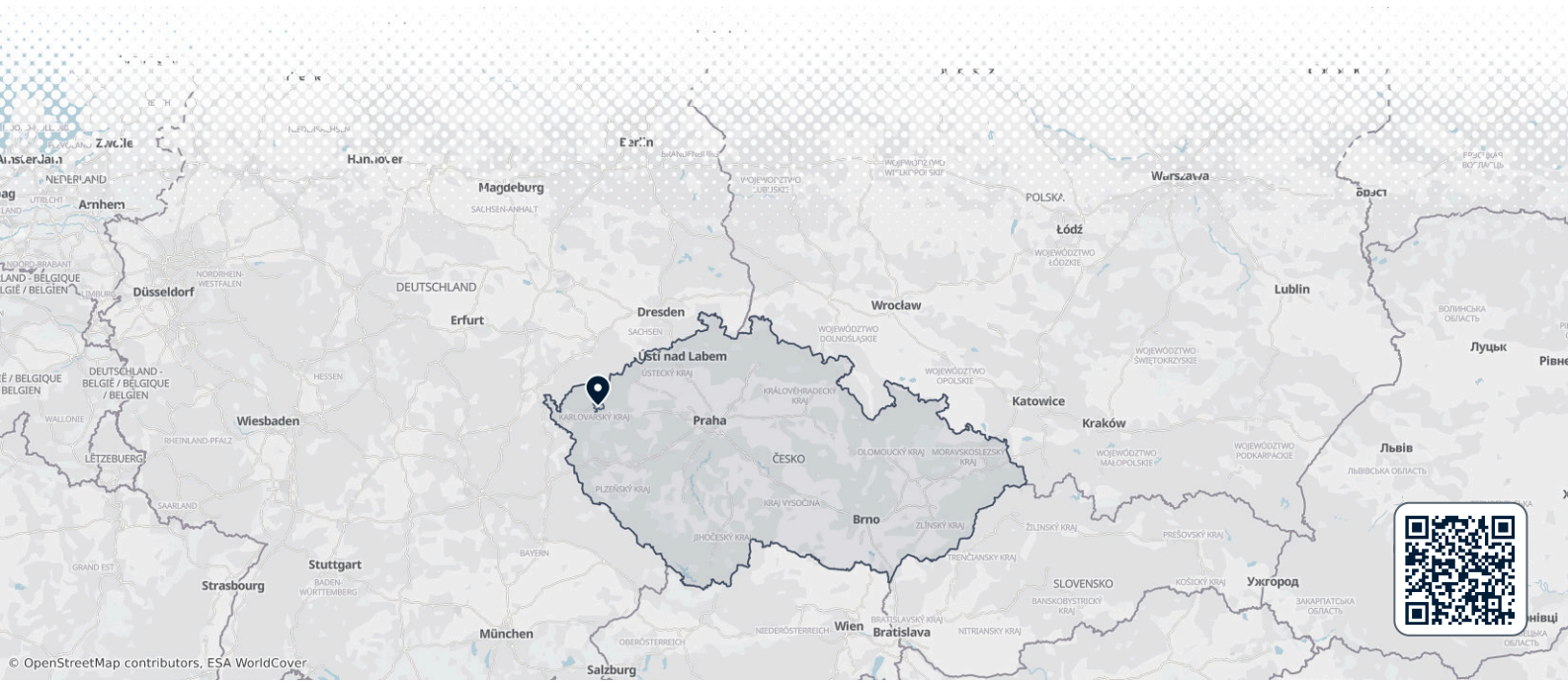


Karlovy Vary

Czech Republic

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Karlovy Vary is the Czech Republic's most famous spa town. It sits in a narrow, wooded valley in West Bohemia, where the Teplá river runs between rows of pastel spa houses. The town grew up around its hot mineral springs, and its colonnades, promenades and old hotels still shape it today. In 2021 it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of the "Great Spa Towns of Europe".

It suits a slow stay of two or three nights. You come here to walk the colonnades, drink the warm spring water, take a spa treatment, and make easy trips into the countryside around it. The town is also the home of the herbal liqueur Becherovka and of Moser crystal glass. Emperor *Charles IV* founded it in the 14th century, and later guests included the writer *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* and the composer *Ludwig van Beethoven*.

When to visit

The best time to visit is from late spring to early autumn, roughly May to September. Summers are mild and pleasant, and rarely too hot. Spring and autumn are cooler and quieter, which suits a calm spa trip. Winters are cold and often snowy, but the spa houses stay open all year.

