

When you hear the **Bohemian Paradise** you can picture huge sandstone towers and rock blocks, creating groups with an apt name - rock towns. Their origin goes back to the geological past of our planet, to the period of 70 to 100 million years ago when the hard bed of the North Bohemian formation was flooded by subtropical sea.

The sediments, deposited for million years on its bottom, gave rise to a chalk plateau which was broken up by tectonic movements in the Tertiary period. Climatic conditions and erosion gradually modelled rock towns to their present appearance. In 1955 this area was declared the Protected Landscape Area Bohemian Paradise and it was enlarged in 2002. In 2005 the Bohemian Paradise became the part of the European network of geoparks UNESCO.

# Hruboskalsko

One of the most popular rock towns is without any doubts the **Hrubá Skála Rock Town** which is characterized by impressive towers reaching the height of up to 55m and by steep canyons leading from rock edges to deep romantic valleys. If you wander through the Hrubá Skála region, you can, walking from a viewpoint to a viewpoint, look into the very heart of the rock town, or you can follow the marked trails and stroll in the very proximity of giant rocks which attract climbers so much. The most frequently visited places include Mariánská vyhlídka (Mary's Viewpoint), the viewpoint U Lvička (At the Lion), and Janova vyhlídka (John's viewpoint). People gave names to individual rock groups and formations and there are plenty of tales and stories connected with them. You can pass Čertova ruka (Devil's Hand), Kapelník (Conductor), Maják (Lighthouse), Sahara, Dračí skály (Dragon's Rocks) and squeeze through the 65 meters long Myší díra (Mouse Hole). Another remarkable spot is the place where you can see a group of rocks which seem to grow from the surface of the **Věžický pond**. The Hrubá Skála region has turned into the most frequently visited place of the whole Bohemian Paradise, into a magnet which attracts people to return there again and again. Other places of interest include the Hrubá Skála mansion and the ruins of the Valdštejn castle. The Heart of the Bohemian Paradise - the town of Turnov - offers a visit to the Museum of the Bohemian Paradise, the Dlask farm or the Hrubý Rohozec mansion. Another place which attracts tourists is the group of **Borecké Rocks** and the **Apolena Rock Town** with unusually shaped walls where you can find a large number of overhangs, rock windows and a unique rock gate.

# Prachovské skály

In the easternmost part of the Bohemian Paradise lie **Prachovské Rocks**. This unforgettable rock town originated from the remnants of a sandstone plateau, broken up by ravines and gullies. It is characterized by slim towers and pillars with striking vertical cracks and corners and by many rock promontories. Tourists are attracted to this area mainly by the dense network of marked tourist trails with frequent viewpoints which reveal the interior of rock towns.

The favourite places include "Americká sluj" (American Cave), unique "Císařská chodba" (Emperor's Corridor) and especially the "Vyhlídka Českého ráje" (Viewpoint of the Bohemian Paradise) which gives you a beautiful view of the rocks towers Prachovská jehla (Prachovská Needle) and Prachovská čapka (Prachovská Cap). Another place of interest is the remarkable castle Pařez, cut in a rock in the north-western part of Prachovské Rocks. Every year, the nearby Jinolické ponds and the town of Jičín with a large number of preserved Renaissance and Baroque sights bring in the Prachovské Rocks region a great number of tourists.

Near the town of Sobotka lies the **Plakánek Valley**. Its two kilometres long main valley with many small side valleys decorated by rock formations looks like a deep canyon with a rich forest growth and typical flora. Together with the preserved Gothic castle Kost (Bone) charms the visitors with its unique spell.

# Maloskalsko

The pearl of the Bohemian Paradise is the Malá Skála region. The noticeable **Vranovský hřeben (Vranov ridge)** and **Suché Skály (Dry Rocks)** are the remnants of a gigantic formation which was lifted by the Alpine-Carpathian folding and put into a vertical position. The narrow rock massive on the right bank of the Jizera was used in the Middle Ages as the basis of defence castles Vranov and Frýdštejn. The viewpoint above the Jizera gives an unforgettable panoramic view of the meander of the Jizera in places where water penetrated the craggy barrier. Above the Záborčí hamlet, there is another group of rocks, this time a smaller one, with remnants of a rock fortified settlement, called **Malá Skála Drábovna**.

