

2 OLOMOUC

A BIG TOUR OF THE CZECH-POLISH FRONTIER



The university city of Olomouc is, after Prague, the largest urban conservation area in the Czech Republic. That is why this city with a population of 100,000 is often referred to as 'Little Prague'. The most dominant landmark in Olomouc, the Holy Trinity Column, was put on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000. The Lonely Planet Tourist Guide has ranked Olomouc the number one of the '50 Secret Gems of Europe'.

MUST-SEE PLACES

The most significant cultural heritage sites in Olomouc are concentrated around the Upper Square (Horní náměstí), the Lower Square (Dolní náměstí), and the Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí). The Upper Square is dominated by the **Holy Trinity Column** 1 (UNESCO) and the **Town Hall building with the astronomical clock** 2. Both Upper Square and the neighbouring Lower Square are lined with Renaissance and Baroque palaces, which tell the story of the city's rich history. You can also admire a unique set of fountains with classical antiquity themes. The exceptional **Gothic building of St Maurice's Church** stands just a few steps away from Upper Square. The church boasts one of the biggest organs in Europe, and the annual **International Organ Festival** 3 is held here every September.

You can also thread your way through the romantic alleys between the Upper Square and the Lower Square, where you can find the **St Michael's Church** 4 with its three Baroque domes, which complete the characteristic skyline of the city; as well as **St Jan Sarkander's Chapel** 5, where the priest Jan Sarkander was tortured to death on the site of a former prison. If you then pass through



100 523
 Ostrava – 80 km
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 Horní náměstí (Upper Square), the Town Hall arcade, 779 11 Olomouc
 Tel.: +420 585 513 385, 392
 E-mail: infocentrum@olomouc.eu
tourism.olomouc.eu
www.central-moravia.cz

tourism.olomouc.eu/tourism/information-centre

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University Street, follow the tram route to your right, and go up Dome Street, you will see in front of you the impressive Neo-Gothic **St Wenceslas Cathedral** 6 and the former **Přemyslid Palace site**, which now houses the **Olomouc Archdiocesan Museum** 7. You can also visit the **Archbishop's Palace** 8, situated nearby. The Palace is the only archbishop's residence in central Europe that is open to the public.

Olomouc used to be a significant **fortress city** 9, as evidenced by the approximately 30 historic military buildings located either in the city itself, or in its close vicinity (→ p. 59).



GUIDED TOURS OF THE CITY

The Olomouc Information Centre, located in the Town Hall building, offers a wide range of commented tours of the city, as well as audio-guides for individual visitors and groups, all year around. You can also explore the city in many unconventional ways – such as using a mobile beer-bar, Segways, bicycles, tandem bicycles, boats, or rafts.



Regional Museum in Olomouc

Ten permanent exhibitions await the visitors of the historic museum building. The most impressive one is 'Olomouc – Fifteen Centuries of the City' comprised of seven main historical themes telling a comprehensive story of the city's history. Other permanent exhibitions include 'Gallery of Personalities of Olomouc Region', or 'From the Cradle to the Grave', which is a story of birth and death set in a realistic environment of a Hanakian village and Hanakian lands in the 19th century. Today, the entire collection of the museum consists of nearly one million items. Among other things, the museum's permanent exhibitions will guide you through the history of Olomouc, the region's folk traditions, tell you the tale of stone since its earliest history, and introduce you to the most prominent figures linked to the Olomouc Region.

www.vmo.cz

Olomouc Archdiocesan Museum

The museum is located on the premises of a national heritage building, and its permanent exhibition consists of over 300 artistic treasures from 11th–18th century. The Museum is the only one in the Czech Republic to have received the prestigious 'European Heritage Label'. The Museum stands out not only due to the uniqueness and size of its collections, which tell the story of nearly one thousand years of faith culture in the Olomouc archdiocese, but also the rich history connected with its location in the Olomouc Castle grounds. The site is associated with the murder of Czech King Wenceslas III in 1306, and with the stay of composer W. A. Mozart, who composed his Symphony No 6 in F major there.

www.muoz.cz/arcidiecezni-muzeum-olomouc/



NEARBY TRIPS



What does the area around Olomouc have to offer? Romantic castles and chateaux, fascinating exhibitions, magical natural scenery, and a serving of fun for the whole family.

Just 12 km north of Olomouc (towards Šternberk) lies an important place of pilgrimage, **the Basilica Minor of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary** (→ p. 46), which was elevated to a rank of minor basilica by Pope John Paul II when he visited the site in 1995. Located near the basilica is the most visited tourist destination in Central Moravia – **the Olomouc Zoo**, which stretches over 42.5 hectares. A few kilometres further, the town of **Šternberk** will unfold before you, and so will the castle of the same name (→ p. 38) and the unique Time Exhibition.



