

**VYSOČINA** is the fifth largest region in the Czech Republic. Thanks to its geographical position across the border of two historical lands, fertile Moravia meets romantic Bohemian hills. The dark fields of Dyje basin neighbour upon Žďárské vrchy and Železné hory mountain ranges in one region. Geographers have calculated that the geographic center of the Czech Republic lies within Vysočina – a region that is nearly equally divided between Bohemia and Moravia. The center can be found close to the village of Čihošť near Ledec nad Sázavou. Compared to other regions, which are often dominated by one large city and a number of smaller settlements in the rest of their territory, Vysočina is an evenly populated area. Five cities of similar size are evenly distributed here, together forming natural centers for the scattered villages and municipalities up to 15,000 inhabitants, which often serve as administrative centers.



**Area:** 6,796 km<sup>2</sup>, nine percent of the overall area of the Czech Republic. **Number of municipalities:** 704. **Highest points:** Javořice (837 m above sea level), Devět skal (836 m above sea level). **Number of inhabitants:** 515,411 (as of 1 January 2009). **Density of population:** 75 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, the third lowest, compared to other regions. **Regional capital:** Jihlava (55,143 inhabitants, as of 1 January 2009)

**STRONG** The climate in Vysočina is pleasant, although the region is one of the coldest in the country. This is not only reflected in the composition of the local eco-systems, but also in folk traditions, demands in farming and in the way local people spend their free time.

MANY IMPORTANT CZECH ATHLETES of the past and present come from Vysočina: world champion in speed skating Martina Sáblíková from Žďár nad Sázavou; the brothers Jaroslav and Jiří Holík, multiple world champions in ice hockey, who excelled with their performance and inventive hockey skills on the ice in Havlíčkův Brod as well as at the Jihlava Dukla Stadium; and the world record breaker in short and medium track running Jarmila Kratochvílová from Golčův Jeníkov.

ENERGY FROM VYSOČINA flows through every household in the country, providing for a full fifth of the country's overall consumption. In spite of the different attitudes of the public to the use of nuclear energy, Dukovany Nuclear Power Station remains one of the most significant domestic sources of energy. Furthermore, it is one of the safest, compared to other nuclear power stations around the world.

EDUCATION IN VYSOČINA IS PROVIDED FOR BY UNIVERSITIES (College of Polytechnics Jihlava and West-Moravian University in Třebíč) and nine campuses of universities from other regions. The region itself is the founder of 52 secondary schools. A noteworthy fact is that there are 564 public libraries in Vysočina, which is twice the national per capita average.

VYSOČINA HOLDS PRIMACY among the regions in livestock keeping. One fifth of the total number of cattle is raised here which corresponds to the volume of



**CLEAN** Vysočina is the cleanest region in the Czech Republic. It maintains its primacy in air quality and strives for even better results with respect to this indicator. The label 'Vysočina – A Regional Product', which is awarded to organic foods and local specialties, has become popular. Most of the country's organic-quality beef and pork comes from Vysočina, as well as a large portion of organic honey, goat milk, and goat dairy products.

produced milk and meat in this region. People from all over the country know cheese from Želetava, special cream cheese treat "Pribináček" from Přibyslav, and traditional sausages and smoked meats from Kostelec. And finally, popular hard salami is called Vysočina. Another interesting fact is that the cellars used for cheese ripening in Želetava cheese factory are the largest in Central Europe.

EVERY THIRD CZECH POTATO IS GROWN IN VYSOČINA. Thus, Vysočina has rightly earned its reputation as the potato region. Potatoes do well here thanks to the favourable soil conditions – light soils with sufficient moisture. Havlíčkův Brod is the home of potato research and Potato Days are held there annually, accompanied with special seminars as well as culinary attractions for the public. A special festival that has no like in the country is devoted to the celebration of potatoes – the popular annual Potato Harvest in Třebíč.

PEOPLE IN VYSOČINA VALUE THEIR ENVIRONMENT. That is perhaps why buses powered by alternative environment-friendly gas engines are made in Třebíč and Jihlava boasts a well-developed trolleybus network. The Vysočina Region has made Internet and modern technologies available to an extensive number of households. Thanks to advanced electronic communication, people and institutions can limit their daily travel and errands, and thus spare the environment of intensive traffic.

