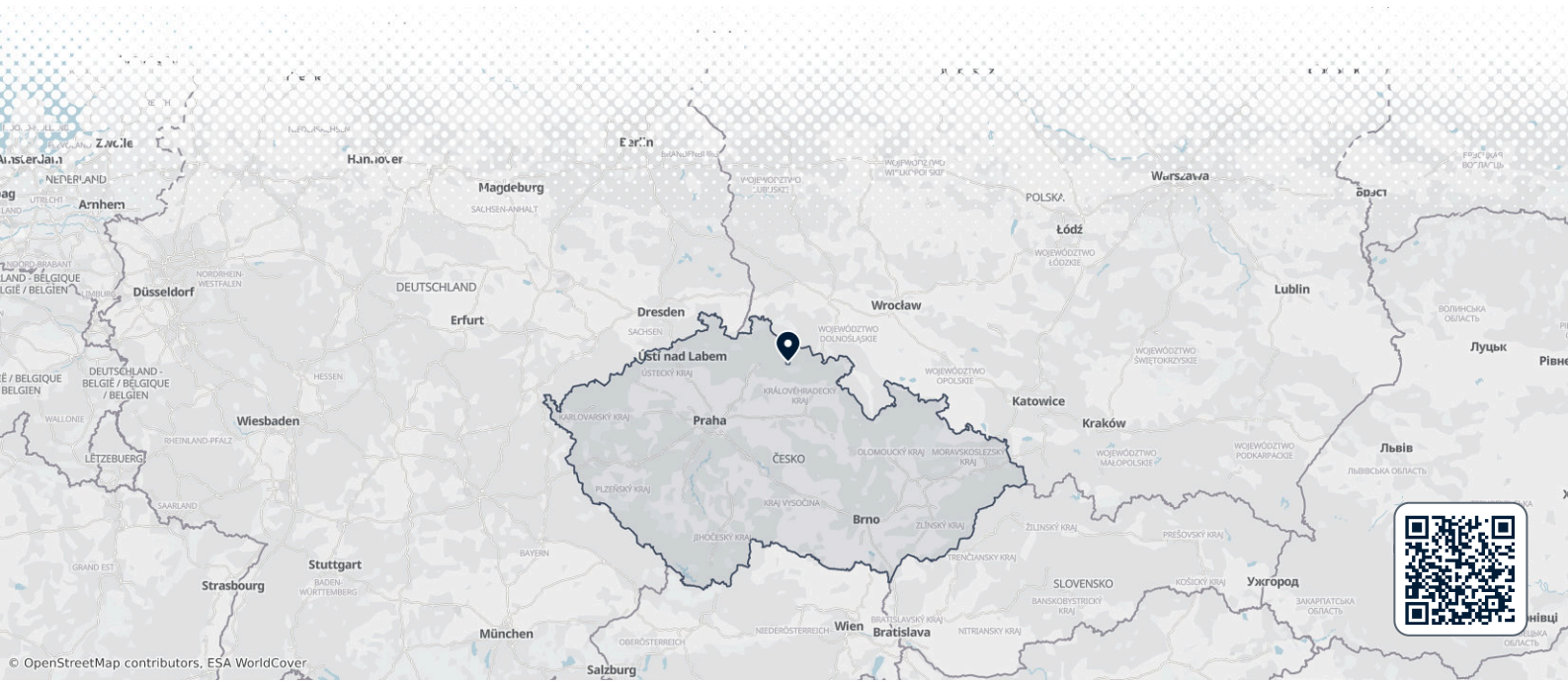
Jilemnice

Semily District · Czech Republic

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Jilemnice is a small, quiet town in the green foothills of the western Giant Mountains. It has a compact historic centre, a former noble chateau and a strong link to winter sport. Czechs call it the cradle of Czech skiing, because it was one of the first places in Bohemia where people took up skiing, in the 1890s.

The town suits a slow weekend or a calm base for the mountains. You can see the main sights in half a day, then go hiking, cycling or skiing nearby. The writer *Jaroslav Havlíček* was born here, and his novels describe life in small towns like this one.

