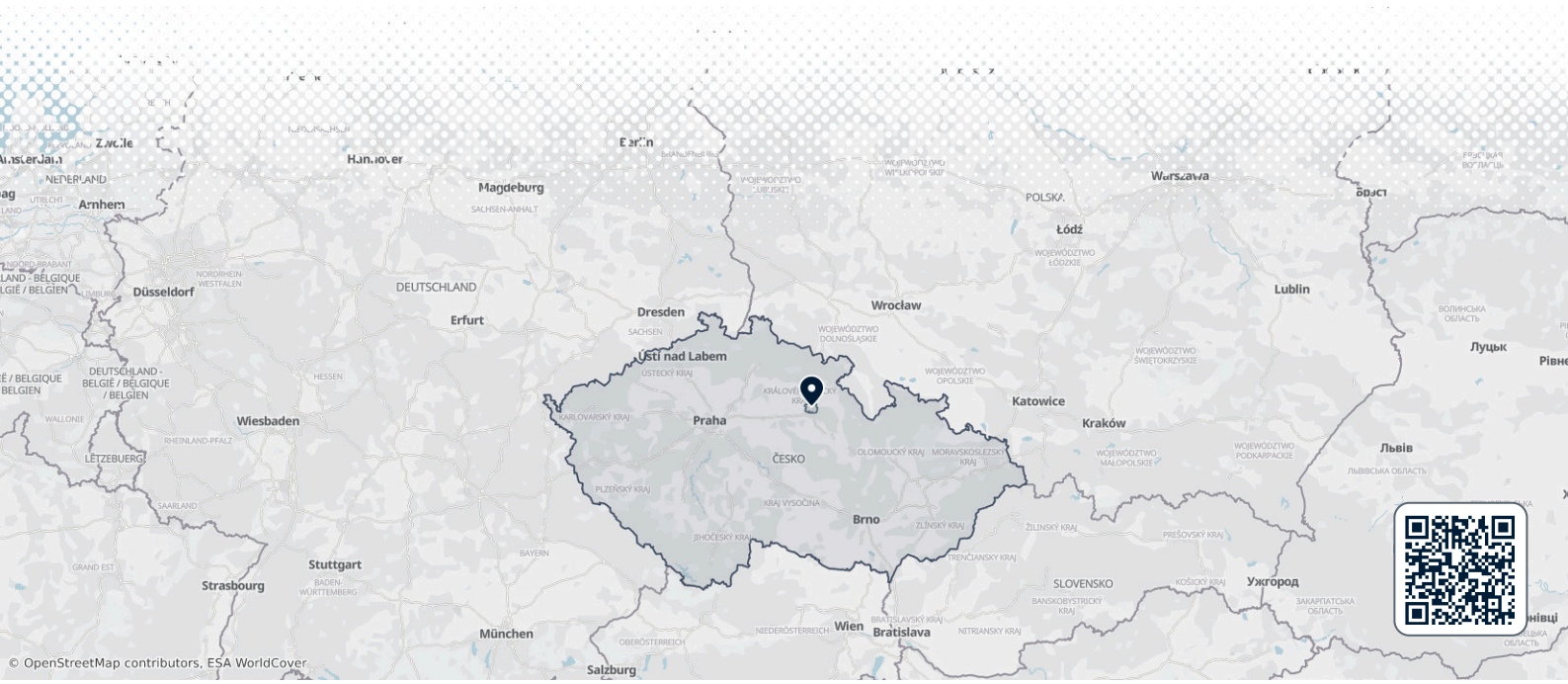


Hradec Králové

Hradec Králové Region · Czech Republic

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Hradec Králové sits where the Elbe and Orlice rivers meet, about 100 km east of Prague. The city earned the nickname "Salon of the Republic" for its rare concentration of early 20th-century architecture. Much of it was rebuilt under the town planner *František Ulrich*, with designs by architects like *Josef Gočár* and *Jan Kotěra*. Wide, tree-lined boulevards link a compact Gothic old town to that purpose-built modern district.

It suits travelers who want a genuine regional capital without Prague's crowds: strong museums, a walkable center, and several colleges that keep the city young. Piano lovers know it as the home of *Petrof*, the country's leading piano maker since 1864.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are mild and pleasant for walking the old town. Summer turns warm with the occasional afternoon storm, and winter is cold with regular snow.

