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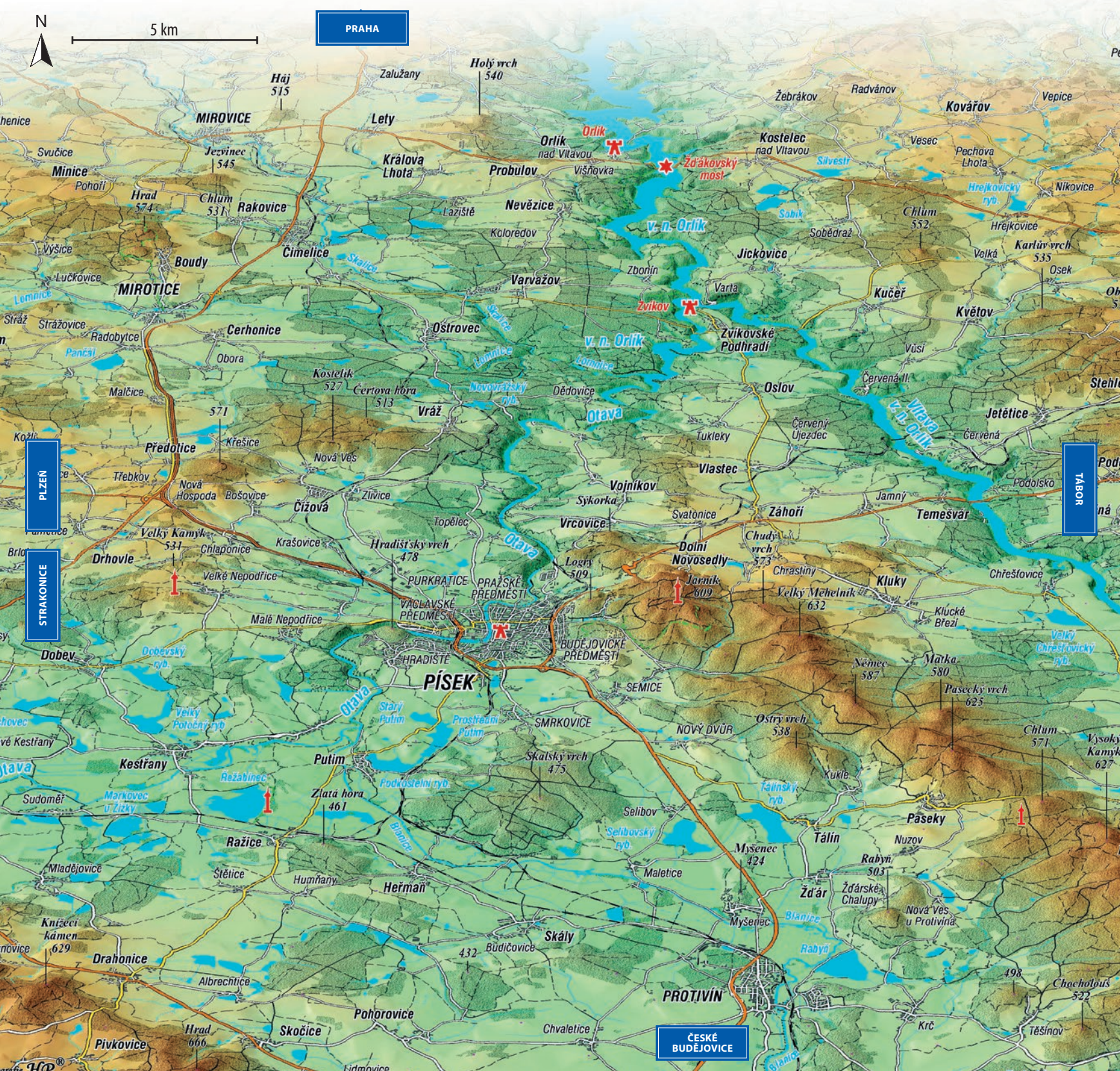


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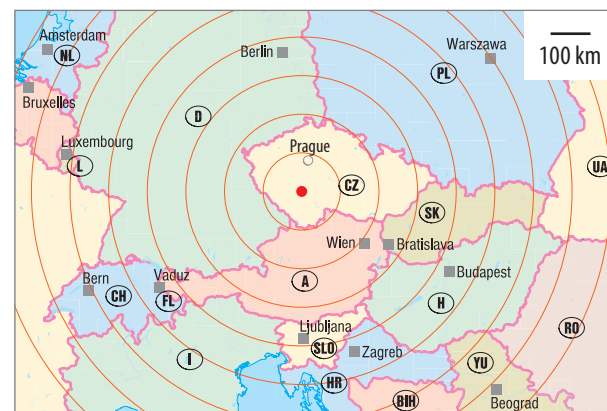
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Weir and log sluice on the Otava River in Písek

PÍSEK



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On-line tourist guide

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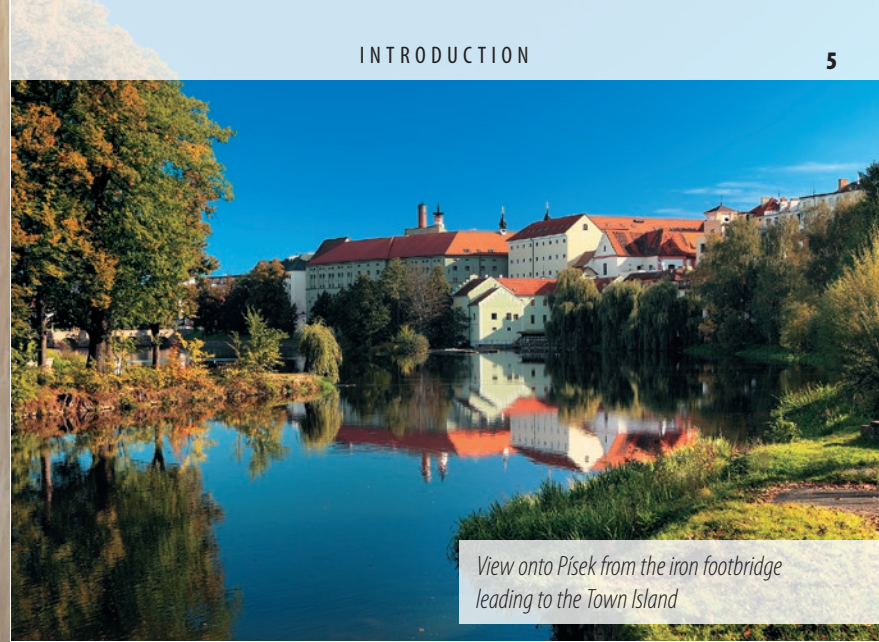


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View from Hradební II Street onto the great tower of the Dean's Church



View onto Písek from the iron footbridge leading to the Town Island

PÍSEK

Bohemia has always held a reputation as a gold-bearing country. Gold was mined here, but it was also panned from the alluvial gravel and sand of many rivers. The lower sections of the Otava River were rich in gold flakes and the panning areas in this area soon became strategically important, so the Czech rulers founded a protective castle and royal town here sometime in the early 13th century. The word “Písek” literally means “sand”, so it’s likely that the town was named after the river’s rich sandy bed, having prompted the town’s foundation and providing its wealth for so many centuries. The city also lay on one of the branches of the Golden Path, so it’s little wonder that the city quickly flourished and enjoyed the favour of the Czech rulers.

Today, all the gold is gone from the Otava River, and the once busy commercial traffic on the Gold Route has quieted, but the royal city still stands proudly on the banks of the river.

The Písek of today, though, is more than just past history and the oldest preserved bridge in Bohemia. It’s a lively “city in a sea of forests”, a city of schools and students, and a city beloved by retirees, a popular tourist destination, and a quiet and pleasant summer spot. Does all this seem like an exaggeration? There’s no simpler way to find out for yourself than to come visit Písek, just an hour’s ride from Prague and still amidst the magnificent landscape of South Bohemia...

Did you know that...

*Písek has successfully adopted the profile as a **SMART CITY**, or “a city using modern technologies to integrate its sub-sections (transport, energy, security, etc.), leading to the city’s long-term economic and environmental sustainability and the satisfaction of its inhabitants.”*



Mikoláš Aleš (1852–1913) — Panning Gold on the Otava



Aerial view of the historical centre of Písek from the south

CITY HISTORY

Písek was first mentioned in **written sources in 1243** in a document of King Wenceslas I. The area was settled much earlier, however, as shown by evidence of human inhabitation from the **Palaeolithic Age** (Old Stone Age). The first settlements in the Písek river basin are linked to the beginnings of **gold panning** from the sediments of the **Otava River**. The first people to thoroughly and systematically sift through these sands were the **Celts**. Evidence of a Celtic presence here can be found in the discovery of several burial mounds near Putim containing many valuable objects from gold and silver. **Slavic tribes** arrived to this area somewhere around the 5th or 6th century A. D. The first actual **settlement** definitely existed on the left bank of the river on the site of today's city by the **12th century**. The settlement's focus on panning gold can be presumed from its name, "Na Písku", or "**On the Sand**". It's important to note that by the

late 13th and early 14th centuries, gold was also being mined here from deep below the ground, and Písek was already the center of a mining district. The settlement gradually became a market village with its own church, consecrated to St. Wenceslas. King **Wenceslas (Václav) I** (1205–1253) began building a **castle** close to the settlement in order to protect the Otava panning areas as well as the merchants passing through this section of the Gold Route which crossed the Otava River at this location. It was King Wenceslas I who founded and built the town together with the castle. The town was most likely named after the river sediment, having played such an important role in its history – the gold-bearing sand, or písek. Even though Wenceslas I founded the town, it was his son **Přemysl Otakar II** (1233–1278) who is credited for its expansion and development and who turned Písek into a **royal fortified city**. During this time, perhaps within a mere two decades,

he also had the **Stone Bridge** build across the Otava River, the Dominican **Monastery**, and the parish **church**, and he completed the construction of the royal castle. Přemysl Otakar II, known for his power and wealth as the "iron and gold king", spent time here regularly; it was during his reign that Písek became **one of the most important cities of the Bohemian kingdom** and its importance and growth reached its highest historic level. During the **14th century**, the panning and mining of gold in Písek, as well as its advantageous position on the Gold Route, allowed it to prosper and grow even wealthier. This importance is attested to by several **privileges** granted it by King **John of Luxembourg** (1296–1346): the right to collect tolls, exemption from customs and tolls, the "mile right" (no merchants or craftsmen were permitted to set up within a mile of the city), and the right to store salt and grains. Just for comparison,

these privileges were similar to those of the Old Town of Prague. John's son, King and Emperor **Charles IV** (1316–1378) later confirmed Písek as the **capital city of the Prácheň Region**. Like his father the emperor, **King Wenceslas IV** (1361–1378) visited Písek often, but he was the last ruler to hold residence at the Písek castle.

The **Hussite period** was an important chapter in the history of the city. Even before the Hussite War broke out, Písek was leaning towards the religious



Reconstruction of the Royal Castle at Prácheň Museum

reformation movement evoked by the teachings of Master Jan Hus. In fact, the nearby village of **Sudoměř**, not even 10 km southwest of Písek, was the site of the **first victorious battle of the Hussites**, under the command of **Jan Žižka** from Trocnov. Just like the Hussite town of Tábor (and maybe even sooner), the townspeople of Písek placed a large wooden vat in the town square where everyone placed all their personal property to contribute to the “common cause”. Písek became one of the **centres of the Hussite movement** and remained faithful to Jan Hus’ ideals for several decades – up until 1452, it served as a **self-governing city of the Hussite Republic**.

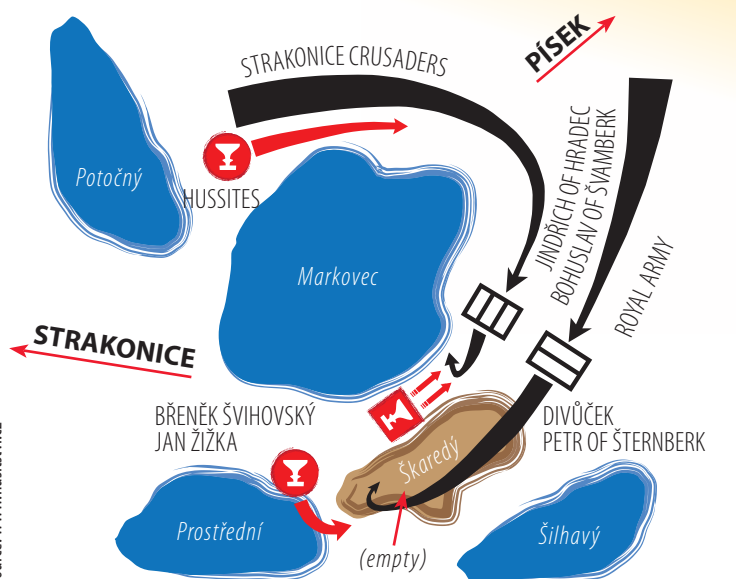
After the Hussite Wars had subsided, the **second wave of blossom and prosperity** arrived to Písek. The proceeds to the city coffers were so great, that at the beginning of the 16th century, Písek was **one of the**

Did you know that...