Another unforgettable view is that of the rugged range of Dry Rocks (known as the "Bohemian Dolomiti") on the opposite side of the river, where plenty of rock-climbers frequently go. The **Rocks at Besedice** with the rock maze Kalich (Chalice) and Chléviště offer several attractive views of the whole Malá Skála valley. The Besedice Rocks and the Rocks at Sokol with many caves, passages and ravines, frequently formed by fallen rock blocks, used to be the hiding place of the Czech Brethren in the times of religious persecution. One such secret place of prayers is on a marked tourist trail. Near the village of Rakousy the whole area turns into lime sandstones with plenty of cleavage caves and fossil deposits. The ruins of the medieval Zbirohy castle are also worth visiting.

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**i** information centre  
**†** chateau, castle  
**L** castle ruins  
**M** museum  
**P** parking

**🚂** train station  
**🪨** rocks  
**🗖** view tower  
**📍** view point  
**🏠** quarry

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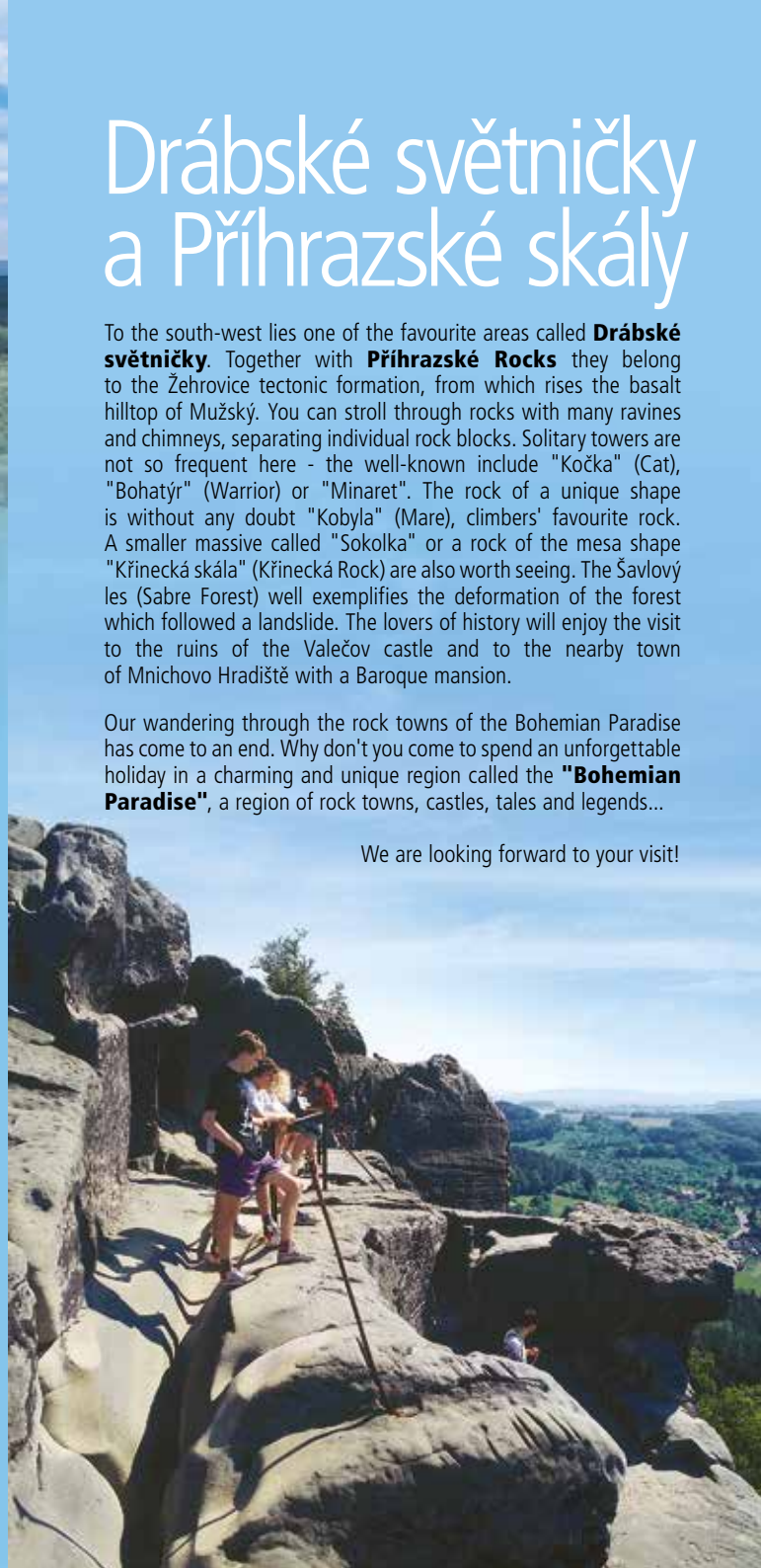