The city's biggest annual draw is **Rock for People**, one of Central Europe's largest open-air rock and alternative music festivals, held over several days each June and drawing tens of thousands of fans.

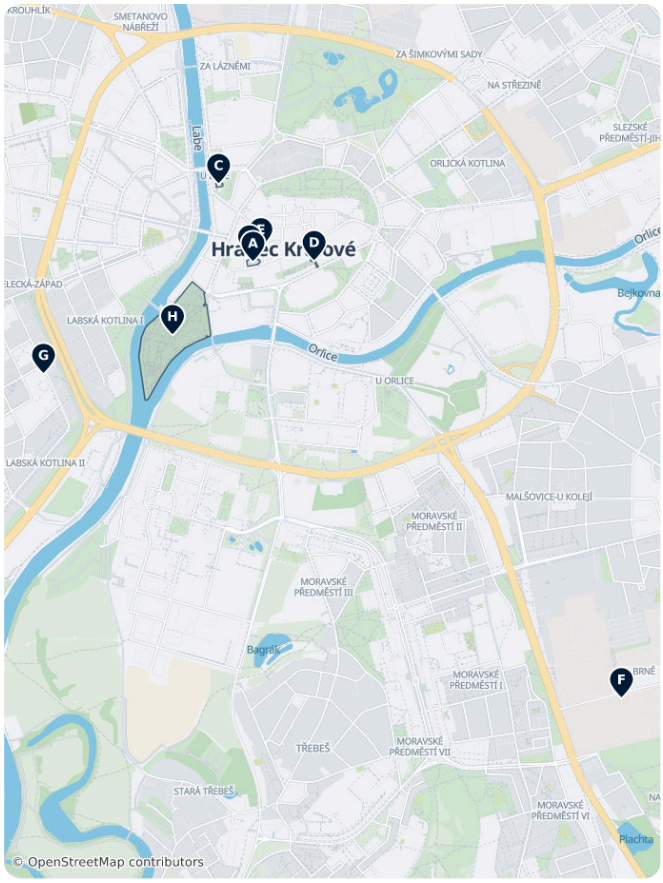
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	1° / 9° Feels like -4°	-5° / -15°	12 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	4° / 11° Feels like -2°	-4° / -13°	Dry air
March	Fair Fair for cycling	9° / 17° Feels like 4°	-1° / -7°	Dry air
April	Good Good for cycling	14° / 22° Feels like 11°	4° / -3°	Dry air
May	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 26°	8° / 3°	15 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 31°	13° / 7°	14 rainy days · Dry air
July	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 33°	15° / 10°	16 rainy days
August	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 33°	14° / 9°	12 rainy days · Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 28°	10° / 5°	Dry air
October	Good Good for cycling	15° / 22° Feels like 11°	6° / -1°	Dry air
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 15° Feels like 3°	1° / -5°	Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	3° / 9° Feels like -3°	-3° / -12°	Dry air

Best months: June, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

Hradec Králové's sights split neatly between a compact Gothic old town and the early modern city built around it.



A Cathedral of the Holy Spirit is the city's Gothic centerpiece, a twin-towered brick cathedral founded in 1307 that still holds a 15th-century triptych and the oldest tin baptismal font in the country.

Right beside it, **B** White Tower is a 72-meter Renaissance bell tower built from Hořice sandstone; climb it for the best rooftop view over the old town and the two rivers.

C Museum of Eastern Bohemia occupies a striking Art Nouveau building designed by *Jan Kotěra*, one of the first works of modern Czech architecture, and covers the region's archaeology, history, and natural science.

D Gočárovo schodiště is a sculptural concrete stairway by *Josef Gočár* that links the old town to the lower streets below, and a good example of why the city calls itself the "Salon of the Republic."

E Radnice anchors the main square with its own tower and now-familiar civic role as the seat of city government.

F Muzeum Petrof traces 160 years of the *Petrof* piano brand across two floors of historic instruments and factory history.

For something different, **G** Obří akvárium Hradec Králové is the largest freshwater aquarium in the Czech Republic, with a walk-through tunnel beneath a tropical fish tank.

End at **H** Jiráskovy sady, the city's oldest park, laid out in 1868 at the point where the Elbe and Orlice rivers actually meet.