At the **Battle of Sudoměř** on March 20th of **1420**, the scant regiment of Hussites (just over 400 people) dealt a severe blow to the royal forces, despite being outnumbered five to one. This was the first battle in which **Jan Žižka** proved his skill as a military commander. Using “wagon forts”, his forces took up fortification on a **dam between two ponds**, causing the enemy forces to completely lose their advantage of numbers. When the royalists attempted to attack from the direction of a drained pond, the heavily armed soldiers became mired in the mud and the Hussite forces quickly finished them. Legend holds that the Hussite women had spread sheets of canvas along the floor of the pond; this hampered the movement of the heavy cavalry, who then became easy prey for the Hussites. (See picture below)



Písek on a relief from the Baroque altar of the Virgin Mary of Písek



wealthiest cities in Bohemia. The city was even able to purchase the unused royal castle and entire royal dominion in 1509. This dominion included the **Písek Mountains**, which now meant that Písek possessed the most extensive forest lands of any city in Bohemia. This period of prosperity was interrupted by the **great fire of 1532** which destroyed a large part of the city; some sources claim that the fire was set intentionally. Another fateful event in the city’s history was the unsuccessful **uprising against Emperor Ferdinand I of Habsburg (1546–1547)**. Afterwards, the office of **royal reeve** was established in Písek (as well as other royal towns), which defended the interests of the sovereign and oversaw the decisions of the city council. With this, Písek de facto lost the right to decide freely on its own important matters.

From the beginning of the 17th century, Písek and its inhabitants suffered one blow after another. In 1618, after the second Prague defenestration and after

the outbreak of the **Estates Rebellion**, Písek took sides with the Czech aristocracy. For this decision, it was punished severely – in the following year, Písek was burned by imperial troops, and by 1620 it had been conquered and plundered by the Habsburgs two more times. The last raid of the imperial army proved fateful for the city; most of its residents were murdered, and nearly all homes were burned. In 1623, the lien holder of the city and dominion of Písek became the imperial general **Martin de Huerta**, known for



The barrel of one of the first firearms in Bohemia (Prácheň Museum)



Marian Column on today's Alšovo náměstí, from 1715

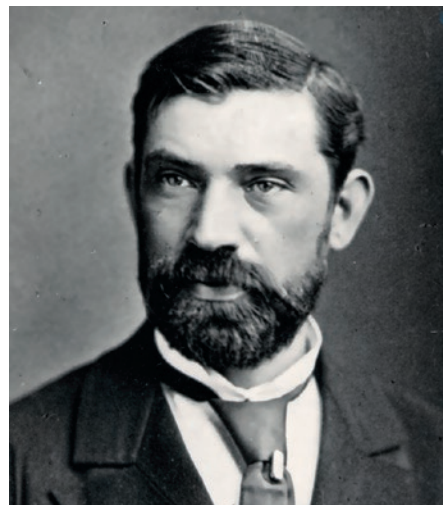
his cruelty towards his subjects. He was entrusted with the task of turning Písek back to Catholicism, using "all means possible". The first half of the 17th century was definitely one of the darkest periods of the city's history.

The beginning of the 18th century was marked by the **plague** which decimated the surroundings but miraculously left the city unharmed. As a token of gratitude for protecting Písek from the plague, a **Marian Column** was erected on the then-named Small Square in 1715.

In 1741, the city was threatened again with bombardment and pillaging, as a military conflict brewed here between the Austrian army and French troops, which had chosen Písek as their foothold. Luckily, the battle never took place and the city was spared further damage.

At the end of the 18th and during the 19th century, the city and its culture began to

undergo fundamental transformations. The **national revival** gave rise to the foundation of numerous **cultural associations and institutions** (in 1868 the **Sokol** gymnastics organization, the **Museum** in 1884), and a number of new **schools** were established: the



František Křižík (1847–1941)

Gymnasium, the Czech Real School, the first Czech Girls' High School, the agricultural school and the forestry school. This was the period when Písek began to be known as the "**Athens of South Bohemia**".

By the late 19th century, the quiet city of Písek was hit by the **industrial revolution**. The most important newly-founded enterprises included **paper mills**, a **tobacco factory**, and **textile plants** for the production of coloured **stockings** and **fezzes**. One very important event for the city, as well as a strong impulse for the development of local businesses, was the connection of Písek to Prague with a **railway** in 1875. In 1887, Písek became the **very first Czech city with permanent public lighting**, the work of František Křižík.

A curious incident regarding the **declaration of independent Czechoslovakia** took place in Písek at the end of the 1st World War in 1918. This declaration was announced in Písek on **October 14th**, two weeks before the new free nation

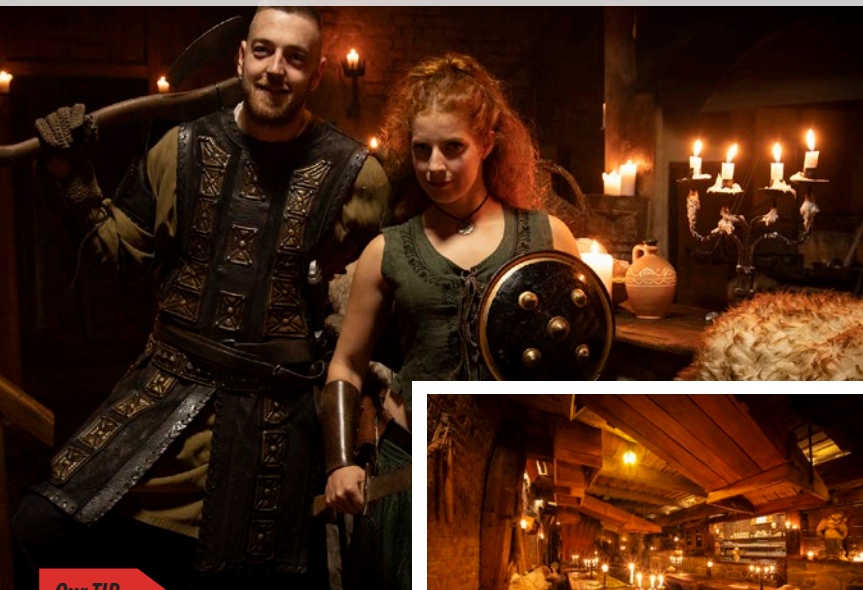
was actually born. The townspeople of Písek, then, had to wait a fortnight before the definitive dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the relatively peaceful period after the end of WWI, life in Písek returned to that of a traditional summer vacation destination, mostly sought out by students and retirees. Unfortunately, this period of calm lasted only two short decades.

Did you know that...

*The longest that **World War II** lasted in Europe was in **Čimelice**, a town with about a thousand inhabitants some 20 km north of Písek. On **May 9, 1945**, the town was still occupied by eighty thousand **German troops** who had fled Prague and refused to surrender to American forces. It was finally on **May 12**, the day after the **Red Army** arrived to Čimelice, that the German general Pückler signed a **surrender**. He shot himself immediately afterwards, as did his aid and interpreter. . .*

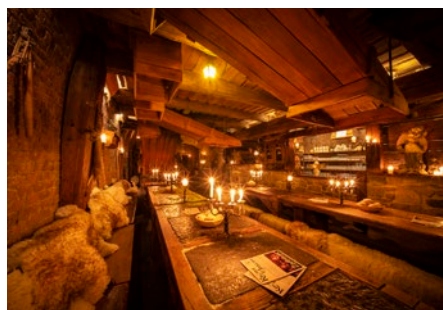


Liberation of Písek by the American Army on May 6, 1945

**Our TIP****MEDIEVAL TAVERN U JAKUBA**

In the historic building of the Písek brewery cellars, near the castle of King Přemysl Otakar II, there awaits the Medieval Tavern u Jakuba. The tavern features a unique South Bohemian experiential restaurant that combines food with theater, transporting you several centuries into the Middle Ages.

The tavern wench and tavernkeeper are ready to greet you in vigorous Old Czech while the cook prepares the meals on an open fire. Modern cutlery has no place here – you eat with your bare hands in candlelight. The favorite dishes here include juicy pork tenderloin and honey ribs, but vegetarians are welcome to choose from the menu as well.



STŘEDOVĚKÁ KRČMA U JAKUBA

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GPS: 49°18'13.349"N, 14°8'38.058"E

**Did you know that...**

This ancient tavern regularly holds medieval feasts with a stunning spectacle featuring live medieval music, belly dancers, a beggar, and a priest selling indulgences, with of course duels and fire shows to top it all off. The program is suitable for adults as well as for families with children. Visit **www.krcma-pisek.cz** to get the latest program information. Reservations can be made via email, Facebook or phone.



The Stone Bridge under the destructive floods of September 2002



The original Baroque statues from the Stone Bridge can be viewed in the Prácheň Museum

The **Nazi occupation** turned the life of the city and its inhabitants completely upside down, just like other Czech towns, bringing suffering and fear and costing many innocent lives. The long-awaited liberation finally arrived with the **arrival of the American Army on May 6, 1945.**

The **post-war period** mostly saw the development of the **peripheral areas of Písek** – new **housing estates** were built, and new **factories** were erected. Luckily, none of these factories, not even the largest – the **Jitex** textile factory and the **Kovosvit** machine works – were heavy industry, so Písek remained an oasis of quiet on the banks of the former gold-laden Otava River. This tranquillity was shortly interrupted by the **catastrophic flood of 2002**, which nearly washed away Písek's most valuable monument, the Stone Bridge. This great work of our predecessors, however, survived the floodwaters. Just like the city of Písek itself, it withstood all the heavy blows of its turbulent yet rich and glorious history.



A modern steel footbridge has connected the banks of the Otava River on the western part of Písek (Hradiště and Wenceslas suburbs) since **2018**. The bridge is designed for **pedestrians and cyclists** and is named the **Dagmar Šímková** Bridge (1929–1995) after a woman imprisoned by the Communist regime for 14 years. Dagmar Šímková was arrested in 1952 at the age of 23 for creating and distributing anti-communist leaflets, for making posters ridiculing K. Gottwald and A. Zápotocký, and for hiding two friends who were military deserters. After a fabricated trial, she was sentenced to 15 years in prison as well as the loss of her civil rights and all property. A villa named Marta, where her family lived, stands on a hillside on the right bank of the Otava River near the footbridge. The footbridge consists of two unequally long suspended arms with a total length of nearly **130 meters**. The arms are supported by a pillar at the site where they connect above the water. The structure was designed by architect **Josef Pleskot**, a native of Písek.





Otava River, the Town Island on the left, the power plant behind it and the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

A STROLL THROUGH THE OLD TOWN

We'll start our tour of Písek at the main square, **Velké náměstí (Large Square)**. Our attention is naturally drawn to the northwest corner of the square, to the beautifully decorated façade of the **Town Hall**. This **Late Baroque** building, still serving as the city's administrative centre, was built **from 1740 to 1765** and is the work of architects V. Jermář, A. Müller, and F. Fanner. From this representative two-storey building there are two **towers** that stand out, each of them bearing a clock on all four sides. Between the towers is a triangular **tympanum** bearing the **city coat of arms**. A bit higher, above the gables, we see decorated stone Baroque

Did you know that...

*On **October 14, 1918**, the independent Republic of Czechoslovakia was spontaneously announced from the balcony of the Town Hall, **14 days too soon**. The whole thing was actually a mistake and the news was revoked the very same afternoon, much to the disappointment of the Písek inhabitants. A committee was named to investigate the incident, but the "culprits" received only very light punishment since freedom from Austria was already "in the air". When Austria-Hungary finally granted Czechoslovakia's independence on October 28, the people of Písek were hesitant to believe it. Ironically enough, the declaration was made in Písek a day late, on **October 29, 1918**.*

On the right is Písek's dominant feature – the bell tower of the Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary

vases as well as statues of three figures – these are **allegories of three virtues**: Justice, Patience, and Strength. Looking at the Town Hall, one might never think that the building was originally fit with a pergola – this was removed in 1845. Passing through the Town Hall, we find ourselves on a quiet green area headed by Medieval walls with three Gothic arches. This is the western and only remaining wing of the former **Royal Castle**. The castle originally had a squared layout with four wings lined with arcades and surrounding a small courtyard.