The one event to plan around is the **Karlovy Vary International Film Festival** in early July. It is one of the oldest major film festivals in the world. For about nine days the town fills with screenings, crowds and film stars, and hotels book out early. Come for the atmosphere, or avoid these dates if you want a quiet visit.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor	1° / 8° Feels like -5°	-5° / -14°	12 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor	3° / 10° Feels like -2°	-4° / -14°	Dry air
March	Poor	8° / 16° Feels like 3°	-1° / -7°	Dry air
April	Fair	14° / 22° Feels like 10°	3° / -3°	Dry air
May	Good	18° / 26°	8° / 2°	14 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great	23° / 30°	12° / 6°	14 rainy days · Dry air
July	Good	25° / 32°	13° / 9°	15 rainy days · Dry air
August	Great	25° / 33°	13° / 9°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	Great	20° / 28°	9° / 4°	Dry air
October	Fair	14° / 21° Feels like 11°	5° / -2°	Dry air
November	Poor	7° / 14° Feels like 2°	0° / -5°	Dry air
December	Poor	2° / 8° Feels like -3°	-3° / -12°	Dry air

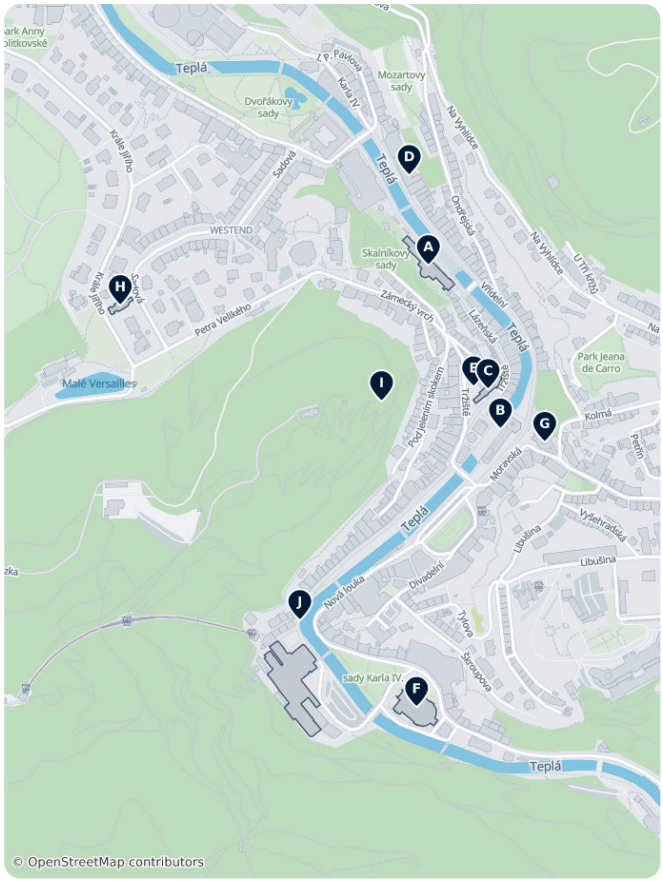
Best months: June, August, September

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

Top sights

Most of the sights sit along the spa valley, within an easy walk of each other. The town is famous above all for its colonnades — covered walkways built over the hot springs.

- A Mill Colonnade is the grandest of them, a long neo-Renaissance gallery with rows of columns and several springs to taste.
- B Hot Spring Colonnade is the hot heart of the town. Inside its glass hall, the Vřídlo geyser shoots mineral water high into the air, and you can taste the water at the taps.
- C Market Colonnade is a delicate wooden colonnade in Swiss style, built over more springs nearby.
- D Park Colonnade is a graceful white cast-iron colonnade in the gardens to the north, and E Castle Colonnade is a smaller one on the terrace above the old castle spa.
- F Imperial Spa is a grand 19th-century bathhouse, one of the most ornate spa buildings in the town.
- G Church of St Mary Magdalene is a Baroque church by the architect *Kilian Ignaz Dientzenhofer*, standing just above the hot spring.
- H Church of Sts Peter and Paul is a Russian Orthodox church with gilded onion domes, a reminder of the many Russian guests who once came to take the waters.
- I Deer Leap is a rocky lookout above the valley, marked by a bronze chamois statue and tied to the town's founding legend.
- J Grandhotel Pupp is the town's best-known hotel, a white landmark from the spa's golden age that is often used as a film location.