**UNIQUE** Vysočina is the only region that can boast about three sites registered on the UNESCO List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. In its territory, we can find the highest point of the busiest Czech motorway, with the country's tallest motorway bridge, the geographic centre of the country, municipalities with the shortest and longest one-word names, a leaning tower, the largest tower clock, and the regional capital with the highest elevation. In hydrological terms, Vysočina is the so-called Roof of Europe. Over one hundred kilometres of the main European watershed cut through the region.

THE TELČ SQUARE AND CHATEAU are uniquely preserved examples of Renaissance urban architecture. The square enclosed with arcaded houses was inscribed the world heritage list in 1992. The Pilgrimage Church of St. John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora, in Žďár nad Sázavou, documents the extraordinary creative abilities of builder Jan Blažej Santini and his sense for symbolism, concentrated in his minimalist concept of architecture. This iconographically de-

signed site, which is considered to be the most significant work of Czech Gothicising Baroque, was inscribed in the UNESCO list in 1994 as the first solitary national structure. In 2003, the two previous sites were joined by Třebíč's Romanesque St. Procopius' Basilica and Jewish Quarter, which has more than one hundred houses, two synagogues, and a cemetery. Furthermore, the Jewish Quarter is the only Jewish site outside of Israel to be included on the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage.

ITS POSITION IN THE CENTRE OF THE COUNTRY, and therefore also in the centre of Europe, destined Vysočina to become an important transportation hub. The region is traversed by European roads and the D1 motorway, which connects Prague with Brno. A unique transport feature of Vysočina is the longest functional narrow-tracks railway in the country, from Obrataň, in the Pacov area, to Jindřichův Hradec and Nová Bystřice.

VYSOČINA IS THE SOURCE OF WATER for a large part of our country. Rivers and brooks have their source in the region and the main European watershed divide between the Black Sea and the North Sea cuts through it. The largest water reservoir in the Czech Republic, Švihov (Želivka), supplies water not only to the inhabitants of the region but also to households and companies in the city of Prague and other large cities in Central Bohemia. Water from the Vir Reservoir (built in 1957) supplies water to the northern and eastern parts of the region and also flows from taps in the largest Moravian city, Brno.

**INDUSTRIOUS** Large companies with famous names, family businesses with hundred-year-old traditions, as well as thousands of sole proprietors, reflect the industriousness of contemporary Vysočina. A number of ideas and inventions originating in Vysočina have enriched and made more pleasant the lives of people all over the world. Evidence of the skills of the local inhabitants can be found, for example, in Nové Město na Moravě, the home of the oldest ski producer in the country, with a tradition going back more than a century.

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SKILLED, EDUCATED, AND CREATIVE PEOPLE have always lived in Vysočina. Those who have made a mark on history include composers, architects, major economists, writers, physicians, biologists, mathematicians, linguists, technicians and builders, inventors, and experts in other fields. Many of them, as university professors, passed their knowledge on to students beyond Vysočina, having thus contributed to the development of various scientific disciplines. Others contributed to progress in medicine, enriched man-

kind with industrial inventions, or constructed buildings that still earn admiration and respect worldwide.

THANKS TO THE ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION AND ACCESSIBILITY of the region for transport, many production plants and companies have found their home here. They have contributed to Vysočina becoming one of the most dynamically developing regions. In addition to the machinery and automobile industry, thousands of people find work opportunities in traditional sectors, such as wood processing, textile production and, last but not least, the food industry and farming. The diverse range of sectors gives Vysočina stability. The Region, too, is a major employer, as it operates schools, hospitals, museums, galleries, and institutions for social care and other purposes, which provide important public services to citizens. These organisations, which have been set up by the Vysočina Region and receive contributions from its budget, employ over 11,000 people.

