



For heart and soul

Pilgrimage along sacred sites
in the border triangle



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Via Sacra

Discover the „holy road“ with its sacred treasures in the border triangle of Germany, Poland & the Czech Republic - whether on foot or by bike. The Via Sacra invites you to an inner contemplation.

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**Find your way in an ancient
cultural region along
traditional paths**

 via
sacra

The idea of the Via Sacra was born in 2003 in the Zittau Municipal Museums after the opening of the permanent exhibition of the Great Lenten Cloth of Zittau in the Museum Kirche zum Heiligen Kreuz in June 1999 and the show „Welt-Macht-Geist (World-Power-Mind). The House of Habsburg and Upper Lusatia 1526-1635. “



I have known the border region of Upper Lusatia, Bohemia and Lower Silesia very well for years from my walking tours. My pilgrimage tours along the Via Sacra offered me the opportunity to get to know these landscapes once again from a completely different perspective. These are experiences that shape my understanding of the landscape.

Frank Sühnel,
Tour guide and hiking guide

The Via Sacra pilgrimage route presents itself to the walker in a very versatile way.

The numerous sights and the changing landscapes offer space for silence, to reflect on life and to bring outer and inner life into harmony. I myself walked four stations and wrote down my experiences for the Protestant weekly newspaper „Der Sonntag“.

Birgit Pfeifer,
Journalist and Blogger



The Via Sacra pilgrimage route



Stations of the Via Sacra

Via Sacra - pilgrimage route

272 km

Via Sacra - czech pilgrimage route

289 km





Via Sacra: Time out from the here and now



The Via Sacra – the Holy Road - connects places of outstanding sacred buildings and art treasures in Germany, the Czech Republic (and Poland). A total of 17 (plus 3 in Poland) stations are part of the 550-kilometre pilgrimage and hiking route. It leads along existing roads and paths, such as the historic Via Regia.

Pilgrims and hikers alike are on their way on the Via Sacra through the varied region of Upper Lusatia and Bohemia. Centuries ago, this area was a centre for flourishing trade and cosmopolitan ideas. In the 19th and 20th centuries, however, war, genocide, flight and expulsion led to deep rifts between people. The Via Sacra therefore also wants to build bridges and remember traditions that have shaped the region across borders. The Saxon, Bohemian, Silesian and Sorbian roots stand for an eventful history that nevertheless thrives on the coexistence of different cultures.

Everyone can create their own individual pilgrimage or hiking experience. Of the 20 stations on the Via Sacra, nine are on the German side, three

in Poland and eight in the Czech Republic. Depending on how much time you have, you can plan your own itinerary. If you are travelling longer, you will find numerous accommodation options along the route. Among the hosts are also four church institutions that can provide spiritual impulses in church services or discussion groups on request.

It is not only the numerous religious sites that enrich the tour along the Via Sacra. It is also the unique diversity of nature that is to be experienced. Visiting places of silence and faith, pilgrims trace centuries of history. At the same time, there is room for mindfulness and awareness of one's own sensibilities. The Via Sacra invites you to take time out from the here and now.

Further information:
www.via-sacra.info





1 | St. Anne's Monastery Church and Sacral Museum (Kamenz altars)

Place of worship with a dual function

The monastery church of St. Anne in Kamenz

is not just a consecrated church. Inside it is a sacral museum where visitors can discover a rarity. The church was built at the end of the 15th century for the Franciscan convent. Not all citizens were happy about this.

The Kamenz councillors long opposed the establishment of the monastery in their town. Later, however, they bowed to the will of the Bohemian king Vladislav II. But they did not give in completely - and merely provided a building site outside the city walls.

The last monk leaves

In contrast, the citizens themselves had a good relationship with the Order. Wealthier citizens donated altars. With the beginning of the Reformation, the Catholic faith was sidelined. When the last monk left the monastery in 1564, the church and convent buildings

went to the town. A condition for this, however, was that the services of the Protestant Sorbs would be held in the church in future. This was the case until 1926.

Art in the church

Today, in addition to church services, St. Anne's also hosts readings, concerts and exhibitions of contemporary art. The sacred museum itself also presents numerous art objects from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and Baroque. Particularly worth seeing is a unique ensemble of five late Gothic carved altars.

Tip: A few years ago, the Kamenz Tourist Information Office found its new home in a glass extension to the church. This close connection between church and municipality was even awarded a prize in 2014.