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What to experience

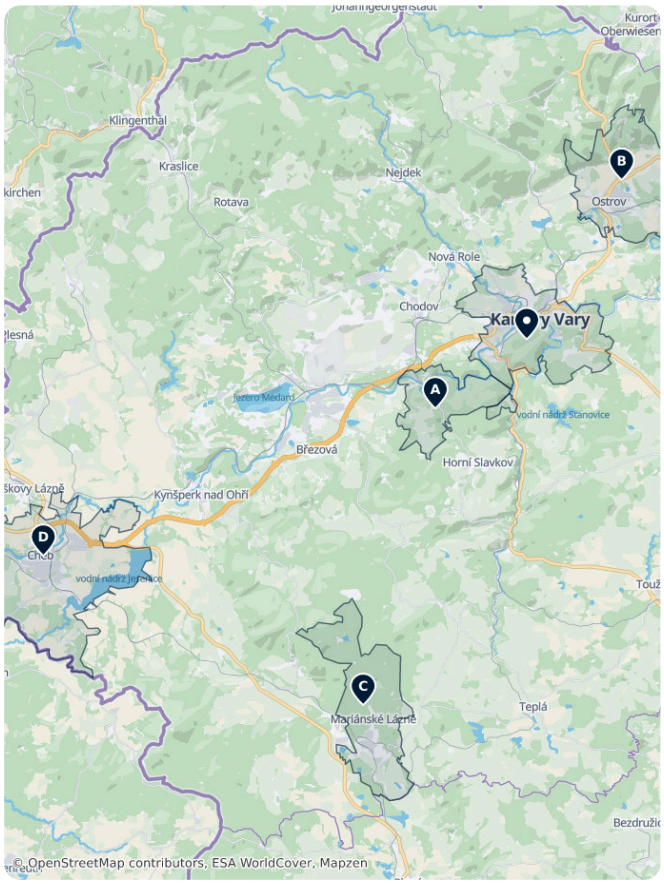
Karlovy Vary is a place for slow rituals more than a checklist of sights.

- **Take the drinking cure.** Buy a traditional spa cup with a built-in spout, fill it at the springs along the colonnades, and sip the warm mineral water as you walk. Each spring has a slightly different taste and temperature.
- Ride the Diana Funicular up through the forest, then climb the tower at the top for the view over the valley.
- Watch glassblowers shape molten crystal on a factory tour at Museum Moser, the town's famous crystal glassworks.
- Taste Becherovka, the town's herbal liqueur, at Jan Becher Museum, where the recipe dates back to 1807.

Day trips

Karlovy Vary is a good base for the castles and spa towns of West Bohemia.

- A Loket — about 20 minutes by car or a short train ride. A small medieval town wrapped in a bend of the Ohře river, below a well-preserved 13th-century castle.
- B Ostrov — about 15 minutes by train. Known for its large Baroque château and its landscaped garden.
- Jáchymov — about 30 minutes by bus. A historic silver-mining town in the Ore Mountains, now a radon spa, with a mining museum.
- C Mariánské Lázně — about 45 minutes by car. A second grand spa town, greener and more open, with a musical fountain and a long colonnade.
- D Cheb — about 45 minutes by car or train. A historic border town with a striking medieval market square and a castle.



Getting there

- **By air**: The main gateway is Prague Airport (Václav Havel Airport), about 100 km away. Direct express buses run from the airport to Karlovy Vary in around 1 hour 30 minutes. Karlovy Vary has its own small airport, but it has almost no scheduled flights.
- **By bus**: Frequent express buses also run from central Prague (Florenc station) and take about 2 hours 15 minutes. Buses are usually the fastest and cheapest option. They also link Cheb, Plzeň and other regional towns.
- **By train**: Direct trains from Prague are slower, at around 3 hours 20 minutes, but the route is scenic. Regional trains connect Cheb, Mariánské Lázně and Plzeň.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The spa centre is compact and made for walking. A pedestrian promenade follows the Teplá river past the colonnades, and most sights are within a 20-minute walk.
- **Public transport**: City buses and trolleybuses, run by DPKV, serve the outer districts and the train and bus stations. The easiest way to pay is to tap a contactless bank card at the on-board reader; you can also buy a ticket from the driver. Fares are low.
- **Taxi and ride-hailing**: Local taxis and the Bolt app both operate.
- **Funicular**: A historic funicular runs up to the Diana lookout, useful for the hill and a pleasant ride in itself.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The spa centre is compact and pedestrian-friendly, with a riverside promenade linking the colonnades.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The valley is hilly, so cycling suits the river and forest trails more than the narrow spa streets.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not for the spa centre, which is walkable and partly closed to traffic. A car helps only if you plan to explore the wider region and its castles.
- **Parking**: Leave the car in a paid garage or car park at the edge of the spa zone, then walk in. Pay by machine or app.
- **Restrictions**: The inner spa district limits car access to protect the springs. Watch for signs and permit-only streets.