The castle used to hold three fortification towers, but none of them are standing today. In the still-existing **western wing**



Façade of the Town Hall on Velké Náměstí



Northern side of Velké náměstí

we can visit the large **Gothic Hall** which displays **copies of frescoes from the end of the 15th century**. The castle was first mentioned in writing in 1254 and was built (under the supervision of King Přemysl Otakar II himself) at the same time as the town, which explains why it fits so perfectly into the town's layout. The last ruler to live in the castle was King Wenceslas (Václav) IV. In 1419, the castle passed into the hands of the Písek burgrave Jan Hájek of Hodětín, but it went through many owners soon afterward. It was purchased in 1509 by

the city of Písek, who still owns it today. Over the following years and centuries it was abandoned and gradually fell into disrepair. The western wing, entrance tower, and parkan (the historical area between two municipal fortification walls) were demolished in 1851, and the castle was transformed into the torso we see nowadays. The remaining part of the castle houses the **Prácheň Museum** today.

Leaving the former castle courtyard, we now turn right to another open area just before the massive building which used to



Gothic Hall in the only preserved wing of the Royal Castle

serve as the Písek **Malthouse (Sladovna)**. This building served for the production of malt for the **Písek and Protivín breweries** for over a hundred years (1864 to 1973). Despite its size and height, it was built over the course of a mere two years, from 1862 to 1864. When the production of malt was terminated in 1973, new uses for such a large industrial architectural monument were sought out, including a textile storehouse for a while. Following **vast reconstruction** of part of the Malthouse, completed in 2007, an entirely new space was opened up. Two years later, this 1700 m² of exhibition space found its new use as a **cultural centre**.



Malthouse

The courtyard of the **Malthouse** has been transformed into a peaceful relaxation zone in the centre of the city, used in the summer months for more modest cultural events under the open

sky. Now let's return to Velké náměstí. We'll take advantage of our location on the northern side, and at the beginning of **Karlova Street** we can see an interesting **house sign** as a sailboat on the **House**



House at the Golden Ship on Velké náměstí



Our TIP

The brewery in the historic center of Písek follows the old and rich brewing tradition of this royal town. Beer is produced here using the more sophisticated method of classical fermentation technology with open fermentation, resulting in a traditional full-fledged beer like our ancestors knew, with all the original nutrients. Our beer is, of course, unfiltered and unpasteurized.



PORTFOLIO

Our bottom-fermented beers based on the blonde PÍSEK LAGER as our most popular brewery beer, complemented by the lighter FLORIÁN for summer drinking, and the stronger and full OTAKAR, awarded the Golden Beer Seal, popular especially during the colder times of the year. These blonde beers are complemented by an amber VIENNESE LAGER, whose popularity continues to rise.

The top-fermented beers are based on the regularly brewed CARDU-US (American Pale Ale – APA) and PIPA (India Pale Ale – IPA), supplemented by a series of Single Hop beers (beers brewed on the same raw material basis but using different hops). These top-fermented beers are complemented with other specialties.



AVAILABILITY

All beers can be tasted in the adjoining brewery restaurant together with traditional meals that complement beer. You can reserve the entire lounge with fireplace for group events. Beers are also available in plastic and glass bottles and in barrels of a variety of sizes



GUIDED TOURS

We offer excursions and, upon agreement, the opportunity to participate in the entire process of brewing beer with the brewer, all with detailed explanations and final tasting.

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f piseckypivovar



at the Golden Ship. The house's Late Baroque façade is worth noting. Taking Karlova Street would lead us to the river and the Stone Bridge.

But for now we'll go the opposite direction to **Heydukova Street**. This pleasant pedestrian zone will lead us to **Havlíčkovo náměstí**. This was named Floriánské Square until the end of the 19th century after the **statue of St. Florian**, placed here in 1735. This Baroque statue honouring the saint of all fire-related occupations (firemen, chimney sweeps, metallurgists, etc.) changed its location on the square twice in the past to make way for the increasing demands of transportation.

If we have the inclination and the time, we can take a short walk down **Nerudova Street** and turn right onto **Soukenická Street**. This is where we'll see the façade of the Písek **Synagogue**,

built by the Jewish community in 1871 but serving only until the Nazi occupation. Even though the building survived the war, it was not renewed afterwards. The Synagogue is presently undergoing reconstruction. Before continuing on our excursion through the sights of Písek, let's return to **Havlíčkovo náměstí** then to **Heydukova Street**. Passing through one of the passageways in the houses lining Heydukova Street, we go to **Palacký Gardens**. Here we find ourselves on a site where there used to be a defensive moat and mounds along the municipal fortifications. After their dissolution and the moat was filled in, a **town park** was established in the 1830's and 40's to the credit of **Josef Schrenk**, who was the Regional Governor in Písek from 1840 to 1850. A number of trees and bushes were planted, and a water fountain was installed in the centre. The year 1886 saw



One of Písek's many playgrounds. The wooden whale sculpture is located in Palacký Gardens.



František Palacký Monument from 1886

the installation of a **monument to the historian František Palacký** and an **monument to an Austrian footsoldier of the 11th infantry regiment** in 1916. **Two more monuments** were erected in 1935: one was dedicated to the **poet Heyduk**, the second to the **heroes of the First World War**. All monuments, however, have had a turbulent fate: Palacký had to disappear during the German occupation but came back in 1945, just like the monument to Adolf Heyduk. The monument to the war heroes didn't survive the occupation, unfortunately, and the Austrian soldier was removed for good in 1918 because the statue's base bore the initials of Emperor Franz Josef I. There are two more interesting buildings in Palacký Gardens, however. The **music pavilion** was installed in 1923.

The shape of the pavilion's **roof**, which covered the stage sometime later gave the pavilion the nickname **"the Shell"**. It was newly reconstructed in 2006 and is a popular place for all sorts of cultural events in the summer. The biggest attraction to Palacký Gardens, though, is doubtlessly the renowned pub **"U Reinerů"**. It was founded in 1844 and was originally named U Jasana. The house actually has its own "literary" history, since the poet

Did you know that...

There is a **cryptogram** inside the **Empirical pavilion** from 1841 dedicated to **Governor Schrenk**. In the first letters of the inscription *"Šlechtný Co Hodného Rád, Ejhle Následky, Koná MDCCCXXXI"*, we easily reveal the name of the park's creator.



Schrenk pavilion in Palacký Gardens

ADOLF HEYDUK (1835–1923)

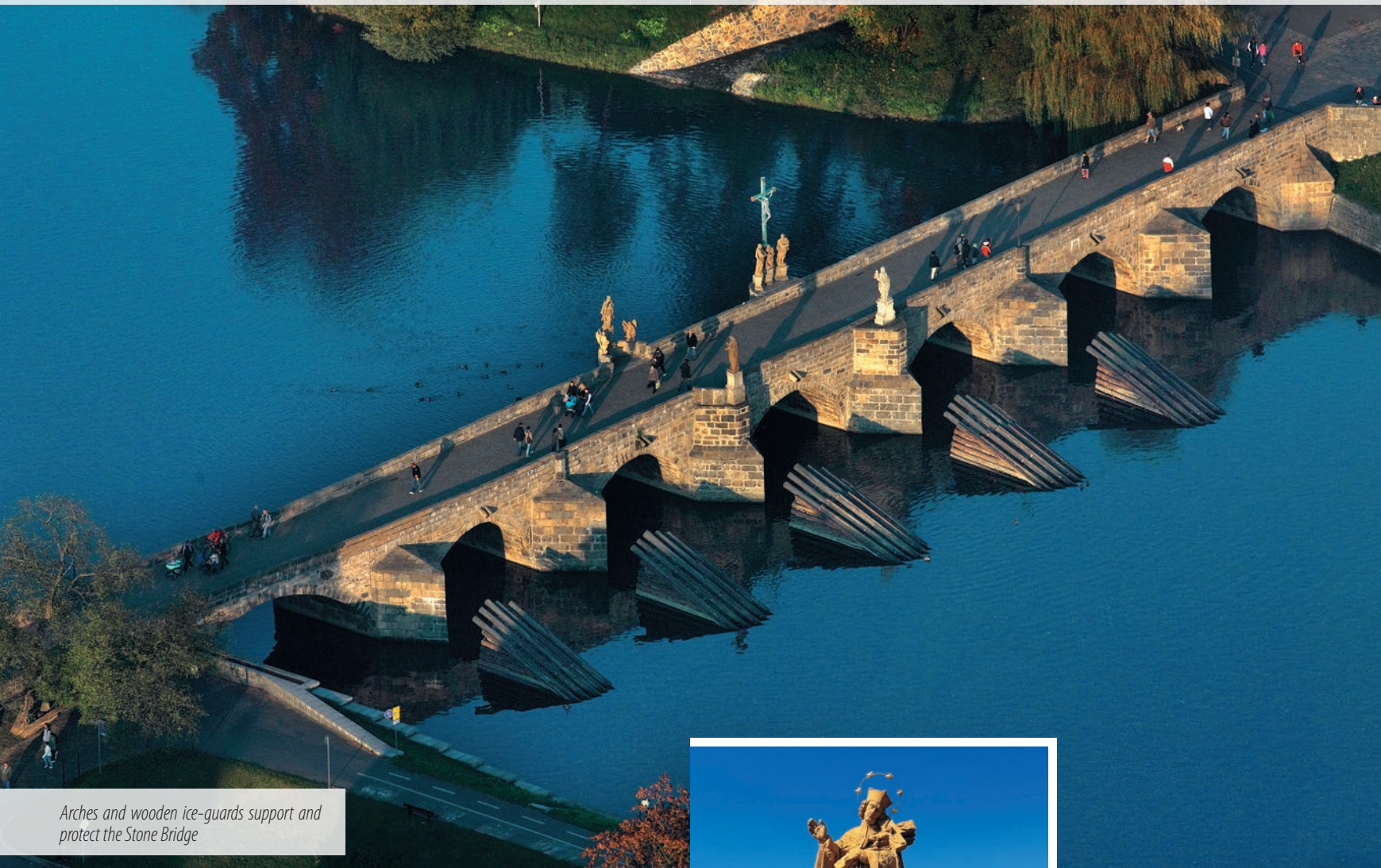
Poet, representative of the May School (Jan Neruda, Karolína Světlá, Vítězslav Hálek and others). He was born in the east Czech village of Předhradí near Skuteč (formerly Rychmburk). **He lived in Písek from 1860**, when he accepted a teaching position for drawing, calligraphy, and architecture at the local Hoch Realschule **until his death**. In 1920, the first Czechoslovakian president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk came to Písek to congratulate him personally for his 85th birthday. Adolf Heyduk is buried at the Slavín cemetery in Vyšehrad, in Prague.



Adolf Heyduk (see personages) lived here for twenty years. He finally married the restaurant owner's daughter, Emilie Reiner, who was 25 years younger than the poet. The north side of the gardens is bordered by **Tylova Street**. Behind it, roughly across from the U Reinerů pub, is the **Fraňa Šrámek Theatre**. Just about at the level of the Schrenk Pavilion is the beginning of **Tyršova Street**. If our stroll takes us this far, we'll see the **Sokolovna** building from 1896 as well as a Neo-renaissance building from 1900 at the end of the street. This building was designed and built by the architect Jan Koula on the order of the popular **Adolf Heyduk**. Today, the building serves as his **memorial** and is open to the public, featuring the poet's study, dining room, and social parlour. All rooms still contain the original furnishings. Let's return to the park and turn right until we come to **Fügenerovo náměstí**. The main feature of this square is the **Monument to Czechoslovak RAF Pilots**. The monument is devoted to Czech heroes of WWII and has kept its original appearance as a broken propeller blade.



Fügenerovo náměstí – Czech RAF Pilot Memorial



Arches and wooden ice-guards support and protect the Stone Bridge

Now we have reached the **Otava River**, and we find ourselves before the best-known and most important monument in Písek, the **Stone Bridge**, officially named "**Kamenný Most**" since 2007. It was built before the end of the 13th century, making this the **oldest bridge in the Czech Republic** (older than Prague's Charles Bridge) and likely the **second oldest bridge in Central Europe** (only the stone bridge in Regensburg is older,

from 1135–1146). The Písek bridge used to be an important link in the Golden Path which crossed the Otava at this site. The structure is 110 meters long and 6.25 meters wide, is supported by **seven arches**, and gives the impression of a small Charles Bridge. Six arches are original, but the seventh is from 1768 and is double the normal width. **Six bridge pillars** were built in the Middle Ages on dry ground; the builders built



The Stone Bridge today is decorated by copies of the original sandstone sculptures

construction pits out of protective walls so that the water could flow around. It's a pity that the **two towers** which guarded the entrance to the bridge on both sides haven't survived. The first fell victim to the **great flood of 1768** (the poor watchman is said to have been washed away with the tower), while the second tower didn't suit the growing demands of transportation and was mercilessly **demolished in 1825**. The **decorative**



The second oldest bridge in Central Europe

Baroque sculptures lining the bridge are worth noting – these are replicas, and the sandstone originals can be seen in the Prácheň Museum. The bridge has been exposed to the onslaught of **floods** several times throughout the centuries, for example in 1432 and 1768. The most demanding test was evidently the “thousand year flood” of 2002, when the Otava water level rose so high that it tore off a stone wall.

