Aichel managed to solve the local problem for buildings of a very damp subbase and a lot of ground water.



Kuks

The former monastery now attracts visitors to see its splendid Baroque church, library and chapel. www.klaster-plasy.eu

Kuks Hospital is an island of Baroque art in the East Bohemian countryside. In the picturesque valley of the river Labe, František Antonín Špork had spa buildings and a chateau constructed in the early 18th century after the discovery of a medicinal spring. Later, a church was added and also valuable sculptural decoration. In the lapidary you can see the originals of the allegories of Virtues and Vices by the most important Czech Baroque sculptor, Matthias Bernard Braun. A point of interest is the group of Baroque sculptures by Braun in the surrounding forests. www.hospital-kuks.cz

Interest in the Orthodox tradition grew among Czech Christians after 1848. In 1874, Prague's Church of St. Nicholas on Old Town Square was given to the **Eastern Orthodox Church** for its masses.

Paths of the Orthodox Christian tradition

Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Prague



St. Nicholas Church in Prague's Old Town

The head of the Orthodox community was Matěj Pavlík, who after consecration as the first Czech Orthodox bishop received the name Gorazd. Bishop Gorazd built dozens of churches and created the form of Czech Orthodoxy that is known today.

Church, and its priests and believers were persecuted. Bishop Gorazd was canonized in 1987 for his heroism and martyrdom.

**Resslovod 9a
Praha 2–Nové Město**

Prague

Until 1935, the **Cathedral of Sts. Cyril and Methodius** (Chrám sv. Cyrila a Metoděje) was a Catholic church. It was inscribed not just in the history of the Orthodox Church but in the history of Czechoslovakia during the Nazi occupation when the paratroopers who carried out the assassination of Acting Reich Protector Reinard Heydrich hid in its crypt. This became the pretext for the subsequent prohibition of the Orthodox

The Carpathian **Church of St. Michael the Archangel** (Kostelík sv. Michala), also called the Church of St. Michael, is a true rarity. This wooden Orthodox church with elements of Baroque folk architecture was built in the second half of the 17th century in Ukraine. In 1929, it was dismantled and brought to the Kinský Garden in the Smíchov district of Prague, where it was re-erected. **Petřín–Kinský Garden
Praha 5–Smíchov**



Church of St. Olga in Františkovy Lázně

West Bohemia

In the early 18th century, the spa industry developed, and because a significant number of the guests coming for treatment to the medicinal springs in **Karlovy Vary** and the vicinity were from Russia, it was also necessary to satisfy their spiritual needs. One of the most widely known Orthodox churches is the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul (Chrám sv. Petra a Pavla) in Karlovy Vary. It was designed by Gustav Wiedermann, who was the mayor of Františkovy Lázně at that time.

He was also responsible for other churches in the spa triangle. In **Mariánské Lázně** is a church dedicated to St. Vladimír in a typically

