

# South Moravia



You get the feeling South Moravia would be perfectly happy declaring its independence from the Czech Republic. So strong and confident is the region's ability and desire to keep its culture alive that metamorphosis into a separate buffer state between Bohemia and Slovakia would be a powerful way to reinforce a potent sense of identity.

The most overt demonstration of this robust identity comes during the summer festival season, when communities from Telč to Moravské Slovácko dress up in traditional garb and sing and dance their way to a profoundly authentic display of 'living history' – all the while mellowed by wine from the local vineyards on the southern border with Austria. Since 1989, Moravian wine has been improving with every vintage, and as a drawcard for travellers, wine tourism now competes with the alluring World Heritage chateaux at nearby Lednice and Valnice. Further west, the untainted Renaissance perfection of Telč is equally spectacular and also demands your attention.

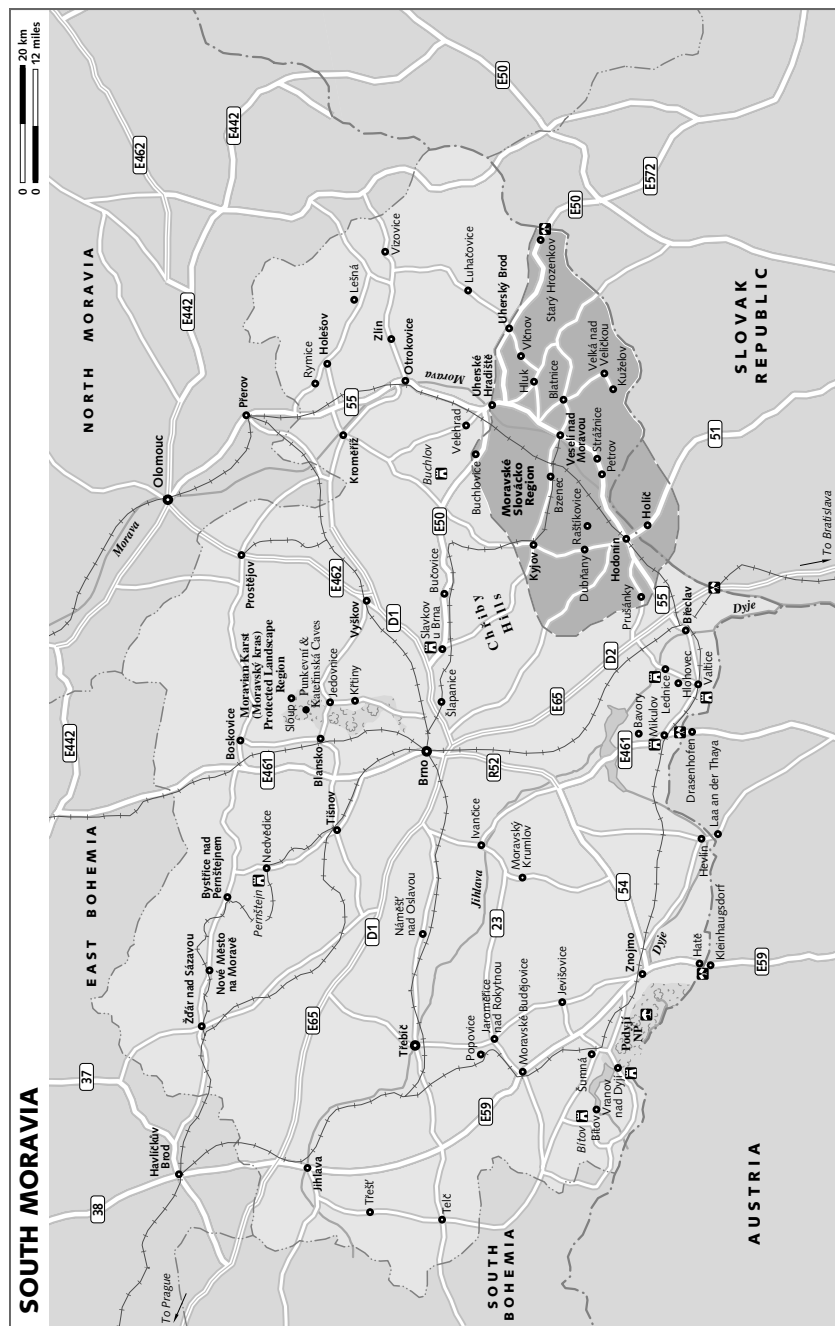
Nature steps up to the mark with the incredible cave systems of the Moravian karst (Moravský kras) and the vertiginous clifftop locations of the chateaux at Pernštejn and Vranov, two of the Czech Republic's most spectacular castles.

Finally, there's Brno, the cosmopolitan heart of the region, where communist-era Trabants jostle with post-EU Audis amid an elegant display of galleries, museums and theatres. And after the theatre, expect the busy chatter in the bars and cafés to be not about distant Prague, but more often about what really matters in Moravia.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience big-city life, Czech style, without Prague's tourist commotion, in cultured and bustling **Brno** (p295)
- Explore the fascinating Jewish heritage of picturesque **Mikulov** (p321)
- Be surprised by the fascinating functionalist architecture of **Zlín** (p329)
- Soak up the unblemished Renaissance perfection of the gorgeous town square in **Telč** (p313)
- Lose yourself in the cinematic canvases of Mucha's sublime *Slav Epic* in quiet **Moravský Krumlov** (p310)





## BRNO

pop 385,000

With flashy Prague being the city at the top of many travellers' must-do list, Brno, just 210km to the west, could be forgiven for developing a slight inferiority complex. But in reality the people of Brno are perfectly OK with their city's lot as the Czech Republic's second city.

Despite having a population of less than 400,000, Brno behaves like the cosmopolitan capital it is (ie of Moravia), and stately boulevards and parks give it an almost Parisian air. This vaguely Gallic ambience is further enhanced by a population with contagious enthusiasm for caffeine, chat and culture, which they energetically bring to life in the city's cafés and bars.

Brno has an after-dark reputation for keeping its top button firmly done up, but spend a few hours in a local pub and you'll soon see that traditional Moravian reserve melt away. Maybe it's because they don't have to share their old town with legions of tourists.

And even if Brno's historical hub is small change compared with the architectural overachievement that is Prague, the city can stand alone with an array of excellent galleries and museums, a brooding castle fortress and a robust confidence in the relevance and importance of surrounding Moravia, comfortably away from the sometimes myopic focus of the national capital.

## History

The present-day suburb of Líšeň was a Slav fort, Staré Zámky, at the time of the Great Moravian Empire. Around AD 1000 a settlement was founded on the Svatka river, where the suburb of Staré Brno now stands.

In the 11th century the Přemysl princesses built a castle on Petrov hill. By the middle of the 13th century the town around it had acquired a defensive wall. At this time another castle was built on Špilberk hill. During the reign of John of Luxembourg, Brno became an important centre of arts and trade. In the late 1300s it became Moravia's capital for the first time. Most of Brno's monasteries date from that time.

This predominantly Catholic town sided with King Sigismund in the Hussite Wars; the Hussites twice tried to take it but failed. In the mid-15th century Brno sided with an enemy of the Czechs, Matthias Corvinus (Matyáš Korvín). Later in the 16th century Brno turned Protestant and joined the unsuccessful anti-

Hapsburg rebellion by the Czech Estates. In the ensuing Thirty Years' War, the town was able to defend itself against the Swedes from 1643 to 1645.

Botanist Gregor Mendel (1822–84) established the modern science of heredity through his studies of peas and bees at the Augustinian monastery in Brno.

After the Brno–Vienna railway was completed in 1839, Brno developed into a major industrial centre. As the most important town in the Czechoslovak state after Prague, it acquired a university and, in the 1920s, some major exhibition buildings. Brno is one of Europe's leading venues for trade fairs.

## Orientation

The town is dominated by Špilberk castle, on the hill of the same name; vying for attention are the spires of the cathedral of SS Peter & Paul on Petrov hill.

Brno's main train station (*hlavní nádraží*) is just south of the town centre. Opposite the station is the beginning of Masarykova, a main pedestrian thoroughfare that leads north to triangular náměstí Svobody, the centre of town. The bus station (*autobusové nádraží*) is 800m south of the train station, via the Galerie Vankovka (Map p298) shopping centre and Tesco department store.

Brno's Tuřany airport is 7.5km southeast of the train station.

## MAPS

SHOCart's GeoClub 1:15,000 *Brno plán města* is recommended.

## Information

### BOOKSHOPS

**Geokart** (Map p298; ☎ 542 216 561; Vachova 8) Stocks maps and travel guides.

**Knihkupectví Literární Kavárna** (Map p298; ☎ 542 217 954; náměstí Svobody 13) Has English-language titles.

### CULTURAL CENTRES

**British Council** (Map p298; ☎ 545 210 174; www.britishcouncil.cz; Solniční 12) UK newspapers are available.

### EMERGENCY

**Tourist Police Station** (Map p298; ☎ 974 626 100; Barbošová 1)

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Internet Centrum** (Map p298; 1st fl, Masarykova 22-24; per hr 45Kč; ☎ 8am-midnight)

**Laudromat@Bar Pod Balony** (Map p298; ☎ 736 277 570; Hybešova 45; per hr 50Kč; ☎ 10am-1pm Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat, 2-11pm Sun)

#### LAUNDRY

**Laudromat@Bar Pod Balony** (Map p298; ☎ 736 277 570; Hybešova 45; ☎ 10am-1pm Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat, 2-11pm Sun) Self-service washers and dryers, a bar and internet access. Charges 70Kč per load.

#### LEFT LUGGAGE

**Train station** (Map p298; per day 26Kč, ☎ closed 11pm-4am) Located on the ground floor.

**Bus station** (Map p297; ☎ 5.15am-10.15pm Mon-Fri, from 6am Sat & Sun)

#### MEDIA

**Metropolis** A free fortnightly events magazine (in Czech) featuring cinema, theatre and club listings.

#### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Lékárna Koliště** (Map p298; ☎ 545 424 811; Koliště 47) Twenty-four-hour pharmacy.

**Úrazová hospital** (nemocnice; Map p298; ☎ 545 538 111; Ponávka 6)

#### MONEY

**KB bank** (Map p298; cnr Koží & Koblížná); branch (Map p298; náměstí Svobody 21) Exchange and ATM services.

#### POST

**Post office** Main (Map p298; Poštovská 3/5; 1 block east of the main square); branch (Map p298; Nádražní; by the train station; ☎ 24hr)

#### TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist Information Office** (Kulturní a Informační Centrum – KIC; Map p298; ☎ 542 211 090; www.ticbrno.cz; Old town hall, Radnická 8; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm Sat & Sun Apr-Sep; to 5pm Sat, to 3pm Sun Oct-Mar); branch (Map p298; opposite the train station; ☎ 542 221 450; Nádražní 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Sells maps and books accommodation.

#### TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Čedok** (Map p298; ☎ 542 321 267; Nádražní 10/12)

**České dráhy** (Map p298; ☎ 542 221 507) In the main train station; also sells bus tickets to Western Europe.

**GTS International** (Map p298; ☎ 542 221 996; gts.brno@gtsint.cz; Vachova 4) This youth travel agency sells international air, bus and train tickets.

#### Dangers & Annoyances

Several cases of pickpocketing are reported daily. There's an area just east of the centre –

surrounded by the streets Cejl, Francouzská, Příkop and Ponávka – that can be dangerous, especially at night.

### Sights & Activities

#### CITY CENTRE

From the main train station, Masarykova leads to Kapucinské náměstí. At No 5 is the **church of the Holy Cross** (kostel sv Kříže, Map p298) and the adjoining and gruesomely compelling **Capuchin monastery** (Kapucinský klášter).

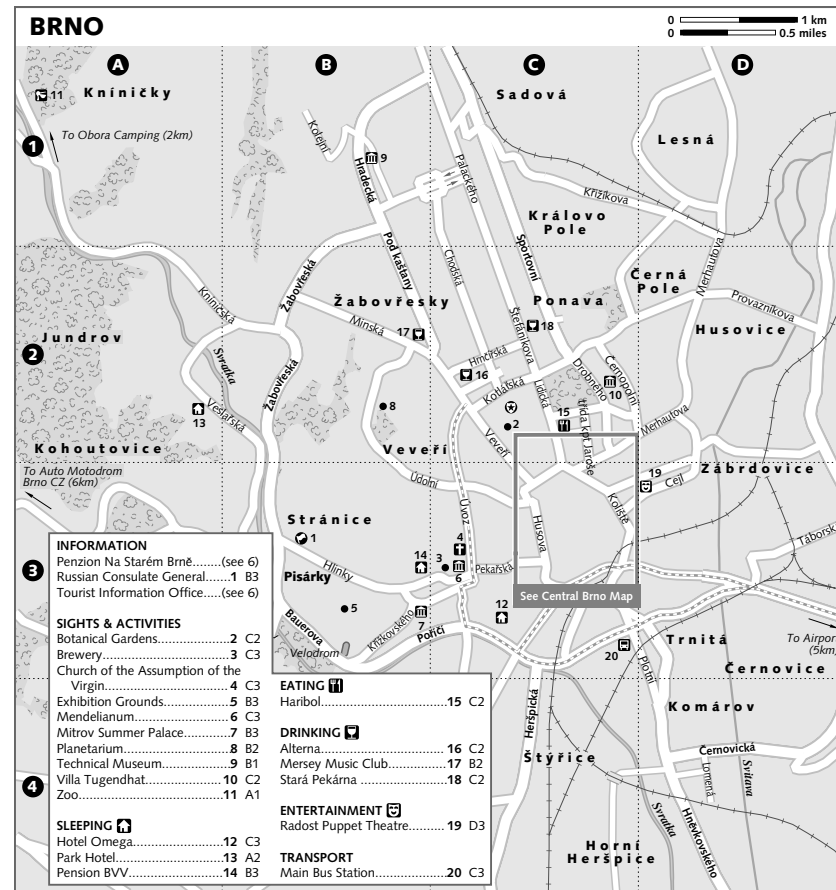
The monastery's ghoulish attraction is a dry, well-ventilated **crypt** (krypta; adult/concession 40/20Kč, English text additional 40Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-4.30pm Tue-Sat, 11-11.45am & 2-4.30pm Sun, closed Dec & Jan) with the natural ability to turn dead bodies into mummies.

Up to 150 cadavers were deposited here prior to 1784, and the desiccated corpses include 18th-century monks, abbots and local notables, from a nameless 12-year-old ministrant to hard-working chimney sweeper Barnabas Orelli, still wearing his boots. In a glass-topped coffin in a separate room is Baron von Trenck – soldier, adventurer, gambler and womaniser – who bequeathed loads of cash to the monastery. At least he got his own room!

#### Cabbage Market & Surrounding Area

Opposite the monastery a lane leads into the sloping square of **Zelný trh** (Cabbage market, Map p298), the heart of the old town and where live carp were sold from the baroque **Parnassus fountain** (1695) at Christmas. The fountain is a symbolic cave encrusted with allegorical figures. Hercules restrains three-headed Cerberus, watchdog of the underworld, and the three female figures represent the ancient empires of Babylon (crown), Persia (cornucopia) and Greece (quiver of arrows). The triumphant woman on top (arrogantly) symbolises Europe. The square has been the best place in town to buy fruit and vegies since the 13th century, and smart shoppers still flock to it. However, the fountain's grotesque design remains an acquired taste.

On the southeast (uphill) side of the square is the former **Ditrichstein palace** (Ditrichštejnský palác), which now houses the **Moravian museum** (Moravské zemské muzeum; Map p298 ☎ 542 321 205; Zelný trh 8; adult/concession 36/18Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sat). Exhibits straddle the intellectual gulf between extinct life and the medieval village.



In a courtyard on the right of the Moravian museum is the **Biskupský yard museum** (Map p298; ☎ 542 321 205; Muzejní 1; adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sat), with the largest freshwater aquarium in the country, plenty on Moravian wildlife, lots of model mushrooms and a sleepy section on the history of money. How's that for a diverse series of exhibitions?

In 1767 Mozart, aged 11, performed at the **Reduta theatre** (Reduta divadlo; Map p298; Zelný trh 4) on the square's eastern side. Following sparkling restoration, the theatre reopened in 2005.

#### Petrov Hill & Cathedral of SS Peter & Paul

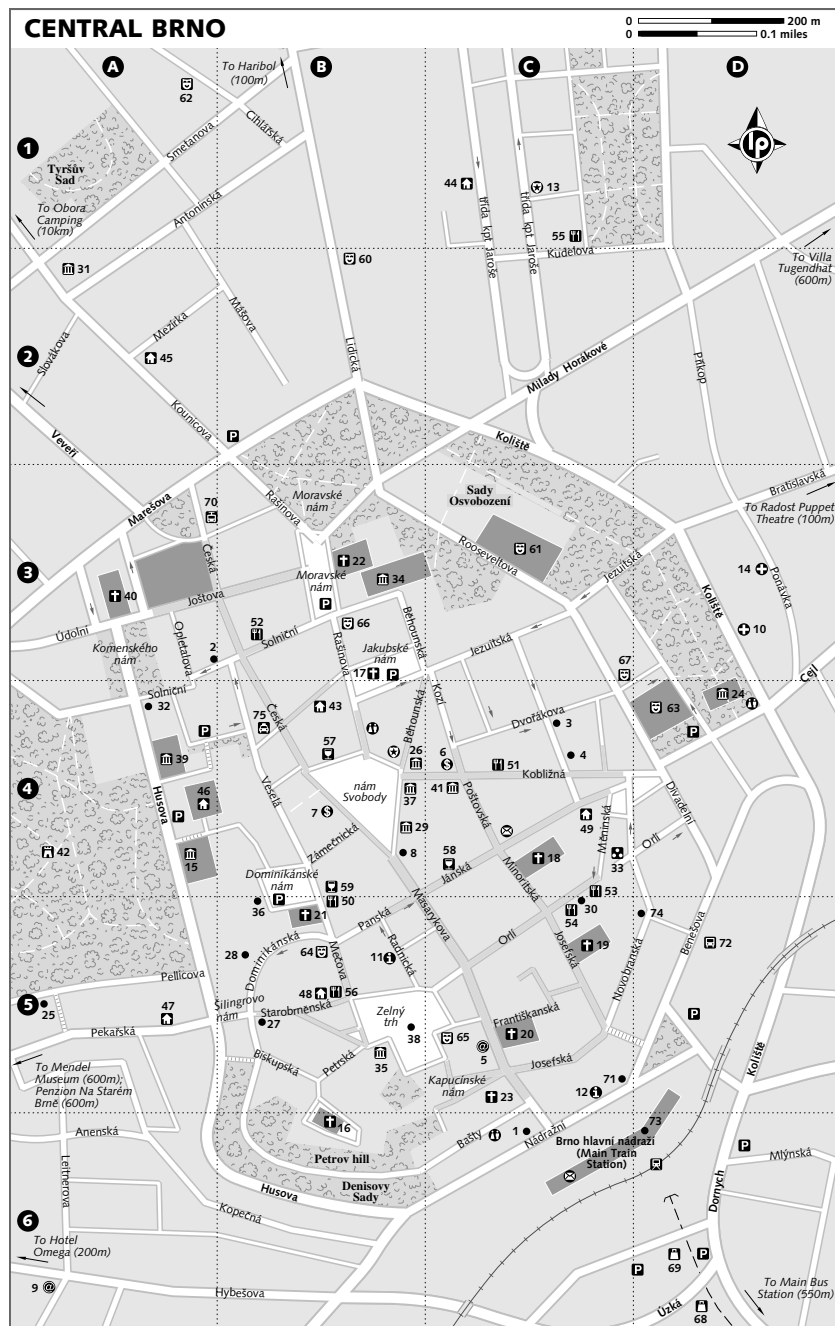
From the top of Zelný trh, Petráská climbs Petrov hill, site of the gargantuan cathedral of SS Peter & Paul (katedrála sv Petra a Pavla,

Map p298). Ascend its **tower** (věž; adult/concession 35/30Kč; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) for great views of Brno, or descend into its forlorn **crypt** (krypta; adult/concession 15/10Kč; ☎ same as tower).

The 14th-century cathedral was originally built on the site of a pagan temple to Venus and has been reconstructed many times since. The highly decorated 11m-high main altar with figures of SS Peter and Paul was carved by Viennese sculptor Josef Leimer in 1891. The Renaissance **Bishop's palace** (Biskupská palác, closed to the public) adjoins the cathedral. To the left is the pleasant **Denisovy Sady** park, which sweeps in a verdant arc around Petrov hill.

#### Old Town Hall & Around

From the downhill end of Biskupská, Starobrněnská turns right to the **former site of**



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the **brewery** (Map p298), now reinstated to the delight of local drinkers in bigger and better premises at the **current site of the brewery** (Map p297) near Mendlovo náměstí.

From Starobrněnská, Mečova runs left to abut the back wall of the **Old town hall** (Stará radnice; Map p298; ☎ 9am-5pm). At Mečova 5, about 5m up the wall, is what looks like the **face of a man**. The well-lubricated urban legend goes that a Brno councillor who plotted with the Hussites to surrender the town in 1424 was overheard by Borro, Emperor Sigismund's court clown, while a prisoner of the Hussites. Borro escaped and told the story, and the councillor was sealed alive in the wall.