Despite the current's fifty-fold increase in force, however, the bridge itself withstood the flood.

Standing on the bridge and looking downstream, we can see a striking **complex of colourful modern buildings** on the **left bank**. This is the original work of architect Jaroslav Trávníček and was completed in 1999. This ambitious project divided the opinions of the lay and professional public at first, but this “**Titanic**” of Písek, evoking the image of a long narrow boat with extensions, has now become an inseparable part of the banks of the Otava. Just past the Stone Bridge, we turn left and walk upstream along the new **bicycle and walking path**. Look back over your shoulder to enjoy a nice view of the bridge on its pillars and arches, the wing of the **castle** and **Prácheň Museum** on the opposite bank of the Otava, and the massive **Malthouse** with its characteristic greenish façade. We gradually come to



The first of a row of modern buildings (1999) on the left bank of the Otava

where the river is split by a **weir with asluice**. On the other side of the weir, notice the **hydroelectric plant** (see page 28). Now we'll leave the embankment's promenade and turn off towards the former **municipal cemetery**. It was founded in 1549 and was in use until the 1950's. In 1975 the cemetery was converted into a **piety park** where we

can now visit the final resting place of several important Písek personages. The violinist **Otakar Ševčík** is buried here, for example, as is historian **August Sedláček** and the prematurely deceased daughters of poet Adolf Heyduk. In 1576, the **Church of the Holy Trinity** was built in the cemetery, but it is now mostly used for concerts and various social events.



Otava with weir, Malthouse and municipal power plant in the background



Children's playground on the Town Island



After our tour of the former cemetery (piety park), we pass over the **iron and concrete footbridge** from 1929 to the right bank of the Otava. The bridge passes over to the **Town Island** which formed as a result of sediment build-up before the construction of the weir, which dramatically slowed the river current here. The island used to serve the Písek shooting club from the 18th century, who had their shooting range here, their bowling, and of course their pub. The island passed into the ownership of the city by the end of the 19th century, and a new summer **restaurant** was built. A faithful and functioning replica of the restaurant stands here today, built in 1996. You can pass a pleasant summer day here in a quiet environment, and your kids can enjoy one of Písek's many **playgrounds**. Just next to the playground, you'll find a **minigolf** course.



On the **right bank** of the Otava, we go down **Ostrovní Street** around the municipal **indoor swimming pool**, pass the **House of Children and Youth** on the corner, and turn left onto **Putimská Street**. We soon come to where we can get the best view of the preserved remnants of the former **town fortifications**. This is formed by a

fortification wall, a protective tower (bastion), and a renewed fortification moat. The moat was renovated in 2006 into a small **park** and soon became a popular relaxation spot for locals and visitors alike. We can pass through **Katovská gate** in the fortification wall from **Podskalí Street** to get to the park.

Former fortification moat, now a place for relaxation

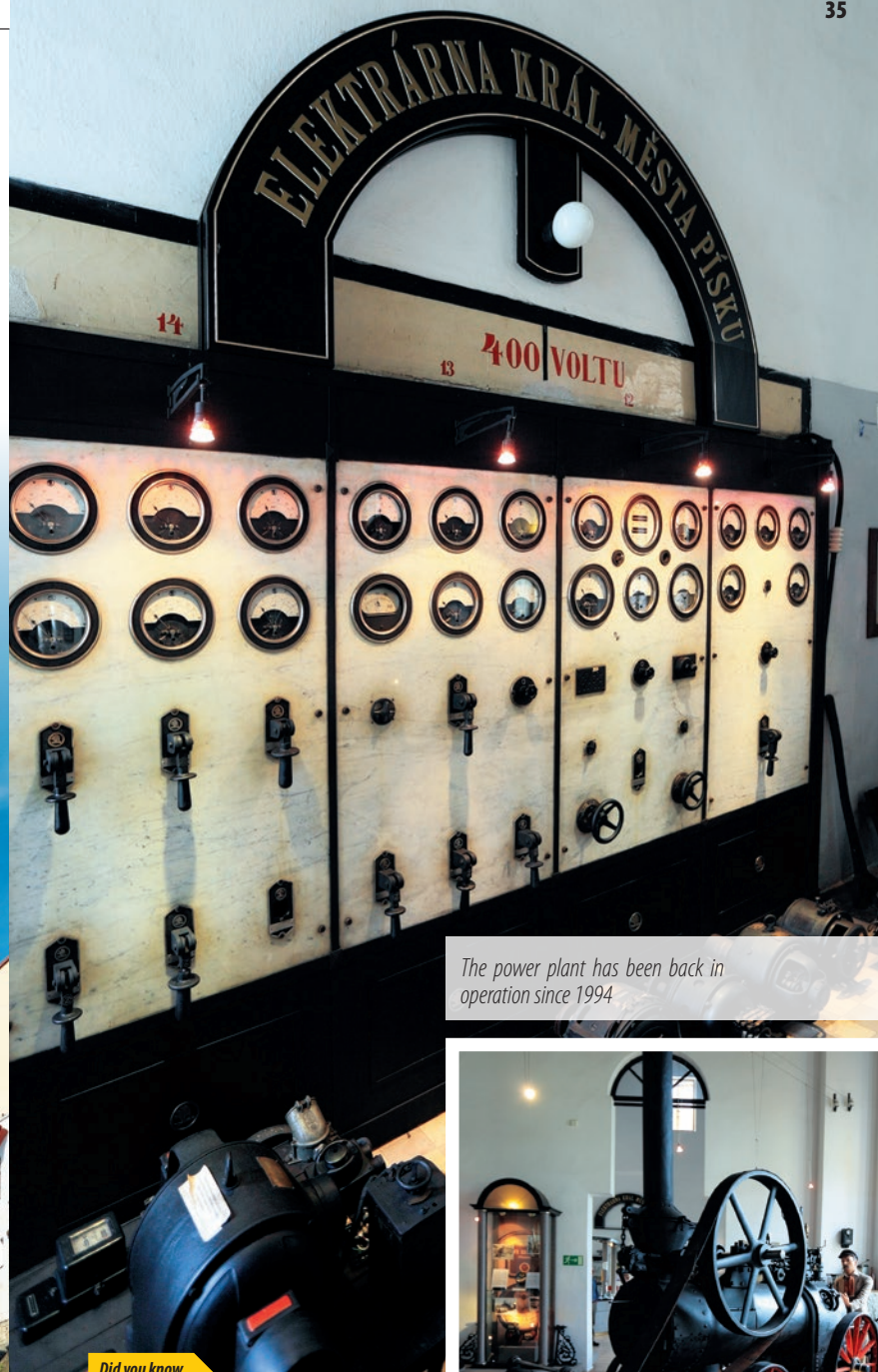


If we continue instead along **Podskali Street** towards the river, we'll reach the oldest public **hydroelectric plant** in Bohemia, proudly known as the **Křížik Power Plant of the Royal City of Písek**. It was established in 1888 to provide electricity to the street arc lamps. The lamps were installed and illuminated by **František Křížik** on June 23, 1887, making Písek the first city in Bohemia which could boast a permanent **public lighting system**. The power plant was

converted from the former Podskalský Mill. The first generators were driven by a subwater mill wheel which was replaced in 1901 by two modern Francis turbines. The plant produced electricity until 1986, then underwent extensive construction and was put back into operation in 1994, this time as an official **technical monument**. In 1997, the plant opened a public **exhibition of public lighting and energy**.



One sight that you shouldn't miss during your visit to Písek: the Power Plant



The power plant has been back in operation since 1994

Did you know that...

The exhibition of energy and municipal lighting features several interesting machines and devices



We now return along Podskalí Street to the fortification walls, then we turn past the bastion tower onto **Street (Fráni Šrámka)**. Crossing above the fortification moat, we come to where **Putim Gate** stood until 1836. The gate no longer exists, but it has been immortalized in a Czech **folk song**. It stood between houses No. 131 and 132 and was one of three city gates (the other two were **Prague Gate**, also known as the Lower Gate, and **Budějovice Gate**). Putim Gate was the first to be demolished. Stones were falling from the dilapidated gate onto the traffic below, so the townspeople decided to tear it down rather than fix it. During the demolition, several **cannonballs** were discovered from the many times when Písek was besieged and bombarded. The cannonballs were then inserted into the facades of the adjacent house, which was then aptly named "At the Cannonballs", or "**U Koulí**". This house has a rich literary history. The house has served as a residence to **writer Josef Holeček**, and **poet Adolf Heyduk** (see page 25), and the poet and writer **Fráňa Šrámek** spent his childhood and youth here. Valuable Renaissance **sgraffito** was recently discovered and restored on the façade of the house "U Koulí".



One of the best preserved sections of the Old Town's former fortification system



House sign at "The White Lamb"

From Fráňa Šrámek Street we turn left onto **Drlíčov Street** which leads us to the city's dominant feature, the Deanery Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary. Along the way, though, be sure to notice the interesting façades of the burgher house "**At the Silver Denarii**" bearing the coats of arms of the five cities of the Prácheň region: Strakonice, Blatná, Písek, Vodňany, and Sušice. The decorations come from 1940 and also include a panoramic view onto Písek and a simple map of the city centre. A bit closer to the church, we find the house "**At the White Lamb**", named after the **house sign** on its Baroque façade. There are many more houses in Písek with interesting house signs. This tradition is a holdover from the time when houses weren't marked by numbers (before 1770), but by the names

of their owners or by individual symbols. One of the nicest and most important of them is the symbol of the sailboat (**At the Golden Ship** which we saw when we viewed the town square) and the relief of the elephant (**At the Elephant**, across from the old bridge).

Did you know that...

There is a **folk song** about Putim Gate in which a student sings about "**two maidens watching**" him from behind. Few know that there are actually two maidens near Putim Gate in Písek today. These are (unfortunately) not real ladies, but **stone reliefs of two heads** on the wall of a house near the stone steps. The reliefs are actually younger than the song, which means that an unknown sculptor drew inspiration from the folk song and not the other way around. . .



Our TIP

KOČKAVÁRNA – the cat café

Excellent coffee, desserts, and relaxing comfort in the company of furry cat friends.



KočKavárna

Žižkova 246, Písek

Telefon: +420 732 622 855

f Kočkavárna v Písku
www.kockavarna.cz





The "classroom" on Bakaláře (Bachelors) reminds us that a school once stood here.

We are now standing on an area known as **Bakaláře (Bachelors)**. The name is reminiscent of the times when a schoolhouse stood here from 1565 to 1853. The building site has been marked since 2009 by a **stylized "classroom"** made out of granite blocks. Before we begin our tour of the church, notice the structure reminiscent of

a "glass well". This is actually a remarkable **archaeological find** — preserved burial mounds from the Bronze Age. What we see now are replicas of the objects originally found in the grave.

The Dean's Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary dates back to the second half of the 13th century. It was built as a three-nave



View from the gallery of the tower of the Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary towards the Písek Mountains. Reservations to climb the tower at www.pisek.eu or in the Infocentrum



Did you know that...

The clock on the Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary has the minute and hour hands reversed — the minutes are shown by the small hand, while the big hand shows the full hour. If you'd like to know why the clock's engineers chose such a curious design, perhaps the tower watchman will be glad to explain it to you during a visit to the tower. You might learn a few other things as well...

pseudo-basilica with the main nave closed in by a pentagonal presbytery. The church used to have two low towers, both of which looked like the lower northern tower (left, when looking from the front). At the end of the 15th century, the southern tower was rebuilt and raised to today's 72 meters. It is **open to the public** (admission fee is donation-based) and features perfectly preserved beams from the 15th century. The gallery stands at a height of 42.5 meters and offers a magnificent view of Písek and its surroundings. The sightseeing tour is accompanied by the tower-keeper, something that evidently happens only in Písek; the number of visitors is limited, so please **reserve** your tour in advance (www.pisek.eu).