Food & drink

Karlovy Vary has two edible souvenirs. Spa wafers (lázeňské oplatky) are large, thin, round wafers, usually filled with sugar or nuts and sold warm from shops all over town. Becherovka, a herbal liqueur, is drunk as a digestive and is sometimes called the "thirteenth spring".

For meals, the pedestrian promenade along the Teplá river and Stará Louka street hold most of the cafés and restaurants, from light spa menus to hearty Czech dishes. For a grand setting, the café at the Grandhotel Pupp serves coffee and cakes under chandeliers.

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

Karlovy Vary is a calm, safe town with very little crime. The usual care with wallets and bags in busy tourist spots is enough.

Tap water is safe to drink. The spring water is a different matter: it is hot, strongly mineral, and meant to be drunk in small amounts as a treatment. Too much can upset your stomach, so a few small cups a day is plenty.

History

According to legend, Emperor *Charles IV* discovered the springs in the 14th century when his hunting dogs chased a deer to a steaming pool in the valley. The spot above the town is still marked today at Deer Leap. The emperor gave the new town his name: Karlovy Vary means "Charles' Baths".

Over the following centuries the town became one of Europe's leading spas. Guests came to drink and bathe in the waters that still rise at Hot Spring Colonnade, among them *Goethe*, *Beethoven* and the Russian tsar *Peter the Great*. The grand colonnades and hotels you see today were mostly built during this golden age in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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

Audio Guides by Tripomatic
Walk it with an audio guide
Available in 9 languages · **Plays when you arrive** · **Works offline**
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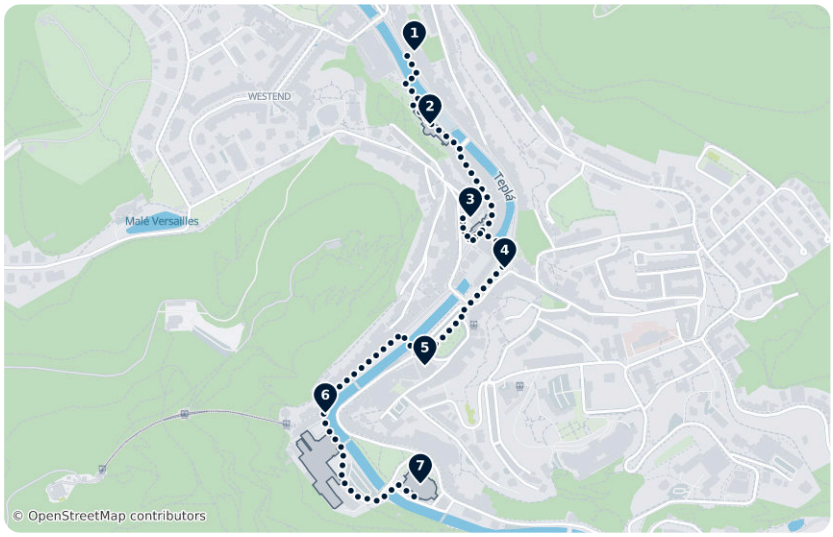
Best of Karlovy Vary