When to visit

Summer is mild and green, and it is the best time for hiking and cycling. Winter is cold and snowy, with good cross-country skiing close to town. Spring and autumn are quieter and often rainy.

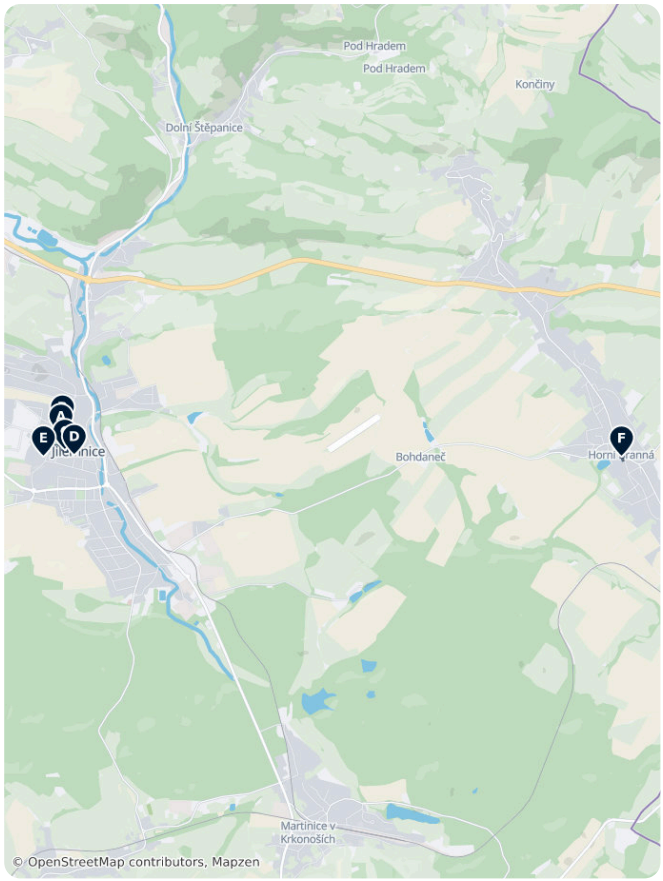
The biggest annual event is the **Jilemnická 50**, a traditional cross-country ski race held on the last weekend of January. It now starts at Horní Mísečky in the mountains, and amateurs can take part.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Great Great for skiing	-1° / 6° Feels like -6°	-6° / -16°	14 rainy days · Dry air
February	Great Great for skiing	2° / 9° Feels like -4°	-5° / -15°	12 rainy days · Dry air
March	Good Good for skiing	6° / 14° Feels like 1°	-2° / -9°	13 rainy days · Dry air
April	Good Good for cycling	12° / 20° Feels like 8°	2° / -4°	Dry air
May	Good Good for hiking	17° / 24°	7° / 1°	15 rainy days · Dry air
June	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 28°	11° / 6°	15 rainy days · Dry air
July	Good Good for sightseeing	23° / 30°	13° / 8°	17 rainy days · Dry air
August	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 30°	13° / 8°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	Good Good for hiking	19° / 26°	8° / 3°	Dry air
October	Good Good for hiking	13° / 20° Feels like 9°	4° / -2°	12 rainy days · Dry air
November	Good Good for skiing	6° / 13° Feels like 1°	0° / -6°	12 rainy days · Dry air
December	Great Great for skiing	1° / 6° Feels like -5°	-4° / -14°	14 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: August

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

Top sights



- A Krkonoše Museum Jilemnice fills the former Harrach family chateau. Its highlights are a large exhibition on the history of Czech skiing and a mechanical nativity scene with more than a hundred moving figures.
- B Chateau Park lies behind the chateau. It is a calm place for a short walk after the museum.
- C Church of St Lawrence is a large Baroque church built in the 1730s. It stands just off the main square and dominates the town skyline.
- D Jilemnice Town Hall faces Masarykovo náměstí, the main square. Look up at its tower, which holds an unusual clock that strikes on small cymbals.
- Zvědavá ulička ("Curious Lane") is a short street of wooden cottages, mostly rebuilt after a town fire in 1788. Each house on one side sits a little further forward than the last, as if curious about the street.
- E Šaldův statek is a restored timbered farmhouse in the same lane. It is a good example of local folk building, and it now holds a restaurant.
- F Horní Branná Chateau is a Renaissance chateau in the next village, about 5 km east. The philosopher *Jan Amos Komenský* (Comenius) stayed here before he left Bohemia for exile, and a memorial exhibition tells his story.

