

South Bohemia



For many travellers, the lakes, forests and fields of South Bohemia whiz by in a cinematic scroll outside the window of a Prague to Český Krumlov bus. And while the region's pampered main attraction will definitely steal your heart, be ready to share your devotion with busloads of other camera-wielding suitors. Invest a couple of nights to stroll Český Krumlov's medieval maze and canoe the meandering Vltava, but also find time to explore the rest of South Bohemia.

In the forests of the Šumava mountains, hiking and mountain-biking tracks link pensions (guest houses) and alpine lodges where hush comes as standard. On Lake Lipno the beaches are thronged with summertime visitors, but just a ferry ride away the lake's western shore is subdued and secluded, legacy of its past as a closed border zone during the Cold War. To the east, near the Austrian border, the melancholy serenity of Slavonice almost demands you whisper, and the town's parade of Renaissance facades is really quite remarkable.

After a few authentic Budweisers with the locals in České Budějovice's raucous beer halls, bring centuries of history to life in chateaux like the delicate lakeside confection at Červená Lhota, or the spectacular twin fortresses of Zvíkov and Orlík. Get pleasantly lost amid the narrow lanes radiating from the photogenic main square of Tábor, the imposing bastion of the unyielding Hussites, or negotiate walking trails around the historic carp ponds and lakes surrounding Třeboň.

Are you still thinking a hurried day trip to Český Krumlov is a good idea?

HIGHLIGHTS

- Canoeing round the graceful arc of the Vltava River through **Český Krumlov** (p153), just maybe Central Europe's prettiest town
- Bringing history to life in the former Hussite bastion of **Tábor** (p165)
- Immersing yourself in the hushed Renaissance perfection of **Slavonice** (p172)
- Catching a leisurely river boat between the spectacular castles at **Orlík nad Vltavou** (p164) and **Zvíkov** (p165)
- Imbibing the original Budweiser beer in **České Budějovice** (p148), an energetic blue-collar brewery town