1h 10min · 1.6 km · 7 stops



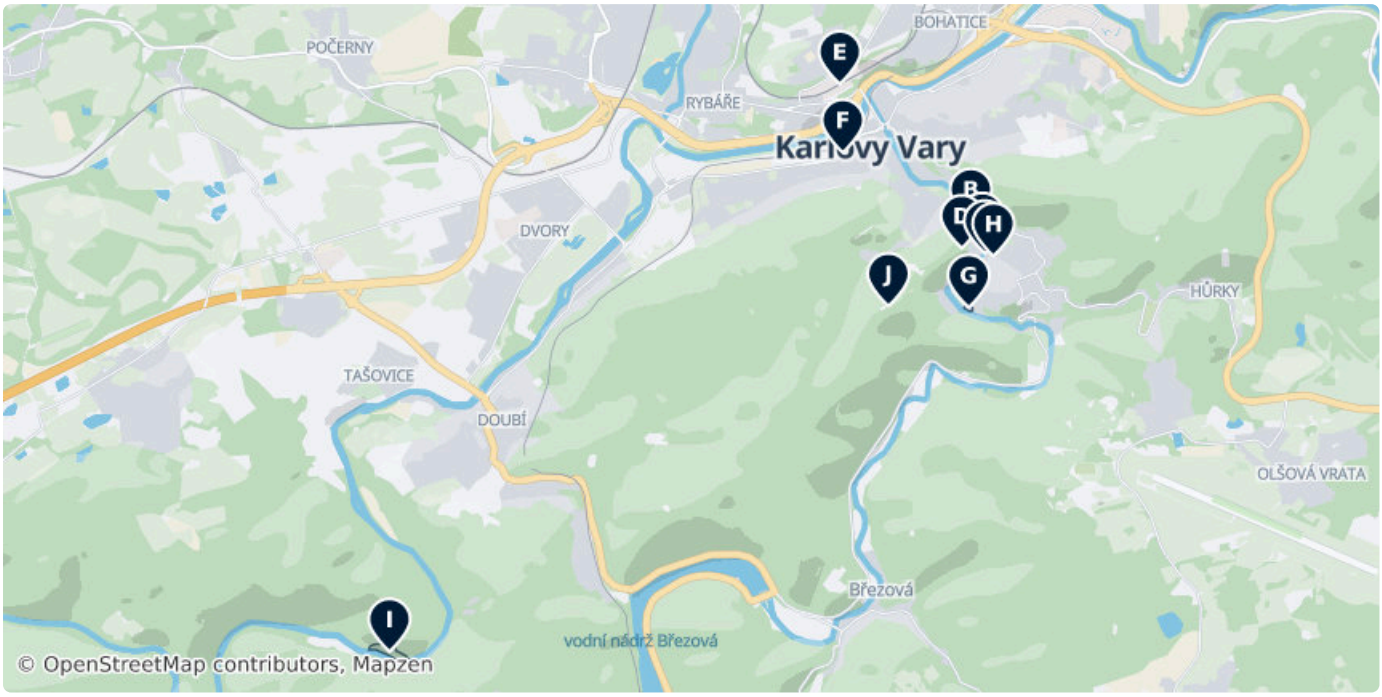
1. Park Colonnade
2. Mill Colonnade
3. Market Colonnade
4. Hot Spring Colonnade
5. Town Theatre
6. Grandhotel Pupp
7. Imperial Spa

Walk the heart of Central Europe's most famous spa town, following the Teplá river past the colonnades where visitors have sipped hot mineral water for centuries. You will see the Hot Spring shoot up to twelve metres, stand beneath Zítek's great Mill Colonnade and the carved wooden Market Colonnade, and finish among the belle-époque grandeur of Grandhotel Pupp and the Imperial Spa. The walk starts at the Park Colonnade in Dvořák Park, a short stroll from the T. G. Masaryk pedestrian street, and follows level riverside promenades throughout.



Karlovy Vary Unmissables

Karlovy Vary is defined by its thermal springs, elegant colonnades and spa houses clustered along the Teplá river. The town features several covered colonnades supplying mineral waters, historic bath buildings from the 18th–19th centuries, cliffside viewpoints and a network of walking routes and funiculars connecting promenades with hilltop observation points.





A Hot Spring Colonnade

Covered colonnade surrounding the Vřídlo (Hot Spring) geyser; spring reaches high temperatures and discharges mineral water used for drinking cures.

2036/2 Divadelní náměstí, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.22289, 12.88346)

Apr-Oct Mo–Su	06:30–19:00
Nov-Mar Mo–Su	06:30–18:00

karlovyvary.cz/cs/vridelni-kolonada-0, +420355321171



B Mill Colonnade

The Mill Colonnade is a large colonnade containing several hot springs in the spa town of Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic.

1 Mlýnské nábřeží, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.22525, 12.88183)



C Market Colonnade

Covered market colonnade housing several mineral water taps and small shops along the spa promenades.

17 Tržiště, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.22346, 12.88318)

karlovyvary.cz/cs/trzni-kolonada-0, +420355321171



D Deer Jump Lookout

Hilltop viewpoint (Deer Leap) with panoramic views over the river valley and central colonnades.

395/26 Pod Jelením skokem, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.22329, 12.88077)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

karlovyvary.cz/cs/vyhlidka-jeleni-skok

E Karlovy Vary

Main railway station serving Karlovy Vary with regional and intercity services connecting to Prague and surrounding towns.