2 | Cistercian Abbey of St. Marienstern

Community for almost 800 years

Only a few monasteries can look back on such a long history. St. Marienstern in Panschwitz-Kuckau has been an abbey inhabited by Cistercian nuns since 1248. The monastery was founded by Bernhard III of Kamenz. It has existed without interruption since its founding and is today a place that combines monastic and secular life and brings people together.

Due to its rather secluded location in Upper Lusatia and fortunate historical circumstances, the abbey still has unique monastic furnishings today. These include relics and manuscripts, some of which can be traced back to the founding family.

Visitors are welcome

The current twelve sisters of St. Mary's Star are dedicated not only to prayer but also to pastoral care, the management of the house and garden, and the education and employment of disabled people.

Several areas of the monastery are open to the public. These include the monastery church, the monastery garden and the monastery shop. A museum also houses the monastery's treasury. There you can see treasures from the 13th to the 20th century.



Tip: There was already a monastery brewery on the grounds in 1700. The monastery beer, which is now available in the monastery shop, is now produced in Wiltichenau. But the beer and monastery liqueur are made according to old recipes.



Monastery liqueur made with an old recipe

The monastery attracts many guests every year. Highlights are the Easter riding, the Corpus Christi procession, pilgrimages, concerts, a monastery and family festival and an Advent market.

One cathedral, two denominations

Die außergewöhnliche Kooperation This unusual cooperation has a long history: Catholic and Protestant Christians have been using St Peter's Cathedral in Bautzen together since 1524. The church is the largest simultaneous church in Germany. To make this work, the parishes concluded cathedral contracts as early as the time of the Reformation. These regulate the property rights and times of worship - and still do today.

As early as around the year 1000, a first parish church stood on the same site. At the beginning of the 13th century, construction began on the cathedral, which finally took on its present form in 1430. With its dual use from 1534, it was the first simultaneous church in Germany. At first, however, there were still disputes between Lutherans and Catholics.

Two organs in unison

A first treaty in 1543 regulated the use of the church by both denominations. The choir

was designated for Catholic services, the nave for Protestant services. Each part has its own organ. The special thing about it: both Instruments are tonally coordinated so that they can also sound together.

Climbing on the roof of the Türmer (tower)

In the immediate vicinity of the cathedral, interested visitors can visit the St. Peter's Cathedral Treasury. Here, the diocese of Dresden-Meissen presents liturgical vessels, embroidered vestments and textiles, books, paintings and sculptures as well as precious glasses.

Tip: *The cathedral tower, which is around 84 metres high, can be climbed at weekends, Saturdays from 12-17 and Sundays from 13-17. It is the highest point in the city open to the public. The viewing floor is a good 53 metres above the Türmerstube (tower room), where, by the way, a Türmer (tower keeper) still lives today.*





4 | Holy Sepulchre, Stations of the Cross and St. Peter and Paul's Protestant Church in Görlitz

The „Jerusalem of Lusatia“

It towers imposingly over the old town of Görlitz. The Görlitz parish church of St. Peter and Paul, St. Peter's Church for short, has been the city's main church since 1372. On Good Friday, it is the starting point for the Stations of the Cross - an event for many tourists as well. It leads to the Holy Sepulchre Chapel of the city on the River Neisse. This is considered one of the best scaled-down copies of the Jerusalem original from the High Middle Ages.

The twin towers of St. Peter's Church, each 84 metres high, are easy to see. But the 72-metre long, pointed copper roof of the east choir is also impressive. For a long time, the church looked quite different.

Sun with pipe rays

The church originated as a castle church in the 11th century. In 1423, it was converted into a five-nave hall church, documenting the growing status of the city of Görlitz. St. Peter's Church is the largest and oldest

Tip: Application as a new station of the Via Sacra: Cultural Forum Görlitz Synagogue-at the heart of Europe and a place for social encounters, cultural offerings and cooperation.

church of this type in Saxony. One attraction inside is the sun organ by the Italian organ builder Casparini, created in 1697. There are 17 suns with radially arranged pipes distributed over its facade. The instrument's register also includes animal voices.