VYSOČINA SUPPORTS MODERN TECHNOLOGIES. Its strong suit is its intensive development of information technologies and extensive utilisation of the Internet. The Region has built its own optic network, RowaNet, which has allowed for fast and reliable data transmission in public administration, as well as for non-commercial Internet connections for the inhabitants and visitors of towns in Vysočina. An extraordinary data warehouse is being developed, where information from many sectors is kept. With its assistance, the Region can create precise analyses that are important for making decisions about further development. For its data warehouse, the Vysočina Region received the Smart Administration award from Business World magazine.







VYSOČINA STRETCHES ACROSS THE CENTRE of the Czech Republic, between the two most significant cities, Prague and Brno, and bridges Bohemia and Moravia. It is an ideal meeting point. In Vysočina, you are the closest to all of the twelve UNESCO heritage sites in the country. The country's geometric centre is (according to a 2008 measurement) in the cadastral district of the municipality of Měřín.

YOU CAN FEEL SAFE IN VYSOČINA. Long-term statistics show that it has the lowest crime rate of all regions. No extensive flooding or any other extraordinary natural disasters have occurred in Vysočina.

VYSOČINA IS AN INCREASINGLY SOUGHT-AFTER DESTINATION, not only for sight-seeing, but also for recreation and family tourism. It offers a number of themes and destinations that are ideal for the entire family, boasts virgin nature, and is attractive due to its accessibility. Clean forests offer rich opportunities for mushroom hunters.

## Did You Know That

Leaning tower can be found at St. James' Church in Telč (inclined 48 cm) • The largest lake in Vysočina is Velké Dářko (206 ha). • An extensive collection of pipes can be found in the Vysočina Museum in Třebíč. • A memorial linden tree grows in the chateau park in Kamenice nad Lipou; its age is estimated at 600 to 800 years (it was allegedly planted in 1248). • The oldest tree in the Czech Republic is the yew in Vilémovice in the Havlíčkův Brod area, which the conservative estimates of experts put at 850 years; some estimates say that the tree may be over a thousand years old. • A curiosity is a memorial to the most famous immigrant who never existed. It was built in Humpolec, on the basis of a famous line from the Czech film "Mareček, Pass the Pen": Hliník moved to Humpolec. • The smallest cemetery in the country is in Hluboká in the Náměšf area. Its interior area is 102 sq meters and has only seven graves. • The oldest bell in Vysočina (and the second oldest in the country) is in the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Havlíčkův Brod. The bell called Vilém was most likely cast in the first half of the 14th century. The bell is 1.47 m in diameter, 1.25 m high, and estimated to weigh 1,900 kg. • The tower clock on the town spire by St. Martin's Church in Třebíč is the largest in the Czech Republic and continental Europe. The four enamel faces have a diameter of 550 cm. • The Svihov Reservoir on the River Želivka is our largest water reservoir. With an area of 1,670 ha and depth of 55.7 m, it holds 298.3 million cubic meters of water. • The only windmill in Vysočina stands in Třebíč. It was built in 1825 and was used for grinding spruce bark for tan for the tanneries in Borovina. • The Vysočina motorway bridge near Velké Meziříčí is unique in terms of its dimensions, height above ground, as well as its construction. The load-bearing structure comprises of two steel beams with a total weight of 6,000 metric tonnes. The pillars are made of concrete. The bridge surface height is 76 meters, and the bridge span is 425 meters. • Eš, in the Pacov area, has the shortest name in the region, whereas Prostředkovice, in the Jihlava area, has the longest one-word name. • The only museum of the book in the country can be found in Žďár nad Sázavou. • The oldest Moravian lookout tower is Babylon, near Náměšf nad Oslavou (1831). • Kralice, in the Třebíč area, is the home to the unique memorial of Kralice Bible. • The first Czech opera was written by František Václav Míča. It is called "About the Origin of Jaroměřice" and was first staged in 1730 at the Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou chateau. • The tallest Czech monolith, Plečník's Obelisk at Prague Castle (15.41 m), was made of Mrákotín granite. • The first Czech political daily paper was Národní noviny, published from 5 April 1848 by a Vysočina native, Karel Havlíček Borovský. • Fára's House and Drechsler's Villa, from 1912–1913 in Pelhřimov, are unique cubist buildings of architect Pavel Janák. • The second most extensive underground cellar and passage system in the country is below the city of Jihlava. • In Pelhřimov, waters from the entire planet flow together in a project of the Museum of Records and Curiosities. Since the launch of the project in 2005, 656 water samples from 65 countries have flowed into Pelhřimov's River Bělá through a giant funnel.