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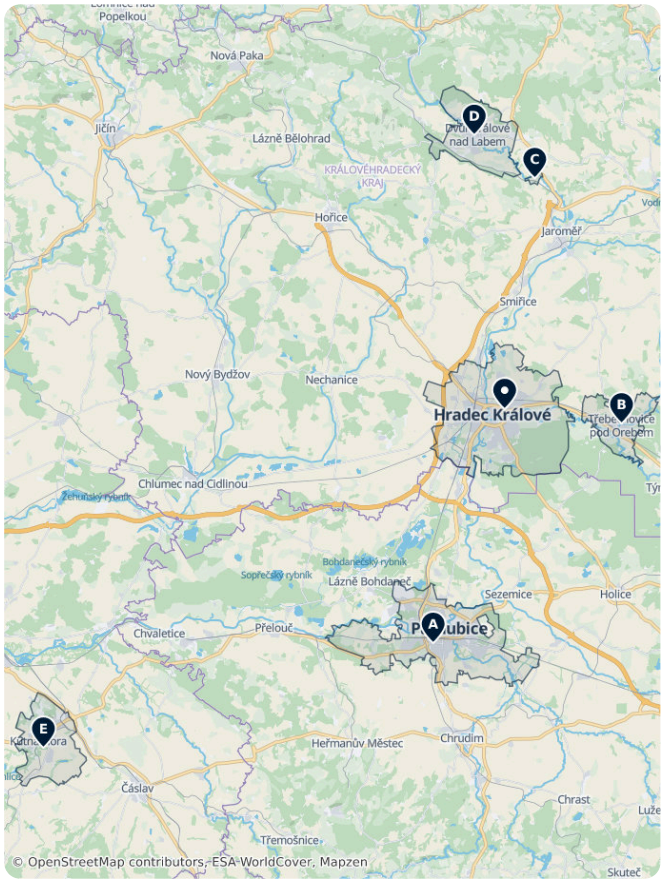
What to experience

A few things travelers do here that go beyond sightseeing:

- Join the crowds each June for **Rock for People**, one of the region's biggest open-air music festivals.
- Cycle the riverside paths along the Elbe and Orlice out to the confluence point and back, an easy ride that locals do year-round.
- Catch a home game of **Mountfield HK**, the city's top-flight ice hockey club, during the September-to-April season.

Day trips

Several worthwhile stops sit within half an hour of the city, plus one flagship UNESCO town a little further out.



- **A** **Pardubice** – ≈ 15–20 min by train. A historic square ringed by Renaissance houses, a Gothic-Renaissance castle, and the gingerbread museum tied to the city's centuries-old baking tradition.
- **B** **Třebechovice pod Orebem** – ≈ 20 min by car or direct bus. Home to a famous hand-carved mechanical Nativity scene with hundreds of moving figures, on display year-round in its own museum.
- **C** **Kuks** – ≈ 30 min by car. A Baroque hospital and pharmacy complex commissioned by Count *František Antonín Špork*, famous for the statues of Virtues and Vices carved into the surrounding hillside by *Matthias Braun*.
- **D** **Dvůr Králové nad Labem** – ≈ 30 min by car or train. Home to the Safari Park, one of the Czech Republic's largest zoos, known for its African animal drive-through.
- **E** **Kutná Hora** – ≈ 50 min by car. A flagship UNESCO World Heritage town, once a medieval silver-mining powerhouse, with the soaring Gothic Church of St. Barbara and the unsettling Sedlec Ossuary decorated with human bones.

Getting there

- **By air**: the nearest international gateway is Prague Airport (PRG), about 110 km away. A taxi or rideshare covers it in about 1.5 hours; public transport (bus and train via Prague's main station) takes roughly 2 to 2.5 hours.
- **By train**: Hradec Králové hlavní nádraží has direct connections to Prague, Pardubice, and other regional towns; check schedules and buy tickets through the national rail operator, České dráhy. České dráhy
- **By bus**: long-distance coaches (FlixBus and regional operators) connect the city to Prague and other Czech cities from the main bus terminal next to the train station.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: buses and trolleybuses run by the city operator cover the center and outer districts; buy a ticket from an on-board machine, an SMS ticket, or the operator's mobile app before boarding. Dopravní podnik města Hradce Králové
- **On foot**: the old town and the early 20th-century district around it are compact and flat, and most top sights are within a 15–20 minute walk of each other.
- **By bike**: the city is known for its bike-friendly layout, with paved paths running along both riverbanks; renting a bike is an easy way to reach the parks and the confluence point.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town and the early 20th-century district around it are flat and compact, with most top sights within a 15-20 minute walk of each other.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

The city has an extensive network of paved riverside cycle paths and a bike-friendly layout overall.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: not for the compact center, which is best explored on foot, but useful for day trips to Kuks, the Safari Park, or the surrounding countryside.
- **Parking**: paid zones cover most of the center; look for pay-and-display meters or the city's parking app, and expect residents-only zones close to the old town.