On the Way of the Cross to the Tomb

On Good Friday, the Görlitz Way of the Cross leads from the crypt of St. Peter's Church via the biblical stations to the Holy Sepulchre. The entire complex consists of the Holy Sepulchre Chapel, the Double Chapel to the Holy Cross and the Salbhaus. Public guided tours of the Holy Sepulchre complex take place every Friday 3 pm and Saturday 10 am and 3 pm.

5 | Cistercian Convent of St. Marienthal

Monastic tradition for almost 800 years



The birthday on 14 October is duly celebrated every year. The history of the monastery of St. Marienthal, which is located south of the town of Ostritz, began on this day in 1234. It is thus the oldest active women's monastery of the Cistercian Order in Germany. However, the sisters do not live a secluded life.

The convent was originally founded by Queen Kunigunde of Bohemia. The property was donated to the nuns. But in 1683 there was a great fire. Afterwards, the monastery was rebuilt in the style of the Bohemian Baroque. The imposing ensemble with its buildings still exists in this form today.

The tomb of a world star

Not only the convent building, the monastery church and the Chapel of the Cross and St. Michael are worth seeing on the extensive grounds. There is also a special memorial on the grounds: the tomb of the 19th century world-famous opera singer Henriette Sontag.

Visitors can also visit the „Garden of Bible Plants“ and the Calvary with the stations of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. From there you also have a unique overview of the monastery grounds - and next door you will find the most eastern vineyard in Ger-

many. The monastery market is also open, with all kinds of products, including hand-decorated candles from the monastery.

Spend the night in the monastery

The monastery guest rooms with their simplicity convey a monastic atmosphere and invite individual guests, families and groups to rest, contemplation and soothing relaxation.

The IBZ also offers stylish accommodation.



Tip: Tip: The monastery tavern offers traditional monastery cuisine as well as Upper Lusatian dishes. Visitors should try the Marienthal monastery beer.



6 | Large and Small Zittau Lenten Cloth / Zittau Epitaph Treasury

56 square metres of pure preciousness

They are unique in Germany: Zittau is home to two lenten cloths that are significant for Europe. In 90 pictures, the Great Lenten Cloth of Zittau tells the story of the special relationship between God and man on 56 square metres. The largest museum showcase in the world ensures that the huge treasure will continue to be presented in all its glory in the Church of the Holy Cross Museum. Along with the Bayeux Tapestry, it is one of the most important works of Western textile art.

Lost for centuries

Exciting history is connected with the cloth: The third largest known hunger cloth in the world was made in Zittau in 1472. From then on, it was used in St. John's Church for around 200 years. During Lent, it separated the chancel from the congregation. But then it disappeared for many centuries. It was not until 1840 that citizens found it again in the

Zittau council library.

The Small Zittau Lenten Cloth from 1573 was also used in St. John's Church. It shows the crucifixion of Christ. The image is surrounded by a total of 30 symbols of the Passion and is one of the Arma Christi-type cloths. There are only eight of these left in the world - one of them in Zittau. Today it is on display in the Cultural History Museum in the city's Franciscan monastery.

Special culture of remembrance

Zittau has another treasure - the epitaph treasure. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, wealthy citizens of Zittau commemorated their deceased with these richly designed memorial plaques. There used to be 160 of these representations in Zittau's churches. About half of them have been preserved in whole or in part and can be seen today mainly in the Klosterkirche and the Kreuzkirche.



Wild romance between rock and ruin

It almost seems a little enchanted: On the 514-metre-high Oybin in the Zittau Mountains, nature and architecture have formed a special symbiosis since the Middle Ages. Anyone who climbs the steps to the Oybin Castle and Monastery Open-Air Museum feels history with every step. This history was quite dramatic.

From a distance, the rock massif of Oybin resembles a beehive. There was already a good view from there at the beginning of the 14th century. To protect two trade routes leading over the mountain pass, a first fortified complex was built on the mountain at that time.

Together against the attackers

In the middle of the 14th century, the German Emperor Charles IV had an imperial house built on the Oybin and donated a monastery to the Order of the Cölestines in the immediate vicinity, which was built with the help of the famous Prague cathedral builders.

The castle and monastery then existed side by side for almost 200 years. Together, the monks and castle inhabitants even drove out the attacking Hussites in 1429 - and thus also defended part of the Prague cathedral treasure of St. Vitus, which was kept at Oybin. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation led to the end of monastic life.