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**Photographs:** Previous page – Romanesque St. Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč; meanders of the River Doubrava; baroque Chateau in Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou; Martina Šablíková, World and European Champion Speed-skating Champion at a photo exhibition opening in Žďár nad Sázavou; skilled hands of a woodcarver – crèche-maker; Roštejn Castle  
This page – Landscape around Bystřice nad Pernštejnem; a modern swimming facility in Havlíčkův Brod; Pilgrimage Church of St. John of Nepomuk at Zelené hora in Žďár nad Sázavou; The Town Square in Jihlava (The Municipal Hall and The St. Ignatius of Loyola Church)



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**Regional Authority of the Vysočina Region**  
Žižkova 57, 587 33 Jihlava, Czech Republic  
Phone: +420 564 602 111; fax: +420 564 602 420  
E-mail: [posta@kr-vysocina.cz](mailto:posta@kr-vysocina.cz); internet: [www.kr-vysocina.cz](http://www.kr-vysocina.cz)

**DIVERSE** Today, people not only live, get their education, and work in Vysočina, but they also pursue entertainment and sports and contribute to the richness of social life by their involvement in many civic associations. The local inhabitants, as well as numerous visitors, associate Vysočina with historical sights, music festivals, folk celebrations, exhibitions, and many natural beauties. There are hundreds of historical sights in the region, from famous castles and chateaus to unique rural buildings.

VYSOČINA'S NATURAL CONDITIONS offer diverse opportunities for outdoor activities. Winter sports enthusiasts, as well as fans of biking and water-sports, can find something for themselves here. To spend their leisure time, people can take advantage of the opportunities offered to them by the numerous sports and cultural facilities in towns. Old folk customs have survived in villages. February carnivals, Easter whipping, summer festivals, folk pilgrimage fairs, and Advent markets. Vysočina's pride is the skills of the local crèche-makers, whose work pleases the eye of many fans of traditional folk carving.

VYSOČINA IS ALIVE WITH MANY CULTURAL EVENTS, some of which have a reach far beyond the borders of the region and the country. For example, the Jihlava International Festival of Documentary Film, the Petr Dvorský Music Festival in Jaroměř, and Prázdnyiny v Telči are regularly attended by people from various corners of Europe.

NEARLY A HUNDRED MUSEUMS, galleries, memorial halls, and castles and chateaus, which are open to the public, present Vysočina from its ancient history to present day, in year-round and permanent exhibitions. There are twelve national cultural monuments in the region, and 25 urban and 8 rural heritage reserves and zones.

**TRADITIONAL** People in Vysočina live modern lives, but they have not lost touch with their roots. This is documented by Christian traditions that have survived, especially in rural areas; in many other places, there are visible traces of Jewish culture. Numerous historical buildings, as well as traditions, customs and architectural symbols continue to provide testimony to their time.

JIHLAVA, Třebíč, Velké Meziříčí, Brtnice, Golčův Jeníkov, Chotěboř, Havlíčkův Brod, Světlá nad Sázavou, Polná, Třešť. Those are locations in which colourful Jewish quarters and cemeteries have survived. Most former synagogues are presently used as cultural and social halls, museums, or galleries. A sad, but particularly dramatic and educative memory of Vysočina's Jewish past is the so-called Polná Hilsneriad, which is documented by the museum in the Polná synagogue.

CHURCHES ARE THE LANDMARKS OF NEARLY EVERY VILLAGE. Unlike in many other regions, they are not empty on Sundays, holidays, and often not

even on weekdays. People here actively practice their faith; according to statistics, 47 percent of the region's inhabitants are believers. For example, the great passion plays of the congregation in Žďár nad Sázavou, and many other events, such as pilgrimages and processions, have become a part of the tradition throughout the region. Perhaps that is why the saying "God Loves Vysočina" is often uttered by the inhabitants here.