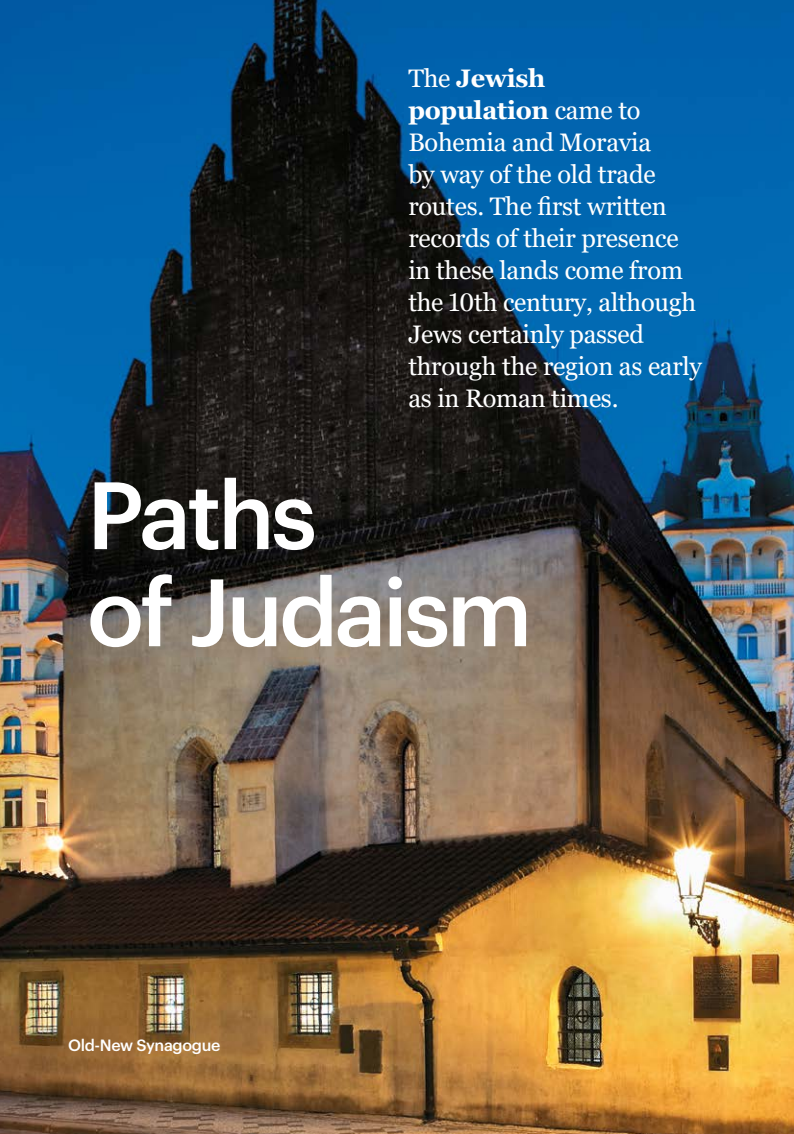
Russian-Byzantine style with an onion dome, and in **Františkovy Lázně** is the Church of St. Olga (Kostel sv. Olgy) with a bell-shaped roof and small onion domes. All churches have richly decorated interiors.

The newest of the local Orthodox churches is located in the **Doubí** district of Karlovy Vary. The wooden St. Nicholas Chapel was consecrated only at the turn of the millennium, and it was built on the model of the Suzdal Chapel in Russia from the private funds of Nikolai Gennadievich Stepanov.

The architectural model for the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Karlovy Vary was the Byzantine Old Russian church in Ostankino.

Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Karlovy Vary





The **Jewish population** came to Bohemia and Moravia by way of the old trade routes. The first written records of their presence in these lands come from the 10th century, although Jews certainly passed through the region as early as in Roman times.

Paths of Judaism

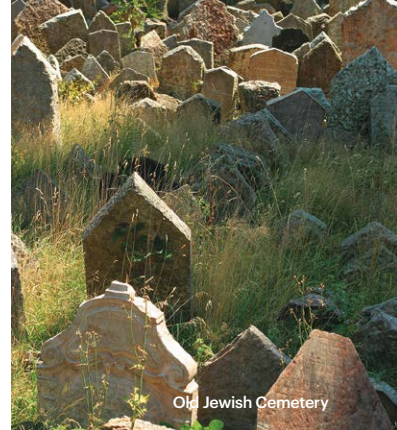
Old-New Synagogue

In the 13th century, certain rights were granted to Jews, and it was just at this time that construction of the Old-New Synagogue in Prague began. Jews settled also in Brno, Olomouc, Jihlava, Litoměřice and Píbram, where they built enclosed settlements for religious and political reasons. In the 16th century, new synagogues and new centres arose. They gained emancipation in the Czech lands in 1848 and were granted legal equality 19 years later. Until 1939, Jewish culture flourished in the Czech lands, yielding many architectural and artistic masterpieces.