There are **four bells** on the tower of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. They bear the names of St. Cyril and Methodius, St. Wenceslas, Virgin Mary, and Master Jan Hus. The shells were cast in the years 1991–1992 in the bell workshop of Marie Tomášková-Dytrchová in the town of Brodek u Přerova.

The **Gothic church** is the work of the Písek-

Zvíkov building works (as are the Stone Bridge and Royal Palace) and was enriched with Renaissance gables on the northern nave in the 16th century. The **Baroque chapel** was built in 1741 to 1748, consecrated to St. John of Nepomuk, and contains a veduta which captures Písek's appearance before the middle 18th century. The church's **interior is Neo-Gothic**, although it also contains Romanesque and Gothic **wall murals** with biblical motives. The painting of the Madonna on the side altar is worth noting. This is a copy (the original was stolen in 1975) of a valuable panel painting from the 14th century, named the **Madonna**



The former Hotel Dvořáček is a beautiful example of the Art Nouveau architectural style

of Písek.

A bit further, in the gardens behind the church, we can see the historic **first monument** erected in Písek. It was revealed to honour fallen Austrian soldiers who died in the bloody battle near the northern Italian towns of **Melegnano** and **Solferino** in 1859. There were a total of **872 soldiers** who met their fate in these battles; they were members of the **11th infantry regiment** from South Bohemia.

The **stone lion**, the work of Czech-German sculptor Emanuel Max (1810–1901), is shown on the monument stepping on **two snakes**, the symbols of Austria's enemies, France and Sardinia. We continue on along **Budovcova Street** until we reach the **intersection** with **Chelčického Street**. Here, on the site where the Budějovice Gate once stood, we look across the street to see a magnificent **Art Nouveau building** with an ornately **decorated façade** – this

used to be one of the most luxurious hotels in South Bohemia, the former **“Dvořáček Hotel by Archduke Franz Ferdinand”**. It was built from 1898 to 1899 on the design of architect Štech and commissioned by the local **pharmacist Rudolf Dvořáček**. At the time, the hotel was quite the accomplishment, boasting the most **modern equipment and furnishings** of the time (electric lighting, central steam heating). The hotel even had its own “bus” which transported its guests to and from all train connections. The hotel is also remarkable for its exceptionally decorative façade, dominated by a strip of **eleven sgraffito pictures** with thematic scenes from the history of Písek and the region (panning gold from the Otava, rafters, Písek town celebrations, etc.). The author of the sgraffito, depicted between the windows of the first and second floors, is **painter Josef Bosáček**, who worked from the **sketches of Mikoláš Aleš**. During the 1920's and 30's, part of the hotel also served as the **Otakar Ševčík international violin school**.

Did you know that...

The foundation of the **International Red Cross** is closely related to the **Battle at Solferino**. The battle marked a decisive conflict in Italy's struggle for independence (1859–1860). The allied armies of France and Sardinia defeated **Austria's forces**, thus opening the way for Italy's unification. The bloody event inspired **Swiss Jean Henri Dunant** to establish an organization to help and protect injured soldiers. Four years later, in 1863, the **International Committee of the Red Cross** was finally founded in Geneva, and was personally attended by **Emperor Franz Josef I** (but never again).



From the hotel, we continue down **Chelčického Street** slightly downhill, and we soon come to **Alšovo náměstí (Aleš Square)**. It's also known as the "Small" square, and in Medieval times it was the main town square where markets were held. The first object that grabs our attention is the **Marian Plague Column**



Municipal Library

in the centre of the square. The column is from **1715** and is the work of the Plzeň sculptor Christian Widemann and Horažďovice mason František Zeber. It was erected as a symbol of gratitude for averting the last great **plague** that raged through Bohemia in 1715. In addition to the statue of the Virgin Mary at the peak of the column, there are also sculptures of nine other saints. On the northern (farthest) side of Alšovo Square stands an originally Gothic **house No. 85** with a classicist facade decorated with stone vases. **House No. 75-77** on the upper side of the square, with its commemorative plaque dedicated to J.A. Comenius, is the **oldest school building** in the city. It stands on the site of the original building where the **first Písek Gymnasium school** was located. Since 2019, this has been the seat of the **Municipal Library**, which with its year of foundation (1841) is **one of the oldest in Bohemia**. If we look back towards where we came from, we'll see the corner Neo-Renaissance building with a small tower in all its glory. This house, or rather palace, is named "**U Černého orla**", or "**At the Black Eagle**" (No. 50). The building houses medical offices today, but it was originally built in 1889–1890 as a grandiose headquarters for the local Civic Credit Union. The impressive sgraffito decorations on the façade display figural motives and are the work of renowned painter **Adolf Liebscher** (1857–1919); he also took part in decorating the National Theatre in Prague.



House "At the Black Eagle" on Alšovo náměstí



Alšovo náměstí is connected to Velké náměstí via **Jungmannova Street**. In the past, this used to be a high-class residential area, so the wealthier burgher residents of Písek enjoyed building their prestigious houses here. A few good examples are numbers 31 and 32, **two Baroque houses** built on earlier Gothic structures. The left one (No. 31, with the red façade) has kept its original arcade; the house next door used to have one as well. If you look closely, you can see a glassed niche between the four windows with a colourful statue of St. John of Nepomuk.

At the end of Jungmannova Street, on **Velké náměstí** itself, we reach the monastery **Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross**. The church faces the square to display its interesting **Renaissance sgraffito decoration**. The church is the only remaining structure of the monastery; the monastery was founded together with the town, but it was destroyed by the Hussites in 1419. It was renewed during the period of recatholization after the Battle on White Mountain, but the Josephinian reforms closed it for good. The church tower is very low and is topped by a simple pyramidal roof, holding two hanging bells from 1557 and 1673. There are two **crypts** beneath the church; one of them is the burial site for members of the monastery order while the other is the final resting place for members of the noble Švamberg family.

*The route that this guidebook describes (the one you've just finished) has acquainted you with all the most interesting and important sites of the **historical centre of Písek**; we hope you've enjoyed a pleasant stroll as well. Your quest for knowledge can continue with a trip to the city's nearby surroundings, which also offer several interesting sites.*



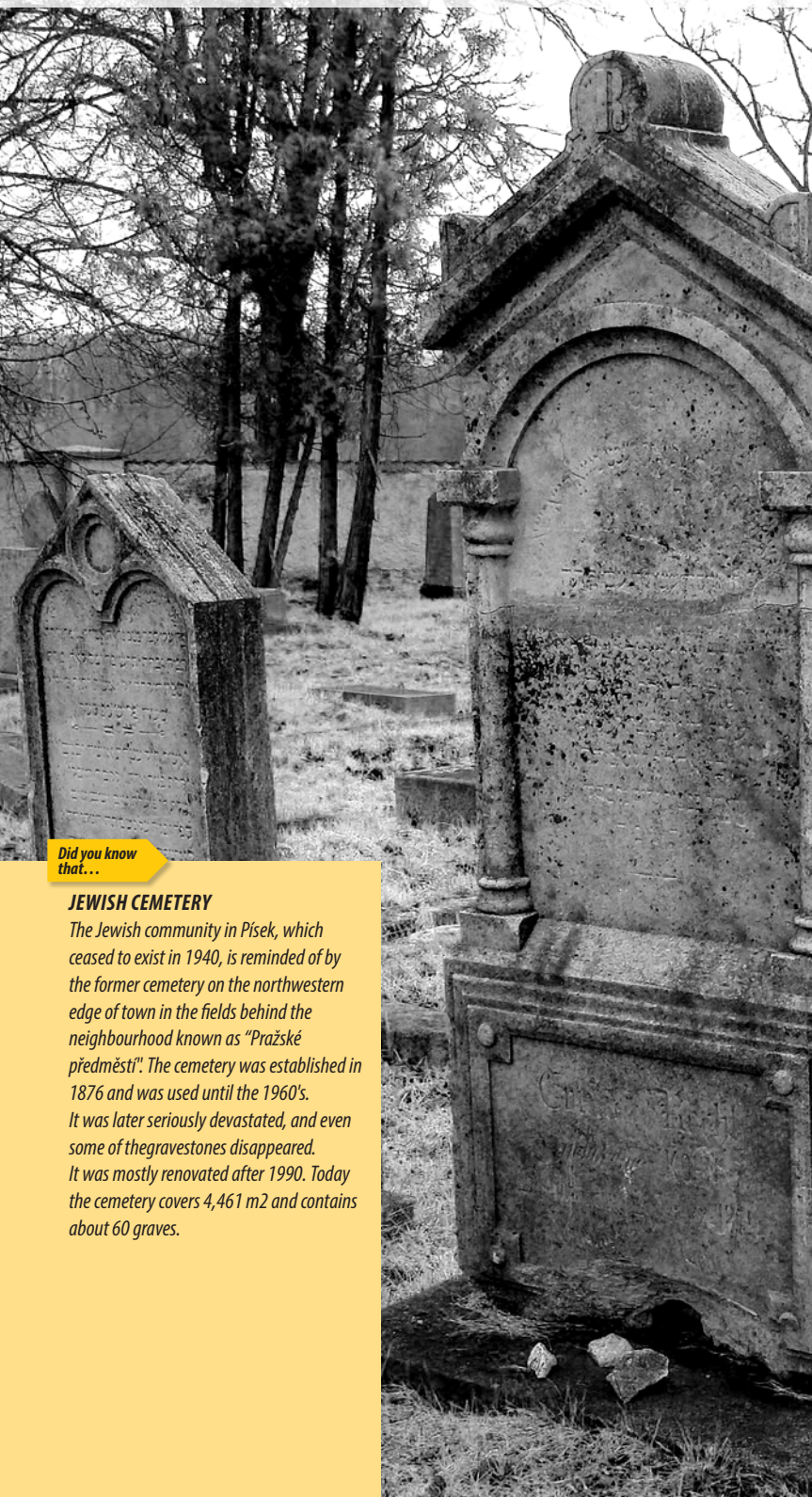
The orientation of the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was reversed — the altar is on the western side



PROVINCIAL STUD FARM

The first mention of a facility for stud stallions comes from 1811, but modern stud farming in Písek comes from the beginning of the 20th century. At this time, studs were kept at the new stud farm built at the edge of Písek in **1901–1902**. At first, the breeds were taken care of by the **army**, since Písek was a garrison town, then in 1924 the stud farm passed into civil administration. The stud farm complex houses spacious and bright stables as well as a covered and open **riding school**, an isolation stable, insemination centre, and administrative complex with apartments. The entire complex, which has been a national cultural monument since 2010, is built from fair-face brickwork supplemented with Art Nouveau elements.

Provincial stud farm



Did you know that...

JEWISH CEMETERY

The Jewish community in Písek, which ceased to exist in 1940, is reminded of by the former cemetery on the northwestern edge of town in the fields behind the neighbourhood known as "Pražské předměstí". The cemetery was established in 1876 and was used until the 1960's. It was later seriously devastated, and even some of the gravestones disappeared. It was mostly renovated after 1990. Today the cemetery covers 4,461 m² and contains about 60 graves.



Did you know that...

FOREST CEMETERY

When the cemetery at the Holy Trinity Church ceased to provide sufficient space in the 1920's, the decision was made to build a new burial ground. The new cemetery was placed in the forest in 1933, on the northeastern outskirts of the city; the first burial there took place in 1934 (the locals did not trust the new cemetery). The ceremonial hall dates back to much later, to 1980. The unique cemetery architecture spreads out over 12 hectares on a terraced landscape and provides an eternal resting place for many of the city's important personalities such as composer Otakar Jeremiáš and painter Václav Rožánek.



