

# Sightseeing holidays



For many Czechs and even a number of foreigners the Liberec Region is synonymous with sport. The 2009 FIS Nordic World Ski Championship strengthened this view. While the Liberec Region certainly enjoys this interest it also has even greater potential – come and see for yourself...

The lands of this region have been inhabited since the Stone Age. This fact is proven by many archeological discoveries, the latest of which comes from the area of Příšovice near Turnov.

In the Middle Ages many trade routes crossed the region and it was necessary to protect them, hence the building of many castles and strongholds. Some of them are still preserved today as ruins, while others were rebuilt into comfortable chateaus.

**National cultural monuments** are part of the Czech Republic's most valuable cultural heritage. Currently there are 12 of them in the Liberec Region. You can visit the ruins of Bezděz, for example, along with Trosky, Grabštejn Castle, and the chateaus of Zákupy, Sychrov and Hrubý Rohozec. The only technical national cultural monument in the region is the unique Ještěd mountain hotel and its television transmitter, built in the 1970s. Worth noting are the other 2,200 plus cultural monuments that are declared protected. Towns and villages with preserved collections of historical building have been declared **monumental zones and reserves**. If you are interested in village architecture you can visit the Lusatian Mountains region, where there are many timbered and half-timbered houses with wooden load-bearing frames. Timbered cottages are typical to Bohemian Paradise, the Jizera Moun-

tains and the lowlands of the Giant Mountains (Podkrkonoší).

If you are interested in **industrial architecture**, the Liberec Region will not disappoint. Hidden in mountain valleys are not only the majestic buildings of the former textile factories and glass works but also architectonically interesting dams. Some of the more famous ones are Harcov dam in Liberec, the dam in Jablonec nad Nisou or at Černá Nisa, Harta in the Frýdlant sub-region or the infamous burst dam above the village of Desná in the Jizera Mountains. The Liberec Region is a paradise for lovers of view-towers, where in the Jizera Mountains in particular you can visit view-towers constructed of stone, wood and also metal.

The cultural influence of Jewish inhabitants has been preserved in several buildings. The newly repaired Jewish synagogue in Turnov, with the nearby cemetery and Jewish cemetery in Česká Lípa are only a couple of examples.

The pilgrimage footpath Via Sacra introduces you to the key **religious architecture** in the Liberec Region and elsewhere. The Via Sacra connects North Bohemia with Upper Lusatia and Lower Silesia. Along the way you can visit the baroque Virgin Mary Visitation church in Hejnice, the Johannite commendam in Český Dub or the St. Lawrence and St. Zdislava church in Jablonné v Podještědí, built according to the plans of Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt.

The Liberec Region also has connections with **important personalities in Czech history**. The most important Czech romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha composed his works in the region under Bezděz and the biggest recreational lake – Mácha's lake – carries his name. The beauty of

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the landscape to the south of Ještěd brought to this region the important writer Karolína Světlá. Her novels are usually based on the true stories of villagers and even today you can walk the path of Karolína Světlá which leads you to the places of her past dramas. The Basilica Minor in Jablonné v Podještědí and the nearby chateau Lemberk are very closely connected with the life of her ladyship Zdislava of Lemberk who was canonized by the Pope John Paul II in 1995.

An integral part of the Liberec Region's charm is also the diverse natural landscape. Bohemian Paradise was registered in the UNESCO European geoparks network for its exceptional geological and aesthetic values. You can be lead through the most interesting corners of the region with the numerous educational paths. Display boards along the way contain information about geological and ecological curiosities and the fauna and flora.