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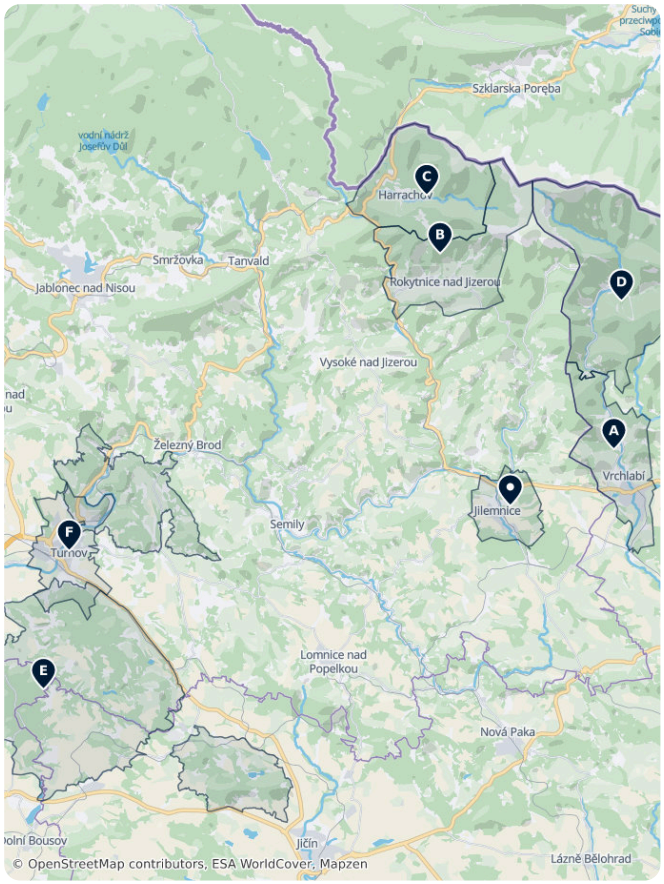
What to experience

A few things here are worth planning around.

- **Watch the mechanical nativity scene move.** In Krkonoše Museum Jilemnice, the large nativity scene by *Jáchym Metelka* is set in motion at fixed times each day. Figures walk, work and bow to the sound of music and bells. Check the times before you go.
- **Ski where Czech skiing began.** In winter, use the groomed cross-country trails in the hills near town, or join the **Jilemnická 50** race in January.
- **Walk or cycle up to Benecko.** Marked routes climb from town through meadows and forest to the hilltop village, with wide views of the Giant Mountains.

Day trips

Jilemnice sits between the Giant Mountains and the rock towns of the Bohemian Paradise, so good day trips are close.



- A Vrchlabí — about 20 minutes by car or bus. A gateway town to the Giant Mountains with a chateau, a park and the national park information centre.
- Benecko — about 15 minutes by car. A small hilltop resort with easy ski slopes in winter and wide mountain views in summer.
- B Rokytnice nad Jizerou — about 25 minutes by car, or by the local train. A long mountain village with ski slopes and hiking trails along the Jizera valley.
- C Harrachov — about 40 minutes by car. Known for its ski jumps, a glassworks with a small brewery, and the Mumlava waterfall.
- D Špindlerův Mlýn — about 45 minutes by car. The largest resort in the Giant Mountains, with lifts that run in summer and winter.
- E Bohemian Paradise — about 45 minutes by car towards F Turnov. Sandstone rock towns, castles and marked walking trails.

Where to explore

Jilemnice belongs to a group of small towns around the Jizera valley and the western Giant Mountains.

- **Mountain resorts**: Rokytnice nad Jizerou and Harrachov are the closest ski and hiking centres to the north. For the wider mountain range, see Giant Mountains.
- **Towards the Bohemian Paradise**: Turnov is the main town for the rock towns, and Lomnice nad Popelkou is a quieter town in the hills to the south-west.