Olomouc Zoo, Sv. Kopeček – 12 km from Olomouc

Some of the most distinctive features of this forest zoo, which houses more than 2,000 animals, are a single enclosure shared by American black bears and Arctic wolves, a bat pavilion, a giant aquarium, a tropical pavilion, and an enclosure of Japanese macaques that is accessible to visitors via a hanging walkway. A recent addition is the African Kalahari Pavilion, which has become the home for meerkats, hyraxes, aardvarks, and a honey badger.

www.zoo-olomouc.cz

*The natural treasure that is **Litovelské Pomoraví Protected Landscape Area** will stretch before you as you head northwest of Olomouc (towards Mohelnice). The area beckons you to take walks, cycling trips and some easy canoeing. Make sure you don't miss taking a tour of **Javoříčko Caves**, which are among the best sites this Protected Landscape Area has to offer. If you go a few kilometres further, you won't regret it, for one of the most visited castles in the Czech Republic, the fairy-tale **Bouzov Castle** (→ p. 38), will emerge before your eyes. **Loštice**, the one place truly devoted to the famous regional delicacy, **the Olomouc tvarůžky cheese**, is only a short distance away from there. If you'd also like to see how the locals lived in the 19th century, be sure to visit **the open-air folk museum in Příkazy**, situated just 10 km from Olomouc.*



Hanakia Open-Air Museum – 10 km from Olomouc

This open-air folk museum, which dates back to the 19th century, showcases local traditional architecture. The site consists of a traditionally furnished Hanakian farmstead complete with a scuncheon barn, and other three unique scuncheon barns located in adjoining gardens. All these buildings, listed as cultural heritage sites, are complemented by rural home furnishings dating from 1799–1950.

www.nmvp.cz/prikazy

Javoříčko Caves – 31 km from Olomouc

Javoříčko Caves are unique due to their rich, well-preserved and varied speleothem decor, and rank among the most beautiful caves in the Czech Republic. Their underground network comprises of an intricate system of tunnels, domes, and chasms. The total length of all known tunnels is over 4,000 metres. The air temperature in the caves is between seven and eight degrees Celsius.

www.caves.cz/jeskyne/javoricke-jeskyne

Olomouc Tvarůžky Cheese Museum – 30 km from Olomouc

The history of Olomouc tvarůžky cheese goes back more than 600 years. The cheese has been undergoing ripening processes in the A. W. Cheese Factory in Loštice since 1876. Tvarůžky is a one-of-a-kind cheese of Czech origin, and is well-known for its unmistakably pungent aroma and strong flavour. The true Olomouc tvarůžky cheese is a natural, soft cheese that ripens under a slimy surface layer, has minimum amount of fat and salt, and no chemical additives whatsoever. This unique museum displays the past and present production of this famous delicacy.

Did you know that...?

Olomouc tvarůžky cheese is the only original Czech cheese that is protected by the EU's geographical indication mark. You can try the tvarůžky cheese in many forms across the Region – à la tartare, served on a slice of bread, fried, in soups, and even as ice cream or one-of-a-kind savoury desserts.



www.tvaruzky.cz/muzeum-olomouckych-tvaruzku

*If you head southwest from Olomouc towards Prostějov, be sure to stop at **Čechy pod Kosířem** (→ p. 41), where you will come across a newly renovated chateau in the middle of a romantic park. You can also find a rare exhibition of historical carriages nearby.*

Museum of Historical Carriages – 20 km from Olomouc

The museum displays an unparalleled collection of historical lanterns and horse-drawn carriages, the largest in Central Europe. The exhibition showcases over 50 carriages and sleighs from the years 1750–1920. Among the most precious exhibits are a carriage named the Golden Carrosse, which was made in France in 1750, and the archbishop's carriage, which was used in a film about Empress Sissi. The collection also includes hearses, sleighs, and a range of carriage accessories.



www.historickekokary.cz

If you leave Olomouc and take the motorway to Ostrava, you'll pass the town of Hranice. You can take a short walk from the edge of the town and reach the world's deepest flooded abyss.

Hranice Abyss – 46 km from Olomouc

In September 2016, a team of deep-divers led by Krzysztof Starnawski managed to reach a depth of 404 metres using a robot, thus proving that the Hranice Abyss is the world's deepest flooded cave. At that point, the remotely controlled robot did not even reach the bottom of the cave, as it was stopped short by the length of the control cable. When the length of the dry section was added, the recorded depth of the abyss was established as 473.5 metres. Geologists estimate the possible depth of Hranice Abyss at between 700 and 1000 metres. You can see an interactive display pertaining to this globally unique place in the station building, behind which you can join an educational trail leading to the abyss.



REGULAR EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Shrove Carnival, Olomouc

APRIL

Olomouc Tvarůžky Cheese Festival, Olomouc

MAY

Dvořák's Olomouc
BEERFEST, Olomouc

JULY

Olomouc Baroque Festival, Olomouc
Bezděkov Lavender Festival, Bezděkov
Celtic Night, Plumlov
Josefkol, Čechy pod Kosířem

AUGUST

Hefaiston, Helfštýn

SEPTEMBER

International Organ Festival, Olomouc

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER

Olomouc Christmas Markets

