



12 OPARENSKÉ ÚDOLÍ Valley

Oparenské Údolí (valley) has been created by the Milešovský stream over thousands of years on its way to the Labe. Due to its microclimatic conditions, the valley is home to a number of rare plant and animal species. In spring, the carpets of wood anemones, hollowroot and common lungwort bloom here. Visitors to the valley are attracted not only by its wildlife, but also by the ruins of a medieval castle and the memorial Plague Stone (Morový kámen).

13 LOVOŠ (570 M A.S.L.) National nature reserve

Lovoš rises above the town of Lovosice. The relief of the mountain is quite unmistakable for its two peaks - Velký Lovoš (570 m a.s.l.), formed by basalt, and the phonolite Malý Lovoš, also known as Kybička (489 m a.s.l.). On Lovoš, well-preserved stands of rocky steppes and scree forests are protected. Since 1892 there has been a tourist cottage with a viewpoint.



14 ŽERNOSECKÉ JEZERO Lake

Lake Žernosecké, also known as Pišťanské, is a large water area created by the relatively recent flooding of a former sand pit. The extracted material was used in the construction of the Vltava Cascade waterworks. Since the 1980s, it has been used for recreation purposes. Many aquatic animals make this place their home.



15 RADOBYL (399 M A.S.L.) Nature Monument

On the top of Radobýl, a massive cross was erected which symbolically protects the town of Litoměřice. Since the reign of Charles IV, excellent wine has grown on the slopes of the hill, and a part of it is covered with orchards. In a former quarry, an impressive example of the columnar separation of basalt has been uncovered. Above all, however, Radobýl is an important natural habitat with an impressive number of animal and plant species.



A JOURNEY THROUGH A VALLEY FULL OF NATURAL TREASURES



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BEAUTIES OF THE LABE VALLEY

NATURAL
TREASURES



BEAUTIES OF THE LABE VALLEY

A flat and fertile lowland, above it the landforms of České středohoří, with its typical steeply rising mountains of volcanic origin, and then a deep gorge with steep slopes and rocks. The Labe River pushes its way through here, from the Czech Republic into Germany (as the Elbe River), to journey's end in the North Sea.

Porta Bohemica, the Gateway to Bohemia, was declared a Site of Community Importance 2016. Thus it became a part of the Natura 2000 network, which has gradually grown since 1992. It protects the diversity of plant and animal species in the European Union. Some places with rare species require regular care. In particular, clearing self-seeding plants, regular mowing and grazing by sheep and goat herds. The work is financed by the state or directly by the European Union. This way, in addition to nature conservation, Natura 2000 opens up opportunities for the local community.

The towns of Litoměřice and Děčín form the boundaries of Porta Bohemica. Near Malé and Velké Žernoseky, the Gateway to Bohemia itself is formed by the hills Hrádek and Kalvárie on the right bank of the Labe River, and the hill Dobry on the left bank. The effect of the elements on these volcanic rocks has created an impressive scenery full of contrasts. Due to the different conditions in the Labe Valley, both thermophilic species (common in the Mediterranean) and psychrophilic species (more common in northern Europe or mountain areas) prosper here. Despite the apparent human influence, the river has retained its natural character in most areas, for which it deserves the highest protection.



START

1 CHMELNÍK (508 M A.S.L.) Hill

On the left bank of the Labe River near Děčín, a solitary mighty hill rises. Its shape reminds us of its volcanic origin, as do the basalt rocks scattered on its steep slopes. The most well-known of these is Břečťanová jehla. Chmelník, together with Bohyňská Lada and Lotarův vrch, form a single Site of Community Importance with valuable forest and meadow communities. There are also rich orchid meadows.

3 VRABINEC (400 M A.S.L.) Nature Reserve

On Vrabinec, everyone can admire the remarkable rock diatremes and the ruins of a medieval castle, which probably gave the whole place its name. It was built like a sparrow's nest between individual rocks. There is a beautiful view of the Labe gorge. Interesting invertebrate species live in the extensive scree at the foot of the rocks.