End with a thunderclap

The forces of nature were no more merciful. In 1577, lightning struck the barely used complex. A rockfall in 1681 destroyed numerous buildings. Perhaps it is precisely this drama that still gives the ensemble its special flair today. A large number of visitors discover the castle and monastery on their own exploratory tours or as part of a guided tour every year.

Tip: A photo in the still preserved library window is an absolute must when visiting!



From Herrnhut to believers all over the world

The Dresden court and judicial councillor Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zingendorf was a pious man. Already during his law studies, he travelled Europe in 1719/20 and met Christians of various denominations. From 1722 he took in religious refugees from Moravia on his estate in Berthelsdorf - it is the beginning of a special community.

In Bohemia, a Brethren community had already been established since the middle of the 15th century. The Counter-Reformation forced their followers to leave their homeland. Near Berthelsdorf they founded the settlement of Herrnhut - „under the guard of the Lord“.

Over one million members worldwide

In 1727, the Evangelical Brethren-Unity of Herrnhut was re-founded there. The idea later spread through active missionary work, not only in Europe. Today it has over 1.2 million followers worldwide. There are 29 provinces on five continents, three of them in Europe with more than 19,000 members. The largest Brethren community is currently in Africa, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. The Unity of the Brethren confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour with the other churches. It places particular emphasis on



congregational life and mutual support. It is also known for publishing the Watchwords, a devotional book published since 1731, which contains two Bible texts and a song verse or prayer for each day of the year.

Show on the history of the Unity of the Brethren

Interested visitors can get to know the Herrnhut Brethren Unity on a guided tour. In addition to the church hall or the Vogtshof, where the watchwords are drawn, there is also an exhibition on the history of the Moravian Church.

Tip: The Gottesacker (Church Acre) is located on the slope of the Hutberg. There are 6,000 graves in the park, which has existed since 1730. The names from Greenland or the Caribbean testify to the internationality of the Unity of the Brethren.



Visit to the largest village church in Germany

Admittedly, with around 4,600 inhabitants and an area of almost 27 square kilometres, Cunewalde is definitely one of the largest villages in Upper Lusatia. Nevertheless, the local church seems somewhat oversized even by these standards. With over 2,600 seats on three galleries, it is the largest village church in Germany.

The 61-metre-high steeple and the steep hipped roof can be seen from afar. Its construction was not a megalomania of earlier generations. The dimensions made perfect sense in the past. In earlier centuries, not every village had its own church. Surrounding villages belonged to the parish of Cunewalde.

Lottery for the new church

Due to the economic boom in Upper Lusatia in the 18th century, the population grew strongly. The number of Sunday churchgoers also increased. The former, small Cunewald church soon had too many people. A new building was needed. To finance this, the people of Cunewald not only collected money from wealthy parishioners. They also organised a lottery. Nevertheless, the funds were modest and the church took 13 years to build.

A unique procession of lights at Christmas

Because of the tight budget, the church tower was initially only 25 metres high, and the furnishings were taken over from the old church. The church was consecrated in 1793 and the spire was not added until the end of the 19th century



Tip: *There is a special event every year on 24 December. The Cunewald procession of lights has been taking place on Christmas Eve since 1817. 50 historic pyramids of lights from the 19th century are then carried into the church by confirmation candidates and older children.*

The Via Sacra Cycle-Pilgrimage Route



Pilgrimage along sacred sites in the border triangle
Via Sacra

Via Sacra - Cycle-Pilgrimage route 262 km

Via Sacra - czech Cycle-Pilgrimage route 558 km



Status 2021 | Status 2021 The numbering of the stations does not imply any valuation or permanent marking. It corresponds to the current situation.





Pedalling

to find yourself

When we think of classic pilgrimage, many people first think of walking, hiking on foot - perhaps even with a pilgrim's staff in hand. Nowadays, pilgrimage can be done differently. For some years now, cycling pilgrimage routes have become increasingly popular. In the saddle, people experience how they arrive more and more at themselves, kilometre by kilometre. As they pedal, they find time for pause, reflection and new ideas for their own lives. Pilgrims can therefore of course also experience the Via Sacra by bike.

Attractive route suggestions are available for the German and Czech stages. The 260 km long cycle pilgrimage route on the German side is laid out as a circular route through Upper Lusatia. This makes the route flexible for everyone. The route leads to Kamenz, Bautzen, Löbau, Görlitz and Zittau, among other places. Each stage can also be enjoyed individually as a single cycle tour.