83/31 Nákladní, Karlovy Vary 36005, Czech Republic (50.23545, 12.86663)



F Jan Becher Museum

Museum dedicated to Jan Becher and the production of Becherovka bitter liqueur; includes guided tours and tastings.

282/57 Tomáše Garrigue Masaryka, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.23038, 12.86698)

Tu–Su 09:00–17:00

becherovka.com/en/visit-us/, +420359578142

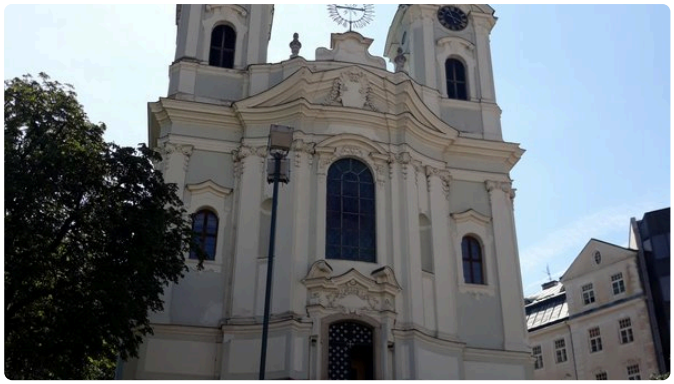


G Imperial Spa

Historic spa building (Císařské lázně) used for thermal treatments and spa programmes.

306/2 Mariánskolázeňská, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.21887, 12.88157)

cisarskelazne.cz, +420606096193



H Church of St. Mary Magdalene

Baroque Roman Catholic church dating from the 18th century, notable for its ornate interior and organ.

1 náměstí Svobody, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.22270, 12.88445)

+420355321171



I Svatošské skály

Sandstone rock formations along the Ohře (Eger) River; protected natural monument with local legends.

35731, Czech Republic (50.19336, 12.81442)



J Diana Observation Tower

Late 19th-century observation tower accessed by funicular, offering wide views over Karlovy Vary and the Teplá valley.

1219 Vrch přátelství, 36001, Czech Republic (50.21898, 12.87226)

Jan Mo–Su	Closed
Feb Mo–Su	09:15–16:45
Apr Mo–Su	09:15–17:45
May-Aug Mo–Su	09:15–18:45

karlovyvary.cz/en/diana-observation-tower

Notable Memorials and Monuments

This collection highlights memorials, statues and monuments across Karlovy Vary, from commemorative plaques and composer statues to a Baroque Trinity (plague) column and a twentieth-century civic memorial to victims of National Socialism. Entries include sculptural depictions of Goethe, Smetana, Beethoven and Gagarin, a historic pedestrian street named for T. G. Masaryk, and distinctive markers such as the Birnbaum (wild pear) of Drahovice.





A Findlanterův obelisk

Obelisk memorial.

(Unnamed Road), 36001, Czech Republic
(50.22055, 12.87473)

B Goethova vyhlidka

Scenic viewpoint named after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

244/2 Goethova vyhlídka, 36001, Czech Republic
(50.22403, 12.90331)

C T.G. Masaryka - Pěší zóna Karlovy Vary

Pedestrianized street named for President T. G. Masaryk.

(50.22925, 12.87399)

D Memorial Victims of National Socialism

Monument commemorating victims of National Socialism.

(50.22549, 12.87757)



E Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)

Bronze statue of composer Bedřich Smetana.

(Unnamed Road), Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.21620, 12.88915)



F Zákoutí knížete Karla Schwarzenberga (1818)

Memorial corner dedicated to Prince Karel Schwarzenberg (1818).

(Unnamed Road), Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.21480, 12.88804)



G Adam Mickiewicz

Statue of Polish Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz.

Slovenská, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.21717, 12.88952)

H Ludwig van Beethoven

Statue of composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

(50.21629, 12.89060)

I Jurij Gagarin

Statue of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.