Food & drink

Expect the same hearty Czech staples found across the country — roast pork with dumplings, gulaš, and svičková — alongside a strong café culture tied to the city's student population.

For a concentrated choice of restaurants and cafes, head to the streets and arcades around Velké náměstí, the main square, where historic town-house cellars now hold many of the city's kitchens and wine bars.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Fruit Dumplings · Ovocné knedlíky
Sweet dumplings filled with seasonal fruit (like plums or apricots), topped with cottage cheese and sugar.

DINNER

Svíčková · Svíčková na smetaně
Marinated beef sirloin in a creamy vegetable sauce, served with bread dumplings and cranberries.

Goulash · Guláš
A hearty stew, typically made with beef, onions, and paprika, often served with bread dumplings or potatoes.

Roast Pork with Dumplings and Cabbage · Vepřo knedlo zelo
A traditional Czech dish of roast pork, bread dumplings, and sauerkraut or stewed cabbage.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Fried Cheese · Smažený sýr
A thick slice of cheese, breaded and deep-fried, usually served with fries and tartar sauce.

Potato Pancakes · Bramboráky
Crispy pancakes made from grated potatoes, flour, and spices, often served as a side dish or a snack.

Chlebíčky
Open-faced sandwiches on slices of white bread, elaborately decorated with various toppings.

Fried Cauliflower · Smažený květák
Breaded and deep-fried cauliflower florets, similar to fried cheese but made with cauliflower.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Trdelník
A sweet pastry made from rolled dough, wrapped around a stick, grilled, and topped with sugar and walnut mixture.

DRINKS

Pilsner Urquell · Plzeňský Prazdroj
The world's first pale lager, originating from the city of Pilsen, known for its crisp, refreshing taste.

Becherovka
A traditional Czech herbal liqueur with a distinctive bitter-sweet taste, often enjoyed as a digestif.

Kofola
A popular Czech herbal cola-like soft drink, often described as having a unique, slightly medicinal flavor.

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Safety & health

Hradec Králové is a safe city for travelers, with low rates of violent crime. Normal precautions apply around the train station and in crowds at festivals, where pickpocketing is the most common issue.

Tap water is safe to drink throughout the city.

History

The city's name literally means "Queen's Castle": for centuries it was a dower town, held by the wives of reigning Czech kings rather than by the crown itself. Its Gothic core took shape around Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, founded in 1307 under Queen *Eliška Rejčka*.

In 1866, the fields just north of the city were the site of the Battle of Königgrätz (Königgrätz is the German name for Hradec Králové). It was one of the largest battles fought in Europe before the First World War, and it ended in a decisive Prussian victory over Austria. Museum of Eastern Bohemia maintains a memorial and collection connected to the battle.

The city's modern character dates to the early 1900s, when mayor *František Ulrich* commissioned architects *Jan Kotěra* and *Josef Gočár* to design an entirely new district beside the old town, using the latest Art Nouveau and functionalist ideas. That ambitious, largely realized plan is why the city is still called the "Salon of the Republic" today, visible in landmarks like Gočárovo schodiště.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for the Czech Republic at a glance:

CURRENCY
CZK Kč

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Czech

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Walks

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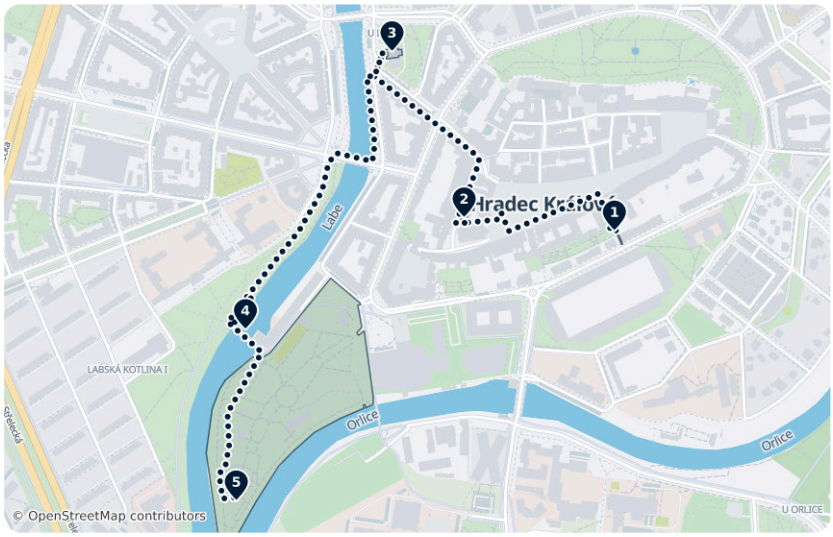
Historic Hradec Králové