The original, early-13th-century building, which became the town hall in 1343, has been incorporated into today's structure. A peculiar sight by the entrance on Radnická is a Gothic portal with a crooked middle turret, made by Anton Pilgram in 1510. According to legend, he was not paid the agreed amount by the council and, in revenge, left the turret (above the statue of Righteousness) crooked.

The town hall **tower** (adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm), raised by 5m during repairs in 1905 so as not to disappear among the newly built houses around it, offers magnificent views. For another 30Kč you can also see the town hall's interior, including the **Crystal hall**, **Fresco hall** and **Treasury**.

The building is full of oddities. Hanging from the ceiling at the entrance is the corpse of a legendary **Brno dragon** that terrorised the city's waterways. It is, in fact, an Amazon River crocodile, donated by Archprince Matyáš in 1608. Note also the **Brno wheel**, made by an enterprising cartwright from Lednice. In 1636 he bet a mate he could fell a tree, build a wheel and roll it 50km to Brno – all before dusk. He was successful, and the wheel has been on display ever since. Unfortunately, someone started the dodgy rumour that the cartwright had received diabolic assistance, and he died penniless when his customers went elsewhere.

### Minorite Monastery & Around

To the east of the main shopping street, Masarykova, is a brace of churches. The **church of St Mary Magdalene** (kostel sv Máří Magdalény, Map p298) on Františkánská stands on the former site of a synagogue, and on Josefská is the **church of St Joseph** (kostel sv Josefa, Map p298), first consecrated in 1674.

Further north on Masarykova, Orlí leads to the **Ménin gate** (Méninská brána, Map p298) built around 1600 and now housing a small **archaeological museum** (☎ 542 214 946; Měšnická 7; adult/concession 25/15Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, to 5pm Oct-Apr).

**AHEAD OF THEIR TIME**

The bells of the cathedral of SS Peter & Paul disconcertingly ring noon an hour early, at 11am. Legend has it that when the Swedish laid siege to the city in 1645, their commander, General Torstenson, who had been frustrated by Brno's defences for more than a week, decided to launch a final attack, with one caveat: if his troops could not prevail by noon, he would throw in his hand.

By 11am the Swedes were making headway, but the cathedral's tower-keeper had the inspired idea to ring noon early. The bells struck 12, the Swedes withdrew and the city was saved.

On nearby Minoritská (off Orlí) is the **church of St John** (kostel sv Janů, Map p298) and the Minorite monastery founded in 1230. (The Minorites are the only order in Moravia still in their original quarters.)

**Náměstí Svobody & Around**

Heading north, Masarykova leads to Brno's elegant and spacious main square, náměstí Svobody, the city's bustling central hub. On the eastern side of the square is the **house of the four mamlases** (dům U čtyř mamlasů; Map p298; náměstí Svobody 10). The façade is supported by a quartet of extremely muscled but clearly moronic 'Atlas' figures, each struggling to hold up the building and their loincloths at the same time. Created by Germano Wanderley in 1928, the building has provoked a longstanding and robust debate over whether the statues aptly reflect the elegant face of the Moravian capital.

Náměstí Svobody dates from the early 13th century, when it was called Dolní trh (Lower market). Its **plague column** dates from 1680. On the corner of the square and Koblížná is the **palác Říkovský z Dobřčic** (Map p298), also known as the house at the red ox (dům U rudého vola). At Koblížná 4, the **Schrattenbachův palác** (Map p298) has a niche containing a 1637 statue of the Madonna.

Showcasing Moravia's obsession with tradition, the **Ethnographic museum** (Etnografické muzeum; Map p298; ☎ 542 422 361; Koblížná 1; adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sat) gives a comprehensive insight into the region's traditional culture from the 18th to 20th centuries.

North of the square, Běhounská leads to Jakubské náměstí and the monumentally austere

15th-century **church of St James** (kostel sv Jakuba, Map p298). It has a baroque pulpit with reliefs of Christ dating from 1525. Also here is the baroque tomb of the French Protestant Raduit de Souches, who died leading the defence of Brno in 1645. The church's biggest drawcard is a small stone figure known by its local nickname of 'Nehaňba' ('The Shameless'). Look up at the first-floor window on the south side of the tower at the west end of the church; at its top is the tiny stone figure of a man baring his buttocks in the general direction of the cathedral (you really need binoculars or a telephoto lens to see him clearly). Local legend claims this was a disgruntled mason's parting shot to his rivals working on Petrov hill.

**Dominikánské Náměstí & Around**

From náměstí Svobody, Zámečnická leads west to Dominikánské náměstí, a humble square dominated by the **church of St Michael** (kostel sv Michala, Map p298), which has an interesting, ornate main altar (1759) by Josef Winterhalter and a massive pair of cupola-topped towers.

Also facing the square is the 16th-century **New town hall** (Nová radnice) with its impressive frescoes.

**Church of St Thomas & Around**

The church of St Thomas (kostel sv Tomáše, Map p298), with a soaring nave in the purest Gothic style, abuts a 14th-century **Augustinian monastery** that today houses a branch of the **Moravian gallery** (below).

Along Joštova, past the neo-Renaissance **assembly** (zemská sněmovna), stands the Evangelical Comenius church (kostel JA Komenského), better known as the **Red church** (Červený kostel, Map p298) for its red-brick exterior; it was built between 1862 and 1867 to a design by H Ferstel. On the corner of Husova and Komenského náměstí is the **Meeting house** (Besední dům, Map p298), one of the best works of 19th-century Danish architect Theofil Hansen and now home to the Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra. The name of the building comes from its role as a social rendezvous point for locals, a tradition still being maintained in the 21st century with the assistance of text messaging.

**Moravian Gallery**

If proof were needed that the people of Brno were pathological art-lovers, the fact that there

are *three* branches of the Moravian gallery (Moravská galerie) is surely it. Entry to all three galleries is free on the first Friday of the month.

Adjoining the church of St Thomas, **Místodržitelství palace** (Map p298; ☎ 532 169 130; Moravské náměstí 1A; adult/concession 50/25Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun, 10am-7pm Thu) hosts a variety of changing exhibitions.

The second branch, the **Applied Arts museum** (Map p298; Umělecko-průmyslové muzeum; ☎ 532 169 130; Husova 14; adult/concession 50/25Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun, 10am-7pm Thu), focuses on the evolution of arts and crafts from the Middle Ages to Art Nouveau and also holds regular, temporary exhibitions.

Up the road, the third branch is inside **Pražákův palace** (Map p298; ☎ 532 169 111; Husova 18; adult/concession 80/40Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun, 10am-7pm Thu); it focuses on the Czech modernist movement and 20th-century art.

**ŠPILBERK CASTLE**

Špilberk castle (Map p298) may lack fairy-tale good looks, but it has been a crowning feature of the city's skyline for centuries. Founded in the early 1200s, the castle was lived in by the Czech kings before being transformed into a military fortress in the 18th century. In this form the castle became 'home' to enemies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A multinational band of rebels was incarcerated in the so-called Prison of the Nations. The prison closed in 1853 but was reopened by the occupying Nazis in WWII. Baron von Trenck (see Capuchin monastery, p296) died here in 1749.

Some of Špilberk's casemates (*kasematy*), the dark corridors between the bastions, are now a **museum of prison life** (☎ 542 123 614; adult/concession 60/30Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, closed Mon Oct-Jun, to 5pm Oct-Apr). The last entry to the museum is 45 minutes before closing time.

The castle itself houses the **Brno city museum** (muzeum města Brna; Map p298; ☎ 542 123 611; www.spilberk.cz; adult/concession 100/50Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct & Apr, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun Nov & Mar), which hosts permanent exhibitions on the history of construction, Brno's monuments and architecture, plus a fine arts gallery. Especially interesting is the section on the castle's past as a prison and the exquisite and colourful **Brno Law Book and Bibles** made for Arnošt of Pardubice (Arnošt of Pardubice), who was appointed the first Archbishop of Prague in 1364. (In the early days of Prague's Charles University, his support was

vital when he ordered all monks to study there, thus raising the educational standards of the institution.)

There is also an exquisite **baroque pharmacy** (adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep) dating from the mid-18th century. For great views climb the **lookout tower** (adult/concession 20/10Kč) and admire the rather impressive **chime** (in the second courtyard), which musically sees in the hour from 10am to 6pm. Discounted **combination tickets** (adult/concession 120/60Kč) for the *kasematy*, lookout tower and exhibitions are also available.

The castle is approachable only on foot, up the hill through the quiet gardens.

Below the hill, on the corner of Pellicova, there is a 1914 **cubist house** (Map p298) by František Uherka. From Šilingrovo náměstí, Dominikánská runs north to a **former Dominican monastery** (Dominikánský klášter, Map p298).

**OUTSIDE THE OLD TOWN****Near Špilberk Castle**

Over Špilberk hill from the old town, on the corner of Úvoz and Pekařská, is the **church of the Assumption of the Virgin** (kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie, Map p298), Brno's finest late-Gothic building. Inside is the oldest painting on wood in the Czech Republic, the 13th-century *black Madonna* (černá Madona).

Around the corner at Mendlovo náměstí, in part of the **abbey of St Thomas**, the **Mendelianum** (Map p297; ☎ 543 424 043; www.mendel-museum.org; Mendlovo náměstí 1; adult/concession 80/40Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm May-Oct, 10am-4pm Wed-Sun Nov-Apr) is a museum devoted to the father of modern genetics, botanist Gregor Johann Mendel (1822-84), who opened up new realms of possibility in this area with his pioneering work on the humble garden pea. He was a former abbot of St Thomas. Mendel's work went largely unnoticed until after his death, when it was discovered that he had identified the principle of inheritance that governs how characteristics are passed on through the generations. A tour of the abbey costs 60Kč extra.

Take tram 1 from the train station to Mendlovo náměstí, and the museum is through a gate into a garden, second door on your right.

**North of the Centre**

A short walk from the old town is the small **Leoš Janáček memorial museum** (památník Leoše Janáčka; Map p298; ☎ 542 212 811; Smetanova 14; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 1-4pm Wed, 9am-noon & 1-4pm Thu & Fri) dedicated to

the composer. Janáček was born in Hukvaldy (North Moravia) but lived in Brno from childhood until his death in 1928. Janáček is the least known of the 'big three' Czech composers, the others being Smetana and Dvořák. All were exponents of 'musical nationalism', incorporating folk music into their pieces.

Further north, on adjacent Veveří (to the west), are the **Botanical gardens** (Botanická zahrada; Map p297; ☎ 541 129 397; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat & Sun); from the city centre take tram 3 or 13.

**Villa Tugendhat** (Map p297; ☎ 545 212 118; www.tugendhat-villa.cz; Černopolní 45; adult/concession 120/60Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun), a modern functionalist building in the suburb of Černá Pole, is the work of well-known German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) and a shrine for students of modern architecture. Hired by rich newlyweds to build them a home, Mies turned it into one of the first open-plan houses. In 2001 it was added to Unesco's list of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites. Don't miss the huge glass windows that disappear into the floor to flood the house with birdsong. Forward bookings are mandatory, so phone ahead. Take tram 3, 5 or 11 from Moravské náměstí up Milady Horákové to Černopolní, then walk 300m north.

### Exhibition Grounds & Around

The Exhibition Grounds (Výstaviště, Map p297) in the suburb of Pisárky (take tram 1 from the train station) were opened in 1928. They are now a year-round trade fair venue. In addition to the **palace of industry** (Průmyslový palác) other interesting buildings include the **Congress hall** (Kongresová hala) and Bauhaus-style **New house** (Nový dům).

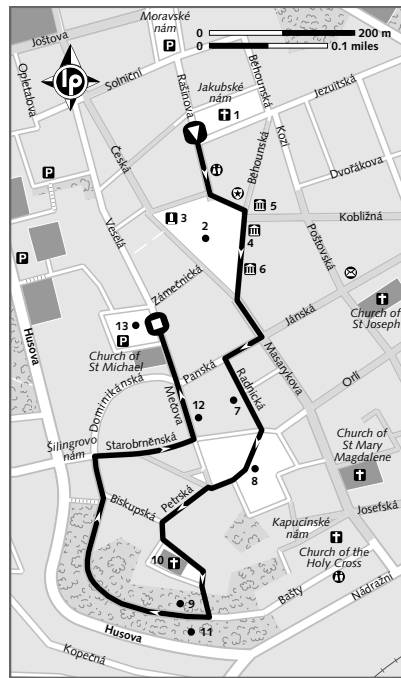
In the space between Rybářská and Křížkovského is the quaint **Mitrov summer palace** (letohrádek Mitrovských; Veletřní 19).

### Other Museums & Galleries

Contemporary art exhibitions are held at the **city art gallery** (dům umění; Map p298; ☎ 542 211 808; www.dumb.cz; Malinovského náměstí 2; adult/concession 50/25Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun). It's free on Wednesday.

### Walking Tour

Begin at the **church of St James** (1; p300) in Jabubské náměstí and make sure you spy the odd little statue near a south-facing window in the church tower. It will give you something to ponder as you're walking. From Jabubské



náměstí, head south along Rašínova to **náměstí Svobody** (2; p300), Brno's epic main square. At the northern end of the square is the town's **plague column** (3; p300), and on the eastern side on the corner with Koblížná is the **palác Říkovský z Dobřič** (4; p300) dating from the 1730s. Across the road on Koblížná, the **Ethnographic museum** (5; p300) is worth seeing. Return to náměstí Svobody, and further down the square's eastern side is the compelling **house of the four mamlases** (6; p300), now contrasting with the modern façades of nearby shopping arcades. Follow náměstí Svobody as it squeezes southwards into Masarykova, a bustling pedestrian mall. Turn right into Panská and then left into Radnická. On your right on Radnická is the **Old town hall** (7; p299). In the entrance hall are oddities, including the Brno wheel and the Brno dragon, and a weirdly angled front spire. Opposite, climb the tower for good views of the old town. Follow Radnická south to the sloping expanse of **Zelný trh** (8; p296) and maybe buy some fresh fruit to sustain you for the walk up **Petrov hill** (9; p297). To get there climb Petřská at the southwest (uphill) end of the square. Atop Petrov hill is the **cathedral of**

**SS Peter & Paul** (10; p297), with excellent views from the cathedral's tower or from the **Denisovy Sady** (11; p297) gardens to the south. From the gardens follow Dominikánská back down the hill. Turn right into Starobrněnská and then left into Mečova. On your right, about 5m up the rear wall of the Old town hall is the **face of a man** (12; p299), allegedly a former councillor who plotted to overthrow the city in 1424. Follow Mečova north to **Dominikánské náměstí** (13; p300) where you can have designer tea and coffee at Čhajovna (p304) or something stronger at the funky Livingstone bar (p304), and carry on pondering the statue at the church of St James.

### Brno for Children

There is a **planetarium** (Map p297; ☎ 541 321 287; www.hvezdarna.cz) at Kraví hora 2 (tram 4), and a **zoo** (Zoologická zahrada; Map p297; ☎ 546 432 311; www.zoobrnno.cz; ☎ 9am-6pm) at Bystrc-Mniší hora (tram 1, 3 or 11).

Brno's new **Technical museum** (Technické muzeum vs Brně; Map p297; ☎ 541 421 411; www.technicalmuseum.cz; Purkyňova 105; adult/concession 50/25Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is worth a half day of anyone's time. Highlights are cool retro Tesla televisions and stereos, and the wonderful 'Orchestron', a huge wind-up forerunner to the jukebox with mini drums and cymbals crashing in perfect unison. Don't miss the **Panoptikon** on the first floor; this huge wooden stereoscope allows up to 20 viewers to look at 3-D images from antique glass slides that are changed on a regular basis. Catch tram 13 to Králově Pole.

**Radost puppet theatre** (Radost divadlo; Map p297; ☎ 545 321 273; www.divadlo-radost.cz; Bratislavská 32) is a fabulous theatre that puts on kids shows during the day, with occasional evening shows for adults. Either way, it's all great fun.

### Festivals & Events

The **Auto Motodrom Brno CZ** (☎ 546 216 406; www.automotodrombrno.cz; Ostravačice) holds events for rev-heads throughout the year, culminating in August's **Moto Grand Prix** (www.motograndprix.com; admission from 700Kč). Tickets are available from the circuit and **Tourist Information Office** (Map p298; ☎ 542 211 090; www.ticbrno.cz; Radnická 8). Brno is packed out at this time and hotel prices can double. The racing circuit is just off the D1 road to Prague, 10km west of Brno. It's well signposted.

In early June, Brno celebrates **Brno Days** for four days with shows, exhibitions and fireworks.

### Sleeping

In February, April, August, September and October, Brno hosts numerous major international trade fairs, and hotel rates increase by 40% to 100%. Book ahead.

### BUDGET

The Tourist Information Office (p296) can help with accommodation in private rooms from around 400Kč.

### Hostels

The Tourist Information Office (p296) and Čedok and GTS International travel agencies (p296) can help with accommodation in student dormitories during July and August.

**Traveller's Hostel** (Map p297; ☎ 542 213 573; www.travellers.cz; Jánská 22; dm incl breakfast 290Kč; ☎ Jul & Aug) Gregor Mendel first presented his genetic research in this stately building in 1865. Every summer the rooms are filled by backpackers in a super-central and friendly spot close to good nightlife and not far from the railway station.

### Camping

**Obora Camping** (☎ 546 223 334; www.autocampobora.cz; tent per person 80Kč, dm 200Kč; ☎ May-Sep; [P]) This camp site is at the Brněnská přehrada (Brno dam), northwest of the city centre. Get there from the main train station on tram 1 to the zoo, then change to bus 103. The camp ground is at the seventh stop.

### MIDRANGE

**Penzion Na Starém Brně** (Map p297; ☎ 543 247 872; www.penzion-brno.com; Mendlovo nám 1a; s/d incl breakfast 850/1050Kč) An atmospheric Augustinian monastery conceals five compact rooms that come reader-recommended. And with an attached wine bar offering the best of Moravian vintages, there's no reason to be too pious.

**Penzion BVV** (Map p297; ☎ 543 213 426; www.bvv.cz/ft; Hlinky 28A; s/d incl breakfast 890/1180Kč) Situated within close proximity of the Mendlovo náměstí transport interchange, this three-star spot has robust breakfasts, comfy rooms and the lure of the Starbrno brewery just down the road.

**Hotel Omega** (Map p297; ☎ 543 213 876; www.hotel.omega.cz; Křídlovská 19b; s/d incl breakfast 890/1350Kč; [P]) In a quiet neighbourhood a brisk 1km walk from the centre, this tourist information favourite has sunny, spacious rooms decorated in cool pastels and with modern pine furniture. There's a squash court if you still have energy after a day's sightseeing.

**Hotel Amphone** (Map p298; ☎ 545 428 310; www.amphone.cz; trída kpt Jaroše 29; s/d incl breakfast 990/1490Kč; (P)) On an elegant tree-lined street, the friendly Amphone has bright and airy rooms around a garden filled with birdsong. Attached is Sabaidy (right), a spicily authentic Lao restaurant.

**Hotel & Pivnice Pegas** (Map p298; ☎ 542 210 104; www.hotelpegas.cz; Jakubská 4; s/d 1000/1550Kč) With a buzzy microbrewery downstairs offering four different beers, you won't have far to go to your room. And despite the hops-fuelled mayhem in the bar, the rooms are quiet, if a tad dowdy.

**Hotel Pod Špilberkem** (Map p298; ☎ 543 235 003; www.hotelpodspilberkem.cz; Pekařská 10; s/d incl breakfast 1100/1450Kč; (P)) Tucked away beneath the castle, this spot has quiet rooms around a central courtyard and complimentary off-street parking. Recommended for self-drive travellers.

**Hotel Continental** (Map p298; ☎ 541 519 111; www.continentalbrno.cz; Kounicova 6; s/d incl breakfast 1450/1900Kč; (P) ☒ ☑) The sweeping retro staircase and curvy leather chairs in reception are straight from Dr Evil's lair, and upstairs the rooms are businesslike with spacious bathrooms.

## TOP END

**Park Hotel** (Map p297; ☎ 543 236 350; www.parkhotel.cz; Veslářská 250; s/d incl breakfast from 1596/2100Kč; ☒ ☑ ☑) This 19th-century mansion in parkland above the Svratka river has 20 individually decorated rooms.

**Hotel International** (Map p298; ☎ 542 122 111; www.hotelinternational.cz; Husova 16; s/d incl breakfast 3000/3390Kč; ☒ ☑ ☑ ☑) Look forward to all mod cons, including a fitness centre, at this reliable business offering from Best Western.

**Hotel Royal Ricc** (Map p298; ☎ 542 219 262; www.romantichotels.cz; Starobrněnská 10; s/d incl breakfast 3500/3900Kč; ☒ ☑ ☑) An utterly captivating mix of traditional and modern, this intimate hotel with 29 rooms would be right at home in Paris or Venice. Bring along your loved one and fulfil the promise of the hotel's website address.

## Eating

**Čhajovna** (Map p298; Dominikánské náměstí 6/7; tea 30Kč) Relax with more than 40 types of tea and cruise world music. If you're feeling really chilled, linger for one of the yoga sessions upstairs.