(50.20125, 12.91318)



J Hygie

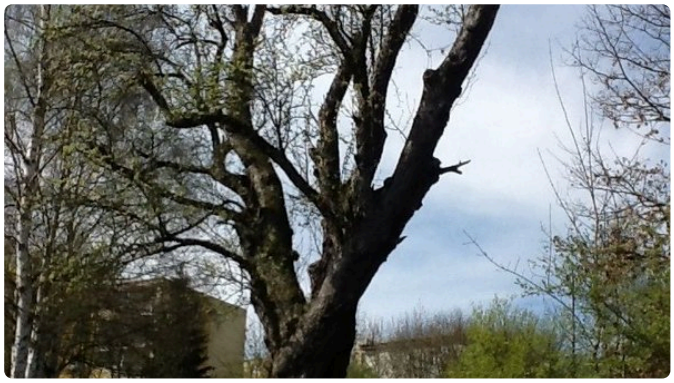
Sculpture of Hygieia, goddess of health and cleanliness.

(50.22303, 12.88346)

K Chlapec s letadlem

Bronze sculpture depicting a boy with an airplane.

(50.24949, 12.83005)



L Hrušeň v Drahovicích

Notable wild pear tree (Birnbaum) in the Drahovice district.

Waldertova, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic
(50.23433, 12.89374)

M Pomník Městských lesů Karlovarských

Memorial dedicated to the Karlovy Vary municipal forests.

(50.20956, 12.84989)

N Památník Kniha

Memorial sculpture titled 'Book'.

(50.21947, 12.86778)

O Column of Grateful Hungarians

Column dedicated by grateful Hungarians.

(50.21780, 12.88773)

P Otto 1

Monument honoring Otto I.

(50.22717, 12.89184)



Q "Anastasia"

Baroque Trinity (plague) column locally called 'Anastasia'.

33 Tržiště, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic
(50.22275, 12.88273)

R Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Memorial to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

(50.21789, 12.88384)

S Frederyk Chopin

Memorial to composer Frédéric Chopin.

(50.21773, 12.88127)

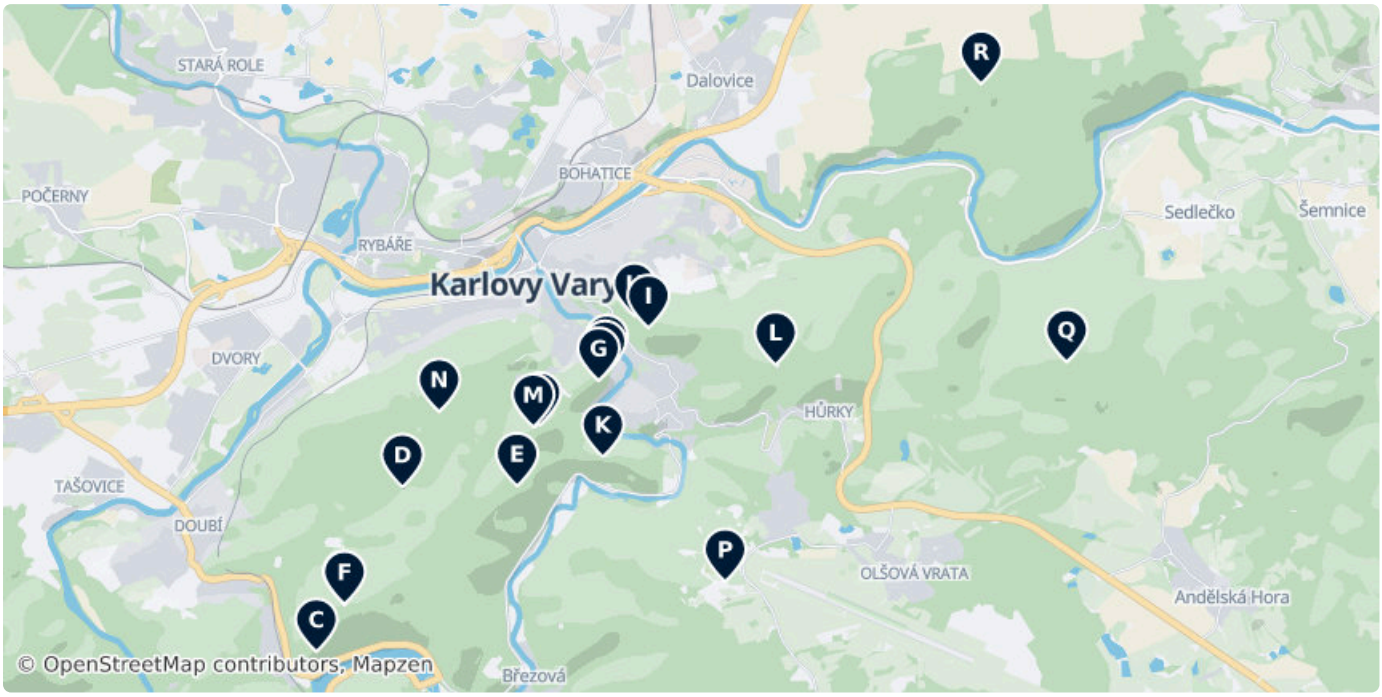
T Zde pracoval Petr Veliký

Plaque marking where Peter the Great worked.