Eight stations of the Via Sacra are located in northern Bohemia in the Czech Republic. These can also be explored by bicycle. The route is also designed as a circular route. If you want to follow it completely, you need to plan enough time. The entire route is over 500 kilometres long and leads to pilgrimage sites such as the Braunau Monastery or the pilgrimage church of the Visitation of Mary in Hejnice/Haindorf. The Czech route of the Via Sacra connects seamlessly with the German part. Of course, there is also plenty of accommodation available for cyclists on the Via Sacra along the way. In addition to hotels, guesthouses and holiday flats, there are also a number of ecclesiastical providers offering accommodation for visitors. So the pilgrimage can begin - even in the saddle of a bicycle.

Further information:
www.via-sacra.info





10 | Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Hejnice/Haindorf

The Miracle at the Lime Tree

Wooden chapel, Gothic chapel, basilica: the

Church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary in Hejnice/Haindorf in the Czech Republic already has a long tradition. It begins with a legend that has made the church a place of pilgrimage to this day. According to legend, the following happened in 1211: At that time, a poor sieve-maker lived in a nearby village. When his wife and child fell ill, he was full of worry. One day he lay down in the shade of a lime tree to take a midday nap. In a dream he heard a voice. It told him to place a figure of the Mother of God in the hollow lime tree and to pray in front of it with his wife and child.

The first pilgrims arrive

According to tradition, he did just that. He bought a simple figure of Mary from a carver in Zittau. After the family prayed at the lime tree, the wife and child were restored to health. People heard about it and soon the first pilgrims came. There were so many that a wooden

chapel was soon built in place of the lime tree. The village of Haindorf grew up around it and was first mentioned in a document in 1381. When further miraculous healings took place, the enlarged St. John's Chapel was built in 1352 and this was expanded into a Gothic church in 1472.

Basilica for thousands of people

After the Reformation and with the re-Catholicisation, the Franciscan Order took over the church in 1690. A monastery and a pilgrimage route were built. The flow of believers increased. Therefore, in 1725, the impressive basilica Maria Heimsuchung was consecrated, with room for 7,000 people.

Tip: Inside you can admire an old field altar by Albrecht von Wallenstein and baroque sculptures. Also worth seeing is a Marian column from the 17th century.

Church by the Grace of the Emperor

The church in Jelenia Góra/Hirschberg

in Poland is known by two names. As the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, it is now a Roman Catholic building. In the past, it was a Protestant church building as the Church of Grace to the Holy Cross. The story behind it is an exciting one. In the 16th century, the Reformation also took hold in Lower Silesia. But under Emperor Matthias I, re-Catholicisation took place. The Protestant believers were forced to hold services in the open air or in refuge churches on the other side of the Silesian-Saxon border.

Help from the Swedish King

In the summer of 1706, King Charles XII of Sweden passed through Silesia and occupied Saxony. In the „Altranstadt Convention“ he persuaded Emperor Joseph I to make concessions to the Protestant side. In Silesia, through the Emperor's grace, six Protestant churches were allowed to be built: the Gnadenkirchen (Churches of Grace). One of them was in Hirschberg.

The building was erected from 1709 to 1718 according to a design by Martin Frantz, an architect from Tallinn who lived in Liegnitz. It was modelled on the St. Catherine's Church in Stockholm.

Rededication in the 20th century

In 1806, a fire destroyed the towers of the staircase as well as the church dome, which were rebuilt by 1811. In October 1957, the building was finally rededicated as the Roman Catholic Kreuzerhöhungskirche. Until 2012, it served as a garrison church and belonged to the Silesian Military Deanery. Since 2006, it has been a pilgrimage church due to the transfer of relics of the Holy Cross.



Tip: The Cemetery of Grace is located around the church.

There you can see 19 historically significant burial chapels of Hirschberg patrician families.

An exotic in the Riesengebirge

A piece of Norway in the middle of the Krkonoše Mountains: A Scandinavian stave church made of pine wood travelled to Silesia in the middle of the 19th century. The Prussian King Frederick William IV played an important role in the unusual resettlement.

Since the middle of the 12th century, the wooden church with its ornate carvings had stood in Vang near Lake Vang in southern Norway. But in the 19th century the church became too small for the congregation. A new church was built right next to it in 1840. The stave church was to be auctioned off.