2 NEBOČADSKÝ LUH Nature Monument

Nebočadský luh is a river cut-off, on whose peninsula part of an alluvial forest has been preserved. It is an important nesting and wintering place for birds. The European beaver is also prospering here. The current Nature Monument used to be an island. Even in the 20th century it was an economically used meadow. Later it was planted with poplars and left behind to the influence of the river.

5 KOZÍ VRCH (380 M A.S.L.) Nature Reserve

This impressive hill extends from the bend of the Labe between Povrly and Mojžíř, a district of Ústí nad Labem. It is a phonolite massif, which was extruded by volcanic activity through the Mesozoic layer of calcareous marlstones and claystones, often more than 66 million years old. The hill is important geologically, zoologically, and botanically. In the local forests you can find Europe's largest beetle - the stag beetle.

4 BUKOVÁ HORA (683 M A.S.L.) Mountain

This mountain with a television transmitter in the shape of a space rocket is a noticeable dominant of Verneřické středohoří, visible from afar. The transmitter reaches a height of 223 metres and is the highest concrete structure in the Czech Republic. The surrounding landscape can be seen from the nearby Humboldt Lookout Tower. Alexander von Humboldt was one of the first natural scientists to intensively study České středohoří. There are the mysterious ruins of several abandoned villages in the area.

7 SLUNEČNÍ STRAŇ Nature Reserve

Sluneční stráň is a steep slope difficult to access above the Brná part of Ústí nad Labem. Exposed to the sun throughout the day, it is home to hundreds of species of thermophilic plants and animals. Basalt rocks rise from the hillside, the most famous of which is Čima - a rock tower very popular with climbers.

6 VRKOČ National Nature Monument

The rock formation Vrkoč is a dominant feature near Masarykova zdymadla. The columnar separation of basalt is remarkable, with a shape that resembles hair braided into a bun. This beauty was exposed to the human eye during the construction of the adjacent railway, when part of the rock was blasted off. The well-known Vaňovský vodopád (waterfall) is a part of the Vrkoč massif.

8 PRŮČELSKÁ ROKLE Ravine

Průčelská rokle (gorge) was eroded by Průčelský stream over thousands of years and is an attraction for visitors thanks to its two waterfalls - Průčelský and Výří. Both have low flow for most of the year, but their lengths of 20 and 45 metres rank them among the longest Czech waterfalls. In particular, the site is protected for large screes and remnants of natural forests. In the spring, the gorge is closed because it provides a home to two endangered species - the peregrine falcon and the eagle owl. They need absolute peace for their nesting.

9 DEBLÍK (459 M A.S.L.) Hill

České středohoří has been strongly influenced by stone quarrying because the geological origin of the mountains gives an unusually high quality of ore. Consequently, large quarries have irreversibly damaged natural landmarks. One such landmark is the hill Deblík. Other, smaller peaks are adjacent to the hill itself - Kostelní vrch and Trabice. On all the above-mentioned hills we can find preserved steppes and impressive deciduous forests with unique fauna and flora. A rare speargrass species, *Stipa zalesskii*, grows there.

10 KALVÁRIE (245 M A.S.L.) Nature Reserve

Kalvárie, or Tříkřížový vrch (Three Crosses), is a rocky promontory above the Labe River near Velké Žernoseky. Three crosses were first placed on Kalvárie in the 16th century. A huge fortified settlement from pre-Christian times stood on the nearby hillock called Hrádek. It probably served as a strategic and spiritual centre for the area and its ramparts are still visible on the site. Rare plants grow here, and critically endangered green lizard thrive here.

11 ZAHRADA ČECH The Garden of Bohemia

Velké Žernoseky has always been famous for growing and processing wine. The local vineyards cover the hills of Velká Vendula (281 m a.s.l.) and Malá Vendula (239 m a.s.l.) and form breath-taking scenery reminiscent of the Mediterranean. The surroundings of the Labe River near Litoměřice are an extremely fertile area thanks to rich soils with calcareous components and a warm climate. Fruit was transported from orchards on the slopes of České Středohoří as far as Dresden.