**Rebio** (Map p298; ☎ 542 211 110; Orli 16; mains 60-90Kč; ☒ ☑ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat; (V)) Who says vegetarian food can't taste great? The décor of warm, natural wood complements a menu of healthy risottos, vegetarian pies and

a soothing selection of tasty desserts in this very popular self-service spot.

**Spolek** (Map p298; ☎ 542 213 002; Orli 22; mains 70-100Kč; ☒ ☑ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat) You'll get friendly, unpretentious service at this coolly 'bohemian' (yes, we're in Moravia) haven with interesting salads and soups and a concise but diverse wine list. Photojournalism on the walls is complemented by a funky mezzanine bookshop.

**Sabaidy** (Map p298; ☎ 545 428 310; trída kpt Jaroše 29; mains 100-220Kč; ☒ ☑ 5pm-11pm Mon-Fri) The spicily authentic tastes of Laos are served in this atmospheric restaurant attached to the Hotel Amphone. With décor incorporating Buddhist statues, and a very talented Laotian chef, it's a case of 'Ommm...' and 'Mmmm...'

**Špalíček** (Map p298; ☎ 542 215 526; Zelný trh 12; mains 140-300Kč) Brno's oldest (and just maybe its 'meatiest') restaurant sits on the edge of the Cabbage market. Ignore the irony and dig into the huge Moravian meals partnered with something from the good local wine list.

**U Staryho Billa** (Map p298; ☎ 545 244 453; Kudelova 7; mains 160Kč) 'Old Bill's' serves up rip-roaring steaks and Tex-Mex tastes in an eclectic space bedecked with cow skulls, Confederate flags and outlaw country music. Each day begins with happy hour from 2.30pm to 5.30pm and the chance to try wines from 15 countries.

Also recommended:

**Pizza okNo** (Map p298; Solniční 8; pizza slice 15Kč) For hole-in-the-wall and eat-on-the-run pizza.

**Bambus** (Map p298; Koblížná 13; mains from 70Kč) For hole-in-the-wall and eat-on-the-run Asian food.

**Haribol** (Map p297; Lužanecká 4; mains 70Kč; ☒ ☑ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri) Wholesome vege feasts at this friendly Hare Krishna-run place.

## Drinking

### PUBS

**Pivnice Pegas** (Map p298; Jakubská 4) *Pivo* melts that old Moravian reserve (the locals become pleasantly noisy and animated) in a cosy spot enshrined in moody lighting and dark wood panelling. Try refreshing wheat beer with a slice of lemon.

**Livingstone** (Map p298; Dominikánské náměstí 5; ☒ ☑ to 1am) Become an explorer yourself to find this eclectic and raucous spot tucked away under an archway. Think funky world discoverer meets Irish pub and you're part way there. There's an adventure travel agency on hand if you get all inspired. It fills up late.

**Černohorský Sklep** (Map p298; náměstí Svobody 5; ☒ ☑ closed Sun) The busy, busy, busy waiters at the Black Mountain Brewery's Brno tavern can be

a little surly, but you'll forgive them once you taste the Black Hill aperitif beer or the Kvasar brew flavoured with honey.

## BARS & CLUBS

Brno has a vibrant music scene. The free guide *Metropolis* has invaluable listings. Also check the numerous flyers around town. At the time of writing the following clubs were popular: **Mersey Music Club** (Map p297; ☎ 541 240 623; www.mersey.cz; Minská 15; ☒ ☑ 9pm to late) Nicely noisy beats provided by local and international DJs.

**Stará Pekárna** (Map p297; ☎ 541 210 040; www.starapekarna.cz; Štefánikova 8; ☒ ☑ to 1am) Old and new music with blues, world beats and drum 'n' bass. Catch tram 1, 6 or 7 to Pionýrská.

Also recommended:

**Alterná** (Map p297; ☎ 541 212 091; Kounicova 48, blok B; ☒ ☑ to 2am) For rock, punk and occasional jazz.

**Klub 7** (Map p298; Jánská 9) Sweaty underground club popular with the younger crowd.

## Entertainment

### CINEMAS

As a centre for the arts, Brno has plenty of cinemas. They include:

**Kino Art** (Map p298; ☎ 541 213 542; www.kinoartbrno.cz; Cihlářská 19) For art-house films. From June to August cult movies are screened at an outdoor cinema in Špilberk castle.

**Palace Cinemas** (Map p298; ☎ 543 560 111; www.palacecinemas.cz; Mečova 2) In the Velký Špalíček shopping centre; shows all the latest Hollywood releases.

**Scala** (Map p298; ☎ 542 211 659; Moravské náměstí 3) Shows a mix of mainstream and art-house films.

### CLASSICAL MUSIC & THEATRE

Except in midsummer when the artists are on holiday, Brno's theatres offer excellent performances. In Brno you are expected to dress up a bit. The **Theatre Booking Office** (Národní Divadlo v Brně Prodej Vstupnek; Map p298; ☎ 542 158 252; www.ndbrno.cz; Dvořákova 11; ☒ ☑ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat), behind Mahen's theatre, sells tickets for the Mahen's, Janáček and Reduta theatres.

Following are some major venues:

**Janáček theatre** (Janáčkovovo divadlo; Map p298; Sady osvobození) Shows opera and ballet.

**Mahen's theatre** (Mahenovo divadlo; Map p298; Divadelní) For classical drama (usually in Czech) and operettas.

**City theatre** (Městské divadlo; Map p298; ☎ 545 321 269; www.mdb.cz; Lidická 16) Hosts Broadway-style musicals and a selection of more sedate plays.

**Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra** (Map p298; ☎ 542 214 255; www.sfb.cz; Komenského náměstí 8) Holds regular concerts in the Meeting house.

**Reduta theatre** (Reduta divadlo; Map p298; Zelný trh 4) Newly restored, with an emphasis on Mozart (he played there in 1767).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**Brno Tuřany airport** (code BRQ; ☎ 545 521 302; www.airport-brno.cz) is 7.5km southeast of the train station, along Křenová (which becomes Olo-moucká). Bus 76 runs from the train station and bus station to the airport (13Kč). A taxi will cost around 300Kč.

**ČSA** (Map p298; ☎ 542 211 414; www.csa.cz; Nádražní 4) has scheduled flights to Prague.

**Ryan Air** (www.ryanair.com) has daily flights from London, and **Cirrus Air** (www.cirrus-world.de) flies daily to/from Munich.

### BUS

Two main companies, **Tourbus** (Map p298; ☎ 543 163 493; www.tourbus.cz) and **Student Agency** (Map p298; ☎ 542 424 242; www.studentagency.cz), battle it out on the competitive route between Prague and Brno (130Kč, 2½ hours). Buses to Prague leave from Benešova, north of the train station and opposite the Grand Hotel. Tourbus also runs to many European destinations, including Vienna (200Kč), Dresden (770Kč) and Aachen (1760Kč). Note that only buses to Prague leave from Benešova. Local buses and international buses leave from the **main bus station** (Map p297), 800m south of the train station.

For short trips, buses are faster and more efficient than trains, especially to Telč (88Kč, two hours), Trenčín (125Kč, three hours), Znojmo (60Kč, one hour), Strážnice (via Hodonín, 73Kč, 1¾ hours) and Kroměříž (58Kč, 1¼ hours).

### TRAIN

Brno's **train station** (Map p298; ☎ 541 171 111), a major rail hub, has frequent express-train connections to Prague (294Kč, 3½ hours). See p456 for information on international train travel. There are direct trains to destinations within Moravia such as Břeclav (76Kč, 40 minutes), Jihlava (130Kč, two hours), Třebíč (88Kč, 1½ hours), Žďár nad Sázavou (110Kč, one hour), Blansko (34Kč, 20 minutes), Přerov (110Kč, 1¼ hours), Ostrava (204Kč, 2½ hours) and Veselí nad Moravou (110Kč, 1¾ hours). You can reserve couchettes or sleepers at ČD Centrum, to the right of the station's entrance.



## Getting Around

**DPMB** (Map p298; ☎ 543 174 317; www.dpmb.cz; Novobranská 18; ☎ 6am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3.30pm Sat) sells tickets and monthly passes for public transport. Tickets valid for 40/60 minutes cost 13/19Kč and allow unlimited transfers; 24-hour tickets are 50Kč. There's also a 10-minute, no-transfer ticket (8Kč). You can also buy tickets from *tabák* (tobacco) shops or at the orange ticket machines at some tram stops.

From April to October environmentally friendly **riverboats** (www.dpmb.cz; adult/concession 80/45Kč) run between 11 stops on the Brno water reservoir. Ask at DPMB for more information.

**City Taxis** (☎ 542 321 321) can be called for bookings in advance.

**Avis** (Map p298; ☎ 542 122 670; www.avis.cz; Husova 16) car rental has an office at the Hotel International (p304).

## AROUND BRNO

### MORAVIAN KARST

The Moravian karst (Moravský kras) is a beautiful, heavily wooded, hilly area north of Brno, carved with canyons and honeycombed with some 400 caves.

Karst formations result from the seepage of faintly acidic rainwater through limestone, which slowly dissolves it and, over millions of years, creates hollows and fissures. In caves, the slow dripping of this water produces extraordinary stalagmites and stalactites.

To hire **climbing gear** and source local information, see **Hudy Sport** (Map p298; ☎ 542 221 144; Orlí 20) in Brno.

### Getting There & Away

Unless you have a car, the simplest way to the Moravian karst is by train from Brno to Blansko, and by bus from there. Check with the Tourist Information Office (p296) in Brno for the latest on guided tours from there.

### Blansko

pop 21,000

Functional Blansko is little more than a jumping-off point. The only thing of interest in town is a small **museum** (☎ 516 417 221; Zámek 1; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, Tue-Fri Nov-Mar) in a cute chateau up the hill and across the road from the tourist office.

### ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The main square, náměstí Svobody, is 1km northeast of the train station, which is directly across the Svitava river from the bus station.

The **Tourist Information Office** (Blanenská Informační Kancelář; ☎ 516 410 470; www.blansko.cz; Rožmitálova 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) sells maps and advance tickets to the Punkevní and Kateřinská caves, fields transport questions and can help with accommodation. It also has internet access (per hour 40Kč) and bike hire (per hour 20Kč).

ČSOB, with an exchange desk and ATM, is next door.

### SLEEPING

The Tourist Information Office (above) can book cheap private rooms from 300Kč per person.

**Hotel Panorma** (☎ 516 418 111; www.hotelpanorma.cz; Husova 1; s/d incl breakfast 890/1280Kč; ☎) A boxy, chocolate-brown exterior conceals modern rooms, and sauna and massage facilities to revive you at day's end. It's 2km from the centre, in Českovice.

**Hotel Macocha** (☎ 516 419 661; www.hotel-macocha.cz; Svitavská 35; s/d incl breakfast 900/1200Kč; ☎) Big and bold, this new place has spacious rooms, functional IKEA-style furniture and a popular restaurant downstairs.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are 33 trains a day to/from Brno (34Kč, 25 minutes). Buses direct from Brno are less frequent.

### Skalní Mlýn & the Caves

Skalní Mlýn is the administrative centre for the two most popular caves, Punkevní and Kateřinská. At the far end of the Skalní Mlýn car park are two offices: the first sells train (*vlak*, on wheels) and gondola (*lanovka*) tickets to reach Punkevní cave and Macocha abyss (it's possible simply to walk); the second, called **Ústřední Informační Služba** (Central Information Service; ☎ 516 413 575; www.cavemk.cz), sells the entrance tickets to Punkevní and Kateřinská.

Arrive early in summer, as tickets sell out. Consider buying Punkevní or Kateřinská tickets in advance from Blansko's Tourist Information Office (above).

### PUNKEVNÍ CAVE & MACOCHA ABYSS

The first part of the tour through **Punkevní cave** (Punkevní jeskyně; ☎ 516 418 602; www.cavemk.cz; adult/

concession 100/50Kč; ☎ 10am-3.50pm Mon, 8.20am-3.50pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, to 5pm Jul & Aug, 8.40am-2pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) involves a 750m walk through caverns draped with stalactites and stalagmites before you emerge, blinking, at the bottom of Macocha abyss. You then board a small, electric-powered boat for a cruise along the underground Punkva river back to the entrance. On weekends and in July and August, tickets for tours can sell out up to a week in advance, so book ahead. The tour is wheelchair accessible.

Just beyond the cave's entrance, a **cable car** (60/50Kč return) will whisk you to the upper rim of spectacular Macocha abyss, a dizzying 140m-deep sinkhole. If that seems too lazy, you can hike to the top on a blue-marked trail (2km).

### KATEŘINSKÁ CAVE

**Kateřinská cave** (Kateřinská jeskyně; ☎ 516 413 161; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 8.20am-4pm Apr-Sep, to 2pm Oct, 10am, noon & 2pm Feb & Mar) is only 300m from the Skalní Mlýn car park yet is much less crowded. The 30-minute tour covers two massive chambers, one of which hosts music concerts on summer weekends.

### OTHER CAVES

The least visited cave is **Balcarka jeskyně** (☎ 516 444 330; adult/concession 50/30Kč; ☎ 7.30am-3.30pm Tue-Fri, 8.30am-3.15pm Sat & Sun Apr-Sep, 7.30am-3.30pm Tue-Fri, 8.30am-2.30pm Sat & Sun Oct, 9am, 11am & 1pm Feb & Mar), a 2km walk from Skalní Mlýn (or there are a few buses from Blansko). On the way to Balcarka jeskyně is a turn-off to the upper rim of Macocha abyss.

The fourth cave, **Sloupsko-Šošůvské jeskyně** (☎ 516 435 335; adult/concession 70/30Kč, short tour 50/20Kč; ☎ 8am-3.30pm Apr-Sep, 8.30am-1.30pm Oct, 10am, noon & 1pm Feb & Mar), is near the village of Sloup and is also the deepest, at 1670m. There are two tours: 1½ hours and one hour.

### SLEEPING & EATING

**Chata Macocha** (☎ 516 444 250; www.smk.cz; dm 260Kč; ☎) This summer-only hostel with dorm beds is near Macocha abyss.

**Hotel Skalní Mlýn** (☎ 516 418 113; www.smk.cz; s/d incl breakfast 980/1320Kč; ☎) Opposite the ticket offices, this is the perfect place to warm up after a trip into the depths of the earth. The restaurant is also good.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Take a train (33 trains a day) to Blansko, then walk over to the adjacent bus station. From

May to September there are five regular **ČSAD** (☎ 516 418 610) buses between Blansko (stand 6) and Skalní Mlýn (12Kč; 10 minutes; 7.40am, 9.35am, 11.40am, 3.10pm, 4.50pm). Note that only the first three will get you there in time for the cave tours. The buses return directly (7.55am, 9.50am, noon, 3.25pm, 5pm).

Off season, buses run to Skalní Mlýn at 7.40am, 3.10pm and 4.50pm only, returning at 7.55am, 3.25pm and 5pm.

On foot it's 5.3km from Blansko's train station to Skalní Mlýn's car park. To get there turn right across the bridge onto the highway, left at Hotel Morava, and follow the signs to Hotel Skalní Mlýn.

## PROSTĚJOV

pop 47,100

Prostějov dates back to a castle built here in 1213. Seeing the few sites takes a couple of hours.

### Orientation & Information

From the adjoining train and bus stations, head straight up Svatoplukova for 800m to the main square, náměstí TG Masaryka.

Next to the town hall on the main square is the **Tourist Information Office** (Informační a Turistická Kancelář; ☎ 582 329 722; www.mestopv.cz; náměstí TG Masaryka 12; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri).

### Sights

The remains of the pretty **castle** (zámek; Pernštýnské náměstí 8) are 200m north of the main square; it was closed for restoration at time of writing.

The **town museum** (muzeum Prostějovska; ☎ 582 344 990; náměstí TG Masaryka; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), in the **Old town hall** (Stará radnice), features shoes, local history and traditional handicrafts.

František Bílek (1872-1941) painted the Stations of the Cross in the **cathedral of the Ascension of the Holy Cross** (chrám Povýšení sv Kříže; Filipovo náměstí). There are also some striking buildings such as the Art Nouveau **Národní dům** (Vojáčkovo náměstí), which now houses the **town theatre** (☎ 582 333 390), and the 1910 **villa** (náměstí Padlých hrdinů) of architect E Králík. Both are a short walk northeast of the central square.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Grand Hotel** (☎ 582 332 311; www.grandhotel.cz; Palackého 3/5; s/d incl breakfast 1350/2110Kč; ☎) The plushiest place in town has slick rooms and a good restaurant.



Also recommended:

**Hotel Romže** (☎ 582 365 493; www.hotelromze.wz.cz; Olomoucká 275; dm/d 150/400Kč; (P)) Cheap dorms and basic rooms.

**Hotel Avion** (☎ 582 334 561; www.avion.prostejov.cz; náměstí E Husserla; s/d incl breakfast 550/950Kč; (P)) Also has rooms without bathroom (s/d 350/600Kč).

### Getting There & Away

Trains link Prostějov with Brno (98Kč, two hours) and Olomouc (28Kč, 30 minutes). Buses are also frequent to Brno (55Kč, 1½ hours) and Olomouc (30Kč, 25 minutes).

### VYŠKOV

Vyškov, on the Haná river, is worth a visit only if you have a *serious* interest in folk museums. The **tourist office** (informační centrum; ☎ 517 301 312; www.vyskov-mesto.cz; Masarykovo náměstí 1; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) is on the pretty main square.

The oldest building in town is the Gothic **Archbishop's chateau** (Arcibiskupský zámek), which now houses a **museum** (muzeum Vyškovska; ☎ 517 348 040; http://muzeum.vyskov.cz; adult/concession 20/5Kč; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Sat & Sun) that features an interesting section on the folk traditions of the Haná region, including a beehive made from a tree trunk and a mock-up room from a peasant house. It's behind the town hall and through the car park.

**Chalupa U městské brány** (☎ 517 341 907; www.penzionchalupa.cz; Masarykovo náměstí 21; s/d incl breakfast 650/980Kč), on the main square, has snug rooms and an excellent restaurant with wood beams and an open fire.

The oddly named **Brett's Hole Irish Pub** (Nádražní 21; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 4pm-midnight Sat & Sun) beside the entrance to the chateau has a sterling range of beer and whiskey.

### Getting There & Away

Trains run to/from Brno (64Kč, 40 minutes). Buses travel to Prostějov, Kroměříž and Blansko.

### SLAVKOV U BRNA & AROUND

pop 6000

Slavkov (Austerlitz) and its surrounds were almost as significant players in the Napoleonic Wars as the little Frenchman himself. As the setting for the pivotal Battle of the Three Emperors in 1805, it was here that Napoleon defeated the combined (and superior) forces of Austrian Emperor Ferdinand I and Russian Tsar Alexander I. For more information see opposite.

### Orientation & Information

From Slavkov's train station, turn left onto the highway, go past the bus station and continue straight up Palackého náměstí to the **chateau**. The **Tourist Information Office** (Informační Regionální Centrum; ☎ 544 220 988; info@austerlitz@infos.cz; Palackého náměstí 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), under the ramp going up to the castle, can help with accommodation.

### Sights

Napoleon stayed for several days at **Slavkov chateau** (zámek Slavkov; ☎ 544 221 204; www.zamek-slavkov.cz; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May, Jun & Sep, to 4pm Tue-Sun Apr, Oct & Nov), where the treaty with Austria was signed. Built around 1700 to a design by Martinelli, the chateau was enlarged in the mid-18th century and its rooms are adorned with stucco decorations and ceiling murals.

You can take a **tour** (adult/concession 60/40Kč, in English 105/85Kč) of the chateau, or experience the **'Virtual Battle'** (adult/concession 70/50Kč). Promising '3-D virtual reality' but delivering a slightly enhanced PowerPoint presentation, it does give you a good handle on the surrounding terrain on which the battle was fought. From December to March, visits are by reservation only (prices 200% more).

Complete the Austerlitz circuit with a trip to **Pracký kopec**, a hill 12km east of Slavkov, where the Battle of the Three Emperors was actually decided. At the site is the **Cairn of peace** (Mohyla míru; adult/concession 75/35Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, to 5pm May, Jun & Sep, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr, 9am-3.30pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) honouring those who fell, with a small **museum** with handy touch-screen information kiosks about the battle.

Unfortunately, Pracký kopec is difficult to reach by public transport and hard to find. You can get a bus from Brno's bus station to Prace (10 buses a day; ask to get off at the Náves stop), from where it's a 1.6km walk south to the top of the hill. On weekends you'll need to catch one of the more frequent Brno-Slavkov trains (14km, 10 trains a day), getting off at Ponětovice and walking the 3.5km southeast through Prace.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Soult** (☎ 544 227 148; hotel-soult@volny.cz; Nádražní 909; s/d incl breakfast 500/950Kč) Opposite the train station, this is a reasonable backup if Hotel Sokolský dům is full.