44min · 2 km · 5 stops



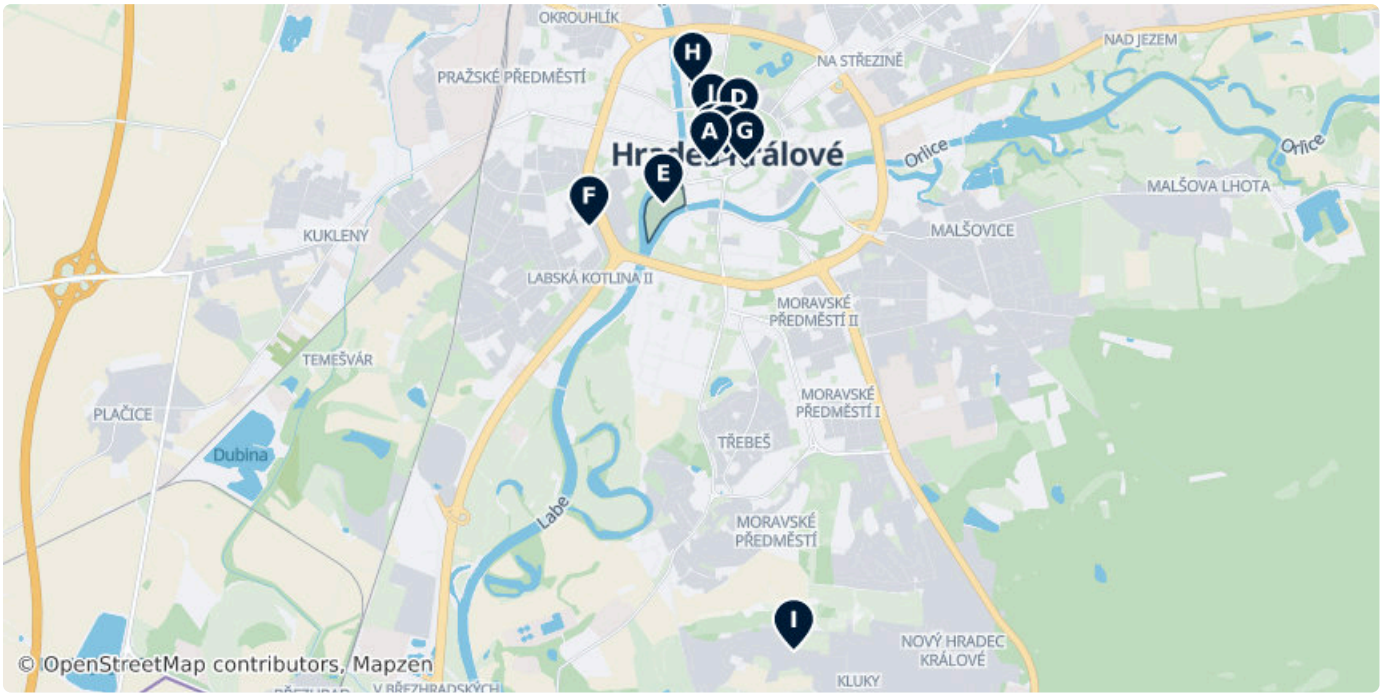
1. The Gočár Staircase
2. Velké náměstí — The White Tower and Cathedral
3. Museum of Eastern Bohemia
4. Hučák Weir
5. Jirásek Gardens

Walk through the historic heart of Hradec Králové, a regional capital known for its brick Gothic cathedral, Renaissance bell tower, and one of Bohemia's finest Art Nouveau museums. This circuit visits a modernist stone staircase by Josef Gočár, the twin towers of Velké náměstí, the Museum of Eastern Bohemia designed by architect Jan Kotěra, the roaring Hučák weir on the River Elbe, and the quiet gardens where the Elbe and Orlice rivers meet. About forty-five minutes on foot, five stops. The walk starts at the Gočár Staircase on Komenského street, a short walk from the bus and tram terminal.



