



Tchequie TOUR

FAIRYTALE CASTLES AND GARDENS

...When the UNESCO heritage comes back to life...

MEETING WITH ARISTOCRACY, ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN

DAY 1 – PRAGUE – PALACE GARDENS



After meeting our English-speaking guide right after your arrival, you will go along the Royal Way, the traditional route used by the Bohemian kings for the coronation ceremony, and you will discover the symbols of Prague and cultural heritage of UNESCO: Prague Castle, the official residence of the Czech president; the St. Vitus Cathedral, the most esteemed religious construction in the country; Mala Strana, a picturesque neighbourhood with many palaces, churches and baroque gardens; Charles Bridge, an old stone historical monument, and Old Town, a mysterious labyrinth of medieval lanes and modern galleries, with the Old Town Hall and its Astronomical Clock, and also Wenceslas Square which boasts the famous statue of St. Wenceslas, the patron saint of the Czech Republic. You will also enjoy a guided tour of the Wallenstein garden (Valdštejnská), the most extensive garden dating back to the beginning of the Baroque period. Within the site lies the monumental Sala Terrena, an artificial stalactite wall complete with small caves, an aviary and a set of bronze statues made according to the originals of Adrien de Vries (the garden is open from spring till autumn). Overnight stay in Prague.

SPECIAL PROGRAMME – IN ADDITION, ON REQUEST AND UPON AVAILABILITY

It is possible to organise a special visit of **the Palace Gardens** situated on the slopes beneath Prague Castle. A complex of five terraced gardens in a baroque and rococo style extends over the palaces belonging to the aristocratic families. Alternatively, you can visit **the Vrtba Garden** which is a splendid terraced garden comprising a Sala Terrena and precious statues made by reputed sculptor Matthias Bernard Braun.

You can meet a landscape architect or a gardener. The gardener will show you some gardening, maintenance and conservation work; he will give a presentation on gardening. In the case of bad weather, you can participate in a special visit of the Baroque library of the Premonstratensian monastery at Strahov. You can take a guided tour of the interiors of the library, which regular tourists can see only from behind the cordon, looking from the entrance.



SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION

In the evening, you can enjoy a concert of classical music in a garden, a Gothic church or a Baroque palace, or even take **an illuminated night tour** of Prague. Your guide will be in costume as one of Prague's legendary ghosts or historical persons.





DAY 2 – CENTRAL BOHEMIA – ROYAL CASTLE (85 KM)

After breakfast, you will leave for a visit of the most famous castle in the country – **the royal castle of Karlštejn**. The castle was founded by the Father of the Nation and **Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV**. The castle served to preserve the Imperial Crown jewels and despite many changes, the construction has retained its majestic medieval appearance. The entrance to the castle and the basic circuit are included in the price, and you will learn about the history and the function of the castle. The tour includes the Imperial Palace with the royal chambers of Charles IV, the staterooms and Banquet Hall, the Royal Hall of Ancestors, the Marian tower and the Castle Treasury.

Return to Prague and visit of **the Troja Chateau**, a charming castle built near Prague by the French architect Jean-Baptiste Matthey for



SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION

You can attend a practical **demonstration of the maintenance of the historical monuments at the Faculty of Restoration in Litomyšl**. The faculty resides in the **Piarist college** in front of the Castle. Includes short demonstrations of restoration techniques and meeting with experts, students or professors, protectors of the historical heritage and local restorers. Their job includes activities like facade treatments, plastering and creating other architectural elements, the restoration of paintings, sculptures and frescoes. They are in charge of preservation and restoration of the Czech cultural heritage.



The visit continues with a stop and an excursion at a **private castle, Častolovice**. The castle was built in the 16th century by **the Sternberg family**, and descendants of this family still reside here. Castle Častolovice differs from the other castles in the sense that its owners keep the interiors maintained, and the castle is still inhabited. The castle complex consists of a large park with a pond, a mini-zoo, a forest with white deer and a pastry-shop. You will visit the rooms of the castle to admire the collection of paintings and historical furniture collected by the family, as well as many personal objects and photographs. The floral arrangements give the place an especially charming atmosphere. Overnight stay in Brno.

SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION



It is possible to attend an **exclusive visit** – the most valuable interiors of the castle and **the Chapel of the Holy Cross**, where you can find a unique set of **129 Gothic paintings on wood by Master Theoderic**, mural paintings of biblical scenes, stucco walls and semi-precious polished stones. With Christian symbols, a theme of spirituality and faith, and art of Middle Ages, this is an exceptional artistic and spiritual experience. Large groups should be divided.



the aristocratic family of Sternberg in the 17th century. The central and dominant feature of the whole building is its **great hall** where an extensive fresco decoration depicts the victory of the Habsburgs over the Turks. Don't miss the double spiral staircase decorated with the statues of giants made by the Hermann brothers. You will go through the representative halls and will have the opportunity to admire the exhibition of **Czech Romanesque paintings from the 19th century**. The building is surrounded by a beautiful garden decorated with terracotta vases. There is a **vineyard** spread over the castle and a **wine shop**, as well as **St. Klara's Chapel**, a **zoo** and a **botanical garden where the Fata Morgana greenhouse** is situated. On request, we can organize a visit or some degustation in these places. Overnight stay in Prague.

DAY 3 – EAST BOHEMIA – MEET THE CZECH NOBILITY (278 KM)

Departure by bus to **Litomyšl (UNESCO)**, in East Bohemia, in the morning. A gorgeous Renaissance castle dominates the square. The facade is decorated with 8 000 sgraffito and ornamental gables.

The Baroque theatre inside the castle is a real treasure. It is one of the last well-preserved theatres in Europe, which is largely thanks to the efforts of **composer Bedřich Smetana**, born in the building across the street.

The opera festival "Smetanova Litomyšl" takes place in the courtyard of the castle and the theatre every year.

You will take a tour of the composer's native apartment while listening to excerpts of his musical work. You can admire the work of the most famous Czech contemporary sculptor **Olbram Zoubek**, and you will visit the staterooms of the castle, as well as the theatre.



SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION

Meet **Countess Diana Franciska Sternberg**, the owner of the castle. You can enjoy a glass of wine and a snack with her, and she will briefly tell you the story of her noble family and answer any questions you may have.





DAY 4 – BOHEMIAN AND MORAVIAN HIGHLANDS – TRAVEL BACK IN TIME TO THE MIDDLE AGES (156 KM)

Our guide will accompany you to **Žďár nad Sázavou** where you will visit the site of **the Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk (UNESCO)**. This church is dedicated to the important Czech patron Saint, originally an archdeacon. According to the legend, he drowned in the river because he was the confessor of the Queen of Bohemia and refused to divulge the secrets of the confessional. The site was built by the architect **J. B. Santini**, who harmoniously combined Baroque and Gothic elements. The ground-plan of the church – a five-pointed star – refers to the saint's five stars, according to the legend, which appeared above his body when he died.



DAY 5 – SOUTH MORAVIA – BATTLE OF THE 3 EMPERORS (145 KM)

You will visit the historic site – the protected **battlefield of Austerlitz**. The small Moravian village became well-known under its German name Austerlitz. **The Battle of the Three Emperors** took place here at the time of the Napoleonic wars. Armies of the three most powerful countries of the time – Austria, Russia and France fought here. The battle took place on 2nd December, 1805 and Napoleon achieved his greatest victory here. Sadly, it was the bloodiest battle of the time, and thousands of soldiers were killed.

You will visit **the Cairn of Peace Memorial**, which was erected in memory of the victims of the battle, a multimedia exhibition describing the course of the battle and a commemorative chapel in the Art nouveau style. You will also make a stop in **the small town of Slavkov** where you can admire the castle, or you can buy some souvenirs of the famous battle. **A soldier dressed in a period uniform** will welcome you at the former post office, where **Napoleon spent a night in the local stables**. You will taste one of the Czech and Moravian specialities during lunch in a rustic restaurant.



SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION



A folklore evening with cimbalom and dance in folk costumes. You will spend an evening in a typical Moravian folkloric restaurant designed with the traditional architecture. A music group with a cimbalom and a tradition Moravian dance group will perform during the dinner. Three-course menu, wine tasting, plus wine from local vineyards.

SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION

There is an old Cistercian Abbey which was converted into a private castle not far from the church. Nowadays the castle belongs to **the important Czech aristocratic family Kinský**. Meet the owners of the castle, and in particular,



Mrs Thamar Kinský. She will show you the private rooms and the garden, and give you a talk about the family history, management and maintenance of the heritage. **You can also have lunch at the castle with the owner.**

Visit of **Pernštejn, the best preserved Gothic castle in the country**, which was built by the family of Pernštejn on a rocky crag in the 13th century. The visit of the site is an extraordinary experience and visitors are able to travel back in time to that time period. The castle is associated with **the legend of the mysterious White Lady** who is said to appear in the castle grounds, but it also well-known because of the many Czech fairy tales and **foreign adventure movies** which were filmed here.

The first guided tour is included in the program. The visitors can trace the history of the castle and the family; they will explore **the exceptional original interiors and exteriors in the Middle Ages style**. They will admire the typical stone construction elements, towers, patrol paths, oriel windows, spiral staircase and historical vaults. Overnight stay in Brno.



In the afternoon you will arrive at **the Archbishop's Chateau in Kroměříž (UNESCO)** which is a real architectural gem. There are many luxurious rooms hidden in the Archbishop's Chateau: the private rooms of the archbishops, the library, and **the Assembly Hall** furnished in the Rococo style. The Chateau is also well-known for its gallery. The painting collection is the second most valuable in the Czech Republic after the National Gallery in Prague: the pieces of Tiziano, Lucas Cranach and van Dyck form part of the collection. Kroměříž was listed as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage site mainly due to the beautiful **Flower Garden – Podzámecká and Květná**. These gardens are unique pearls of landscape gardening.

The price includes either a basic tour of the Castle or a visit of the Chateau Gallery, plus an afternoon snack including a coffee or a glass of beer / wine and at the end of one of the garden visits. **A representative of the National Centre of Landscape Gardening** (a landscaper or art historian) will give you a tour and a speech about the landscaping architecture, maintenance of the site, green areas and floral composition. Overnight stay in Brno.





DAY 6 – SOUTH MORAVIA – CASTLE CELLARS AND WINE TRADITION (131 KM)

After breakfast, you will leave for a visit of a former residence of the family of Liechtenstein. The Lednice – Valtice complex (UNESCO), also called the Garden of Europe, it is a vast site with a surface of 283 km² which was transformed by man into a cultural landscape. In addition to two great castles, there are countless romantic buildings (such as pavilions, colonnades, artificial ruins, forest castles and chapels, arches and a minaret) which are surrounded by a tangle of forest parks, channels, ponds and small lakes. The price includes the visit of the summer house, Lednice Castle, which was conceived in the Neo-Gothic style, and a boat trip along the local channels. In the castle, you can admire the spiral staircase made with carved wood and the tropical greenhouse from the 19th century which is still in use.

You will stop at the Little Border Chateau (Hraniční zámek). This historical castle, built in the Empire style, today serves as a restaurant and monument – and you can enjoy lunch in the authentic setting. The last stop on the excursion will be at the former main residence of the Liechtenstein family, Valtice Castle. Today it is a seat of The National Wine Centre and Wine School. Instead of a regular circuit, you will visit the cellars of the castle and taste local wines from The Wine Salon of the Czech Republic. This collection includes the top 100 wines produced by local winemakers during the past years. Overnight stay in Brno.