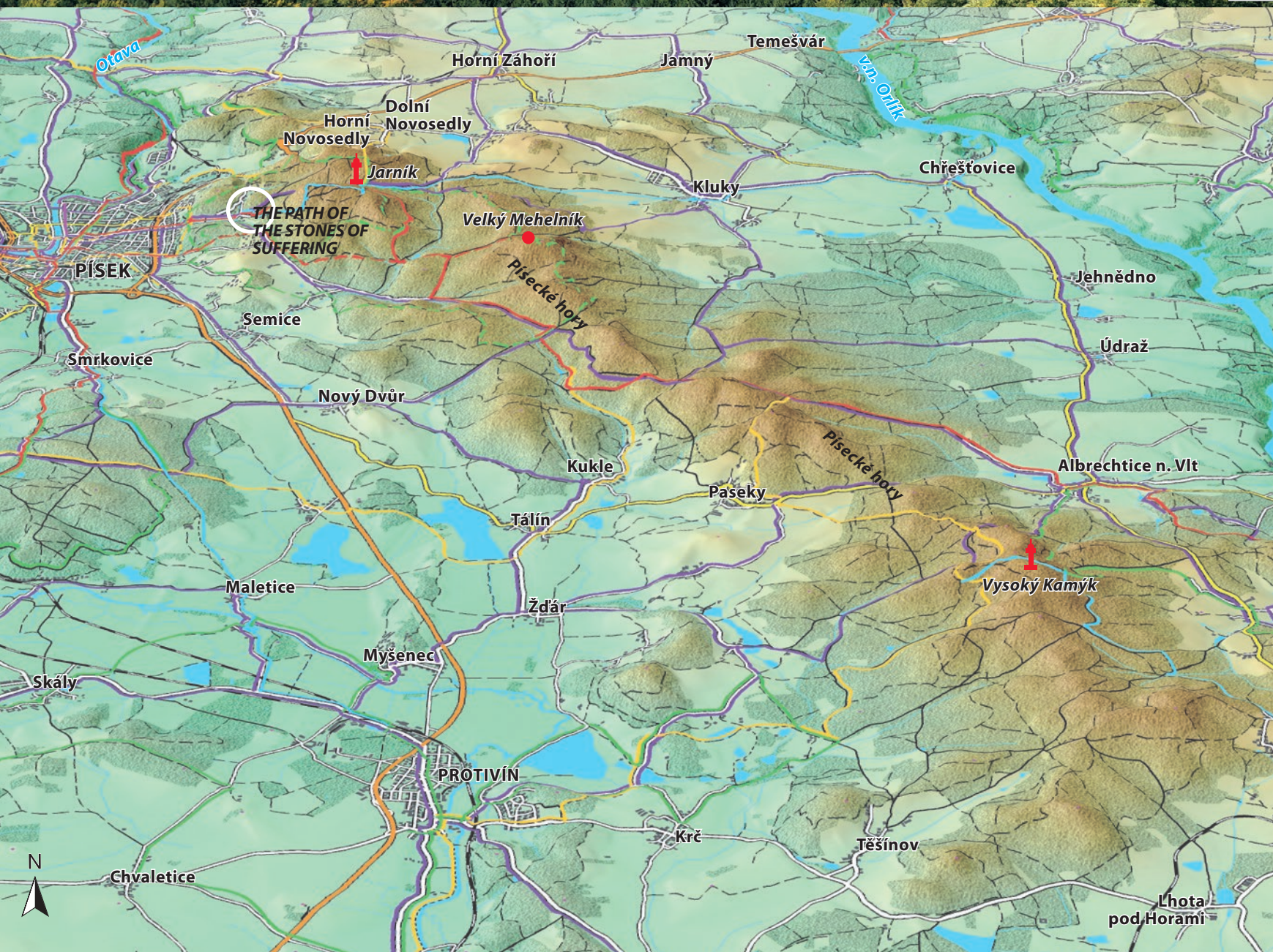
MILITARY CEMETERY, one of Písek cemeteries, established in 1914

PÍSEK MOUNTAINS

This is a mountain ridge covered with mixed forest growth that extends from the eastern edge of town southeastwards towards Albrechtice nad Vltavou and Temelín. This geological formation is properly known as the “**Mehelnická vrchovina**”, or Mehnice Highlands, and is part of the Central Bohemian Highlands. Its highest peak is **Velký Mehník** (632 meters). Most of the Písek Mountains are close to city of Písek and are a favourite place for rest and relaxation. The mountains are interwoven with plenty of **paths and trails**, especially in the areas close to the city itself, and many of them are suitable for **cycling** as well. The most sought-after areas are Velký Mehník and **Jarník** with its observation tower (see page 41), the lakes Němec and Nový Rybník, the U Vodáka valley, Živec hiking cottage, and more. A significant part of the Písek Mountains was declared a quiet zone in the 1970s, then later a **nature park**.



Písek as seen from the Jarník observation tower



EDUCATIONAL TRAILS IN THE PÍSEK MOUNTAINS

The oldest **educational trail** in the Písek Mountains is the one named "**Jewel Trail**" (Cesta dražokamů). It's 7 kilometers long, begins in the "Amerika" forest park, and covers many points of interest close to the town. The trail finishes at the Živec hiking cottage. Another interesting trail is the **educational trail "From Ptáčkova to Živec"**. This one is 8.5 km

Písek Mountains is the **Havírký Gold Mines**. The old mine shafts are still visible today, although they're mostly filled in or flooded. Gold-bearing silica was mined here from the 14th to 17th centuries, and

Did you know that...

The Živec cottage, built in 1933, was one of the film scenes for the second episode of the notorious "Homolka family" films.



long and leads along the northern parts of the Písek Mountains. The "**Great Circle through the Písek Forests**" (**Velký okruh**) begins at the intersection Na Trubách, is 18 km long, and leads to the highest peak of the Písek Mountains, Velký Mehelník (632 m), as well as to the former Havírký gold mine. This route's distance and difficulty (steeper climbing at Velký Mehelník) makes it more suitable for experienced hikers. Gold wasn't just panned in Písek, but it was also mined from the ground. The best known preserved remnant of gold mining in the

This film series paints a stark picture of Czech society in the middle 20th century.

the mined minerals were taken to mills along the Otava River for processing. There were attempts to revive the mining industry in Havírký in the 18th and 20th centuries, but they proved unsuccessful.

Hůrky

This is a **circular educational trail** passing through the nursery forest of **Hůrky** near the village of Smrkovice (ca. 3 km south of Písek). The area is bordered by the villages of Smrkovice, Selibov, Putim,



Jarník observation tower

and Heřmaň. This **6 km long trail with 17 stations** with information panels is designed for both **hikers and cyclists** and acquaints visitors with the challenges of taking care of the forest, with forest management, and with breeding animals. The starting point is the station U Dubu, accessible from Smrkovice along the blue trail. Bicyclists can hook up along bike trails No. 1043 and 1044.

Jarník observation tower

This steel observation tower standing on a hill of the same name (606 meters) is nearly 60 meters tall and was ceremonially opened on 9 October 1997. After conquering 182 steps, you find yourself on an observation deck at a height of 34.6 meters where you can enjoy a beautiful view onto the city of Písek. In clear weather, you can see the Central Bohemian Highlands, Brdy, the Czech/Moravian Highlands, Blanský Forest, and the peak of the Šumava Mountains. The tower is unique in its double spiral staircase – one goes up, the other goes down.

Getting there and opening times:

The observation tower is **open year round**. Heading eastwards from Písek, go to the Živec cottage, then follow the blue trail about 700 meters to the tower.
GPS: 49°18'28.727"N, 14°11'32.816"E

Vysoký Kamýk observation tower

This tower has stood here at 627 meters above sea level since 1941. Originally it was a **seven-sided stone tower** used for surveying, and in 2011 was extensively reconstructed to hold cellphone operator antennae. The new trussed construction is 46 meters high and is also seven-sided. A lookout platform was added at a height of **32.85 m** above the ground, so this multifunctional structure also serves as a lookout tower, providing a 360° view of the landscape. It was opened to the public on 1 May 2012. There are 166 steps leading up to the platform.

Open to the public:

May to November
Tel.: +420 385 734 403, +420 777 861 050
www.vsemyslice.eu
GPS: 49°13'52.8312"N 14°17'50.0136"E

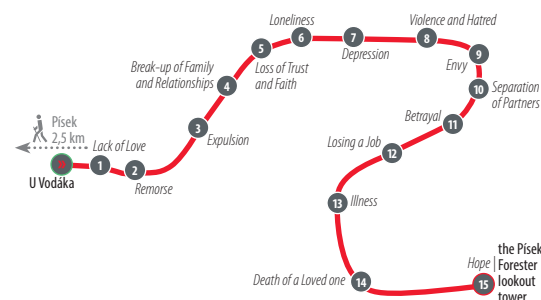


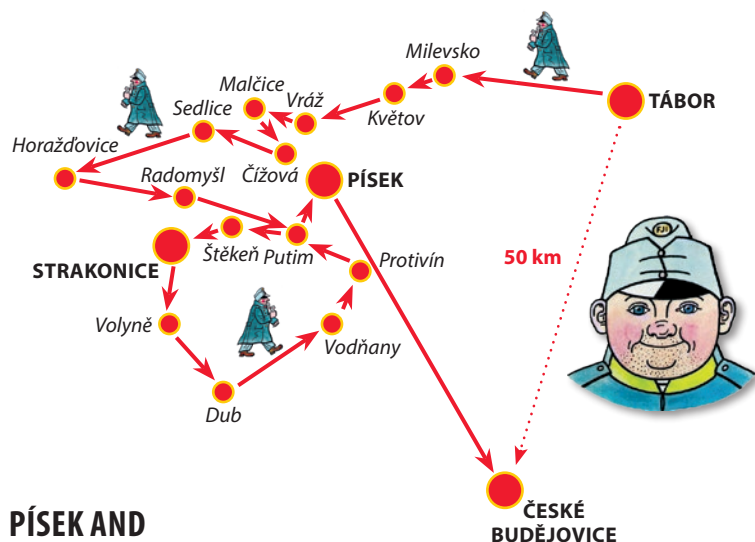
THE PATH OF THE STONES OF SUFFERING

1,5 km



A “Stations of the Cross for Modern Man” set in the charming landscape of the Písek Mountains since 2014. Like the Christian Stations of the Cross, the Stones of Suffering have 14 stops – stones that symbolize the fourteen pains. On each of them is a metal circle with a specifically named pain – Exclusion, Abandonment, Envy, Illness, Betrayal, etc. The ruby lens symbolizes a drop of blood. The culmination of the journey, however, is the 15th stop, named Hope, so the end is actually the beginning. Those absolving this journey are rewarded by a magnificent viewpoint (the Písek Forester lookout tower).





PÍSEK AND JAROSLAV HAŠEK'S "GOOD SOLDIER ŠVEJK"

Písek is known for its association with many well-known Czech figures whose lives or works were somehow related to the city. The city, and especially its surroundings, are also known (especially to literature buffs) for one fictional character, but all the more famous for it – the Good Soldier Švejk, immortalized by the writer Jaroslav Hašek. In the chapter entitled “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis”, our hero sets off on foot from Tábor to the city of České Budějovice, but his journey actually ends in Písek. If we were to connect all the points that Švejk traversed, we would get a very peculiar zigzag nearly **200 km** long! Whether Hašek had a map at hand while writing the novel, or if he chose Švejk’s stops along the way to his regiment simply at random, one thing is for sure – he certainly created an original hiking route. Even if nobody ever absolves this route completely, we can still cover part of it. Every village and town along the way has its own colourful and picturesque charm. Even as Švejk said himself: “I like it everywhere in Bohemia; all along my travels I met very good people.”



Jaroslav Hašek (1883–1923)

The best-known stops along the route of Švejk’s march:

Tábor, Milevsko, Květov, Vráž, Malčín, Čížová, Sedlec, Horažďovice, Radomyšl, Putim, Štěkeň, Strakonice, Volyně, Dub, Vodňany, Protivín...

Did you know that...

One of the most well-known films made around Písek is called “*Poslušně hlásím*” (1957, directed by Karel Steklý), based on Hašek’s famous novels of the *Good Soldier Švejk*. There is one scene shot in Putim in which an old grandmother is serving Švejk potato soup. In the book, however, Švejk receives the grandmother’s soup in the village of Květov.

FILM SCHOOL IN PÍSEK

The Independent Film College in Písek was founded in 1996 by Vladana and Miloň Terč. Since 2004, the town also houses the Film Academy of Miroslav Ondříček.

A SELECTION OF FILMS MADE IN PÍSEK

Kluci na řece (1944, directed by Václav Krška, starring Jindřich Plachta)

Měsíc nad řekou (1953, film based on theatre play by Fráňa Šrámek, directed by Václav Krška, Písek native)

Stříbrný vítr (1954, film version of a novel by Fráňa Šrámek, directed by Václav Krška)

Z mého života (1955, directed by Václav Krška, film about B. Smetana. The film shows nice shots of the Stone Bridge and rafts on the Otava)

Hogo Fogo Homolka (1970, directed by Václav Papoušek. The film “stars” the Živec hiking cottage, where dying grandpa Homolkovic is drinking plum liquor with his friend and coins the Czech-known phrase that he “won’t survive until the plum harvest”)

Už zase skáču přes kaluže (1970, directed by Karel Kachyňa, the shots with the horses are filmed at the stud farm in Nový Dvůr in Písek)

30 případů majora Zemana – díl Mimikry (1972, directed by Jiří Sequens Sr.)