Getting there

- **By air**: The nearest international airport is Prague Václav Havel Airport, about 130 km away. The drive takes around 1 hour 45 minutes. By public transport, go into Prague first, then take a bus.
- **By bus**: Direct buses run from Prague's Černý Most terminal to Jilemnice in about 2 hours. The bus station is a short walk from the main square.
- **By train**: Jilemnice station is on the local line from Martinice v Krkonoších to Rokytnice nad Jizerou. From Prague the trip takes about 3 hours with changes. The station is about a 15-minute walk south-east of the centre. Plan trips with České dráhy (Czech Railways).
- **By car**: From Prague, take the D10 motorway towards Turnov, then continue on regional roads via Semily.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The historic centre is small. The square, church, museum and Zvědavá ulička are all within a few minutes' walk of each other.
- **Regional buses and trains**: Buses and the local train link Jilemnice with the mountain villages. They are part of the Liberec Region transport system; see IDOL public transport. You can buy tickets from the bus driver or on the train.
- **Cycling**: The area is hilly but has many quiet roads and marked cycle routes. An e-bike makes the climbs much easier.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The historic centre is compact, and all the main sights are a few minutes' walk apart.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Quiet roads and marked routes, but the hills are steep; an e-bike helps.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the town itself, which is small and walkable. A car helps a lot for mountain villages and trailheads, because buses there are infrequent, especially on weekends.
- **Parking**: There is parking around the main square and near the bus station. Check the signs for time limits and payment.
- **Restrictions**: Some roads inside the Krkonoše National Park are closed to private cars. Park at the edge and walk or take a local bus.

Food & drink

Look for Giant Mountains dishes on local menus. The best known is **kyselo**, a sour soup made with bread starter, mushrooms and egg. Potato pancakes and game dishes are also common.

For a meal with character, try Šaldův statek, a restaurant in a restored timbered farmhouse in Zvědavá ulička. Otherwise, most cafés and restaurants are on or just off Masarykovo náměstí.

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

Jilemnice is very safe, and serious crime against visitors is rare. Normal care with bags in busy places is enough.

The main risks are outdoors. Mountain weather can change fast, even in summer, so carry warm, waterproof clothes on hikes. In winter, check snow and avalanche conditions before going high. Ticks are common in grass and forest from spring to autumn, so check your skin after walks.

History

Jilemnice grew as a small market town known for linen weaving at the foot of the mountains. From 1701 until 1945 it belonged to the Harrach family. In the 1890s they rebuilt the chateau that now holds Krkonoše Museum Jilemnice.

In 1788 a large fire destroyed much of the town. The wooden cottages of Zvědavá ulička, including Šaldův statek, show how people rebuilt afterwards. The town's main church, Church of St Lawrence, is older than the fire and still dominates the centre.

In the 1890s, Count *Jan Harrach* brought skis from Norway and had copies made for his forest workers. Local people soon took up the sport. In 1895 Jilemnice held one of the first ski races in Bohemia, and a local ski club followed. The museum's skiing exhibition tells this story with old skis, sledges, photos and film.