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SPECIAL PROGRAM – IN ADDITION

You can spend the rest of the afternoon at Mikulov, visiting the old town, or you can visit the modern villa Tugendhat in Brno (UNESCO). The decision is up to you. Mikulov has a long tradition of grape harvesting and is located in the heart of the Moravian wine region. The trip includes a visit of the main square, the exteriors of the Dietrichstein Tomb and the castle the winemaking museum is located. The brave ones can climb the Holly Hill.

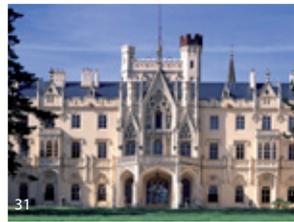
The Villa Tugendhat was built in the 1930s in a functionalist style by the German architect Mies van der Rohe. It is a great example of how people lived at this time; a culture of timeless modernity and clean living.



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DAY 7 – BOHEMIAN-MORAVIAN HIGHLANDS – JEWISH HERITAGE AND ROMANTIC CASTLE (248 KM)

Part of the day will be devoted to the visit of Třebíč. It is the only place where Jewish monuments outside of Israel are registered in the UNESCO World Heritage list. The local Jewish quarter includes nearly 123 well-preserved houses, two synagogues, the Rabbi's home, a school, hospital and the cemetery. There is another impressive monument close to the quarter – the Romano-Gothic Basilica, dedicated to St. Prokop – an important propagator of the Slavonic liturgy.

You will continue to the nearby town of Telč (UNESCO) located in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. The town is especially well-known due to its main square which is as picturesque as the most beautiful fairytale settings. The square is surrounded with mansions with decorated gables in the Renaissance, Baroque or classical style. The Castle, surrounded by simple gardens, was rebuilt in the 16th century. You will have lunch in a restaurant in the historic city centre.

The day will end up at the Romantic castle of Vranov nad Dyjí. Its landscape is simply breath-taking. The family von Althann built the castle on a rocky crag above the Dyje river. You will visit the Hall of Ancestors, which has an oval shape and was built by Fischer von Erlach, then the Holy Trinity Chapel or a well-preserved bathroom decorated in the Classic style. Overnight stay in Brno

DAY 8 – FREE PROGRAM, RETURN



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RATES April – October (except public holidays)
starting from 599 € per person in a double room (base 30 pax)

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a double room

ADDITIONAL SERVICES:

- transport
- see blue boxes:
- D1 – special visit of baroque terraced gardens with gardener or landscape architect as a guide
- D2 – special visit of the Karlštejn Castle – Gothic Chapel of the Holy Cross and gothic artwork
- D3 – special excursion to Litomyšl – Piarist college – The Faculty of restoration, meeting with restorers and demonstration of restoration work
- D3 – special visit of the castle of Častolovice (noble Sternberg family) – Welcome by the owner, welcome drink and snack
- D4 – guided tour and lunch with the owner of the private castle Žďar (noble family of the Kinsky), 3 course menu, 1 drink – soft drink, wine or beer
- D5 – folklore evening, folk dances in costumes, orchestra, local culinary specialities – 3 course menu, wine tasting
- D6 – special visit of your choice – Dietrichsten Tomb in Mikulov or villa Tugendhat garden in Brno

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- 7 nights including half board in 4 * hotel in Prague and Brno
- 6 lunches (3 course menu, water, bread) in a typical restaurant
- English speaking guide during the tour
- guided visit of towns and monuments according to the program
- admissions fees: Prague – Wallenstein garden, Karlštejn Castle, Litomyšl – chateau with theatre, birthplace of Smetana, Častolovice Castle, Žďar nad Sázavou – pilgrimage church, Castle of Pernštejn, Austerlitz-Slavkov – peace Monument + exhibition Multimedia, Kroměříž – Castle (the Archbishop apartments or Gallery of paintings to choose), Castle of Lednice, Valtice – The National Wine Centre, wine tasting in the cellars of the Castle, Třebíč – synagogue with House of the Rabbi or Jewish and Basilica cemetery Saint Procopius, Vranov nad Dyjí – Castle, coffee / tea and snack D5
- local taxes

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