**Hotel Sokolský dům** (☎ 544 221 103; www.hotelsokolkydum.cz; Palackého náměstí 75; s/d incl breakfast 600/1000Kč;

### BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ

The battle took place 10km west of Slavkov, around the village of Slapanice, on 2 December 1805 – the anniversary of Napoleon's coronation as emperor. A day before the battle, Napoleon evacuated the Pracký plateau (Pracký kopec; opposite), hoping the allies would occupy the site. Allied troops advanced on the French through the fog-filled lowlands the next morning, their plan being to attack the French right flank and cut off supply lines from Vienna. But under the cover of fog Napoleon regrouped, and when the fog lifted, counter-attacked, recapturing the plateau. By the afternoon the allies were defeated, suffering losses five times higher than the French. Austria signed a peace treaty and the Russian troops returned home. The Battle of Austerlitz led to the disintegration of the anti-Napoleon coalition and to a new European political map. It is re-enacted annually in December.

(P) The most popular choice in town serves up decent Czech specialties in its restaurant below.

**Hostinec U černého lva** (Palackého náměstí; mains 70Kč) Meaty mains are the order of the day at 'Black Ivan's'.

### Getting There & Away

Slavkov is 21km east of Brno and easily reached by bus (24Kč, 40 minutes) and train (40Kč, 45 minutes).

### PERNŠTEJN

If you've overdosed on effete Renaissance chateaux, here's the antidote: a medieval castle, with a capital 'C', that has discarded gilt edges and carved stonework for hard rock and heavy metal. Dating from the late 13th century, this beautifully preserved Gothic **fortress** (☎ 566 566 101; hrad.pernstejn@iol.cz; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, to 4pm May, Jun & Sep, 9am-3pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) high above the small town of Nedvědice is one of the Czech Republic's most evocative medieval monuments – a link to a time that has otherwise largely crumbled away. From the 1450s to the 1550s it was enlarged and rebuilt in several stages as the residence of the leading Moravian noble family of Pernštejn, but the beautiful bare bones of the original castle still shine through.

Among the highlights are the small towers, which were part of the original and solid-looking fortifications, and a smorgasbord of renovated rooms, attics, nooks and crannies. A number of tours are on offer: **Tour A** (adult/concession 65/40Kč; 1hr) takes in the main halls of the castle, **Tour B** (150/100Kč; 1½ hrs) covers the 19th-century living areas, **Tour C** (150/100Kč; 1½ hrs) explores the cellars and attics, and **Tour D** (100Kč) shows off the chapel and Cork tower. All tours are conducted in Czech and only Tour A has English text.

### Sleeping

In Nedvědice there are private rooms; look out for 'Zimmer frei' signs.

**Pod hradem** (☎ 566 622 462; www.pensionsholemar.cz; s/d 400/800Kč; (P)) This pretty *pension* has a great location at the bottom of the road leading up to the castle, but the owners can be tough to track down.

**Pension Barborska** (☎ 566 566 317; www.pensionbaborka.cz; s/d incl breakfast 500/750Kč; (P)) Twin fir trees mark the entrance to this friendly place opposite the village pond.

### Getting There & Away

There are regular daily trains from Brno to Nedvědice (48Kč, one hour), with a change to a local train at Tišnov.

Without a car the surest way to Pernštejn from Nedvědice is a 2km walk northwest. There are only three daily buses to Pernštejn on weekdays and one on weekends.

### TIŠNOV

pop 8300

En route from Brno to Pernštejn is the cross-shaped **Porta Coeli Cistercian convent** (founded 1233) in the Tišnov suburb of Předklášteří. The church's beautifully carved Romanesque/Gothic portal dates from the early 13th century. The convent also houses a small **museum** (muzeum Brněnska; ☎ 549 412 293; adult/concession 20/15Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun). Tours of the convent cost an extra 35Kč and keep the same hours as the museum (last tour 4pm). The convent is on the west side of town, across the Svratka river.

### NÁMĚŠŤ NAD OSLAVOU

pop 5200

Náměšť is known for its 13th-century **chateau** (☎ 568 620 319; www.zamek-namest.cz; adult/concession 50/30Kč, in English 100Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug,

9am-5pm May, Jun & Sep, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct). Its present Renaissance face is largely the work of architect Leonardo Garvi. Highlights include 24 Renaissance and baroque tapestries and a library adorned with murals.

There are several cheap accommodation options – contact the **Tourist Information Office** (☎ 568 620 493; mks-namest@iol.cz; Masarykovo náměstí 100). **Zámecký pension** (☎ 568 620 319; holy@zamek-namest.cz; d incl breakfast 900Kč), attached to the chateau, has a variety of so-so doubles.

### Getting There & Away

Náměšť is 26km west of Brno and is easy to reach by bus (36Kč, 45 minutes). The bus station is 300m east from the main square, and the train station is northeast a few minutes further on.

Regular trains also run to/from Brno (64Kč, one hour) and Třebíč (28Kč, 25 minutes).

### MORAVSKÝ KRUMLOV

pop 6000

Despite its idyllic location in the valley of the Rokytná river, Moravský Krumlov would be just another entry on a train timetable if it weren't for Alfons Mucha, who was born in the nearby village of Ivančice in 1860. This little village is now home to the artist's *Slav Epic*, arguably the finest work of the nation's finest painter. There isn't much else to see, but these 20 canvasses inject more colour into the nation's history than all the books yet written about it.

### Mucha Gallery

The **gallery** (☎ 515 322 789; adult/concession 60/30Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) is housed in a slightly moth-eaten Renaissance chateau 300m off the main square. Inspired by Slav history, Mucha's *Slav Epic* (*Slovenská epopej*) is unlike the Art Nouveau style of the artist's Paris posters, yet it retains the same mythic, heavily romanticised quality. The huge canvases (the biggest are 8m by 6m) are wonderfully cinematic and verge on science fantasy, with wild-eyed priests, medieval pageantry and battlefield carnage all under brooding northern skies.

Mucha worked abroad for several years but returned to his newly independent homeland in 1918 and designed some of its banknotes and stamps. No building other than this chateau could be found to accommodate the huge *Slav Epic* paintings, which Mucha worked on between 1912 and 1930. In 2006, approval was

given to move the collection to a purpose-built gallery, scheduled to open in 2010, in Prague's Stromovka Park.

### Getting There & Away

Moravský Krumlov is best visited as a day trip from Brno by bus. From Brno six buses a day (two on weekends) stop on Moravský Krumlov's main square (36Kč, one hour). The train station is about 2km from náměstí TG Masaryka, though local buses aren't good about meeting the 11 daily trains that come through from Brno (46Kč, one hour).

## JIHLAVSKO REGION

Rolling hills studded with compact stands of forest mark the border between Bohemia and Moravia. The region runs south to Austria from the pleasant city of Jihlava and includes the picturesque town of Telč and the fascinating Jewish heritage of Třebíč. Cycling is a good way to travel the short distances from town to town across the undulating hills.

### JIHLAVA

pop 50,100

Jihlavsko's 'Big Smoke' is a tad incongruous amid the pastoral landscapes of this predominantly rural region, but Jihlava sports a fine historical centre to counter an encompassing ring of industrial suburbs. The town square is one of the country's largest (36,650 sq m) but is unfortunately filled by one of the country's biggest, ugliest department stores. Fortunately a pretty selection of Renaissance façades and pleasantly crumbling town walls help to offset the past architectural follies of dodgy communist councils. The zoo's pretty good, too.

### Orientation

There are two train stations. The main station (Jihlava hlavní nádraží; for trains to and from Brno, Třebíč and Prague) is 2km north of the centre; take trolleybus A, B or B1 to the main square, náměstí Masarykovo.

The Jihlava město station (for trains to Tábor and České Budějovice) and the **bus station** (nr Tolstého & Jiráskova) are each a five-minute walk north of the old town.

### Information

**Česká Spořitelna** (nr náměstí Masarykovo & Křížová) Has an exchange and ATM.

**Knihkupectví Cajovna** (☎ 567 312 873; náměstí Masarykovo 21; ☎ 9am-10pm) Bookshop with internet access.

**Main post office** (nr náměstí Masarykovo & Komenského) On the main square.

**Tourist Information Office** (Turistické Informační Centrum; ☎ 567 308 034; www.jihlava.cz; náměstí Masarykovo 19; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Arranges accommodation. In July and August it also opens on Sunday from 1pm to 5pm.

### Sights

The Gothic **church of St James** (kostel sv Jakuba), on Jakubské náměstí, has a gilded Renaissance baptismal font, a baroque chapel and the requisite **lookout tower** (adult/concession 10/5Kč; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, Sat & Sun May & Sep). In the 13th-century **church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** (kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie), to the west on Minoritská, are some Gothic frescoes and the oldest picture of the town, a 16th-century work showing the defeat of Zikmund Křižanovský z Rokštejna by the local residents in 1402.

In the baroque **church of St Ignatius** (kostel sv Ignáce; 1689), on náměstí Masarykovo, are an emaciated Christ, some Tepper frescoes on the vaulted ceiling, and a fine main altar. To the left of the church is the entrance to the **catacombs** (historické katakomby; náměstí Masarykovo 64; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Apr-May & Sep-Oct). Tours are held on the hour except 1pm (minimum four people).

The **Highlands museum** (muzeum Vysočiny; ☎ 567 301 680; náměstí Masarykovo 58; adult/child 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is housed in a late-Gothic villa and includes fine Gothic, Renaissance and baroque interiors and a display of folk arts and handicrafts.

The **Vysočina gallery** (Oblastní galerie Vysočiny; adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) displays Czech art and sculpture from the 1930s to '60s in two locations: Komenského 10 and náměstí Masarykovo 24. Both have the same opening times and admission charges.

At the end of Matky Boží you can see what remains of the **old town walls**, including the impressive clock tower and the **Holy Mother gate** with an archway through to Hradební.

Off the southern end of the square, the **museum of the Young Gustav Mahler** (expozice Mladý Gustav Mahler) was closed at the time of writing. Check with the Tourist Information Office (above) to see if it has reopened.

A real highlight is Jihlava's **zoo** (☎ 567 573 730; www.zoojihlava.cz; Břežiznovy sady 10; adult/concession 60/30Kč; ☎ 8am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Apr & Oct, 9am-4pm Nov-

Mar), 400m from the main square. More than 400 animals – notably Sumatran tigers, snow leopards and a dozen species of monkey – are kept in open-air compounds. There's even a replica African village with thoroughly authentic African animals.

### Sleeping

The Tourist Information Office (left) can arrange private accommodation from around 250Kč per person.

**Ubytovna u Zimního Stadionu** (☎ 606 190 021; mileska@seznam.cz; Jiráskova 6; dm 120Kč; ☎) Jiráskova has plenty of cheap hostels (check out No 32 and 69 as well).

**Penzion Horacka Rychta** (☎ 567 302 721; Komenského 11; s/d incl breakfast 990/1120Kč) Tidy, central rooms sit above a snack bar with comfy old sofas and tasty comfort food.

**Hotel Grand** (☎ 567 303 541; www.grandjihlav.cz; Husova 1; s/d incl breakfast 1140/1690Kč; ☎) The lobby looks like a lounge singer's lounge, but thankfully the rooms are less cheaply ostentatious. There are also less expensive digs with shared bathrooms (s/d 590/790Kč).

**Penzion U Svatého Jakuba** (☎ 567 579 411; penzionjakub@ji.cz; Jakubské náměstí 103/4; s/d incl breakfast 1265/1930Kč; ☎) Warm colours inside and out are the go at this comfortable place tucked in a quiet square beneath the church of St James.

### Eating

**Knihkupectví Cajovna** (☎ 567 312 873; náměstí Masarykovo 21; snacks 60Kč) Deliciously hip, this funky-laden, Indian-style teahouse meets funny bookshop is the kind of place you wish your home town had.

**Pizza in Piazza** (☎ 567 301 940; náměstí Masarykovo 3; pizza 100Kč) Down a quiet lane off the main square, this perennially popular spot is as bright and multicoloured as its tasty pizza toppings.

**Amazonia** (☎ 567 300 280; Husova 26; mains 100-200Kč) Worship the sun gods adorning the walls at this Latin American place. Tapas and mojitos make it relatively authentic and the prices are not a sacrifice.

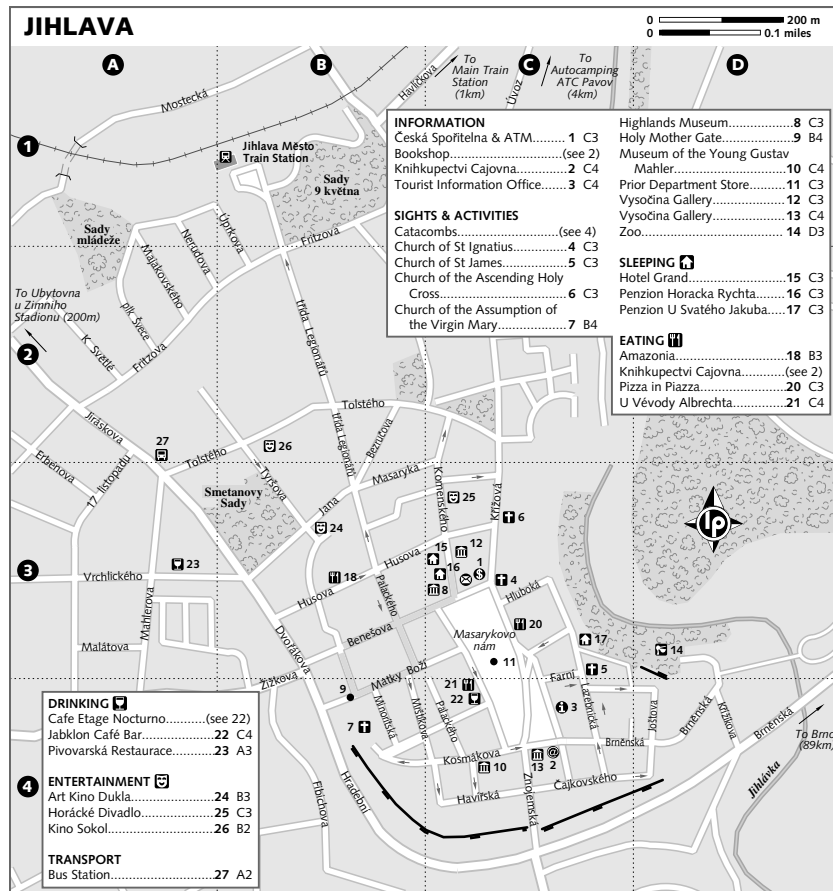
Also recommended:

**U Vévody Albrechta** (☎ 567 308 074; 1st fl, náměstí Masarykovo 40; mains 90-200Kč) Czech pub décor and hearty local fare.

### Drinking

#### PUBS

**Pivovarská Restaurace** (☎ 567 564 163; Vrchlíckého 2). Try the local Ježek ('Hedgehog') beer here;



there are nine brews available. Try them all and you could be curling up in a ball just like the brewery's spiky namesake.

## CLUBS

**Café Etage Nocturno** (☎ 721 639 984; 2nd fl, náměstí Masarykovo 39; ☎ 6pm-2am) Booze plus fish tanks, wicker chairs and trendy exposed air vents equals a perennially popular 'soul and funky night bar' (their words, not ours).

**Jablkon Café Bar** (☎ 608 811 884) This bar, on the next floor down, has live music some nights.

## Entertainment

**Horácké divadlo** (☎ 567 321 717; Komenského 22) Jihlava's swish modern theatre has a regular programme of events.

**Kino Sokol** (☎ 567 300 801; Tyršova 12) Cinema-goers can see the latest releases here.

**Art Kino Dukla** (☎ 602 193 918; Jana Masaryka 20) The place to try for art-house flicks.

## Getting There & Away

Direct train services run to/from Jihlava and Brno (130Kč, two hours), Třebíč (64Kč, one hour), Prague (204Kč, 2½ hours) and České Budějovice (162Kč, 2½ hours).

Express bus services, which are often quicker and always much cheaper (about half the price), run to/from Jihlava and Brno (65Kč, 1½ hours), Prague (100Kč, two hours), Tabor (68Kč, 1½ hours), Telč (32Kč, 30 minutes) and Žďár nad Sázavou (37Kč, 1½ hours).

## ŽĎÁR NAD SÁZAVOU

pop 23,900

Žďár is a bland industrial town with two hot attractions: the Cistercian monastery and the church of St John of Nepomuk, both by architect Giovanni Santini. If it weren't for them, it wouldn't be worth getting off the bus.

## Orientation & Information

The monastery is 3km north of the adjacent train and bus stations. The central square, náměstí Republiky, is 1km northwest of the stations; follow Nádražní. Local buses pass the monastery from the stations, hourly on weekdays and less frequently on weekends.

**Santini Tour** (☎ 566 625 808; santini@santini-tour.cz; náměstí Republiky; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat), in the Old town hall, is central and can help with accommodation. The official **tourist office** (☎ 566 629 152; www.zamekzdar.cz; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, to 4pm Oct-Mar) is in the monastery grounds.

## Cistercian Monastery

Founded in 1252, the **Cistercian monastery** (klášter Cisterciáků; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 8am-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) was burned down by the Hussites in 1422. Reconstruction began in 1638, and Giovanni Santini started work here in 1706, though he never completed the project. In it he attempted to combine the medieval with the baroque in a distinctive dark-and-light style. His **church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** (kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie) contains an altar by Řehoř Thény. The former monastery stables are now a **museum** (adult/concession 70/35Kč) devoted to Santini and an excellent and unique exhibit of historical pianos. You can buy individual tickets to the monastery (100/50Kč) and the church of St John of Nepomuk (50/30Kč), or a combined ticket (140/70Kč) that also includes the piano museum.

The superb **book museum** (muzeum knihy; adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 8am-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) on the evolution of writing, calligraphy and printing is also in another part of the monastery.

## Church of St John of Nepomuk

A little closer to town, on a hill called Zelená hora (Green mountain), is this peculiar but brilliant Santini church (1727) in the shape of a five-pointed star. It's on Unesco's list of World Cultural Heritage Sites.

According to legend, John of Nepomuk's tongue was cut out for his not revealing royal

confessions, and he was thrown off Prague's Charles bridge to his death. Five stars are said to have appeared above the spot where he drowned. Thus the church of St John of Nepomuk (kostel sv Jana Nepomuckého) is chock-full of tongue motifs and circles of five stars.

See the Cistercian monastery (left) for opening times and prices.

## Sleeping

**Hotel U labutě** (☎ 566 622 949; www.oxygen.cz/u-labute; náměstí Republiky 70; s/d incl breakfast 500/700Kč) and **Hotel Fit** (☎ 566 623 508; www.hotelfit.unas.cz; Horní 30; d incl breakfast 600Kč) offer passable, central rooms.

## Getting There & Away

Žďár is on the Brno (110Kč, 1½ hours) to Prague (204Kč, 2½ hours) main line, with about 10 express connections and a few other slower trains a day. There are up to six daily buses to Jihlava (47Kč, 1½ hours).

## TELČ

pop 5700

Yesterday's travel secret may now be a burgeoning tourism hot spot, but that's OK because Telč's appeal is too special to be dissipated by a few tour buses. Surrounded on three sides by medieval fish ponds, the pristine town square is precisely separated from the modern part of town. Strolling across the narrow bridges under the imposing gates is like time-travelling to the heart of the Renaissance.

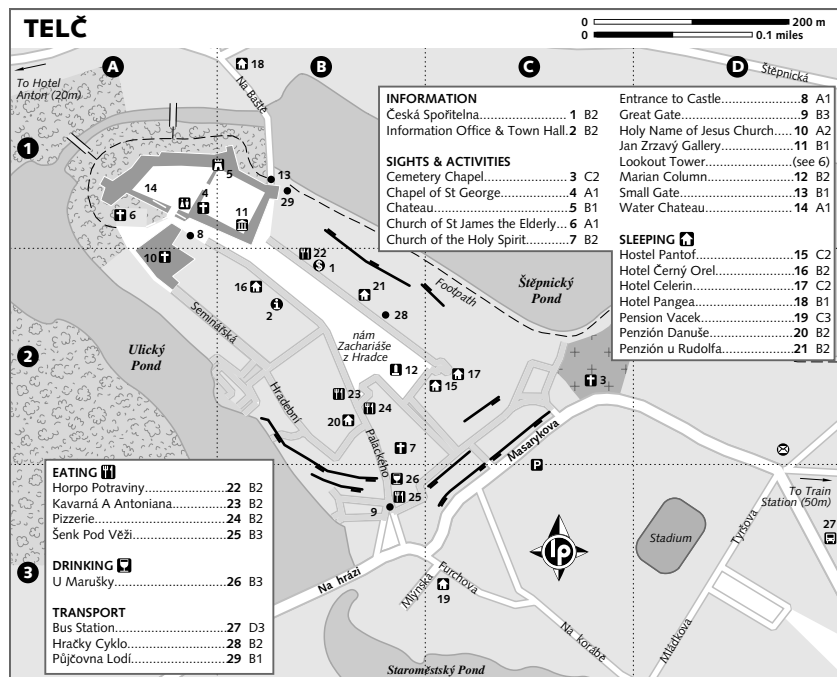
Inside, the square does not disappoint with a grand array of façades, covered arcades and walkways and the beautiful Water chateau. Park yourself with a good book and a glass of Moravian wine at one of the cafés on the square and you'll remember all over again just why you like to travel.