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

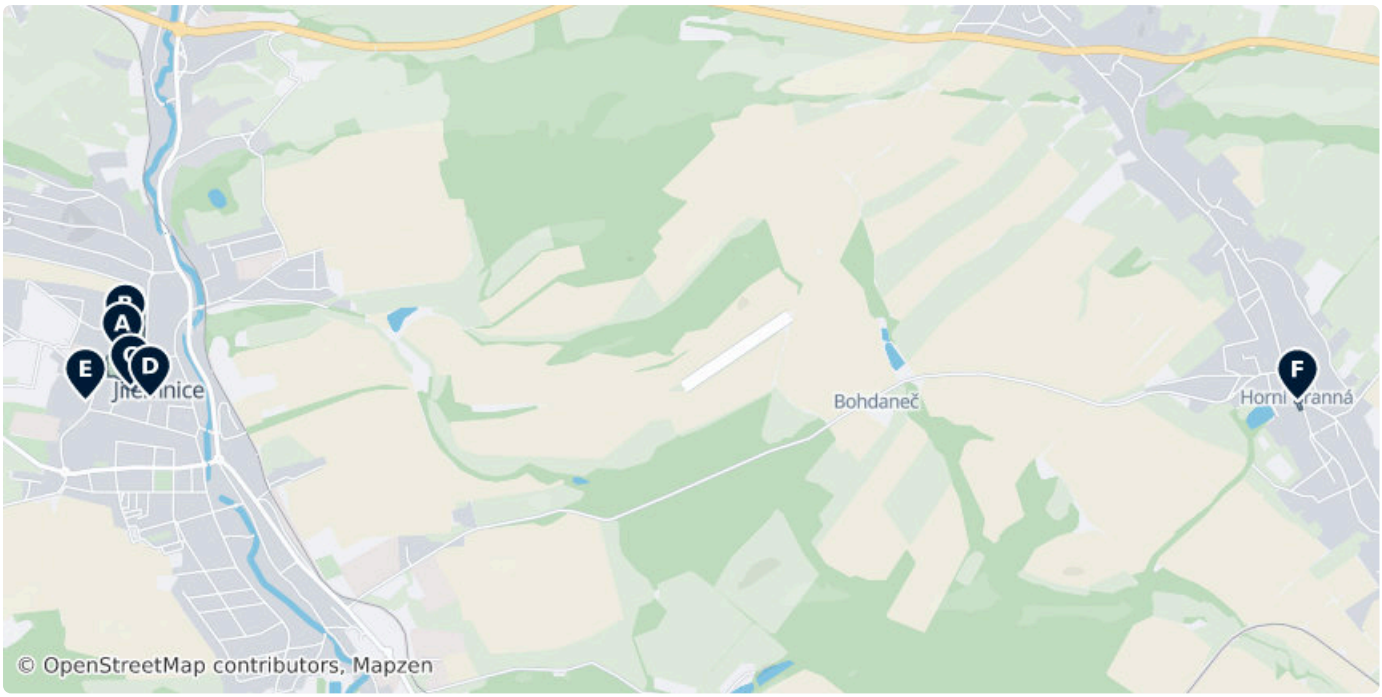
LANGUAGES

Czech

TAP WATER

Safe to drink

Top sights





A Giant Mountains Museum Jilemnice

Museum institution set within a historic complex featuring a neo-Renaissance chateau, a baroque brewery, and a garden house. It focuses on the ethnography of the western Krkonoše mountains and the history of Czech skiing.

Kostelní, 514 01 Jilemnice, Czechia (50.61044, 15.50444)

Sep-Jun Tu–Su	09:00–12:00, 13:00–16:00
Jul-Aug Tu–Su	09:00–12:00, 13:00–17:00

krnap.cz/navstevnici/muzea/krkonosske... , +420481543041

B Castle Park

Historic 16th-century park featuring fountains and diverse plant life. It provides a quiet space for relaxation and contains a monument to a notable geologist.

Zámecká, 514 01 Jilemnice, Czechia (50.61111, 15.50461)

+420481543041



C St. Lawrence Church

Significant Baroque parish church dating from 1729, designated as a cultural heritage site. The building features a rich interior with 15th-century Gothic art and Rococo sculptures.

92 Vavřinecká, Jilemnice 51401, Czech Republic (50.60932, 15.50489)



D Jilemnice Town Hall

Historic Neoclassical building featuring a dominant tower with a unique clock mechanism. It serves as the seat of the municipal office and is designated as a cultural monument of the Czech Republic.

82 Masarykovo náměstí, Jilemnice 51401, Czech Republic (50.60893, 15.50599)



E Šalda Homestead

Historic timbered homestead and cultural monument featuring a restaurant.
The site consists of a reconstructed traditional building.

Zvědavá ulička, 514 01 Jilemnice, Czechia (50.60882, 15.50238)



F Horní Branná Castle

Renaissance castle built in 1582 that houses a memorial dedicated to Jan Amos Komenský. It served as the residence for the philosopher before his departure into exile.

2954, 512 36 Horní Branná, Czechia (50.60881, 15.57002)

DATA SOURCES

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