Lístek do památníku (1975, directed by František Filip. Poetic film starring Karel Höger and several other excellent Czech actors)

Trhák (1980, directed by Zdeněk Podskalský. The film shows the Písek outdoor cinema)

Dobrá voda – 6th episode of the TV series (1982, directed by František Filip)

Dobré světlo (1985, directed by Karel Kachyňa)

Discopříběh (1987, directed by Jaroslav Soukup)

V peřině (2011, directed by F. A. Brabec, 3D musical comedy)



Film shot from the making of *V peřině* (2011)



PÍSKOVIŠTĚ

The event traditionally takes place in May and marks the beginning of the tourist season. Its main attractions are sculptures made of sand brought onto the embankment on the left bank of the Otava River, just next to the Stone Bridge. Each year the “pískoviště” sand festival and its accompanying events feature a different thematic focus – e.g. in 2013, sculptures were created to celebrate the 770th anniversary of the first written mention of the city.



DOTKNI SE PÍSKU (TOUCH PÍSEK)

Since 1993, the town regularly hosts this festival, which offers a rich programme on several stages. Every visitor to the festival is sure to find his favourite activity. Every year, a historical theme is chosen for the festival, which usually goes back to the beginning of the historical festival, i.e. the period during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa. The festival was dedicated to this painter for the 160th anniversary of his birthday.



INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL

This festival takes place every year in the second part of August and is one of the most important events of Písek's cultural summer programme. There are a number of international ensembles that take place in the festival, often from very exotic countries. There are plenty of ensembles from our native Bohemia and Moravia too, of course. The festival has been taking place since the 1990's and is organized by the folklore ensemble Písečan.



ŠRÁMKŮV PÍSEK (ŠRÁMEK'S PÍSEK)

This is a nationwide presentation of experimental theatres which “provides a glimpse into the artistic work of amateur theatres from all corners of our republic”. There are no age or genre restrictions, and 2021 will be its 60th year.



EVENTS ON THE STONE BRIDGE

Spring celebrations, the opening of the tourist season, Coffee Day with important figures, lectures on interesting places, events, history, and personalities, a procession to commemorate St. John of Nepomuk, renewed traditions, Bijásek, summer film performances, St. Martin's Sunday meeting on the bridge, market fairs, cultural programs, performances about St. Martin, and tastings of St. Martin's wine with regional culinary specialties.





Orlík Castle

This originally Gothic royal castle stands on a high rock cliff above the Vltava River valley. After filling Orlík Lake in 1960... the water level rose almost up to the castle.

www.zamekorlik.cz

GPS: 49°30'46.809"N, 14°10'13.618"E



Zvíkov Castle

A fortified castle on the high rock cliffs above the confluence of the Vltava and Otava Rivers. It was first mentioned in 1234 and completed under the rule of Přemysl Otakar II.

www.hrad-zvikov.eu

GPS: 49°26'15.921"N, 14°11'34.338"E

Milevsko Monastery

This is a Premonstratensian monastery, probably founded in 1184 by Jiří of Milevsko; it is the oldest monastery in South Bohemia. Until its devastation during the Hussite Wars, it was the center of education for the entire region.

www.milevskoklaster.cz

GPS: 49°27'23.139"N, 14°22'5.623"E



Podolský Bridge

This elegant iron and concrete structure stretches out over the Orlík Reservoir valley along the road between Písek and Tábor. The project won a gold medal at the 1937 Paris exhibition. The bridge is 510 meters long.

GPS: 49°21'26.071"N, 14°16'23.150"E

Kestřany Stronghold

A complex of two medieval Gothic fortresses and a Baroque country house. The upper fortress is from the later 13th century. The buildings are privately owned and are currently undergoing reconstruction.

www.kestrany.cz

GPS: 49°16'14.158"N, 14°4'25.478"E



Putim

The cemetery here is the resting place of Jan Cimburá from the novel by J. Š. Baar. Putim is also known as one of the stops along Good Soldier Švejk's way to České Budějovice, from Hašek's novel.

www.putim.cz

GPS: 49°15'52.885"N, 14°7'9.342"E

The Information Centre of the nuclear power plant Temelín

There is an extensive exhibition prepared with spatial models and 3D projection.

www.temelinky.cz

GPS: 49°10'52.07"N, 14°23'9.611"E



Cemetery in Albrechtice nad Vltavou

The village is known for this picturesque cemetery whose peripheral wall is created by a number of small chapels. The chapels were decorated with folk paintings and versed gravestone inscriptions.

www.albrechticenadvltavou.cz

GPS: 49°15'23.390"N, 14°18'33.526"E



Čížová (South Bohemian Village of the Year 2010)

The crossroads of a number of hiking trails, home to one of the largest granaries in South Bohemia, Makov animal rescue station, and a hill with a church of St. James.

www.cizova.cz

GPS: 49°21'20.759"N, 14°5'40.852"E




Our TIP
PRÁCHEŇ COOKIES (HNĚTÝNKY)

for about 24 cookies, you'll need:

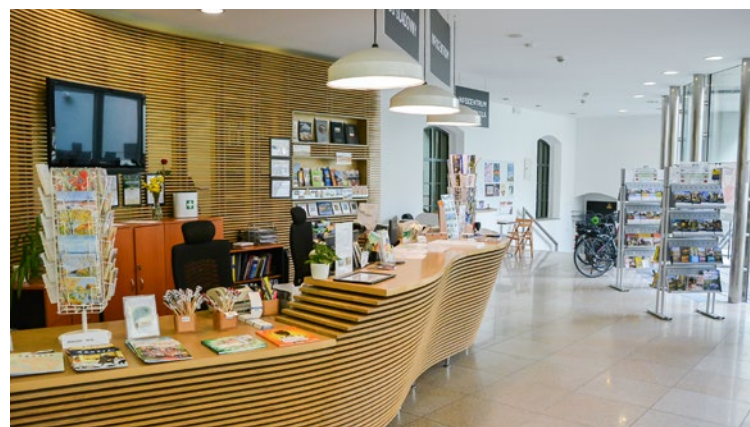
500 g butter
500 g sugar
contents of a vanilla pod
2 spoons of Czech potato rum (Tuzemák)
6 eggs
750 g medium ground flour
lemon peel

Whip the softened butter together with the sugar, vanilla, and egg yolk into a proper froth. Use the egg white to make a thick "snow," and add 2 spoons of powdered sugar to make it hold better. Mix the flour into the whipped butter mass — this will give you a thick dough. Mix the snow into the dough. If the dough is too thick to mix the snow, add a little cream to thin it. Grease a cookie mold pan well with butter and sprinkle with coarse flour, then

work the dough into the molds. Fill each mold only halfway so that it has room to rise during baking.

Note: don't add baking powder to the dough. The dough will expand well from the butter mass. If you really want to be sure, though, you can mix a half-spoonful of baking powder to the dough. When the cookies have partially cooled from the oven, knock them out of the pan and decorate with chocolate icing (up to 60% chocolate, warmed in a simmering pot of water; add a few spoons of oil to thin it) or sugared icing (confectionery sugar mixed with lemon juice). You can decorate the iced cookies with tiny decorative candies or pastry frosting.

Recipe provided by RODEPI


PÍSEK INFORMATION CENTER

Velké náměstí 113, 397 01 Písek

Tel.: +420 387 999 999, infocentrum@pisek.eu

www.pisek.eu

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Overview of accommodation and catering facilities
- Monuments and interesting places
 - Cultural events
 - Promotional materials
- Connection information for Písek local transportation, boat transport on Lake Orlik, bus and train connections
 - We sell tourist and hiking souvenirs
- Copying and printing services: B&W and colour
 - Fax, scan, public internet
 - Audio guide rental





Our TIP



Vodní mlýn
Hoslovice

WATER MILL HOSLOVICE

The **oldest water mill in Bohemia**, uniquely preserved, is located near Strakonice. This is a unique **national cultural heritage** site consisting of 3 buildings — the mill building, a stable with a timbered sty, and a barn with an outbuilding. The buildings have thatched roofs and are equipped with period furnishings. The mill building still holds the **preserved and operational grinding equipment**, granary, timbered room, and the living room with oven and tiled stove. The technical outbuildings still contain an array of agricultural equipment. The mill also features a **permanent ethnographic exhibition** "Life in the Šumava Forests". During the warm season, there are a number of **craft events with cultural program**. The water mill is managed by the Museum of the Central Otava Region in Strakonice, where you can visit the Rumpál observation tower during the summer and enjoy a view over the town and the **Strakonice** castle at the confluence of the Otava and Volýňka Rivers.



Opening Hours:
APRIL / MAY / SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER
Tuesday – Sunday 9:00 – 16:00
JUNE / JULY / AUGUST
Daily 9:00 – 17:00

Museum of the Central Otava Region
Zámek 1, 386 01 Strakonice
Tel. +420 380 422 608
+420 731 907 308
informace@muzeum-st.cz
mlyn@muzeum-st.cz
f /MSPHoslovice
www.muzeum-st.cz



Our TIP

THE KINGDOM OF TIME IN PROTIVÍN fun for the whole family

A unique way to spend time with the family and learn the craft of watchmaking crafts, in the Museum of Clocks and Watches in Protivín, South Bohemian.

The magnificent Art Nouveau villa from 1907 offers entertainment for visitors young and old alike. On the ground floor there are two playrooms for younger and older children, a small craft shop, and a café where you can enjoy some good coffee and sweets. When the weather is good, there is a large garden with an outdoor playground, a cable car, and a seating area. The first floor features a growing collection of clocks, alarm clocks, watches, tower clock machines, and various watchmaking attractions.



KRALOVSTVÍ ČASU

Purkyňova 255,
398 11 Protivín
Tel.: +420 776 213 215
info@kralovstvicasu.cz
Open daily 10:00 – 16:00
www.kralovstvicasu.cz
GPS: 49.2005250N, 14.2144950E





PROTIVÍN

The town of Protivín was **founded in ca. 1260** as a fortress with an adjacent village on a ford across the Blanice River. It was named after its **owner, Protiva**. The first written mention of the town comes from 1282. King Karel IV and his son Václav IV ran Protivín with their own managers. In 1562, Ferdinand I sold the Protivín estates to the **Lords of Hradec**. This period saw the creation of the ensemble of ponds northeast of Protivín by the administrator Zelendar. The next owners were the Vratislav brothers from Mitrovice. In 1711, Protivín became the property of the **prince of Schwarzenberg**. Protivín gained municipi-

The Protivín Chateau looks the same today as it did in 1731



Crocodile Zoo

pal status in 1899. At present, Protivín and its surrounding villages hold about five thousand inhabitants. In addition to the **crocodile zoo** with its 22 different types

of alligators and crocodiles, visitors can also visit the **museum** on the town square which features an interesting interactive mapped history of Protivín as well as an

exotic nature installation from the **collection of RNDr. Karel Pecl** (Indonesian jungle, savannah, world of insects, underwater world). Next to the church of St. Elizabeth of Portugal in the **kaplanka** building (reconstructed former hospital and chaplain's residence), visitors can enjoy a zoological museum with bone displays and thermo-plastic models of large mammals – mostly rhinoceros, a permanent exhibition of the work of the Protivín native **Jiří Kolář**, artist and poet – and a gallery featuring short-term exhibitions of artists, photographs, and collectors. For hikers and bicyclists, Protivín features two interesting **educational trails** – Zelendárky (11 km) and "Along the bank of Blanice river" (23 km). The town also features a traditional **New Year's fireworks** display with a surprise-filled program, a **St. Anna's market** in

the summer, the **town festival** in August with fun throughout the day for visitors of all types, and a magical meeting on the town square to light the **Christmas tree** on the first Sunday of Advent.



Protivín – town square



Concert of vocalist Lucie Bílá with musical support by Petr Malásek



Elementary school

The local Elementary School is also worth notable mention, since it bears decorated frescos and sgraffito designed by **Mikoláš Aleš** (the original sketches and designs are on display in the Vodňany Gallery).

The town is also known for its historical **brewery** and its unique three-rowed sycamore tree-lined alley leading up to the brewery.



Our TIP

BOAT TRIPS ALONG THE VLTAVA AND LUŽNICE RIVERS

The Jihočeská plavební společnost s. r. o. (South Bohemian Boating Company) operates **boat cruises** on the **Vltava** and **Lužnice** rivers from Týn nad Vltavou. In Hluboká nad Vltavou, the company operates **sightseeing boat trips** along the Mlýnský Pond to the Hluboká Zoo and Ohrada Castle. The boat from Hluboká nad Vltavou operates from April/May until October.