The best time to visit is late July/early August when the town explodes into life during the **Prázdňiny v Telči folk music festival** (www.prazdnyintelci.ji.cz). An eclectic selection of local and international performers is usually on offer.

In 1992 Telč's unadulterated 16th-century splendour was recognised with a spot on Unesco's list of World Heritage Sites.

## History

Telč was founded in the 14th century by the feudal lords of Hradec as a fortified settlement, with a castle separated from the town by



a strong wall. The artificial ponds on each side of Telč provided security and a sure supply of fish. After a fire in 1530, Lord Zachariáš, then governor of Moravia, ordered the town and castle to be rebuilt in the Renaissance style by Italian masons.

After the death of Zachariáš in 1589, building activity ceased and the complex you see today is largely as it was then. The main square is unmarred by modern constructions, and the **fire hall** (náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 28) is evidence of local concern to keep it that way.

## Orientation

The old centre of Telč, including náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce and the chateau, is nearly surrounded by two ponds. The train and bus stations (one street apart) are 800m southeast of the town centre.

## Information

**Česká Společna** (náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 21) Has an exchange and ATM.

**Post office** (Staňkova) A block from the train station.

**Tourist Information Office** (Informační Středisko; ☎ 567 112 407; www.telc-etc.cz; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-

Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) Located inside the town hall. It can book accommodation and also provides internet access at 1Kč per minute.

## Sights

### CHATEAU

The glacé cherry on a very pretty cake, Telč's Renaissance chateau, part of which is known as the Water chateau, guards the north end of the peninsula, looking more like it's there to ward off a downturn in the tourist industry than protect against invaders. Rebuilt from the original Gothic structure by Antonio Vlach (from 1553 to 1556) and Baldassare Maggi (from 1566 to 1568), the surviving structure remains in remarkably fine fettle, with immaculately tended lawns and beautifully kept interiors.

In the ornate **chapel of St George** (kaple sv Jíří), opposite the ticket office, are the remains of the castle's founder, Zachariáš z Hradce.

There are two tours through the **chateau** (zámek; ☎ 567 243 821; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, to 4pm Apr, Sep & Oct). **Route A** (adult/concession 80/40Kč, in English 160Kč, 1hr) takes you through the

Renaissance halls, and **Route B** (adult/concession 70/35Kč, in English 140Kč, 45 min) through the castle apartment rooms. Also worth visiting is the local **historical museum** (muzeum vysočiny Jihlava; ☎ 567 243 918; enter from the chateau courtyard; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ same as chateau), with its scale model of Telč in 1895, or the small **Jan Zrzavý gallery** (galérie Jana Zrzavého; ☎ 567 243 649; adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ same as chateau).

## OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Telč's stunning town square is bordered on three sides by Renaissance houses built on the ruins of their Gothic predecessors after the 1530 fire. Though it's from another era, the baroque **Marian column** (1717) in the square doesn't detract from the town's overall character and is a popular early evening meeting point.

Dominating the town centre are the Gothic towers of the **church of St James the Elderly** (kostel sv Jakuba Staršího), which has a **lookout tower** (věž; adult/concession 20/15Kč; ☎ 10-11.30am & 1-6pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, 1-5pm Sat & Sun May & Sep). Also watching over the square is the baroque **Holy Name of Jesus church** (kostel Jména Ježíšova) completed in 1667 as part of a Jesuit college.

North of the square is a narrow lane leading to the old town's **Small gate** (Malá brána), through which is a large English-style park surrounding the duck ponds (once the town's defensive moat).

South along Palackého, towards the **Great gate** (Velká brána), is the imposing Romanesque **church of the Holy Spirit** (kostel sv Ducha; early 13th century). Outside the Great gate you can walk along parts of Telč's remaining bastions.

## Sleeping

Accommodation can be hard to get and therefore expensive during the annual Prázdniny v Telči folk music festival in late July/early August. Book ahead.

## BUDGET

**Penzion u Rudolfa** (☎ 567 243 094; www.volny.cz/libuse.javurkova; náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 58; s/d 300/600Kč) A pretty merchant's house on the main square conceals a friendly home with shared kitchen facilities.

**Hostel Pantof** (☎ 776 887 466; www.pantof.cz; náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 42; dm 300Kč, d 800Kč; ☎ Jul & Aug; P) A friendly and relaxed atmosphere and rooms overlooking one of the country's prettiest squares add up to one of the Czech Republic's best hostels.

**Penzion Vacek** (☎ 567 213 099; www.penzionvacek.cz; Mlýnská 104; s/d incl breakfast 400/800Kč) Bed-and-breakfast service at (almost) hostel prices are standard at this homey spot.

## MIDRANGE

**Penzion Danuše** (☎ 567 213 945; www.telc-etc.cz/cz/pri vat/danuše; Hradební 25; s/d 450/900Kč, 4-bed apt 2000Kč) Discreet wrought-iron balconies and wooden window boxes give this place a touch of class on a quiet corner just off the main square.

**Hotel Celerin** (☎ 567 243 477; www.hotel-celerin.cz; náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 1/43; s incl breakfast 800-1100Kč, d incl breakfast 1300-1600Kč; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Variety is king in the Celerin's 12 comfortable rooms, with décor ranging from cosy wood to white wedding chintz. Take a look first.

**Hotel Pangea** (☎ 567 213 122; www.pangea.cz; Na Baště 450; s/d incl breakfast 1200/1600Kč; P ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Huge buffet breakfasts and loads of facilities make this slightly functional spot very good value. Outside of July and August, rates fall by up to 30%.

## TOP END

**Hotel Anton** (☎ 567 223 315; www.hotel-anton.cz; Slavatovská 92; s/d incl breakfast 1350/1800Kč; P ☎ ☎) Designer furniture, private balconies and a great restaurant downstairs combine in Telč's best accommodation. No wonder this newly opened hotel has been recommended by Lonely Planet readers.

**Hotel Černý Orel** (☎ 567 243 222; www.cernyorel.cz; náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 7; s/d incl breakfast 1350/1800Kč; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Its self-appointed 'four-star' status is stretching things, but if you're into slightly faded old-world glamour right on the main square, look no further than the 'Black Eagle'.

## Eating

**Kavárna A Antoniana** (☎ 603 519 903; náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 23; cake 25Kč; ☎ 8am-2am) With interesting documentary-style photographs of (not so) old Moravia, and dangerously strong coffee, this café is a handy modern refuge from the gorgeous Renaissance overkill outside.

**Senk Pod Věží** (☎ 603 526 999; Palackého 116; mains 100-180Kč; ☎ 11am-3pm & 6-9pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun) Sizzling grills, tasty pizza and occasional live music are the big drawcards at this cosy and traditional restaurant tucked under the tower.

Also recommended:

**Pizzerie** (☎ 567 223 246; náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 32; pizza 110Kč) Right on the main square and right on the money for tasty pizza.

**Horpo Potraviny** (náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 65) Your friendly local supermarket.

### Drinking

**U Marušky** (☎ 605 870 854; Palackého) Telč's hipper young citizens crowd this buzzy bar for cool jazz, a funky selection of old radios, and a wider-than-usual selection of beer and wine.

### Getting There & Away

Frequent buses go from Telč to Jihlava (32Kč, 30 minutes) and Znojmo (70Kč, two hours). Buses from České Budějovice (90Kč, two hours) to Brno (90Kč, two hours) stop at Telč about five times a day. Seven buses a day run to Prague (120Kč, 2½ hours).

Trains from Telč are fairly useless but do go to Slavonice (40Kč, one hour).

### Getting Around

**Hračky Cyklo** (náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 23; per day 100Kč; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) rents out bikes.

From July to August you can rent rowboats from **Půjčovna Lodí** (beside the East gate; per 30 min 25Kč; ☎ 10am-6.30pm)

### TŘEBÍČ

Pop 39,000

Pollution has scoured the sheen from this industrial city's old centre. Its Jewish ghetto – one of the best preserved in the country – is worth a brief stopover, though.

### Orientation & Information

The train station is 1km south of the main square, Karlovo náměstí. The bus station is at Komenského náměstí, 500m west of the main square.

The **tourist office** (informační a turistické centrum; ☎ 568 847 070; www.kvistrebic.cz; Karlovo náměstí 53; ☎ 9am-5pm Jun-Sep, to 1pm Sat, closed Sun Nov-Apr) can book accommodation. There are other tourist offices at **St Procopius' Basilica** (☎ 777 746 982; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Fri, 1-5pm Sat-Mon) and the **Rear (New) synagogue** (☎ 568 823 005; ☎ 10am-5pm).

**ČSOB** (Karlovo náměstí 21) changes money and has an ATM.

### Sights

The castle and former Benedictine monastery (klášter Benediktínů) around which the town originally grew was founded in 1101 and rebuilt shoddily as a **chateau** (zámek; ☎ 568 840 518; www.zamek-trebic.cz; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 8am-5pm Jul & Aug, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-

Mar) at the end of the 17th century. Inside, a **museum** (muzeum Vysočiny Třebíč) has a small collection of Nativity scenes and pipes.

Also in the complex is the World Heritage-listed **St Procopius' Basilica** (Bazilika sv Prokopa; ☎ 568 824 692; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Thu, to 3pm Fri, 1-5pm Sat & Mon, 1-6pm Sun Jun-Aug) with its attractive chancel and carved north portal (portal Paradisi).

East of the monastery is the former **Jewish ghetto**. The 1639 **Front (Old) synagogue** (Přední (Stará) synagoga; Tiché náměstí) now belongs to the Hussite Church; the **Rear (New) synagogue** (Zadní (Nová) synagoga; ☎ 568 823 005; Subakova 1/44; adult/concession 40/25Kč; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-5pm) has beautifully restored frescoes. The 17th-century **Jewish cemetery** (Židovský hřbitov; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm) on Hrádek, 600m north of the Old synagogue, is the largest in the country with more than 11,000 graves, the oldest dating to 1641. Třebíč's Jewish quarter is a Unesco World Heritage Site.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Autokemping Poušov** (☎ 568 850 641; tent/cottage per person 60/110Kč; ☎ May-Sep; (P)) Situated 2km west of town, this camp site also has cottages.

**Grand Hotel** (☎ 568 848 560; www.grand-hotel.cz; Karlovo náměstí 5; s/d incl breakfast 1220/1400Kč; (P)) Situated above a rough-and-ready shopping arcade, the hotel's brightly redeCORATED rooms with new wooden floors are actually more comfortable than you'd expect.

Also recommended:

**Penzió u Synagogy** (☎ 568 821 665; Subakova 3; s/d incl breakfast 490/790Kč; (P)) Near the Rear (New) synagogue.

**Restaurant Neptun** (☎ 776 350 850; Tiché náměstí 3; mains 60-80Kč) Pasta, seafood and steak are served with an eclectic twist near the Front (Old) synagogue.

### Getting There & Away

Třebíč is on a main line between Brno (88Kč, 1¼ hours) and Jihlava (64Kč, one hour), with about 14 trains a day. There are also buses to Brno (56Kč, 1¼ hours), Jihlava (37Kč, 1¼ hours) and Telč (34Kč, 40 minutes).

### JAROMĚŘICE NAD ROKYTNOU

pop 4000

The unassuming small town of Jaroměřice is home to one of Europe's largest baroque chateaux – a typical example of Counter-Reformation architecture in the style fancied by the new nobility, in this case Johann von Questenberg. The visitors come in droves.

A tour of the red-and-white striped **castle** (☎ 568 440 237; www.zamek-jaromerice.cz; adult/concession 60/30Kč, foreign language additional 10%; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, to 5pm May, Jun & Oct, 9am-noon & 1-4pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) includes the **Hall of the forefathers** (Sál předků), with its inlaid wooden ceiling, and the stucco-deCORATED **Dance hall** (Taneční sál).

In the castle grounds the 18th-century baroque **St Margaret church** (kostel sv Markéty) boasts a large cupola with a busy fresco by Karel Töpffer. The interior can only be seen during services or if you manage to find the caretaker (*správce*).

In the large French-and-English-style gardens is a **theatre** where the first Czech opera, *O původu Jaroměřic* (The Origin of Jaroměřice) by František Míča, premiered in 1730.

In August the chateau hosts the annual **Peter Dvorský international music festival** (mezinárodní hudební festival Petra Dvorského; http://jaromerice.box.cz)

### Sleeping

**Opera Hotel** (☎ 568 440 230; Komenského náměstí 996; s/d incl breakfast 450/700Kč) This is one of the few options in town but offers spacious rooms with shower and TV.

### Getting There & Away

Jaroměřice, 14km south of Třebíč, is best reached by bus. There are up to five buses a day from Brno (68Kč, 1¼ hours) and 12 from Třebíč (16Kč, 20 minutes).

The train station is 2km away in the village of Popovice.

## SOUTH MORAVIAN BORDERLANDS

Running in a swathe along the Austrian border, much of this low-lying rural and light industrial area was owned by the Liechtenstein family from the Middle Ages to 1945. Forced to leave during the mass German expulsions after WWII, they retreated to their tiny alpine principality sandwiched between Switzerland and Austria, leaving behind a diverse legacy of castles, estates and churches. Since the passing of *restituce* (restitution law) in 1990, the Liechtenstein family has been striving for compensation from the Czech government (see p325). The highlight of the

area previously owned by the Liechtensteins includes the gorgeous chateaux at Lednice and Valčice.

Another legacy of the earlier German-speaking inhabitants of the region are the prosperous towns and villages that now form the heart of the Moravian wine industry. Mikulov, Valčice and Znojmo have many wine salons where you can sample the rapidly improving local vintages. Southeast Moravia's rolling hills are also ideal for cycling, especially in the Unesco World Heritage area surrounding Lednice and Valčice. Further east there's excellent hiking and mountain biking in the Podyjí National Park, which surrounds the Dyje river as it meanders from Vranov to Znojmo.

### ZNOJMO

pop 38,000

Perched high above the Dyje river, Znojmo conceals one of Moravia's more interesting old towns amid its industrial sprawl. Villagelike alleys link intimate plazas with bustling main squares, and hilltop lookout points provide vistas across the valley. Blur your eyes a little and the atmosphere is almost Italian. With a decent tally of grand religious buildings, and beautiful Romanesque frescoes, Znojmo deserves to be more than just a signpost on the main road from Austria.

### Orientation

The bus and train stations are 800m from the main square, Masarykovo náměstí. From the bus station go up Tovární, turn left at náměstí Republiky, then right onto Vídeňská. From the train station, walk up 17 listopadu and, at the roundabout (Mariánské náměstí), veer left onto Pontassievská.

### Information

The **Tourist Information Office** (Turistické Informační Centrum; ☎ 515 222 552; www.znojmo.cz; Obroková 10; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, closed Sat afternoon Oct-April) also books accommodation. A second office, next door in the **Town hall tower** (Radniční věž; ☎ 515 216 297; Obroková 12; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun, closed Sat afternoon Oct-April), books theatre tickets.

**Česká Spořitelna** (Masarykovo náměstí 2) Exchanges money and has ATMs.

**Na Věčnosti** (☎ 515 221 814; www.navečnosti.cz; Velká Mikulášská 11). Internet access (including wi-fi) at this groovy club.

**Post office** (Horní náměstí) North of the centre.

**Raiffeisenbank** (Obroková 15) Exchanges money and has ATMs.

## Sights

### MASARYKOVO NÁMĚSTÍ & AROUND

The **South Moravian museum** (Jihomoravské muzeum; ☎ 515 226 529; www.znojmo.cz; adult/concession 20/10Kč; Masarykovo náměstí 11; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sat) is on the main square, inside the House of Art (dům umění). The collection includes Czech religious icons, sculpture and temporary art exhibitions. There's another branch (below) at Václavské náměstí.

In the southern part of the square are the **church of St John the Baptist** (kostel sv Jana Křtitele) and the **Capuchin monastery** (Kapucínský klášter).

North of the square, on Obroková, looms the handsome and scalable **Town hall tower** (Radniční věž; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun), 66m tall and one of Moravia's best examples of late-Gothic architecture (c 1448).

Enter Kramářská from Obroková and go through the arch to the old chicken market (Slepčí třída); at No 2 is the entrance to the **Znojmo catacombs** (Znojenské podzemí; ☎ 515 221 342; adult/concession 50/30Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Jul & Aug, to 4pm May, Jun & Sep, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat Apr, 10am-4pm Sat Oct). In the 14th century the town's cellars were linked by some 27km of these tunnels, which were used for both storage and defence.

East of Kramářská is the 13th-century **church of the Holy Cross** (kostel sv Kříže), part of an active Dominican monastery. The early-Gothic church received a baroque face-lift in the 1780s.

### OTHER SQUARES

North of Horní náměstí, via Divišovo náměstí, is Jezuitské náměstí and the Jesuit **church of St Michael** (kostel sv Michala), a 'baroquefied' Romanesque church at the highest point of the old town.

From here Veselá leads south to Václavské náměstí, where a right turn into Přemyslovců takes you to a former Minorite monastery, now a branch of the **South Moravian museum** (Jihomoravské muzeum; ☎ 515 224 961; Václavské náměstí 6; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) with exhibits of crafts and trades, geology, archaeology and oriental weapons.

### ROTUNDA OF OUR LADY & ST CATHERINE

The 11th-century **rotunda of Our Lady & St Catherine** (rotunda Panny Marie a sv Kateřiny; ☎ 515 222 311; admission 90Kč; ☎ 10.15am-4.15pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep) is one of the republic's oldest Romanesque structures and contains a beautiful series of 12th-century frescoes showing the life of Christ. Formerly used as a pigsty and a beer hall, the rotunda is now strictly protected. Visits are restricted to a maximum of 15 minutes and the structure is closed during bad weather. Nearby, the remains of **Znojmo castle** (☎ 515 222 311; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep, Sat & Sun May) are along a scenic path that follows the old city walls from the dead-end street of Přemyslovců. On weekends you can get here from Václavské náměstí down Hradní, through the **brewery** (pivovar; closed to the public). Both sites are visited as part of a tour, with the last tour of the castle at 5pm.

### CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS

From Hradní take Velká Františkánská to Klácelova and turn right into náměstí Mikulášké. Ahead is the church of St Nicholas (kostel sv Mikuláše), once Romanesque but rebuilt as the present monumental Gothic structure.

In a side chapel near the entrance is the so-called **bread Madonna**. According to legend, during the Thirty Years' War a box beneath this image was always found to be full of food, no matter how much was removed. Beside the church is the Orthodox **St Wenceslas chapel** (kaple sv Václava).

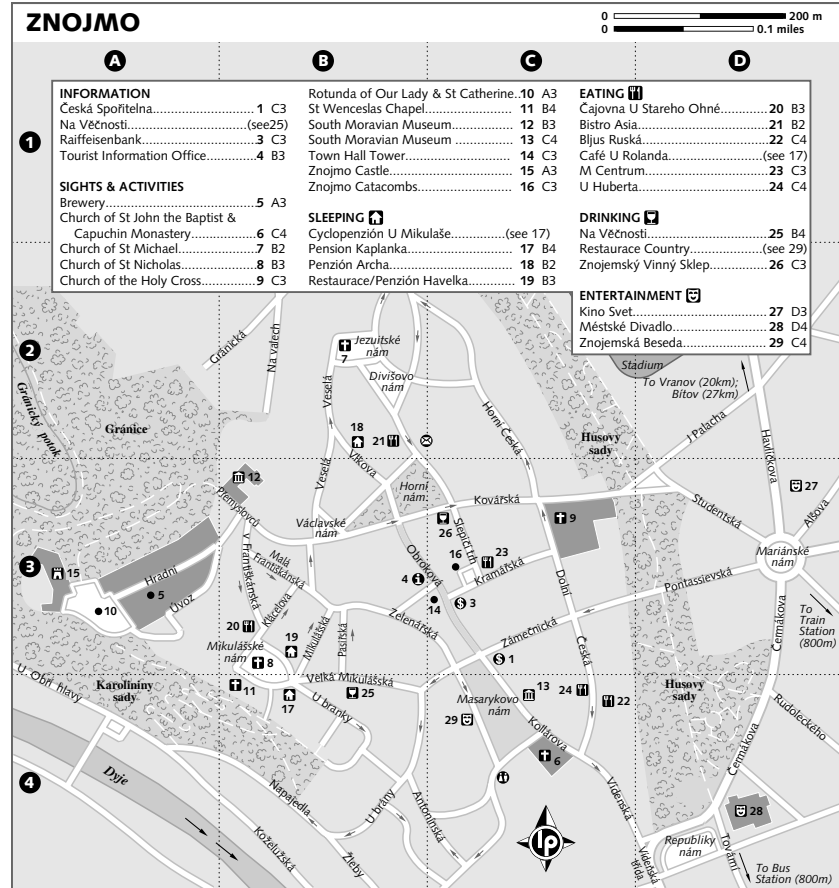
### Sleeping

The Tourist Information Office (p317) books private rooms from 300Kč per person. Count on an additional 15Kč tourist tax from May to September.

### BUDGET

**Cydropenzión U Mikuláše** (☎ 607 555 202; paty@club34.cz; Mikulášké náměstí 8; s/d from 200/400Kč) In a serene location, this has basic beds above the cheerful Café U Rolanda.