Hradec Králové Essentials

Commonly referred to as the 'Salon of the Republic', Hradec Králové is defined by its harmonious blend of medieval history and early 20th-century urban planning. This selection highlights the Gothic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit and the modernist contributions of architect Josef Gočár, such as his iconic concrete staircase. The list also covers the city's green heart at the confluence of the Labe and Orlice rivers, alongside specialized cultural venues like the Giant Aquarium and the Digital Planetarium.





A Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

The Cathedral of the Holy Spirit is a principal church of the Diocese of Hradec Králové in the Czech Republic and also the seat of the...

8 Karla Tomana, Hradec Králové 50003, Czech Republic (50.20877, 15.83099)

katedralahradec.cz/clanek.php, +420495511353



B Hradec Králové Town Hall

A Late Baroque administrative building on the Great Square featuring two distinct towers. It serves as the historic seat of the municipal government.

Velké náměstí, 500 05 Hradec Králové, Czechia (50.20927, 15.83144)

hradeckralove.org/velke-namesti-novy-pohled-na-rekonst...



C Grand Square

The central triangular square of the historical district, home to a 1717 Baroque plague column and lined with burgher houses featuring Gothic and Renaissance foundations.

11 Velké náměstí, Hradec Králové 50003, Czech Republic (50.20921, 15.83263)

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D Klicperovo Divadlo

A professional theater founded in 1885, named after Václav Kliment Klicpera. The Neo-Renaissance building hosts four stages and is a four-time recipient of the Theater of the Year award.

98/7 Dlouhá, Hradec Králové 50003, Czech Republic (50.21093, 15.83393)

klicperovodivadlo.cz



E Jirásek Gardens

A city park situated at the confluence of the Labe and Orlice rivers. It contains a 16th-century wooden church relocated from Zakarpattia and a botanical rose garden.

237/1 Jiráskovy sady, Hradec Králové 50003, Czech Republic (50.20605, 15.82633)

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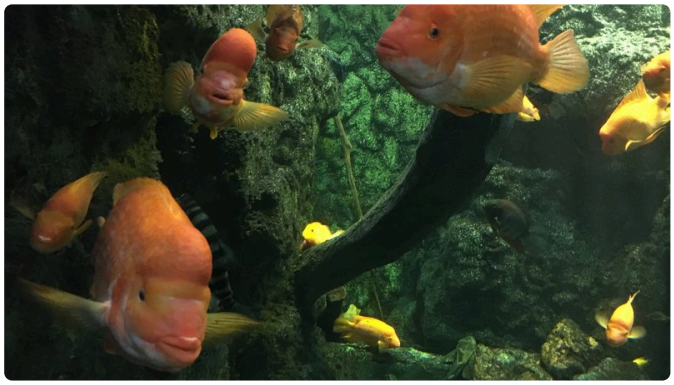

F Giant Aquarium Hradec Králové

The largest freshwater aquarium in the Czech Republic, featuring an underwater tunnel and a tropical rainforest biome with South American fish species.

Baarova 1663/10, 50002 Hradec Králové (50.20462, 15.81887)

Tu–Su 09:00–18:00

obriakvarium.cz/en/



G Gočár Staircase

A modernist concrete staircase designed by architect Josef Gočár between 1909 and 1910, connecting the historic Great Square with the lower part of the city.

249/15 Komenského, Hradec Králové 50003, Czech Republic (50.20880, 15.83452)

H Filharmonie

A specialized concert hall and home to the Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring contemporary architecture and acoustics designed for symphonic performances.

777/5 Eliščino nábřeží, Hradec Králové 50003, Czech Republic (50.21386, 15.82928)

fhk.cz

I Digitální planetárium

An astronomical center equipped with a 9.5-meter dome and 4K digital projection technology for space-themed educational programs and interactive exhibitions.

(50.17731, 15.83945)

J Adalbertinum Hradecka Kulturni

A Neo-Renaissance cultural complex from the late 19th century that serves as a multi-purpose venue for theater, concerts, and social events.

Československé armády 300/22, 50003 (50.21121, 15.83111)

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