Sold to the King

The Norwegian painter Johan Christian Clausen Dahl, who lived in Dresden at the time, wanted to save the church. He won over the Prussian king for this project and incognito the king bought the church for 427 marks. In 1941 it was dismantled in Vang. But the plan to rebuild it in Berlin on Pfaueninsel did not work out in the end. Friderike Countess von Reden auf Buchwald/Bukowiec, a motherly friend of the monarch, was to blame. She knew that the inhabitants of the mountain villages in the Krkonoše Mountains had no Protestant



Tip: If you look closely, you will see wonderful ornaments and depictions of animals on and in the church. The roof with the dragon heads is even reminiscent of Viking ships. At the entrance, two half-columns with plant and snake motifs are carved into the door frames.

churches near them. The way was long and impossible in winter.

Vikings on the roof

So she persuaded the Prussian king to build the stave church at 885 metres above sea level, halfway between Krummhübel and the Schneekoppe. Even today, a monument on the mountain side of the church forecourt commemorates the pious woman.



13 | „Grüssau Abbey“ Krzeszów/Grüssau

Place of pilgrimage with baroque flair



It is considered one of the pearls of the European Baroque: the Cistercian Abbey in Grüssau, now Krzeszów in Poland. In Lower Silesia, it is one of the most important sacred monuments and is currently nominated for UNESCO World Cultural Heritage. Many believers and tourists visit the pilgrimage site every year. They follow in the footsteps of a centuries-old monastery complex. Benedictine monks built the monastery as early as the mid-13th century. In 1292, the Cistercian Order took it over. It quickly became an economic success.

Nuns are at home here today

An eventful history followed: During the Thirty Years' War it was burnt by the Swedish army. The resurrected abbey was subsequently a centre of the Counter-Reformation. In 1919, Benedictine monks again occupied the monastery before being relocated to Bad Wimpfen in Germany. Afterwards, Benedictine nuns from

Tip: Look closely at the main altar: There you can see the famous image of the Mother of God. When the Hussites invaded Silesia in 1426, they hid the image. The exact location was forgotten. It was rediscovered during building work in 1622. In 1997, Pope John Paul II crowned the image.

the abbey in Lviv, now in Ukraine, made their home in the monastery. Until today.

Legendary image of grace on display

Worth seeing for guests are the church of St. Joseph, the abbey museum, the mausoleum of the Silesian ruling dynasty of the Piast dynasty and, of course, the monastery church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The latter was built on the site of a former church in the 17th and 18th centuries as a magnificent Baroque church. The most famous artists of Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, Austria and Bavaria worked on it.

Mummy Cellar and Shroud of Turin



It was a sensation that was found in Broumov (Braunau) in the Czech Republic in 1999. In the church of the local monastery, a unique copy of the Shroud of Turin was discovered by chance in a side chapel. It had been lying there since the 17th century, hidden from people's eyes. By far not the only spectacular thing to be seen here.



Tip: *In the crypt you can see several dozen mummies from the 17th and 18th centuries. The most famous of the mummified bodies belongs to Magdalena Grambova, who brought the tradition of making bobbin lace from her native Belgium to East Bohemia.*

The Benedictines from Prague came to Broumov as early as 1213. They successfully created their monastery there from an original fortress. The monastery church was Gothic at first, but after the Thirty Years' War it was rebuilt into its present Baroque form.

Monastery becomes a prison

As early as the 14th century, the monks founded a Latin school, which later became the monastery grammar school. Famous Czech personalities attended the school here. However, the Nazi regime closed the school in 1939.

The time of the monks in Broumov ended. After the Second World War, those who remained had to leave the monastery. The communist regime turned the complex into a political prison in 1950.

Crypt with dozens of mummies

After the political upheaval of 1989, the monastery grounds are now owned by the Břeunou Monastery in Prague. An economic council takes care of the administration. Together with Břeunou Abbey, Broumov today forms the double abbey Břeunou-Broumov. The monastery building houses the Broumov Town Museum.

A special thanks for health



The plague had spared him.

Governor Christian Karl Platitz von Ehrenthal was very happy about this. In 1719, he therefore donated a Marian column to his Czech hometown of Liberec/Reichenberg, today also known as the Plague Column. The famous Bohemian sculptor Matthias Bernhard Braun made it. Soon it had to be moved.