**Penzion Kaplanka** (☎ 515 242 905; www.kaplanka.cz; U branky 6; s/d without bathroom from 200/400Kč; ☎ ☎ ☎) This whitewashed heritage place has a variety of rooms from so-so to respectable midrange (prices and bathroom facilities increase accordingly). Sample the local vino in the garden as you look across the Dyje river valley and you could almost be in Tuscany.



### MIDRANGE

**Restaurace/Penzión Havelka** (☎ 515 220 138; http://havelka.euweb.cz; Mikulášké náměstí 3; d incl breakfast 750Kč) In the shadow of a church, this immaculate *penzion* opts for soda-white, holier-than-thou décor and a Madonna in the garden.

**Penzión Archa** (☎ 515 225 062; www.pensionarcha.cz; Vlkova 4; d incl breakfast 840Kč) The building is from the 17th century, the awning considerably newer, but the comfy rooms are good enough for the new millennium.

### Eating

**Café U Rolanda** (☎ 607 555 202; Mikulášké náměstí 8; breakfast 60Kč) The curvy wooden chairs and terracotta tiles give this place a vaguely Gallic

ambience, and it's perfect for *le petit déjeuner* (breakfast) if you're staying in one of the nearby *penzions*.

**U Huberta** (☎ 515 221 102; Dolní Česká; mains 80-140Kč) Dark and broody, this place features old-school hunting lodge chic. Old-school hunting types crowd in for cheap Czech food and Hosten beer brewed just up the road.

**Bljus Ruská** (☎ 515 260 782; Dolní Česká; mains 100-200Kč; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri, closed Sat & Sun) Locals with short memories cram this lunch spot for tasty *borscht* (beetroot soup) and other Russian goodies. Pass the salt (mine), comrade.

Also recommended:  
**Čajovna U Stareho Ohně** (☎ 605 803 702; Staré Město 1; ☎ 3-10pm Mon-Sat) Just may be the country's best teahouse, with tasty snacks.

**Bistro Asia** (Divišovo náměstí 2; mains 30-45Kč) For cheap Asian eats.

**M Centrum** (Slepičí třída 7) A supermarket below, a cheap buffet above.

## Drinking

### PUBS

**Restaurace Country** (☎ 602 549 759; Masarykovo náměstí 22; mains 90-150Kč) To a soundtrack of the blues, two dogs had a fight when we last visited this raucous-as-hell but loads-of-fun steak 'n' beer hall. Yep, it's that kind of place.

**Znojemský Vinný Sklep** (☎ 515 261 872; Horní náměstí 20) This cellar bar is the place to try and buy regional wines. Bring a friend because most wines are only available by the bottle.

### CLUBS

**Na Věčnosti** (☎ 515 221 814; www.navecnosti.cz; Velka Mikulášská 11) Upstairs a tasty vegetarian restaurant, downstairs a pub meets club with occasional touring bands. Either way, you win.

## Entertainment

Plays are staged at the **Městské divadlo** (náměstí Republiky 20) and **Znojemská Beseda** (Masarykovo náměstí 22). For tickets and schedules, visit the town hall Tourist Information Office (p317).

**Kino Svet** (☎ 515 224 034; www.illusion.cz; Havlíčkova 7) shows the latest Hollywood releases.

## Getting There & Away

Direct buses run to Brno (60Kč, one hour) and Jihlava (60Kč, 1½ hours) about five times a day. Several buses a day also travel to/from Prague (162Kč, three hours).

Frequent direct trains run daily to Brno (110Kč, two hours); fewer service Jihlava (120Kč, two hours).

## PODYJÍ NATIONAL PARK

Officially opened in 1991, **Podyjí National Park** (www.nppodyji.cz) is one of the Czech Republic's more recent and most spectacular protected areas.

Bordering the park on the southern bank of the Dyje river (Thaya in German) is the Thayatal National Park in Austria, which was inaugurated in 2001.

During the Cold War, the area was a restricted border zone, and the flora and fauna of the region is still remarkably undisturbed. Some hiking trails are trans-border, providing the opportunity to hike in both Austria and the Czech Republic.

On the Czech side, the tiny Podyjí National Park is only 63 sq km and made up of more than 80% forest. The park surrounds an artificial lake between Vranov and Bitov and encases the Dyje river as it meanders eastwards to Znojmo. In some areas the spectacular river valley is up to 200m deep. As well as the incredible chateaux at Vranov and Bitov, there's over 76km of hiking trails and plenty of specialist mountain-bike paths. In the summer the verdant valleys and rustic riverside are packed with holidaying Czechs, so spring and autumn are recommended for more hassle-free hiking. Free camping is not allowed but there are camp sites and other accommodation available in the lakeside villages of Vranov and Bitov. Bus services are not too frequent, so plan on staying a few days or having your own transport.

## VRANOV NAD DYJÍ

### pop 900

West of Znojmo, seemingly rising out of the plain, is beautiful **Vranov chateau** (☎ 515 296 215; vranov@pambr.cz; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm May, Jun & Sep, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct). Atop a high crag above the Dyje river, it enjoys one of the most dramatic positions of any castle in Moravia. The chateau's Gothic core dates from the 14th century, but when it came into the possession of the Althan family in 1680 it was rebuilt in baroque style. Most of the chateau, including its chapel, is the work of renowned baroque architect Fischer von Erlach.

The most impressive part of the castle, perched right on the edge of the cliff, is the oval **Hall of the ancestors** (Sál předků), decorated with famous frescoes by Johann Michael Rottmayr depicting the Apotheosis (glorification) of the Althan family, and statues representing the Althan ancestors.

The guided **tour** (adult/concession 75/40Kč, in a foreign language 150/115Kč) of the castle takes you through many ornate apartments dating from the 18th-century when Spanish princess Maria Anna Pignatelli lived here. There is a royal bath that looks like a modern hot tub, and two elegant ceramic stoves in the Pignatelli bedroom. One of the rooms was used for Freemasonry – a very fashionable pursuit for 18th-century aristocrats – and is decorated with Masonic symbols, including the set square and compasses, the pyramid and the Star of David.

The chateau can be reached across a bridge, about 1km uphill from the quiet town. Shorter tours are available through the chateau's

gardens (adult/concession 50/30Kč) and the chapel (adult/concession 25/15Kč).

## Sleeping & Eating

**The tourist office** (☎ 515 296 285; infocentrum@ouvrano.cz; Náměstí 47; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) can help with private rooms and hostel beds.

**Penzión Jelena** (☎ 515 296 116; www.vranov.com; Zámecká 250; d 900Kč; ☎ ♿) Sparkling rooms come standard in this newly refurbished place. There are also more expensive family apartments (from 1250Kč).

**Zámecký Hotel** (☎ 515 296 101; www.zameckyhotel.cz; s/d incl breakfast 800/1150Kč; ☎ ♿) This four-star and immaculate place has a pleasant terrace restaurant overlooking the river.

## Getting There & Away

There are up to nine daily bus connections from Znojmo, 20km away. Three daily buses run the 26km to and from Bitov.

## BITOV

### pop 400

The best thing about Bitov is the getting there. Surrounded by thickly wooded hills and set above the pea-green Dyje river, Bitov enjoys a truly photogenic setting. The original 11th-century **castle** (☎ 515 294 622; bitov@brno.npu.cz; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, to 5pm May, Jun & Sep, to 4pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) was rebuilt in early-Gothic style and extended during the 15th to 17th centuries. There are two tours. The first (adult/concession 70/50Kč) takes in the palace, while the second (95/70Kč) lingers over the armoury. Tours in English cost twice as much.

The castle is 3km northwest of Bitov village, and unless you have your own wheels, you must walk (follow the road north from the main square, past Hotel Bitov). If you're driving from Znojmo, don't be fooled by the derelict ruins of **Kornštejn castle**, a few kilometres southwest of Bitov village; continue past them to Bitov.

## Sleeping

**Autokemping Bitov Horka** (☎ 602 712 720; tent/dm per person 70/140Kč; ☎ Jun-Sep; ☎ ♿) Beside the castle near the lake, this pretty spot also has dormitory accommodation.

**Pension U Tesarů** (☎ 515 294 616; http://utesaru.hyperlinx.cz; s/d incl breakfast 450/700Kč; ☎ ♿) This pretty place in the centre of the village has a popular restaurant and tidy rooms.

## Getting There & Away

Buses are infrequent from Znojmo and Jihlava. The best connection is from the train station at Šumná, which is serviced by 13 trains from Znojmo and two from Jihlava.

## ČIŽOV

### pop 300

In Čížov you can see the last remnants of the **Iron Curtain** dividing the former Czechoslovakia and Austria, with a preserved section of the imposing barbed-wire fence complete with a guard tower. There is also a small **visitor centre** (☎ 9am-5pm Jun-Aug, Sat & Sun Apr, May, Sep & Oct) for the Podyjí National Park. Two buses per day run from Znojmo to Čížov (58Kč, 1½ hours). There are no direct buses from Vranov or Bitov.

## MIKULOV

### pop 7800

Sitting atop a rocky hillside rising from the surrounding plains, Mikulov will be in sight well before you get there. However, 30 minutes of visual expectation doesn't dull the reality of arrival.

Topped with an imposing chateau and studded with a legacy of baroque and Renaissance façades, Mikulov thoroughly deserves its growing popularity amid the burgeoning Moravian wine country. And once you've experienced enough pretty Renaissance architecture, the legacy of Mikulov's once-thriving Jewish community is a compelling alternative.

## Orientation

To get into town from the train station, turn right onto 28 října, left onto Nádražní, and right onto Hraničářů to Piaristů. The bus station is a bit closer to town, on the corner of Piaristů and 28 října.

## Information

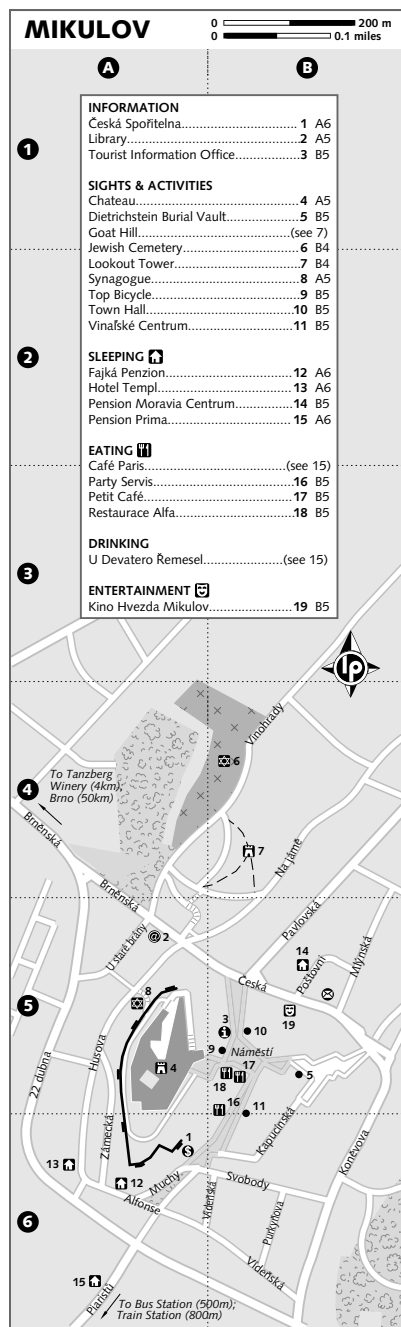
**Česká Spořitelna** (Náměstí 19) Has an exchange desk and ATM.

**Post office** (Česká 7) Northeast of the main square.

**Tourist Information Office** (Turistické Informační Centrum; ☎ 519 510 855; www.mikulov.cz; Náměstí 30; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-May) Organises tours (including specialist outings for wine buffs) and accommodation.

**Town library** (Brněnská 15; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Has internet access on the first floor.





## Sights & Activities

### CHATEAU

A fortified Slav settlement once stood here, but the present walls and towers are part of a 13th-century castle. The heavy baroque renovations were the work of the Dietrichstein family, who owned it from 1575 to 1945. The **chateau** (☎ 519 510 255; adult/concession 60/30Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, to 4pm Apr & Oct) was burned down by the Germans in February 1945 and has been painstakingly restored.

The **chateau museum** (included in chateau entry price) includes exhibits on folk traditions and wine-making. In the cellar is the largest wine barrel in central Europe, made by Kryštof Secht of Brno in 1643. The barrel has a capacity of 101,000L, though it's now suffering from dry rot.

### OTHER ATTRACTIONS

The 15th-century **synagogue** (synagoga; ☎ 519 510 255; Husova 11; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 1-5pm Tue-Sun 15 May-30 Sep) has background on the local Jewish quarter. The **Jewish cemetery** (Židovský hřbitov; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Jul & Aug), founded in the 15th century, is off Brněnská. There are tours every half-hour.

An 'instructive trail' now runs through the Jewish quarter, with information plaques in English. You can pick it up at the end of Husova near Alfonse Muchy. Above the Jewish quarter is **Goat hill** (Kozí hrádek) topped with a 15th-century **lookout tower** (☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep).

The town's main square, simply called Náměstí, has many houses of interest, including the **town hall** at No 1 and the sgraffitoed **Restaurace Alfa** (see Eating & Drinking, opposite) at No 27. At No 5 is the **Dietrichstein burial vault** (Dietrichštejnská hrobka; adult/concession 35/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) with guided tours available.

There's some good **hiking** to be had in the nearby **Pavlovské hills** (Pavlovské vrchy), while wine lovers can visit **Tanzberg's Bavory winery** (Vinařství Bavory; ☎ 519 500 040; www.tanzberg.cz) 4km north of Mikulov (on the Brno road) in the village of Bavory (organise your visit in advance). A pleasant way to visit smaller, local vineyards across the rolling countryside is by bicycle on the **Mikulov Wine Trail**. The Tourist Information Office (p321) can recommend a one-day ride that also takes in the nearby chateaux at Valtice and Lednice. Bicycles and additional cycle touring information are available from **Top Bicycle** (☎ 519 513 745; www.topbicycle.com; Náměstí 24/27).

In town visit **Vinařské Centrum** (☎ 519 510 368; Náměstí 11; ☎ 8am-10pm Apr-Oct, 9am-8pm Nov-Mar), which has an excellent range of local wines available in small tasting glasses (10-20Kč), or whole bottles when you've finally made your mind up.

## Sleeping

**Pension Prima** (☎ 519 511 793; www.pensionprima.cz; Piaristů 9; s/d 400/600Kč; (P)) Comfy but plain rooms with kitchen facilities are available above an atmospheric, traditional-style pub.

**Pension Moravia Centrum** (☎ 519 511 644; www.moravia.penzion.com; Poštovní 1; d 700Kč) The location's a tad dull, but a bright exterior and spotless rooms ensure a good night's sleep.

**Fajká Penzion** (☎ 732 833 147; www.fajka-mikulov.cz; Alfonse Muchy 18; s/d 400/800Kč) Bright, newly decorated rooms sit above a cosy wine bar.

**Hotel Templ** (☎ 519 510 692; www.templ.cz; Husova 50; s/d incl breakfast 1300/1500Kč; (X) (S)) Newly opened in a restored chapel, Mikulov's ritziest accommodation features discreetly furnished rooms and a supremely stylish restaurant.

## Eating & Drinking

**Party Servis** (Náměstí 20; breakfast 50Kč) Have breakfast of coffee, pastries and fresher-than-fresh open sandwiches at the outdoor tables.

**Petit Café** (Náměstí 27; crepes 50-70Kč) Tasty crepes and coffee are dished up in a hidden courtyard. Later at night have a beer or a glass of wine.

**Café Paris** (Piaristů 10; pizza 90-110Kč; ☎ 9.30am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat & Sun) A top spot for pizza, with a steady stream of loyal locals grabbing takeaway – always a good sign.

**Restaurace Alfa** (☎ 519 510 877; Náměstí 27; mains 120-240Kč) Game dishes are the specialty of the house in this slightly stuffy spot housed in a beautiful sgraffito building on the main square.

**U Devatero Řemesel** (Piaristů 9) Just next door to Café Paris, escape this cosy pub's smoky interior by sitting in the airy beer garden.

## Entertainment

**Kino Hvězda Mikulov** (Česká) The local cinema shows films on Friday and Saturday. Check with the Tourist Information Office (p321) for details.

## Getting There & Away

There are eight daily trains from Znojmo (64Kč, one hour) and Břeclav (34Kč, 30 minutes) that

have direct connections from Brno and Bratislava. Buses are faster from Lednice (29Kč, 30 minutes) and Brno (52Kč, 1¼ hours).

## VALTICE

pop 3600

Valtice lies between Břeclav and Mikulov in the heart of Moravia's prime wine region. The town's chateau was one of the main residences of the Liechtenstein family, who owned it for five-and-a-half centuries. This powerful aristocratic family had almost 100 estates in Moravia, many of which were confiscated from the Protestant Czech Estates when they lost the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620. In the 20th century much of the Liechtensteins' land was appropriated and they are now seeking compensation, according to the law of *restituće* (restitution; see p325), from the Czech government.

The area that encompasses both Valtice and Lednice was declared a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1997; the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (Lednicko-valtický areál) is the most architecturally valuable region in the country.

## Orientation & Information

The train station is on the northern edge of town, on the road to Lednice. Buses stop on the main road, where it meets náměstí Svobody. The **Tourist Information Office** (Turistické Informační Centrum; ☎ 519 352 978; www.radnice-valtice.cz; náměstí Svobody 4; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1-5pm Apr-Sep, 7am-3.30pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar) is on the main square below the chateau.

## Sights

The 12th-century **castle** (☎ 519 352 680; adult/concession 70/50Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, to 4pm Apr, Sep & Oct), on náměstí Svobody, has had face-lifts over the years and is now recognised as one of the country's finest baroque structures, with work by JB Fischer von Erlach and Italian architect Domenico Martinelli.

The chateau tour (in Czech with English text) lingers over all the belongings and furnishings left behind when the Liechtensteins fled from the advancing Soviet army in 1945. Of interest are the walls themselves, plastered with 7.5kg of gold. **National Salon of Czech Republic Wines** (☎ 519 352 072; www.salonvin.cz; ☎ 9.30am-5pm), in the chateau, is the place to buy and try local wines.

In front of the chateau is the **church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** (kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie) with a Rubens painting behind the main altar.

Next to the Tourist Information Office is an interesting (for agriculturalists) **agricultural museum** (Národní zemědělské muzeum v Praze; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct).

### Festivals & Events

In July each year, Valtice holds a **Baroque Music Festival** (Zámecké barokní léto; www.radnice-valtice.cz) in many parts of the chateau, complete with a party and fireworks.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Hubertus** (☎ 519 352 537; www.hotelhubertus.cz; s/d incl breakfast 1050/1300Kč) This place inside the castle is a bit 1950s frumpy, but you can't beat the location or the wine-tasting in its cellar.

**Restaurant & Cajovna Avalon** (☎ 603 867 469; Příční 46; mains 90-160Kč) Interesting dishes with a vegetarian skew feature in this nicely hippy spot just off the main square.

Also recommended:

**Penzión Prinz** (☎ 519 352 869; www.valtice.cz/prinz; náměstí Svobody; s/d incl breakfast 700/1200Kč; 📞 📺) Colourful, comfortable and cosy.

**Lahudky V&V** (náměstí Svobody; ☎ 5.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 7am-noon Sat) Deli-style next door, with everything for a picnic in the castle gardens.

### Getting There & Away

Regular trains go to Mikulov (22Kč, 15 minutes) and Břeclav (22Kč, 15 minutes) with connections to Brno and Zlín. From Mikulov the train continues to Znojmo. There are up to seven buses a day to Lednice (13Kč, 15 minutes).

### LEDNICE

pop 2400

It's frigid by name (*lednice* means icebox in Czech), but this little town warms up in summer when crowds flock here to see one of the country's most popular chateaux.

### Information

**Information Centre** (Informační Centrum; ☎ 519 340 986; www.lednice.cz; Zámecké náměstí 68; ☎ 9-11am & noon-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct) On the main square.

### Sights

Lednice's drawcard is its ostentatious 1856 neo-Gothic **chateau** (☎ 519 340 128; lednice@brno.npu.cz; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, to 5pm Sep, to 4pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) by J Wingelmüller. The Liechtensteins held it from 1582 to 1945 but now the chateau is pretty much in the hands

of the visitors queuing up to take one of the tours. There are two to choose from: **Tour 1** (adult/concession 80/40Kč, 45 min) takes you through a selection of the major rooms while **Tour 2** (100/50Kč, 45 min) concentrates on the Liechtenstein apartments. There is a 50Kč supplement for tours in a foreign language.

To the right is a **greenhouse** (skleník; adult/concession 50/25Kč) with a collection of exotic flora. The chateau's extensive **gardens** (☎ 5am-11pm May-Sep, 6am-8pm Oct-Apr), complete with lakes and the odd pavilion, are excellent for long summer walks. A highlight is the Turkish-style **minaret** (adult/concession 15/10Kč).