Prague

In the 13th century, the Prague Jewish settlement expanded into the area around Dušní street and the Old-New Synagogue. This settlement was called the Jewish Quarter, or the ghetto. In 1851, it became a district of the city and was renamed Josefov. From the original quarter full of winding alleys, the town hall and six synagogues have survived.

One of the surviving synagogues is the Neo-Gothic **Maisel Synagogue** (Maiselova synagoga), which was built in the Renaissance style in 1590–92 at the behest of Mordechai Maisel, the mayor of the Prague Jewish Community at that time. Today it houses an exhibition on the history of Bohemian and Moravian Jews. The exhibition continues in the **Spanish Synagogue** (Španělská synagoga), which was built on site of the city's oldest synagogue, called the Old School. The second oldest surviving synagogue

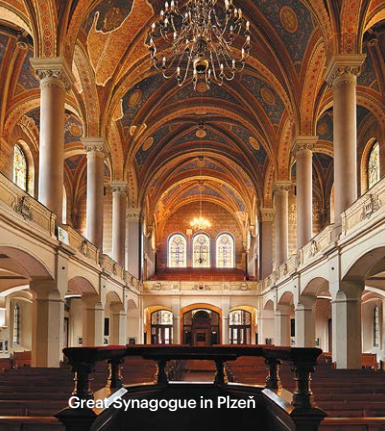


Old Jewish Cemetery

in Prague is the **Pinkas Synagogue** (Pinkasova synagoga). On its walls are inscribed almost 80,000 names of victims of the Nazi Holocaust, or Shoah. Adjacent to the synagogue is the **Jewish cemetery** (Starý židovský hřbitov), where the oldest tombstone, that of Avigdor Kara, dates to 1439. Also located here is the tomb of the famous Rabbi Löw, creator of the legendary Golem. On the right-hand side, in the direction of the cemetery, is the early Baroque **Klausen Synagogue** (Klausova synagoga).

www.kehilaprag.cz

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Great Synagogue in Plzeň

West Bohemia

Plzeň

In addition to the sheer size of the Plzeň synagogue, proof that there has always been a large Jewish community around the city of Plzeň is the number of preserved monuments. As elsewhere, the Jewish population was decimated by the Nazi occupation in the first half of the 20th century. Jews lived in Plzeň in scattered settlements until 1848, when the modern Jewish Community was established. In the years 1858–59, the **Old Synagogue** (Stará synagoga) was built in the Neo-Romanesque style according to the new rite. When the Great Synagogue was built in the years 1888–92, the importance of the Old Synagogue gradually declined. Since the autumn of 2013, it houses an exhibition.

The **Great Synagogue** (Velká synagoga) is one of the largest in the world, blending Neo-Romanesque and Neo-Renaissance elements with oriental motifs. After the Second World War, it fell into disrepair and was used only occasionally. It underwent renovation in the 1990s and became a cultural centre of Plzeň.
www.pilsen.eu

Near the Old Synagogue in Plzeň you will find the ruins of the Auxiliary Synagogue, today the location of the Holocaust memorial called the Garden of Memories, built of 2,600 stones with the names of victims.

Plzeň is a city of beer. Tours of the brewery and the Brewery Museum will acquaint you with the mystery and history of Pilsner Urquell's unique brewing process. You will see a film about beer production in a panoramic cinema with a revolving auditorium.
www.prazdrojvisit.cz

Moravia



Jewish Quarter
and St Procopius
Basilica at Třebíč

Třebíč

One of the most important Jewish sites in the Czech Republic is the preserved Jewish Quarter in Třebíč, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is composed of 116 surviving houses and two synagogues – the Rear and the Front. The Rear Synagogue houses an exhibition on the appearance of the city in the 19th century. After following a former cart way, you can also visit the Jewish cemetery.
www.trebic.cz

In its extent and the number of preserved buildings, the Třebíč Jewish quarter is the biggest in the Czech Republic.