(50.19671, 12.87014)

Scenic Viewpoints and Peaks

This selection groups 18 named viewpoints, observation towers, arbours and peaks around Karlovy Vary and the surrounding hills. It includes wheelchair-accessible Diana Observation Tower, the Camera Obscura arbour, boardwalk viewing at Luční rybníky, historic lookout sites and forested summits such as Doubská hora and Čertův kámen offering panoramic views over the town, river valley and surrounding nature.





A Deer Jump Lookout

Clifftop viewpoint overlooking forested slopes and valley approaches.

395/26 Pod Jelením skokem, Karlovy Vary 36001, Czech Republic (50.22329, 12.88077)

Mo–Su	Open 24/7

karlovyvary.cz/cs/vyhlidka-jeleni-skok



B Diana Observation Tower

Wooden observation tower with elevator access and paved approach; wheelchair accessible viewpoint over Karlovy Vary and the Teplá valley.

1219 Vrch přátelství, 36001, Czech Republic (50.21898, 12.87226)

Jan Mo–Su	Closed
Feb Mo–Su	09:15–16:45
Apr Mo–Su	09:15–17:45
May-Aug Mo–Su	09:15–18:45

karlovyvary.cz/en/diana-observation-tower

C Jungmannův altán vyhlídka

Small hilltop arbour (shelter) providing covered seating and local panorama.

(50.19999, 12.84293)

D Pozorovací lávka u Lučních rybníků

Raised observation boardwalk beside the Luční ponds for close wetland and bird viewing.

36001, Czech Republic (50.21379, 12.85423)

E Rusalka

Sheltered viewpoint ('Rusalka') located on forest trails with bench seating.

(50.21387, 12.86926)

F Rozhledna Doubská hora

Metal observation tower sited on the Doubská hora summit, offering wide views of the Karlovy Vary region.

(50.20397, 12.84662)



G Vyhlídka Petra Velikého

Marked guidepost viewpoint named after Peter the Great, with a small sheltered viewing area.

36001, Czech Republic (50.22271, 12.87993)

H Camera Obscura Arbour

Arbour housing a functional camera obscura that projects a live image of the surroundings.

U Tří křížů, 360 00 Karlovy Vary, Czechia (50.22813, 12.88464)

I Arbour at the Three Crosses

Wooden arbour adjacent to three stone crosses, providing sheltered seating and outlooks.

U Tří křížů, 360 00 Karlovy Vary, Czechia (50.22712, 12.88646)

J Loria-Sitz

Named seating spot ('Loria-Sitz') serving as a small lookout on a forest path.

Zámecký vrch, 360 00 Karlovy Vary, Czechia (50.22377, 12.88101)

K vyhlídka Karla IV.

Open viewpoint named for Charles IV with views down toward the valley and town.

(50.21632, 12.88049)

L Goethova rozhledna

Lookout point named after Goethe offering a hilltop vantage toward Karlovy Vary.

(50.22403, 12.90314)

M Výšina přátelství

Hilltop called 'Výšina přátelství' (Friendship Height) with an open summit aspect.

5/1 Vrch přátelství, 36001, Czech Republic (50.21883, 12.87137)

N Čertův kámen

Distinctive rock formation and small summit known as 'Čertův kámen' (Devil's Stone) on local trails.

36001, Czech Republic (50.22010, 12.85904)

O Doubská hora

Forest-covered peak Doubská hora, the hill on which the Doubská hora observation tower stands.

887 Sovova stezka, 36001, Czech Republic (50.20401, 12.84656)

P Vítkův vrch

Wooded hill (Vítkův vrch) accessible via marked trails with local summit viewpoints.

59, 36001, Czech Republic (50.20585, 12.89651)

Q Bukový vrch

Bukový vrch — beech-covered hill (literally 'Beech Hill') with trail access and open clearings.

36272, Czech Republic (50.22426, 12.94129)

R Ve Spálené

Hill named Ve Spálené featuring ridge-top views along hiking routes.

36001, Czech Republic (50.24757, 12.93007)

DATA SOURCES

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Route	HERE, GraphHopper

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