

# Jáchymov Storms: World's First Radon Spa

Who would not know the fragrance of fresh air after a storm had died down? The rain washes away everything old and dirty and all the surroundings are filled with energy of something fresh and new. Such purification is usually more intense in the mountains than in towns or valleys. The true mountain storm can perplex everyone!



During long years of its existence, the city of [Jachymov](#) in Czech Republic experienced several storms. Some were devastating, destructive and full of dramatic flashes; the others were purifying and bringing hope. One of the storms gave birth to a rarity. Something unique that literally shook the whole world. A mere one tenth gram of radium salt was the tiny and almost invisible object that the storm revealed to the world and the storm was Marie Curie Sklodowska.

When French professor Bequerel discovered at the end of the 19th century that uranium compounds emit X-rays, Marie Curie was just searching for an unexplored field she could focus on in her postgraduate work. She thus concentrated on uranium ores and with her husband she was researching various intensities of radiation.

They found the highest one in pitchblende – a stone named after bad luck. Miners used to find pitchblende at the end of silver-bearing veins and the stone was associated with the end of sweet dreams about gained fortune. However, Bad luck brought Good luck to the Curie couple and a flash of lightning struck from the sky and stirred up the most famous Jáchymov times.

"Tons of pitchblende were too expensive! Wits are sufficient instead of money: if pitchblende in its raw form is a precious mineral, then, its waste after processing should be of a minimum price. At the intercession of the Vienna Academy of Science, the Austrian government ruled to donate free of charge a ton of waste from Jáchymov, which had not been disposed of," Eva Curie wrote in the memoirs of her mother. An accident helped it that the pitchblende from Jáchymov was at the birth of the discovery of rare radon.

Not only Jáchymov pitchblende but also water streaming in the mines was full of radon, which as the miners gradually ascertained was beneficial for the treatment of wounds and diseases. And it took just a small step to establish the first radon spa in the world in 1906. Since then, more than one hundred years

have passed. Water is no longer carried in wooden buckets from the mine to town bathtubs and healing effects of radon water have been examined thoroughly. The last storm split up the fog of ignorance and the lightning lit up Jáchymov as the cameras floodlight world stars.



### **Beneficial Source of Radon Water**

Many balneological methods apply a plentiful of chemical means. In contrast, radon [spa therapy](#) is a purely natural source of energy (gas released from the cracks of the earth which dissolves into underground water). In Jáchymov, the oldest operating mine in Bohemia and probably even in the whole Europe is a unique source of this natural treasure. The Svornost mine (in English: Concord) was opened in 1518 and on its twelfth level (in the depth of 500 meters under the ground) there are springs of radon water named after academician Břehounek and Marie Curie (the names of both scientists can be found in the names of Jáchymov spa hotels as well).

The walk through the mine can be compared to a walk through a picture gallery on some spots. Evaporating radon colored the surrounding walls into unbelievable thick colors (therefore, Jáchymov uranium was used for a production of glass and porcelain colors). Red is replaced by green, blue is substituted by white, brown is transformed into yellow...And try to mix the colors yourselves, famous painters!



### **Unique Natural Source in the Role of a Renowned Physician**

For people who have problems with the locomotive apparatus or who want to prevent such complications, the Jáchymov baths are the right choice. The radon bath ranks among the most efficient balneological methods! During the bath, soft alpha rays with a minimum amount of radon (0.5%) penetrate the body. Within half an hour, 75% of radon is released from the body. The amount of radiation which enters the human body during a three-week treatment can be compared with one X-ray of lungs. Radon is absolutely harmless. On the other hand, it stimulates the body regeneration and

significantly increases immunity.

Radon baths contribute to blood perfusion of bones and joints. They cure diseases of the spine and joints, work as anti-rheumatism medicine without any side effects and moderate pain for up to 8–10 months after the cure. Radon helps after injuries and operations. It is also beneficial for people with diabetes or gout. For numerous clients suffering from rheumatism and Bechterew disease, radon treatment means inexpressible relief.

The treatment can be taken during the three-week spa program in the Jáchymov Spa. You can also take single baths as an external patient. However, patients should take at least 11 baths to experience some benefits.

### **How Is the Radon Bath Carried out**

Radon water at the temperature of 35–37° C is pumped into the bath from down below. This unusual way which reminds you of the springs of wild water stops radon from leaking into the air. This would occur if water was poured in from a classical tap. Then, it suffices to lie down and allow small bubbles to jump along your body in peace.

Another form of radon treatment application is the so-called Jáchymov boxes (Jáchymovské krabičky). It is a special ionizing method called brachyradiumtherapy. The client receives a minimum anti-inflammatory and painkilling dose of gama ionization whose source is radium salt. The boxes are applied directly to aching joints.

It is apparent that the greatest Jáchymov storm – Curie – gave birth to a world unique discovery of radioactivity. Above all, she helped to make thousands of people feel and move better, younger and without pain every year.

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