Brno

Before the Second World War, Brno, the metropolis of South Moravia, was home to around 12,000 Jews, who could worship at four synagogues. Only one survives – a Functionalist-style synagogue by the architect Otto Eisler dating from 1934–36. It still serves its original purpose and is the only one in the entire region. In the **Židenice** (meaning Jewish town) district, there is a cemetery which was established in 1852. In its Neo-Romanesque ceremonial hall, fragments of tombstones from the Middle Ages are embedded in the walls. Behind the ceremonial hall is a Holocaust memorial.
www.gotobrna.cz

Boskovice

There was also a significant Jewish community in Boskovice, where a famous school (yeshiva) and centre for Talmudic research were in operation at the turn of the 19th century. In the mid-19th century, more than one-third of the population was of Jewish origin. The local cemetery has more than 2,400 graves. Of the original 138 buildings, 79 are still standing today, including a school, a spa, a hospital, a mikveh (ritual bath) and a Baroque synagogue.
www.boskovice.cz

Since 1999, the major Jewish sites are connected via an educational trail.

Mikulov

Up to 90 surviving Jewish buildings, of which 45 are designated cultural monuments, can be found in Mikulov. From the 16th century until 1851, this was the seat of the Moravian regional rabbi. You can follow a kilometre-long educational trail with stops at 13 important sites in the Jewish district's history, ending at the medieval mikveh.

Mikulov occupies a prominent place on the religious map of Moravia. This is mainly thanks to Cardinal František Dietrichstein, who in the mid-17th century established an outstanding collegiate chapter in the city and commissioned the first Loretto church to be built in the Czech lands. He also started the tradition of religious pilgrimages to Holy Hill (Svatý kopeček) above the town, which continue to this day.
www.mikulov.cz

Mikulov is located in the centre of Moravian wine country, so there is also a wine trail with stops at wine cellars. The region is interwoven with a network of cycling paths.

In Mikulov, history was made. On 6 December 1805, four days after the Battle of Austerlitz, peace negotiations were opened at the local chateau. Napoleon himself slept in Mikulov on his way to Brno and the Slavkov battlefield in 1809. In August 1866, a truce between Austria and Prussia, called the Mikulov Armistice, was pre-negotiated here before later being concluded in Prague. Mikulov is truly a place of reconciliation.



Terezín

The Terezín Fortress was built in 1790 as a defence against Prussian incursions into Bohemia. It epitomizes the high art of fortification, but changes in weaponry and military strategy meant that it was never used militarily.

Today, the **Terezín Fortress** is also a sad reminder of the atrocities that took place during the Second World War. Besides the police prison in the Small Fortress, the Main Fortress served as a Jewish ghetto for Nazi Germany. But prominent people were also imprisoned here – leading politicians, scientists and artists. The Nazis then transported Jewish prisoners by train to death camps such as Auschwitz or Treblinka for liquidation. In 63 transports, about 87,000 people left Terezín, of whom only around 3,600 returned after the war. About 155,000 people passed through the ghetto. After the war, the **Terezín Memorial** was established here as a national monument. It is visited by thousands of tourists from around the world each year.

The **Ghetto Museum** presents an exhibition on the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. The exhibition was arranged in cooperation with prisoners of the Terezín ghetto and with the help of hundreds of documents, drawings, objects, letters and films about life as a prisoner. In the Magdeburg Barracks, the former headquarters of the Jewish self-government, exhibitions about cultural activities in the ghetto are held.

www.pamatnik-terezin.cz
www.terezin.cz



Litoměřice

Litoměřice

The historical city of Litoměřice stretches along the river Labe (Elbe) just a few kilometres from Terezín. Litoměřice is noted for the cultivation of grapes. In Europe's northernmost vineyards, wine of excellent quality is produced.

Do not miss the interactive exhibition about Czech viticulture in the newly renovated castle in the centre of Litoměřice. Of course, you can also taste the wine here.