Boat **trips from Týn nad Vltavou** run from May to September. Enjoy the beauty of South Bohemia between Týn nad Vltavou and Hluboká from the deck of pleasure boats sailing on the Vltava and Lužnice rivers. Trips set off from Týn nad Vltavou to the **confluence of the Vltava and the Lužnice** and back (approx. 30 min), while the longer route passes the confluence of the Vltava and Lužnice to the Kořensko waterworks (approx. 60 min).

You can also choose to take a boat from Týn nad Vltavou past the confluence of the Vltava and the Lužnice, then along the Lužnice to Koloděje nad Lužnicí and back. Here you can get off at the

Mitrowicz Castle and use one of the hiking trails along the Lužnice River to go back to Týn nad Vltavou (about 2 hours).

One of the longer routes is from Týn nad Vltavou to the **Kořensko** dam with a pass through the lock and onwards to the village of Újezd and back to Týn nad Vltavou (120 min). The South Bohemian Boating Company has prepared a boat trip from Týn nad Vltavou to Hluboká nad Vltavou during the summer holidays. It sails through **three lock chambers** and the beautiful rocky nature reserve between the Hluboká game reserves. This boat trip deploys the **historic cruise boat Pálava**. The length of the trip is about 3.5 hours. The boat departs in July and August according to the timetable on predetermined days.

The **marina in Týn nad Vltavou** is close to the central car park below the church, about 150 m from the Vltavotýnské Town Square.

Boat operations begin on 1 May and end on 31 September, based on the weather. In Hluboká nad Vltavou, you can use the regular boat ferry from Hluboká nad Vltavou to the Mlýnský Pond for transportation to the Ohrada hunting lodge with the nearby very popular **Hluboká Zoo**. The ferry dock is close to the Penny Market roundabout and the central car park.



Jihočeská Plavební – David Machart

Reservations at: +420 777 834 710 / 716
david.machart@email.cz

jihoceskaplavebni@gmail.com

For reservations call

Tel.: +420 721 462 513 (ENG, DE)

www.jihoceskaplavebni.cz





A lake 68 km long formed behind the walls of Orlik Dam

Excursions to the interior of the dam and to the power plant can be booked at +420 737506950



ORLÍK DAM

Orlík Dam sits at the Vltava River kilometer no. 114.650, at 91 km above Prague; it is the **largest water work** in the Republic and forms the most important segment of the Vltava Cascade. The dam itself is built as an upright,

gravity-based, concrete dam, crowning at **450 m long**. A class II road stretches across the ridge of the dam at a height of 81.5 m from the ground. The water is led through a crowned three-level barrier overflow system; there are two final discharges below the spillways. There is an **electric power station** bearing four Kaplan turbines

on the left bank below. The Orlík dam works in conjunction with the equalizing reservoir downstream, **Kamýk Dam**.

On the right bank of the Orlík reservoir is a **boat lock** for smaller sport vessels which are transported upon a flat carriage. The lock is for boats up to 300 tons of displacement and was designed as a slanting boat hoist

— so far, though, this has only been carried out in the building area. When the dam was completed, a reservoir lake **68 km long** was formed in the **Vltava River**; now the Vltava



The appearance of Orlik Castle today is the work of Neo-Gothic architectural changes carried out from 1840 to 1860 (www.zamekorlik.cz, tel: +420 382 275 101)

extends up to the backflow of the **Otava** and **Luznice Rivers**. The total length of its banks is over 300 km²; it covers 2732.7 hectares and holds **716.5 mil. m³** of water. The waterwork's main purposes include the accumulation of surfacewater, potable water, and stream improval for the lower parts of the Vltava and Elbe Rivers; it also provides partial protection from floods, and is a **producer of electrical energy**. After these main uses come recreation, water sports, fish husbandry, and swimming in the reservoir's waters. During the extreme **floods of August 2002**, Orlik dam was overburdened by much more water than it had been projected for – the level of the current was much higher than the “hundred year flood” level. But the dam bravely held up to the floodwaters; the work's accumulation capacity provided enough time to execute safety and evacuation work in the towns below it along the Vltava and

Elbe Rivers, including Prague and Dresden. More information on the Vltava Cascade can be found at: www.pvl.cz
www.facebook.com/povodivltavy



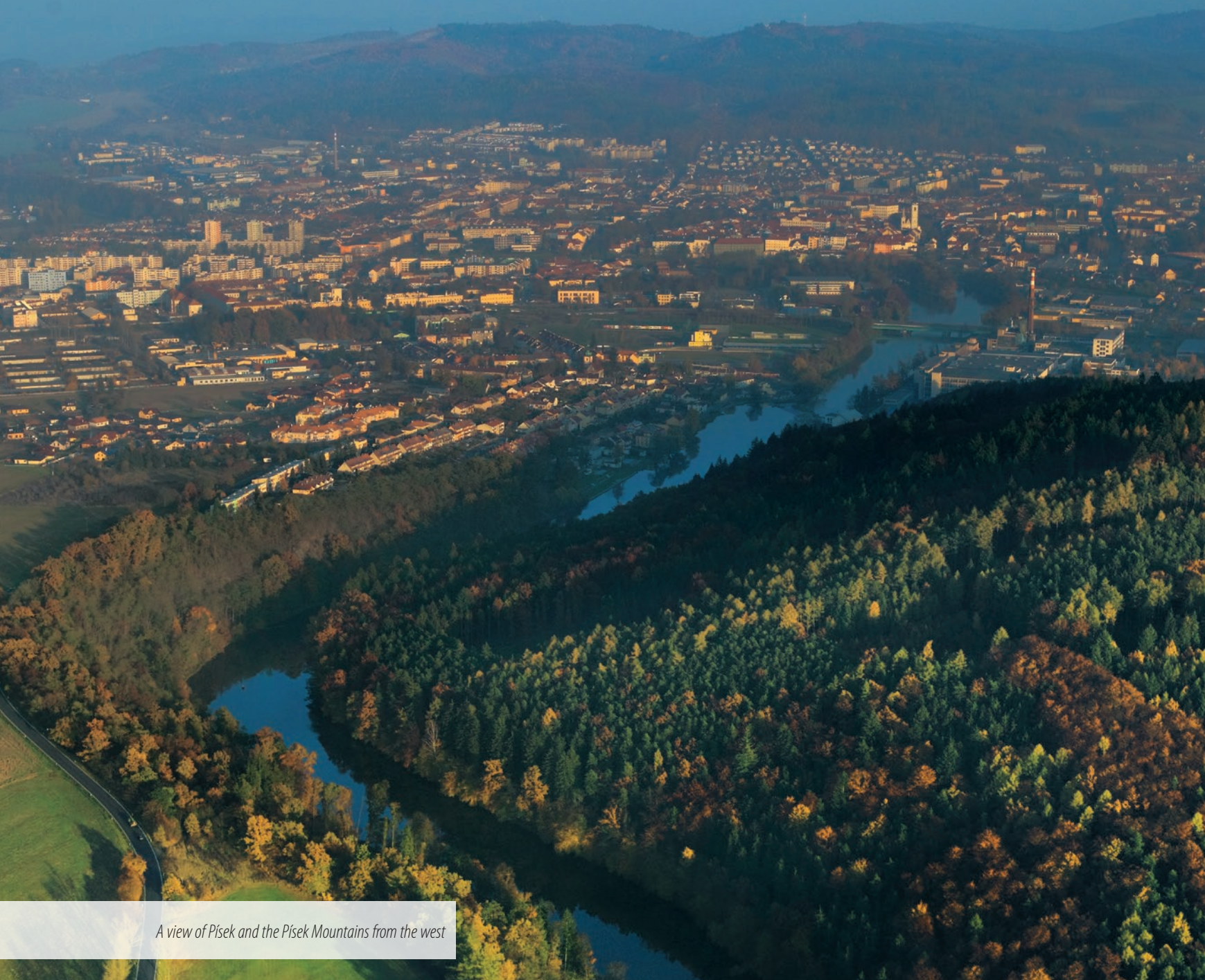
Did you know that...

Over a million square meters of concrete were used to build the dam body. Preparatory construction began in 1954, and work on the actual dam itself began in April of 1957. The decision to fill the reservoir was made in 1960. Detailed research carried out by the Czechoslovak Academy of Science resulted in the protection of several historic monuments on the new shores of the lake, especially Zvíkov Castle, as well as the noble residences Orlik and Koloděje.



The Orlik Lake flooded the confluence of the Otava River (left) with the Vltava River below Zvíkov Castle (www.hrad-zvikov.eu, tel: +420 382 285 676)





A view of Písek and the Písek Mountains from the west



OTAVARENA

HOTEL OTAVARENA PÍSEK ***
Burketova 303, 397 01 Písek
Tel.: +420 382 228 592
+420 702 040 424
www.otavarena.cz

Hotel Otavarena was built near the Písek town centre for domestic and foreign clients in the area of sports camps and seminars but also for families with children.

- modern accommodation • non-smoking restaurant with terrace • organisation of parties • catering
- congress tourism • wellness



Hotel U KAPLICKÝ

HOTEL U KAPLICKÝ***
Budějovická 2440, 397 01 Písek
Tel.: +420 775 289 531
info@hotelukaplicky.cz
www.hotelukaplicky.cz

Southern Bohemian hospitality!
The hotel is located in the quiet suburb of Budějovice in the ancient royal town of Písek.

- quality accommodation • non-smoking restaurant • café • lounge
- summer terrace with children's playground



HOTEL BULÝ**
Na Vystavišti 371, 397 01 Písek
Reception +420 734 852 344
+420 382 272 828
info@hotelbulý.cz
www.hotelbulý.cz

Hotel Bulý is located in a quiet part of Písek.
It offers cheap but quality accommodation in 1-5-bed rooms with private bathrooms and free wi-fi. Hotel Bulý is located near the historical center and near one of Písek's most important sights, the Stone Bridge. It is in the immediate vicinity to the city's ice rink as well as a tennis and football area, bowling, squash, gym, indoor and outdoor swimming pool, swimming area, and dozens of kilometers of attractive bike paths.

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APARTMENTS ORLÍK – LOUŽEK
Struhy I a II
262 56 – Milešov, Klenovice
Tel.: +420 702 264 195
apartmany.louzek@seznam.cz
www.apartmany-orlik-louzek.cz

ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE ORLÍK DAM,
PEACEFUL SPOTS BY THE WATER, AND FISHING



ENJOY A CRUISE ON THE OTAVA

www.otavskaplavba.cz

The Otava River is created by the confluence of two streams in the Bohemian Forest Region, the Vydra River and the Křemelná River, near Čenčkova Sawmill. Its name is of Celtic origin and denotes a rich river. The Otava River was known as a gold-bearing river with an abundance of fish and pearl oysters. In the Middle Ages, the towns of **Sušice**, **Horažďovice**, **Strakonice** and **Písek** were established along its 113 km length. These towns are currently co-operating in the **"Otava Cruise"** Project and invite you to visit the romantic Otava Region in combination with sightseeing and visits to organised events. You will travel by boat along the tourist boating route between Sušice and Písek. You may also opt for the **Otava cycling route**, which starts in the Modrava Bohemian Forest and runs toward the confluence of the Vltava River. The last kilometres of the Otava River below Zvíkov Castle are also already a component of the Orlik Dam.



Castle Rábí



Courtyard of the Castle
Horažďovice



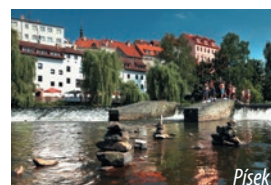
Confluence of Otava and Vltava
below Zvíkov Castle



Castle Zvíkov

vodní nádrž
Orlik

ZVÍKOVSKÉ
PODHRADÍ



Písek



Dragon boat Race



River Island Santos
in Sušice



Castle Strakonice

LEGEND:

- Sluice – dangerous place
- Dangerous place
- Otava cycling route
- Castle, ruins
- Historically bridge



Paddlers at Otava



Otava Bicycle Trail



1. Stone Bridge
2. Municipal Power Plant & museum
3. Royal Castle and Prácheň Museum
4. Sladovna (Malthouse)
5. House of Adolf Heyduk
6. Parish church of the birth of the Virgin Mary
7. Monastery Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
8. Marian Plague Column
9. Municipal Library
10. Former cemetery with the Holy Trinity Church
11. Gothic Town Moat
12. Former army barracks
13. Memorial to casualties of the battles of Melegnano and Solferino
14. Baroque Town Hall
15. Former hotel Dvořáček
16. Kronberger Garden House
17. Baroque Houses Nos. 1, 2, 31, 32
18. Sculpture of St. Florian
19. Sculptures in the Palackého Gardens
20. Bakaláře – renovated area

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 **150 Fire Brigade**

 **158 Police**

 **156 City Police**

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www.mesto-pisek.cz
www.visitpisek.cz

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