The column is impressive. On an octagonal foundation is enthroned a globe on which Mary is standing. Four statues surround it. St Florian pours water from a jug onto a burning house. Saint John Nepomuk appears with a crucifix and a five-star wreath.

A dog brings bread to St Roch as a pilgrim. St. Sebastian stands at St. Mary's Column.

Procession to the Stations of the Cross

Until 1877, the plague column stood in front of St. Anthony's Church. After renovation, it was then placed at the Church of the Holy Cross. The church, which was built until 1698, was later enlarged and renovated in the late Baroque style. The column stands there in front of the Stations of the Cross, which were laid out in the 18th century.

Burial chapel based on the Görlitz model

Behind the Stations of the Cross in Liberec is the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. It is a replica of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and, like the Marian column, originally stood at St Anthony's Church. The Holy Sepulchre in Görlitz served as the model for its construction.

Tip: An altarpiece by the later Saxon-Polish court painter Franz Xaver Palko can be seen in the Church of the Holy Cross in Liberec. It shows Empress Helena venerating the newly discovered Holy Cross. According to legend, she found the Cross of Christ while digging under a pagan temple in Jerusalem.





16 | St. John's Monastery and Compound Český Dub

The surprise under the tenement

The Czech town of Český Dub/Bohemian Aicha owes this sensation to the former director of the town's museum. In 1991, Tomáš Edel rediscovered a monastery and Compound that had long been thought lost. For centuries it had remained hidden underground under other buildings. The Knights of St. John's Compound was founded shortly after 1237 by the Bohemian nobleman Havel von Lämberg. He was the husband of St. Zdislava. The patron saint, who became famous for her hospital activities and healing miracles, probably worked mainly in the hospital, which belonged to the Compound.

New houses are built

The Hussites destroyed the Compound during their military campaigns around 1425 and it was dissolved. At the end of the 15th century, a Renaissance castle was built over the remains. After a fire in 1859, a tenement house was built on the site, and once again the rooms of the Compound remained undamaged and undiscovered.

Tip: The exhibition about the Knights of St. John's is run by the Regional Museum. This is also dedicated to the life of the Czech writer Karolína Sušilá.

The archaeologist Tomáš Edel had suspected their remains on the site for some time. Using a probe, he looked into the premises for the first time in 1991. The entrance to the two-storey complex was found behind a wall. Among other things, a number of rooms, a large and a smaller convent hall and a chapel have been discovered to date.

Valuable cross discovered

In 2003, a rare Romanesque reliquary cross decorated with precious stones, enamel and a sculpture of the crowned Christ was discovered in one of the tombs in the centre of the St John's Compound. The relic kept was a wooden part of the Holy Cross.



Anna's Statue and Wallenstein's Crypt

At the end of the 17th century, Count Ernst Josef von Waldstein not only had a magnificent castle built in the Czech town of Mnichovo Hradiště/Münchengrätz. In 1687 he founded a Capuchin monastery in the immediate vicinity. A little later, the monastery church of the Three Kings also belonged to it. It soon received a chapel - in honour of a special saint. In 1713, the plague raged. Many people died. But the Black Death avoided the Mnichovo Hradiště dominion. It was spared. The people at that time attributed this to the protection of Saint Anne.

Franz Josef von Waldstein therefore had a statue erected in her honour in front of the church just one year later.

A chapel for Anna

More and more believers came to visit the statue and the church. There were so many that the space of the church was soon no longer sufficient.

The count's widow therefore had the St. Anna Chapel built onto the church in honour of the saint. In contrast to the simple design of the church, the chapel is executed in a rich Baroque style.

Visit to Wallenstein's crypt

At the end of the 18th century, the monastery was dissolved. Until 1945, the property belonged to the von Waldstein family. After that, the monastery became state property. The former church now serves as a lapidarium for Baroque statues from Central Bohemia and can be visited. The St. Anna Chapel is also open to the public.

Tip: Albrecht von Waldstein, or better Wallenstein, was a famous Bohemian general in the Thirty Years' War. Schiller's *Ladies Trilogy* memorialised him. His tomb is located in the Chapel of St. Anne.