**Pleasure boats** (☎ 519 340 619; www.1plavebnik.cz; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Jul & Aug, Tue-Sun May, Jun & Sep, Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) cruise between the chateau and minaret (adult/concession 60/30Kč) and between the minaret and Janův castle (opposite; 80/40Kč).

### Sleeping & Eating

The Information Centre (left) can help with bookings for private rooms and hostel beds (from 200Kč per person).

**Penzion Lednice** (☎ 519 340 986; ubytovani@lednice.cz; Mikulovská 120; s/d 280/560Kč; 📞) On the road to Mikulov, this is a low-key, good-value spot.

**Penzion Myslivna** (☎ 519 340 220; www.myslivna-lednice.cz; Nádražní 675; s/d 400/800Kč, apt 1650Kč; 📞) Along with comfy, clean rooms this spot offers billiards, bowling and beer. Visiting the chateau may just have to wait.

**Pension Onyx** (☎ 519 340 068; www.onyx-made.cz; Nejdecká 176; s/d 420/660Kč; 📞) Near car park 1, this features a heaving restaurant, spit roasts and tidy rooms.

**Kavárna U Markýzy** (Valtická 252; coffee 25Kč, cake 35Kč; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun, 1-5pm Sat) Ice creams, cakes and coffee.

**Pizzeria Na Knihovně** (☎ 519 340 751; Mikulovská 74; pizza 80-120Kč; 📞) Tasty grills and pizza are served up in the town's old library, right on the main square.

There's a supermarket on the main square.

### Getting There & Away

The train station is in the southern part of town, on the road to Valtice, but buses to Břeclav (13Kč, 20 minutes) and Valtice (13Kč, 15 minutes) are more convenient.

### AROUND LEDNICE

The flat region around Lednice is fairly easy to explore on foot or bicycle. See **Peňáček** (☎ 776 625 817; Bředavská 366; per day 100Kč) for bike rental. Using

SHOCart's hiking map, *Turistická mapa – Břeclavsko, Pálava* (1:50,000), or cycling map, *Cykloturistická mapa – Pálava, Lednicko-valtický areál* (1:75,000), you can spend an interesting day or two exploring the smaller, scattered Liechtenstein chateaux, temples and pavilions around Lednice and beyond.

Just over 2km east of Lednice, on a green-or yellow-marked trail through forests and meadows, or by pleasure boat (opposite), is the rarely visited but picturesque **Janův castle** (Janův hrad; adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, Sat & Sun Apr & Oct).

Most of the other buildings can be visited on a red-marked trail south from Lednice. Past the Apollo camping ground, south of Mlýnský rybník, are the **Apollo temple** (Apollónův chrám; 1817) and **Nový dvůr stables** (1890).

Further on, a yellow trail digresses to **Hlohovec** and **Hraniční chateau** (Hraniční zámek; 1816). On a rise in the southern part of Hlohovec village there are several **wine cellars**, where you can try the local product.

From Hlohovec take the yellow trail joining the dead-straight Valtice–Lednice road to return to Lednice.

## MORAVSKÉ SLOVÁCKO REGION

Moravia is at its most colourful when celebrating its traditional folk culture, and the Moravské Slovácko region is its spiritual heart. Every summer locals don traditional costume to celebrate the region's festival season, and

any traditional Moravian reserve melts in a frenzy of music, dance and merry mayhem, creating one of the most intense expressions of regional identity seen anywhere in Europe.

Culturally, the inhabitants of the region, which straddles the gap between the Chýbý hills (southeast of Brno) and the White Carpathians (across the border in West Slovakia), are neither Moravian nor Slovak, but something in between, and draw on influences and traditions from both sides of the physical divide.

The region's unique flavour arises not only from a mild climate (which favours production of the republic's best wine) but also from the character of the people, who have an innate predisposition to the arts. Be it in the clothes that are worn, the wine that is drunk, the songs that are sung or the houses that are built, the communities of Moravské Slovácko appear to add a little bit of art to every facet of daily life.

Folk dress heavily decorated with embroidery and lace includes a head covering and dress for women, hat, shirt (and sometimes a waistcoat) and trousers for men, and boots or leather thongs for both genders. These often differ according to the age of the wearer.

Some of the houses in many villages are still painted in traditional white with a blue band around the bottom, many embellished with painted flowers or birds. Good souvenirs include the famous local pottery, often decorated with floral and other designs, as well as embroidery and woodcarvings.

### Wine Cellars

The region's distinctive *vinné sklepy* (wine cellars) are generally open for tastings from

### RESTITUCE

Following the demise of the communist era in 1989, the new government passed the law of *restituce* (restitution) which demanded that all property seized by the communists after 1948 be returned to its original owners. While this legislation has seen the return of significant estates to some aristocratic families (eg the return of Častolovice chateau to the Šternberks; see p253), the powerful Liechtenstein family continues to lobby the Czech government for compensation for estates appropriated by the state in 1918 and 1945. Unfortunately for the Liechtensteins, the law of restitution only applies to a very specific time frame, ie 25 February 1948 to 1 January 1990 – essentially the communist era. In addition, claimants must be Czech citizens. The land in debate amounts to 1600 sq km – 10 times the area of the titular Alpine principality the Liechtensteins retreated to in 1945. Reinforcing how seriously the Liechtensteins regard these demands, the case was heard by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague in 2005. Unfortunately the ICJ refused to make a ruling on the case. Meanwhile, in other news, the Prince of Liechtenstein is reported to be the world's fifth-wealthiest head of state, with an estimated fortune of four billion dollars.

mid-May to late September. In places such as Petrov (3km southwest of Strážnice), where they are called *plže* instead of *vinné sklepy*, they are partially underground; in Vlčnov they are more like huts (*vinařské budy*).

In some villages, wine cellars virtually constitute a separate village, such as at Raštitkovic or Prušánky. Normally they are within the village boundaries. Many wine cellars have seating for eager tasters, but take your own containers if you're keen to buy.

Unfortunately, buses around these villages (except to Petrov) are erratic.

### Festivals & Events

The best time to see folk dress and to hear the local music is during a regional festival. The following are some major ones:

**Hluk – Dolníčáké Festival** First weekend in July, every four years (next in 2009).

**Kyjov – Kyjovsko Summer Festival** On a weekend in mid-August, every four years (next in 2007).

**Strážnice – International Folk Festival** Last weekend in June.

**Velká nad Veličkou – Horníácko Festival** Folk music and dance, on a weekend in the second half of July.

**Vlčnov – Ride of the Kings** Last weekend in May.

More details are given under Strážnice (right) and Blatnice and Vlčnov (opposite).

## STRÁŽNICE

pop 6000

Strážnice comes into its own during the annual International Folk Festival (right), one of the best attended in the region. Outside the festival whirlwind, the town is also home to an excellent *skansen* (open-air village museum) but has little else of interest. It is best visited as a day trip from Uherské Hradiště.

### Orientation

The train and bus stations are near the main square, Předměstí; walk straight out of the train station, turn right onto the main road and follow it for 200m before turning left.

### Information

**Irra travel agency** (☎ 518 332 184; Předměstí 388; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri) doubles as the tourist information office.

Česká Spořitelna, with exchange desk and ATM, is nearby.

The town's website, [www.straznice-mesto.cz](http://www.straznice-mesto.cz), has plenty of information in English.

### Sights & Activities

Only two of the Renaissance town gates are left from the town's defensive wall. The originally Gothic castle (1261–64), which was rebuilt as a neo-Renaissance **chateau** in the mid-19th century, is today a **museum** (☎ 518 332 132; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun Jul & Aug, to 4pm May, Jun, Sep & Oct) that includes good displays on the folk culture of the Slovácko region. From Předměstí, walk north on kostelní, turn right and cross náměstí Svobody to Rybářská, then go left up Bzenecka.

Across the road and slightly closer to town is the **skansen** (☎ 518 332 173; [www.nul.k.cz](http://www.nul.k.cz); Bzenecká 671; adult/concession 50/25Kč; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun Jul & Aug, to 4pm May, Jun, Sep & Oct) with its large collection of Slovácko buildings from the last century, including smithies, wineries and colourfully decorated beehives. Most houses are furnished.

**Půjčovna Lodi Strážnice** (☎ 603 371 350; [www.batuv.kanal.net/](http://www.batuv.kanal.net/)) hires out canoes (100Kč per hour) and organises boat tours (adult/concession 90/45Kč). It's by the bridge on Rybářská, en route to the chateau.

### Festivals & Events

The Strážnice three-day **International Folk Festival**, held on the last weekend in June, was the first such festival held in the Czech Republic, back in 1945. It gave a major boost to the preservation of traditional culture.

Most of the festivities go on in the chateau's park, including open-air stage performances and impromptu jams, and food stalls with plenty of booze. The entry fee into the park is 130Kč per day or 300Kč for three days. One of the highlights is a procession from the town's main square to the chateau's garden.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Autokempink Strážnice** (☎ 518 332 037; [www.camp-straznice.cz](http://www.camp-straznice.cz); Bzenecká 1533; tent/hut per person 55/145Kč; ☎ May–Oct; P) Near the chateau, this also has rooms, bungalows and a buffet; book ahead around festival time.

**Turistická Ubytovna** (☎ 518 334 501; Bzenecká; dm 150Kč; P) Signposted across the sports field next to the *skansen*, this has basic beds in basic surroundings.

**Strážnice-Flag** (☎ 518 332 444; [www.hotelflag.cz](http://www.hotelflag.cz); Předměstí 3; s/d 900/1180Kč) It's a bit of a shoe-box but the rooms offer typical three-star comfort.

**Restaurace Na rynku** (náměstí Svobody; mains 60–90Kč) Near the village centre, this offers no-fuss, pub-style Czech fare.

### Getting There & Away

Direct buses connect Strážnice with Veselí nad Moravou (12Kč, 15 minutes), Hodonín (24Kč, 25 minutes), Uherské Hradiště (27Kč, 45 minutes) and, twice a day, Brno (58Kč, two hours).

Trains are pricier but also run to Veselí nad Moravou (16Kč, 15 minutes), Hodonín (28Kč, 30 minutes) and Uherské Hradiště (34Kč, 45 minutes).

## KUŽELOV

Kuželov's Dutch-style **windmill** (admission 25Kč; ☎ 9am–noon & 1–5pm Sat & Sun Apr–Oct) dates from 1842 and is one of only a handful to survive in Moravia (there were 700 in the 19th century). The caretaker will show you how it works and take you through a little museum full of old furnishings, clothing and utensils.

Buses are scarce, with irregular connections to/from Strážnice (19km) and Veselí nad Moravou (28km).

## BLATNICE

Blatnice is 5km west of Veselí nad Moravou and is known for the **St Anthony pilgrimage**, which is held on the weekend nearest the period 13 to 16 September. The colourful pilgrimage takes place around the **chapel of St Anthony** (kaple sv Antonína), built in the 17th century. Many of the pilgrims are dressed in traditional dress, and the songs and music are traditional as well.

## VLČNOV

There is little to see in Vlčnov – apart from some decorated houses and the village's 40 or so *budy* (wine cellars) – unless you're here for the annual **Ride of the Kings** (Jízda Králů; <http://jizdakralu.vlcnov.cz>) folk festival (p328).

The closest accommodation is in Uherské Hradiště (15km away), to which there are several daily buses (many more are added during festival time). Entrance to the festival costs 100/50Kč for adult/concession.

## UHERSKÉ HRADIŠTĚ

pop 26,200

Most mid-size towns would be content with one pretty main square, but Uherské Hradiště fits two into its well-preserved historical

centre. Both have a lively selection of bars and restaurants.

Outside the old town, Uherské Hradiště gets increasingly gritty. However, good hotels and a pair of interesting museums make it a good base to explore the surrounding region.

### Orientation

Uherské Hradiště train station is southwest of the city centre, on the corner of Nádražní and Spojovací, but it's only on a rail link between two main lines. Břeclav–Přerov trains, including from Hodonín and Rohatec, stop in the northern suburb of Staré Město. Brno–Slovakia trains, including those from Kyjov, stop in the southern suburb of Kunovice.

The bus station is at Velehradská třída, near the Centrum department store. To get to the main square, Masarykovo náměstí, walk west along Obránců míru as far as Velehradská and turn left along Krátká and Šromova to the square.

### Information

**Česká Pojišťovna** (Masarykovo náměstí 34) Has an exchange desk and ATM during office hours.

**Post office** (Masarykovo náměstí)

**Tourist Information Office** (Městské Informační Centrum; ☎ 572 525 525; [www.mic.uh.cz](http://www.mic.uh.cz); Masarykovo náměstí 21; ☎ 8am–noon & 12.30–6pm Mon–Sun) Books accommodation and provides internet access (40Kč per hour).

### Sights

#### PAMÁTNÍK VELKÉ MORAVY

The archaeological site **Památník Velké Moravy** (Great Moravia Monument; ☎ 572 543 382; Jezuitská 1885; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am–noon & 12.30–5pm Apr–Nov) is believed to be a major centre of the 9th-century Great Moravian Empire. Many of the artefacts found here, such as jewellery, weapons and ice skates made from bone, have been collected in the museum. You can also see foundations dating back to the 8th century.

It's in Staré Město, 2km north of the city centre. To get there from the main square walk east on Havlíčkova to the highway (Velehradská třída), turn left and cross the Morava river, continue along Hradištská, turn right into Velkomoravská and take the second left at Jezuitská. Alternatively, take bus 4 from the bus station on Obránců míru; it stops near this corner, two stops past the bridge.

### THE RIDE OF THE KINGS

Dating back to the old European festival of Whitsuntide, the Ride of the Kings (Jízda Králů) festival in Vlčnov is a celebration of spring and a young man's rite of passage.

The king, who must be chaste, is always a 10- to 12-year-old boy. His helpers can be up to 18 years old. To prevent him speaking or smiling, he holds a rose in his teeth throughout the ceremony. He and two helpers dress in women's clothing, symbolising the escape of Hungarian king Mathias Korvin after losing a battle with Czech king George of Podebrady. Mathias evaded capture by dressing as a woman, and the rose is a symbol of his silence during his successful escape. The horses are decorated with ribbons and paper flowers and there's folk dancing and singing. Starting from the home of the king, the ride winds through the village. His helpers call out old verses in the king's honour and ask for gifts for him; the crowd stuffs money in the helpers' boots.

In Vlčnov this two-day festival happens on the last weekend in May, with the 'ride of the kings' on the Sunday. The ride also takes place in nearby Kunovice and Hluk, where it happens only every four years, and is celebrated with a Haná spin in Doloplazy and Kojetin near Olomouc in North Moravia.

### SLOVÁCKÉ MUSEUM

In addition to its excellent collection of traditional folk dress, the **Slovácké museum** (☎ 572 551 370; Smetanovy sady 179; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 12.30-5pm) has unusual 'folk art': an exhibit of 17th- to 19th-century shooting targets (from the days of local civil defence militias) featuring politicians, musicians, mythological characters, animals and birds. It's in Smetanovy park (Smetanovy sady) behind the cinema, at the intersection of Havlíčkova and the highway.

The **Gallery of Slovácké museum** (Galerie Slováckého muzea; ☎ 572 552 425; Otakarova 103; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 12.30-5pm Tue-Sun), just north of the main square, is a branch of the museum exhibiting local art.

### Sleeping

**Hotel Quadro Club** (☎ 542 540 554; www.hotel-quadro.com; Maršála Malinoveského 360; s/d 600/800Kč) A snazzy new spot on the main road into town but an easy walk to the two town squares.

**Hotel Grand** (☎ 572 551 511; www.granduh.cz; Palackého náměstí; s/d 850/1240Kč; 🚗) At the lower end of the Best Western comfort scale, but still good value.

**Hotel Slunce** (☎ 572 432 640; www.synohotels.com; Masarykovo náměstí 150; s/d incl breakfast 1700/2600Kč; 📺 📺 📺 📺) Care has been taken to showcase the building's original (from 1578) Renaissance features, but not at the expense of modern and comfortable rooms.

### Eating & Drinking

**Ziné Kavarna & Gallerie** (☎ 739 020 847; Havlíčkova; mains 80Kč; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Thu, to midnight Fri & Sat,

from 1pm Sun) Interesting breakfasts, salads and pizza shine in this modern space that moonlights as a gallery for local artists.

**Corso** (☎ 672 552 180; Masarykovo náměstí 147; ☎ to 1am) After dark this humble café transforms into the after-hours haunt of Uherské Hradiště's VIPs.

### Getting There & Away

Trains to/from Hodonín (52Kč, 45 minutes) stop at the Staré Město station, while those to and from Kyjov (52Kč, 50 minutes) use the Kunovice station (see also Orientation, p327).

There are regular buses to Buchlovice (16Kč, 25 minutes) and Zlín (36Kč, 45 minutes) and less frequent services to Brno (70Kč, 1½ hours).

### Getting Around

City bus 1 links Staré Město and Kunovice train stations, via the city centre, while bus 4 connects Uherské Hradiště and Staré Město train stations.

### BUCHLOVICE

pop 2500

The baroque **Buchlovice chateau** (☎ 575 595 112; www.zamek-buchlovice.cz; adult/concession 70/30Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 12.30-6pm Jul & Aug, to 5pm Tue-Sun May, Jun & Sep, to 3pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) was built in the 1700s, probably to a design by Martinelli, with ornate stucco decorations. On display are the furnishings left behind by the Berchtold family, who fled the advancing Soviet forces in 1945. En route to the chateau you pass through a **garden** (adult/concession 20/10Kč) of preening peacocks.

### Sleeping & Eating

The **tourist office** (☎ 572 595 996; tic@buchlovice.cz; Svobody 6; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) can help with cheap accommodation.

**Hotel Buchlovice** (☎ 572 596 021; www.hotelbuchlovice.cz; Svobody 426; s/d 1050/1250Kč; 📺) This central place has smart rooms and an excellent terrace restaurant.

### Getting There & Away

Infrequent buses stop here en route from Uherské Hradiště (16Kč, 25 minutes) to Kunovice.

### BUCHLOV CASTLE

In the Chřiby hills, **Buchlov castle** (☎ 572 595 161; www.zamek-buchlovice.cz; adult/concession 70/35Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Jul & Aug, to 4pm Tue-Sun May, Jun & Sep, to 3pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct) was built in the 13th century and, although it's been enlarged, it hasn't been restyled since its founding. Its last owners, the Berchtold family, turned it into a museum during the 19th century.

This simple place has none of the overwrought decoration of the baroque style. Rooms are sparsely furnished but interesting. As in most medieval castles, there are plenty of weapons and instruments of torture on display.

**Hotel Buchlov Park** (☎ 572 577 925; www.buchlovpark.cz; s/d incl breakfast 1350/2250Kč; 📺 📺), which is right next to the castle, organises horse-riding trips (200Kč per hour).

### Getting There & Away

The castle turn-off is on the Brno highway, 4km west of Buchlovice. On foot or by bike it's uphill all the way. Four daily buses between Uherské Hradiště and Kunovice stop at the castle turn-off, from where it's a pleasant 2km walk through the forest.

### VELEHRAD

pop 1300

Not far from Uherské Hradiště, at Velehrad, is the **Cistercian monastery** (klášter Cisterciáků; ☎ 572 571 130; admission free; ☎ 7am-6pm). It was long considered (though mistakenly) to have been the archiepiscopal seat of St Methodius, who may have died in the area in 885. Pilgrims have been flocking to the shrine for centuries, including Pope John Paul II in 1990.

Under the monastery's church is a **lapidarium** (adult/concession 30/15Kč; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) with the remains of the original basilica.

On the road from Uherské Hradiště sits the **Archeoskanzen** (☎ 572 571 180; www.archeoskanzen.cz; in Czech; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Sep, to 4pm Tue-Sun Apr & Oct; adult/concession 50/20Kč), a replica Great Moravian village complete with animal pens, a defensive palisade and a restaurant.

There are regular buses during weekdays (fewer on weekends) from Uherské Hradiště (12Kč, 20 minutes).

## ZLÍNSKO REGION

### ZLÍN

pop 78,500

After the prettified architectural excesses found elsewhere in the country, the robust and uniform structure of Zlín is a welcome contrast. Developed as a planned community by philanthropist shoe millionaire Tomáš Baťa (pronounced 'Batya'), Zlín is a fascinating legacy of one man's vision. Factories, offices, shopping centres and houses all use lookalike red bricks and a functionalist template, to provide 'a total environment' to house, feed and entertain the workers at Baťa's massive factory. Wide avenues and planned gardens produce a singular ambience, giving Zlín an expansive and unnervingly modern appearance in contrast with the saccharine historical centres of other towns.

Zlín also has a tradition of film-making. The town's studios began making films to promote Baťa shoes, and more than 2000 films have been made in the last half-century. At opposite ends of the 'entertainment' spectrum, Zlín is the birthplace of playwright Tom Stoppard (born Thomas Straussler in 1937, when his father worked at the Baťa factory) and Ivana Trump, socialite former wife of New York property tycoon Donald Trump.

### Orientation

The train station (Železniční stanice) stands just off Gahurova, south of the river. The bus station is about 100m closer to the centre. The town centres on functional náměstí Míru.

