

# Czech Republic: Horse Riding Holidays Growing in Popularity

As an old proverb says 'The most beautiful view of the world is from horseback'. Naturally, not all of us want to become professional jockeys, jump over obstacles, or go horse racing. However horse riding holidays are one of the most beautiful types of vacation bringing pleasure of riding as well as many unforgettable experiences and joy to anyone.



People from cities who decide for holidays in a saddle can enjoy not only the sport itself but also the surrounding picturesque wilderness. They often develop close relation to horses who for some of them become an important part of their lives and they keep coming back.

Thanks to the popularity of horse riding vacations in the Czech Republic the number of recreational horses is growing. Currently in the country a marked network of horse trails is being developed, which will enable the riders to smoothly go through various areas. It is evident that on the marked trails mutual respect is required as well as observance of several rules to secure safety of everybody. Soon it will be possible for horse riders to go through the whole Europe knowing there are enough accommodation facilities for themselves as well as their horses. Such network of facilities providing accommodation and food for the tourists as well as stables and feed for their four-leg friends is necessary for further development of agrotourism. Such stations might enable the riders to stay even for several days when they are interested in the local landscape and monuments.

In the Czech Republic it is possible to ride through the whole country thanks to three interconnected trails - Elbe Horse Trail, Central Bohemia Horse Trail and South Bohemia Horse Trail. The Elbe Trail

passes through the Bohemian Central Mountains, and then continues to Bohemian Switzerland where it is possible to join the German riding trails. The protected landscape area Bohemian Central Mountains is situated in the northern Bohemia, on both sides of the lower flow of the Czech part of the Elbe River. The taper shapes of hills that are typical for this region are the result of Tertiary volcanic activity. The Central Mountains are one of the richest areas in the country with respect to the number of species of flora and fauna. Over the centuries there has developed unique, harmoniously shaped landscape with typical relief; landscape of fruit orchards, interwoven by numerous tiny villages with picturesque traditional folk buildings and imposing historical monuments.



The romantic name of Bohemian Switzerland refers to the region of captivating table mountains, sandstone rock towns and deep river canyons between the cities of Decin and Krasna Lipa. On both sides of the border between the Czech Republic and Germany the visitors can enjoy the unique national parks called Bohemian and Saxon Switzerland respectively.

One of the stations on the Elbe Horse Trail that use the system of marked horse trails is a family-run farm called Trebusin-Zababec Farm. For three years the family guides week-long horse riding trips on the trails in the region. Since the organization of such tours is not easy - especially securing quality accommodation and meals for the riders as well as horses - there are not many companies offering similar services.

"The first two years we organized weekly tours on horseback only around our farm in Bohemian Central Mountains. This year we wandered also to the German border where we went for one-day trips on the German trails," said Dagmar Vostova, the farm manager. Although most of the tour's participants were foreign tourists from Netherlands, UK, Denmark and Belgium, all of them enjoyed unique views of north Bohemian landscape - colorful meadows, forests as well as timbered cottages.





“What they especially liked was our hilly landscape because most of their native country is flat. They were also fascinated by the flocks of deer, fallow deer and wild boars that they saw,” said Ms. Vostova. The farm plans to further develop and expand their services and offer tours up to Dresden in Germany where they currently look for potential partners. Horse

Horse riding holidays have become a growing niche market in this region that has so far been rather off the beaten path.

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