18 | Pilgrimage site Horní Police/Oberpolititz

The 160 Wonders of Oberpolititz

Mathäus Hoser was taken prisoner during the Thirty Years' War. He called on the Mother of God for help. When the guard fell asleep, he fled together with the chains that bound him to Horní Police/Oberpolititz. However, when he approached the church, the chains suddenly fell off him. It is not the only miracle that is said to have happened there. There is a reason for this. According to legend, a wooden statue of the pregnant Virgin Mary was washed up on the banks of the Polzen River as early as 1523. Citizens brought it to the then Gothic parish church. Pilgrims heard about the statue of Mary and sought it out. This was the beginning of the pilgrimage site Horní Police/Oberpolititz. The later prisoner Hoser also prayed there.

Lack of space due to pilgrimage rush

As proof, Hoser's alleged chain can still be found at the Stations of the Cross today. The chronicle records 160 such miracles. To have

enough space for the pilgrims, the church was enlarged at the end of the 17th century. But even that was not enough. A new extension with a sacristy, side aisles and a cloister with chapels took place.

Statue of Mary with changing outfit

In 1861, the church was renovated at the suggestion of Emperor Ferdinand. Further renovation work took place on the structure, which had been damaged by the impact of a bomb in 1945 and was in overall disrepair. Since 2018, there have been further renovations co-financed by the EU. The renovated church with the bell tower was opened in 2020.

Tip: The image of grace of Oberpolititz is a statue of the Virgin Mary about 75 centimetres tall. The special feature: She wears real clothes. These change according to the church calendar.

The burial chamber of a saint

The Church of St. Lawrence in the Czech town of Jablonné u Podještědí/German Gabel was first mentioned in a document as early as 1252. Its history is closely linked to the work of Havel von Lämberg and his wife Zdislava. In 1996, Pope John Paul II elevated the house to the status of „basilica minor“. In addition to the church, Zdislava and her husband also endowed a Dominican monastery in Deutsch Gabel. The landed noblewoman is still venerated in Bohemia today because of her help for the poor and sick and the raising of five dead people attributed to her. However, the noblewoman died very young.

There is no money for a new building

The church was destroyed during the Hussite Wars and the Thirty Years' War. Count Franz Anton Berka of Dubá was a descendant of Zdislava. He arranged for a new building at the end of the 17th century. The famous Aus-

trian architect Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt designed the church on the model of St. Peter's Church in Vienna. However, the count died while the church was still under construction. The lack of funds forced the heiress to simplify the construction of the church. The solemn consecration took place in 1729. Two years later, Zdislava's mortal remains were buried in the crypt.

Valuable relic of Zdislava

The history of the monastery was also eventful. Due to political upheavals, the monks were expelled again and again. Since 1990, there has been active monastic life at the site again.

Tip: A late Gothic Madonna from the old monastery church stands on the altar. A glass shrine holds the skull relic of Zdislava. Nearby is the opening to her burial chamber below.





Holy house according to the Italian model

The Santa Casa is located in Loreto, Italy. It is said that angels brought the house where Mary, Joseph and Jesus lived there. A basilica was later built around the building. In Rumburk/Rumburg in the Czech Republic, there is a copy of this Holy House.

Prince Anton Florian of Liechtenstein had it built between 1704 and 1707. In addition to the Loreto Chapel, the site consists of the former Capuchin convent with cloister, the Holy Staircase and the monastery church of St. Laurentius.

Pilgrimage memories in the homeland

The first Loreto chapels in Bohemia were built in the 17th century. They were usually financed by wealthy aristocrats who, after visiting the Italian pilgrimage site of Lore-

to, wanted to have a Marian chapel in their own place of residence. With its precious relief and sculptural decoration, the Loreto Chapel in Rumburk is one of the most valuable in the Czech Republic.

The important baroque architect Johann Lucas Hildebrandt was also involved in its construction. Originally, the chapel was free-standing. Later, the cloister was built on.

Statue with miraculous power

One of the most precious parts of the cloister is the „Holy Staircase“. The staircase symbolises the stairway of Pilate's palace, which Jesus once walked to receive his death sentence. The wide staircase is flanked by figures representing mocking Jews.

Tip: A copy of the Black Madonna of Loreto is venerated inside the chapel. Anton Florian Prince Liechtenstein had the figure sculpted during his stay in Italy. In 1694, the statue received the blessing of Pope Innocent XII in Rome. It is associated with 30 miraculous healings.





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