### Information

**ČSOB** (náměstí Práce) Has ATMs and exchange desks.

**KB** (cnr Dlouhá & třída Tomáše Bati) Has ATMs and exchange desks.

**Tourist Information Office** (Městské Informační a Turistické Středisko; ☎ 577 630 270; www.mestozlin.cz; náměstí Míru 12; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Arranges accommodation and has internet access (1Kč per minute).

## Sights

The Zlín chateau houses the **museum of South-East Moravia** (muzeum jihovýchodní Moravy; ☎ 577 004 611; Soudní 1; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), which has displays of local film studios, folk music instruments and utensils from the Slovákco and Haná regions. Upstairs is a branch of the **State Gallery** (Galerie Výtvarného Umění ve Zlíně; adult/concession 20/10Kč; ☎ same as museum), with permanent displays of 20th-century Czech art and sculpture.

The interesting **Shoe museum** (Obuvnické muzeum; ☎ 577 522 225; třída Tomáše Bati 1970; adult/concession with English text 30/20Kč; ☎ 10am-noon, 1-5pm Tue-Sun, Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) has more various footwear than Imelda Marcos could dream of, including basketball player Shaquille O'Neal's 41cm-long Timberland boots and some effortlessly cool 1960s loafers. In a corner of the museum is Tomáš Baťa's amazing office which doubled as a lift, allowing him to move up and down in the Baťa HQ. Don't miss the video showing retro Baťa TV advertising.

A few 20th-century buildings are also worth a look. František Gahura's **House of Art** (dům umění; ☎ 577 218 317; náměstí TG Masaryka 2570; adult/concession 15/5Kč; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) hosts another branch of the State Gallery featuring works by Mucha, among others. It's also home to the Zlín Philharmonic Orchestra.

Another curiosity is the gargantuan **Grand cinema** (Velké kino; ☎ 577 432 936; www.velkekino.cz; náměstí Práce 2511) built in the 1960s and capable of seating 2000.

## Sleeping & Eating

For private rooms (from around 250Kč per person) talk to the Tourist Information Office (p329).

**Hostel Duo Zlín** (☎ 577 433 112; www.hotelduozlin.cz; Růmy 1391; s/d 350/550Kč) is a cheaper hostel that shares a building with the refurbished business-oriented **Park Hotel Zlín** (☎ 577 056 111; www.parkhotelzlin.cz; s/d incl breakfast 1250/1740Kč).

**Hotel Garni Zlín** (☎ 577 210 458; www.hotelgarnizlin.cz; nám TG Masaryka 1335; s/d 1000/1200Kč; ☎) A quiet business hotel with spick-and-span rooms, the Garni has excellent weekend discounts and a cosy Portuguese wine cellar.

**Hotel Moskva** (☎ 577 561 111; www.moskva-zlin.cz; náměstí Práce 2512; s/d incl breakfast 1000/1500Kč; ☎) Dominating the town with its gargantuan functionalist façade, the Moskva has an enjoyably retro selection of more than 100 rooms, and 10 bars and restaurants (some equally old school).

**Záložno** (náměstí Míru; mains 80-140Kč) This place is at the eastern edge of the main square and provides good views from its popular terrace restaurant.

**Café Archa** (☎ 577 211 083; třída Tomáše Bati 190; mains 100Kč; ☎ 8am-10pm) This is an elegantly cool and versatile spot that's good for breakfast, lunch, dinner or end-of-day cocktails.

## Getting There & Away

To go anywhere by train usually requires a change at Otrokovice; the 127km to Brno (162Kč) takes three hours. Buses are faster; there regular links to Uherské Hradiště (30Kč,

## THE PEOPLE'S SHOE

Before its present incarnation, humble Zlín was one village among many – an unassuming dot on the map. Its present form, a herringbone pattern of streets radiating from the main thoroughfare, dates from 1894 when Tomáš Baťa, the omnipresent shoe manufacturer, began to expand his enterprise (Baťa had made a fortune from the sale of boots to the Austrian army in WWI). The town grew quickly and between 1910 and 1930 its population trebled to 36,000.

Baťa (and later his son) grew the company into a sizable multinational and by the early 1930s it had become the world's leading footwear exporter, designing, producing and marketing shoes in 30 countries by 1938.

Tomáš Baťa was killed in a plane accident in 1932, but the company remains largely a family affair. From humble beginnings it now has 4600 stores, 40 factories and 40,000 employees and operates in more than 50 countries. Every day more than one million customers are served in a Baťa store.

You can invest in your own pair of local shoes at the **Baťa shop** (Dlouhá 130) in Zlín.

40 minutes), Olomouc (68Kč, 1½ hours) and Kroměříž (38Kč, 55 minutes).

## VIZOVICE

pop 4500

As the home of the Jelínek distillery, this small town 15km east of Zlín is the source of some of the country's finest *slivovitz* (plum brandy).

The rather ordinary **Vizovice chateau** (zámek Vizovice; ☎ 577 452 762; http://zamek-viz.hyperlink.cz; adult/concession 40/20Kč; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, to 4pm Sat & Sun Apr, Sep & Oct), 100m off the main square, does have some good exhibits on traditional trades and crafts.

There are regular daily train and bus connections to/from Zlín.

## LEŠNÁ

The attractions of tiny Lešná, 8km north of Zlín, include a romantic-style chateau and a better-than-average zoo.

**Lešná chateau** (zámek Lešná; ☎ 577 914 180; adult/concession 50/35Kč; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, to 3.30pm Sat & Sun Oct, to 5pm Sat & Sun Apr) is an overdecorated concoction of towers and shutters.

The surrounding **zoo** (www.zoolesna; adult/concession 75/55Kč; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, to 4pm Oct-Mar) is in an English-style park, with 2500 animals largely free to roam in fairly spacious enclosures.

There are hourly buses from Zlín (20Kč, 30 minutes); fewer at weekends.

## LUHAČOVICE

pop 5400

With the notable absence of the sickly yellow *Kaisergelb* paint that festoons the spas of West Bohemia, Luhačovice also lacks the

primness that blights Mariánské Lázně' and Karlovy Vary. Instead the town has an everyday no-fuss feel and is all the better for it. Architecturally it's a bit of a mishmash with rustic half-timbered houses abutting a few Soviet-style blocks, but with the serene woodland setting and friendly, unpretentious locals, it's a pleasantly low-key Moravian alternative to the spa town excesses in the west.

## Orientation & Information

Luhačovice snakes along Štávnice creek and the main road that runs parallel to it. The train and bus stations are at the southwest end of town; walk out the stations, turn left onto Masarykova and continue past the police station.

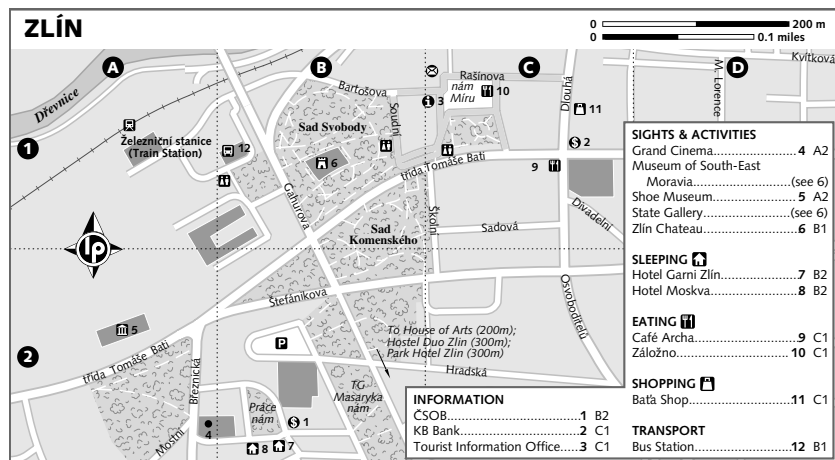
**Luha** (☎ 577 133 980; www.mesto.luhacovice.cz; Masarykova 950; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) arranges accommodation and has a good selection of maps. It also opens weekends in July and August.

There is a **KB** (Masarykova 950) ATM outside the Elektra Restaurant.

## Sights & Activities

Luhačovice has some fine examples of rustic architecture incorporating Wallachian farmhouse motifs. Among the town's more interesting Tudoresque houses are **Jestřábí dům** and **Vodoléčebný ústav** on L Janáčka, and **Jurkovičův dům** on Dr P Blaha. Designed by Slovak architect Dušan Jurkovič, Jurkovičův dům blends rustic Slovak folk traditions with the whimsy of Art Nouveau and has recently reopened as a luxury spa hotel.

The spa follows the creek, lined with trees, spa hotels and fountains. Perhaps the most visited spas are **Ottovka**, in the gazebo by the



tennis courts, and **Aloiska** behind the Palace Sanatorium.

Many spa hotels offer specialised treatments: paraffin packs, four-chamber baths, you name it. The average 'cure' lasts about a week; contact the spa's main office, **Lázně Luhačovice** (☎ 577 682 111; www.lazneluhaovice.cz; Lázeňské náměstí 436).

The **Luhačovice museum** (muzeum v Luhačovicích; ☎ 577 132 883; adult/concession 15/10Kč; ☹ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar), next to the tennis courts, has a small collection of painted Easter eggs (*kraslice*), ceramics, embroidery and other folk art.

## Sleeping

There is plenty of accommodation in all ranges, including private rooms from 250Kč per person. Luha (p331) can help with these.

**Autokemping Luhačovice** (☎ 577 133 318; tent/chalet per person 70/140Kč; ☹ May-Sep; P) This pretty camp site with chalets is at the Údolní dam (Údolní přehrada), 3km north of town along the stream. Get there on bus 7.

**Penzion Stella** (☎ 577 132 339; http://penzionstella.luhaovice.cz; Solné 1010; s/d incl breakfast 685/1020Kč; P) The welcome is super friendly and the rooms spacious in this new place with great views. There's every chance the owner will join you for a sundowner beer and his homemade *slivovitz* (plum brandy). Be warned – it's very strong.

**Pension Růža** (☎ 577 134 202; www.penzionruza.cz; U Štávnice 256; d incl breakfast 1100Kč) Housed in a traditional villa down a quiet side street, this has smart rooms and a welcoming bar.

Also recommended:

**Hotel Zálesí** (☎ 577 134 060; hotely@zalesi.cz; Zatloukalo 70; s/d incl breakfast 800/1300Kč) Bright and modern with a solarium and massage facilities.

## Eating

As in all Czech spa towns, *oplatky* (sweet wafers) are a popular snack.

The spa hotels have some of the town's smartest eateries.

**Divadelní kavárna** (Masarykova 950; snacks 60Kč; ☹ to 6pm) A pleasant café beside the town theatre.

**Restaurace Elektra** (☎ 577 134 335; Masarykova 950; mains 130Kč) While the rest of Luhačovice is spa town quiet, this grill and pizza place is busy and cosmopolitan well into the night.

Also recommended:

**Lotos** (☎ 572 132 720; Masarykova 151; mains 80-120Kč; ☹ 11am-8pm) Vaguely Greek and vaguely Italian,

the fish dishes and pizza are good in this slice of southern Europe in southern Moravia.

## Getting There & Away

Buses are easier and quicker than trains from most destinations, with up to 11 a day from Zlín (30Kč, 40 minutes) and eight from Uhereský Brod (24Kč, 20 minutes).

## KROMĚŘÍŽ

pop 29,100

Everywhere you go you'll find towns compared to Athens, Venice or Paris, and in this quiet corner of Moravia, this pretty little town fits the bill perfectly.

Known locally as Hanácké Athény (the Athens of Haná), Kroměříž was the home base of the powerful bishops of Olomouc from the 12th to 19th century. Religious wrangling has now made way for tourism in this pleasantly provincial town, and the bishops' flash baroque chateau and spacious gardens are well worth a trip.

## History

German colonists began arriving in the 13th century, when the town was fortified.

The town was practically destroyed by the Swedes in the Thirty Years' War, but in 1664 the bishops undertook their major baroque construction effort. The castle was rebuilt by Italian architects Tencalla and Lucchese to a commission by Charles II of Liechtenstein-Kastelkorn, a bishop.

In the mid-18th century, Kroměříž and the chateau were damaged during an occupation by the Prussian army, and later from a fire.

## Orientation

If you're arriving at the train or bus stations, get onto Hulínská and cross the river. The interesting bits of town are centred on the chateau and Velké náměstí.

## Information

The **Tourist Information Office** (Informační Centrum; ☎ 573 221 473; www.mesto-kromeriz.cz; Velké náměstí 50; ☹ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun) organises accommodation, rents out bikes (200Kč per day), has a left-luggage office and changes money.

**Česká Spořitelna** (Velké náměstí 43) and **ČSOB** (Riegrovo náměstí 182) both have exchange offices and ATMs.

The main post office is on the corner of Oskol and Denkova. There's a second branch in the train station. You can access the internet at **dc Internet Café** (☎ 737 883 400; Velké náměstí 39; ☹ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 1pm Sat & Sun).

**Lékárna v Kovářské** (☎ 573 337 425; Kovářská 18) is a central pharmacy.

## Sights

### ARCHBISHOPS' CHATEAU

North of Velké náměstí is the **Archbishops' chateau** (Arcibiskupský zámek; ☎ 573 502 011; www.azz.cz; adult/concession with guide 180/1000Kč; ☹ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, Sat Apr, Sun & holidays Oct) with its 84m baroque tower. It takes 1½ hours to tour the interior, which features rococo ceilings and murals by Franz Anton Maulpertsch and Josef Stern. The **Manský hall** (Manský sál) has Maulpertsch's skilful ceiling paintings. The best-known room is the **Assembly hall** (Sněmovní sál), where scenes for the film *Amadeus* were shot. It costs extra to tour the **tower** (adult/concession 40/20Kč) and **Sala terena** (adult/concession 20/10Kč).

You can also visit the **Chateau gallery** (Zámecká obrazárna; adult/concession 100/50Kč), which has a

valuable collection of 16th and 17th century paintings. Pride of place goes to Titian's *Flying of Marsyas*.

Behind the chateau is **Podzámecká garden** (Podzámecká zahrada; ☹ 6.30am-8pm), designed in the 17th century by Lucchese and one of the largest in the country, with 64 hectares of greenery.

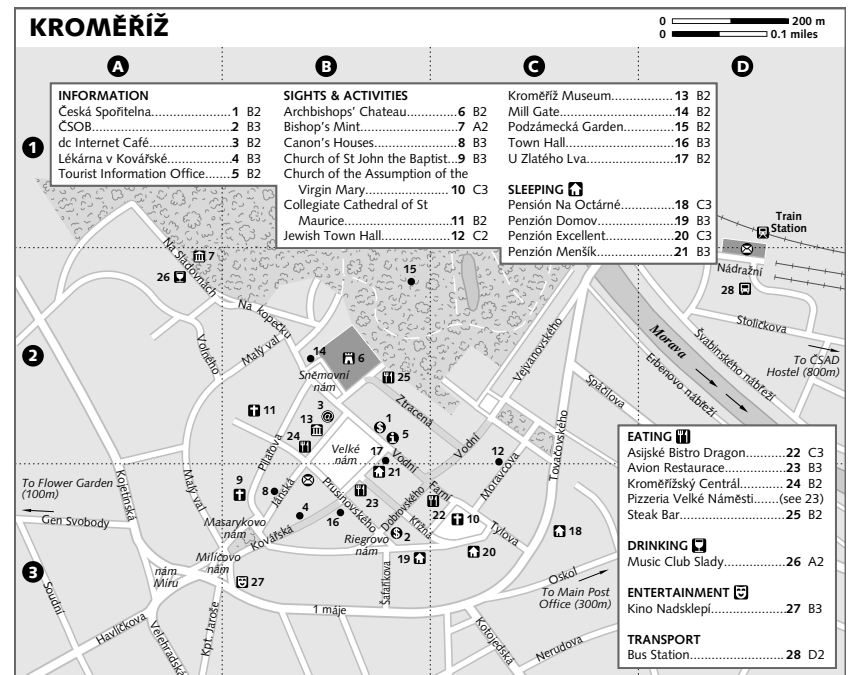
Nearby, the **Bishop's mint** (Biskupskou mincovnu; Na Sladovnách; adult/concession 15/10Kč; ☹ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, Sat & Sun Oct-Apr) is worth a peek if you're interested in making (in the less interesting sense) money.

## AROUND THE OLD TOWN

Leaving the chateau through Sněmovní náměstí, on the right is the **Mill gate** (Mlýnská brána).

On Pilařova is the **Collegiate cathedral of St Maurice** (Kolegiální chrám sv Mořice), a semi-nary built around 1260 and one of the oldest surviving structures in Kroměříž.

Continue on Pilařova to the baroque **church of St John the Baptist** (kostel sv Jana Křtitele), built 1737–68, which features frescoes by JJ Etgens and Stern.



From Masarykovo náměstí, a walk along Jánská back towards Velké náměstí passes a group of colourful **Canon's houses** (Kanovnické domy) on the left. In the square, on the corner with Kovářská, is the 16th-century Renaissance **town hall**.

On Velké náměstí, the **Kroměříž museum** (muzeum Kroměřížska; ☎ 573 338 388; Velké náměstí 38; adult/concession for all exhibitions 60/30Kč, Max Švabinský only 35/20Kč) has a permanent collection of the works of Max Švabinský (born in Kroměříž in 1873), a specialist in colourful nudes and the designer of many of Czechoslovakia's early postage stamps.

At No 30 is the town's oldest pharmacy (*lékárna*), **U Zlatého lva**, which was established in 1675. The cobblestone square also has a decorative **fountain** and **plague column**.

From Velké náměstí, take Vodní and continue along Farní past the **church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** (kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie). On the left is Moravcova, where halfway along is a reminder of the town's Jewish history, the old **Jewish town hall** (Židovská radnice).

A final attraction is the 17th-century baroque **Flower garden** (Květná zahrada) with its frequently photographed rotunda by Lucchese and a colonnade by Tencalla. Enter from Gen Svobody, west of the city centre.

## Festivals & Events

Kroměříž hosts the annual **Festival of Music in the gardens & chateau** (Hudba v zahrádkách a zámku; ☎ 573 315 376; www.hudba-kromeriz.cz, in Czech), a series of classical concerts, from June to August.

## Sleeping

The Tourist Information Office (p332) can help with private rooms (from 300Kč).

**CSAD Hostel** (☎ 517 316 111; Skopalíkova 2385; s/d 215/430Kč; 📍) It isn't clearly marked, but this yellow place offers decent cheap sleeps. It's on bus routes 1, 2, 6 and 7, 20 minutes from the centre of town.

**Penzión Excellent** (☎ 573 333 023; www.excellent.tunker.com; Riegrovo náměstí 164; s/d incl breakfast 660/990Kč; 📍) 'Europe Standard' says its sign, and that's what you get with brightly furnished rooms on a quiet square.

**Penzión Domov** (☎ 573 344 744; www.penziomdomov.cz; Riegrovo náměstí 157; s/d incl breakfast 900/1200Kč; 📍) Another baroque-style building, another cosy

*pension* with slightly ageing rooms – a good backup, if a tad overpriced.

**Penzión Na Octárně** (☎ 573 515 555; www.octarna.cz; Tovačovského 318; d incl breakfast 1800Kč; 📍) A restored Franciscan monastery is now a classy guesthouse with a quiet courtyard shaded by market umbrellas. Downstairs is a stylish candlelit wine cellar.

Also recommended:

**Penzión Menšík** (☎ 602 569 863; Velké náměstí 107; d 650Kč) Main square location with suburban prices.

## Eating

**Avion Restaurace** (☎ 573 339 446; Velké náměstí 111; mains 55Kč) No frills and no-fuss buffet meals are standard fare at this popular self-service restaurant.

**Pizzeria Velké Náměstí** (☎ 573 343 460; Velké náměstí 109; pizza 70-90Kč) Grab an espresso at the stand-up bar, or take your time with a more leisurely pizza while overlooking the main square.

**Steak Bar** (☎ 573 333 388; Ztracená 65; mains 100-1600Kč) This rustic spot with a sunny terrace delivers firmly on the promise of its name with robust, meaty Moravian platters.

Also recommended:

**Asijské Bistro Dragon** (☎ 602 778 497; Farní 97; mains 70-140Kč) Enter the Dragon for Asian favourites.

**Kroměřížský Centrál** (☎ 573 335 513; Velké náměstí 37; mains 100-250Kč) Choose either the relaxed *kavárna* (bar-café) or the classier formal restaurant.

## Drinking

**Music Club Slady** (☎ 731 267 423; Na Sladovnách 1576) On any night this versatile club and beer garden could feature rock, country, ska, hip-hop or brass-band music (actually, we made the bit about brass-band music up).

## Entertainment

**Kino Nadsklepi** (cinema; ☎ 573 339 280; Miličovo náměstí) Hollywood comes to town.

## Getting There & Away

Getting here by train usually requires at least one change – at Kojetín or Hulín (8km away). There are, however, a few direct services to Brno (98Kč, 1¼ hours).

There are regular buses to Zlín (32Kč, 55 minutes), Olomouc (60Kč, 1¾ hours) and Brno (58Kč, 1¼ hours) and infrequent services to Uherské Hradiště (50Kč, 1¼ hours) and Prague (186Kč, four hours).

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