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I would like [khod:skee ko:lahitch]

Hard to pronounce,
even harder to resist

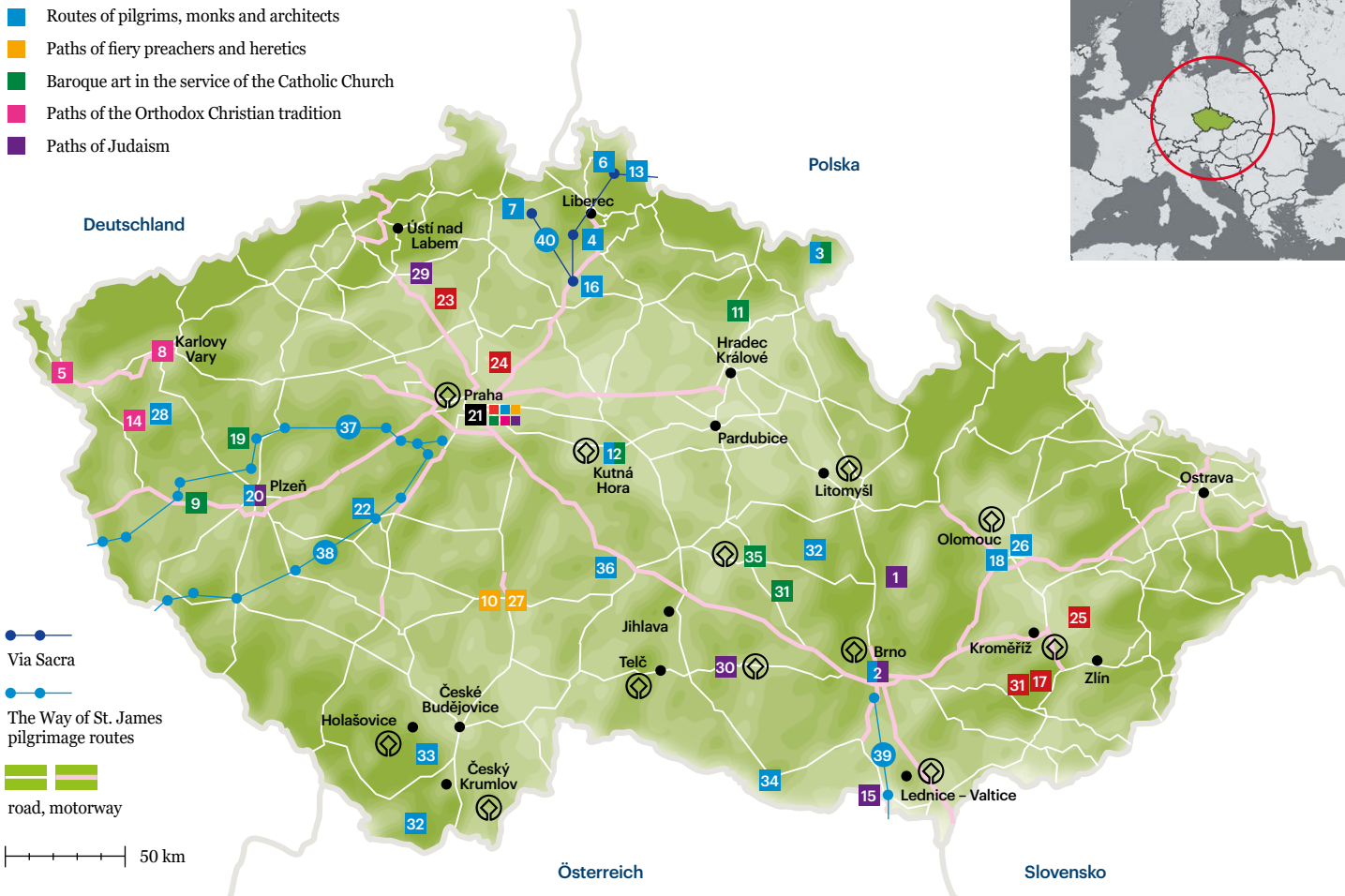


Chodsko-style pastry

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Tugendhat Villa
in Brno