## Kozákov, Klokočské a Betlémské skály

The whole area is dominated by the mysterious Kozákov hill which is also the dividing point between the Bohemian Paradise and the foothills of the Krkonoše (Giant Mountains). On top of the hill there is a lookout tower enabling a panoramic view reaching from the Giant Mountains through Bohemian Paradise to the Ještěd ridge and the Jizerské Mountains.

The deeply cut **Kozákovská Drábovna** and **Měsíční údolí (Moon Valley)** are lined on both sides by sandstone outcrops with typical tectonic ribs. At the foot of the Kozákov hill they turn into a canyon-like valley. People found their first shelter in "Babi" and "Kudrnáčova pec" (Kudrnáč's Oven) as early as in the prehistoric times. You should not miss a visit to the "Radostná studánka" (Joyful Fountain), "Votrubečův lom" (Votrubeč Quarry) and an exhibition of precious stones.

You can enter the area of **Klokočské Rocks**, which are smoothly connected with **Betlémské Rocks**, on a trail passing the romantic Rotštejn castle, or through Klokočské Passages. Massive rock blocks with only a few separated towers show the manner of rock depositing on the bottom of the chalk sea. What is noticeable from the geological point of view is the concentration of almost all geomorphologic shapes known in sandstones into the area of approximately 3 square kilometres. The local pseudo-carst cave Postojna gave shelter to the first hunters in the upper Jizera region.



## Drábské světničky a Příhrazské skály

To the south-west lies one of the favourite areas called **Drábské světničky**. Together with **Příhrazské Rocks** they belong to the Žehovice tectonic formation, from which rises the basalt hilltop of Mužský. You can stroll through rocks with many ravines and chimneys, separating individual rock blocks. Solitary towers are not so frequent here - the well-known include "Kočka" (Cat), "Bohatýr" (Warrior) or "Minaret". The rock of a unique shape is without any doubt "Kobyla" (Mare), climbers' favourite rock. A smaller massive called "Sokolka" or a rock of the mesa shape "Křínecká skála" (Křínecká Rock) are also worth seeing. The Savlový les (Sabre Forest) well exemplifies the deformation of the forest which followed a landslide. The lovers of history will enjoy the visit to the ruins of the Valečov castle and to the nearby town of Mnichovo Hradiště with a Baroque mansion.

Our wandering through the rock towns of the Bohemian Paradise has come to an end. Why don't you come to spend an unforgettable holiday in a charming and unique region called the **"Bohemian Paradise"**, a region of rock towns, castles, tales and legends...

We are looking forward to your visit!



# ROCK TOWNS

## Bohemian Paradise