**LIVELY** Vysočina is an example of an ingenious mixture of natural conditions, historical heritage, and the diligence of ancestors and today's inhabitants. People today are tied to Vysočina by their love for their homes, respect for the environment, and responsibility to future generations. These are people whose ideas, abilities, and industry have brought prosperity and generally positive growth to the region that bestrides the border of Bohemia and Moravia.

VYSOČINA IS A HEALTHY REGION, statistics say. According to them, people live longer here than in other parts of the country (an average age is 77 years). The health of Vysočina's inhabitants is taken care of by five regional hospitals, which the Region, as their founder, has brought to a high professional level and financial prosperity. Very good healthcare is also provided in other places (e.g., the Hospital of St. Zdislava), where healthcare is in private hands, including local hospitals. Vysočina was one of the first regions to sign up for the European project Healthy Town – Healthy Region, and it is doing very well in it.

VYSOČINA'S FORESTS, which are not affected by emissions, are the dream of every mushroom hunter. There are two protected landscape areas in the region – Žďárské vrchy and Železné hory – as well as nine nature parks and 170 small-scale protected areas. Botanically rich and diverse Vysočina is the home of many precious plants, such as drosea and plants from the orchid family. The Mohelno Serpentine Steppe lies near Třebíč – our largest prairie with typical flora and fauna. Its natural uniqueness is at least of Central-European importance.

VYSOČINA IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHOSE NAMES ARE KNOWN far beyond the borders of our country. Other important figures who made a mark in Bohemian or world history chose Vysočina as their home, or at least spent a part of their lives here. Of these, let us note only a few of the most famous names, such as architect Jan Blažej Santini Aichl, composer and violinist Jan Václav Antonín Stamic, composer and conductor Gustav Mahler, poet and writer Jan Zahradníček, poet and writer Jakub Deml, poet, translator, and graphic artist Bohuslav Reynek, writer Jaroslav Hašek, poet and journalist Karel Havlíček Borovský, author and publisher Josef Florian, writer Franz Kafka, writer of poetry and prose Antonín Sova, painter and illustrator Otakar Štáfl, composer Vítězslav Novák, writer and editor Ignát Herrmann, writer and folk art collector Františka Stránecká, poet and writer Otakar Březina, painter, graphic artist, and illustrator Jan Zrzavý, writers and dramatists Alois and Vilém Mrštík; the priest who wrote the first original Czech authored fairytale, Jan Karafiát; architect and designer Josef Hoffmann, technician and inventor Erich

Roučka, economist and political scientist Josef Alois Schumpeter, and mathematician, priest, and philosopher Bernard Bolzano.

**FRIENDLY** Good family and neighbour relations and social traditions have not disappeared from Vysočina even in these modern times. The new way of life has brought a rich selection of services to towns. In villages and countryside it manifests itself through harmonious care of the environment and development of ecologically friendly farming. With the support of the Vysočina Fund and the European Union, traditional regional products and produce are finding their place on the market.

VYSOČINA IS WORTH VISITING: 20 castles and chateaus that are open to the public, two monasteries, 37 educational nature trails, 2,700 kilometres of foot paths, 2,400 kilometres of biking trails, 30 winter downhill skiing areas, 200 kilometres of maintained cross-country ski tracks, five rope centres, 180 horse stables, and seven lookout towers. The rivers Sázava, Jihlava, Oslava, Rokytná, and Svratka, among others, offer good conditions for boating enthusiasts.

ORIGINAL CUISINE in which you can find Bohemian, Moravian and German influence mixed with rural traditions and improvisation – that is how one could characterise the food of many generations in Vysočina – food that is tasty and pays respect to local cooks. For years, people have masterfully integrated into their diets typical local produce, the gifts of the land, as well as the fruits of their daily toil. Beer lovers look for famous specialities from Vysočina: Dalešice Postřiziny beer; natural Bernard, from Humpolec; original Premonstratensian beer from the Želiv monastery, Kloster Bier; and many other famous local brands.

FAMILY COHESION remains a highly respected traditional value in Vysočina, as is documented by the divorce statistic, which is one of the lowest of all the regions. Extended families often keep in close contact and in the spirit of traditions, take advantage of holidays and feasts all year round, to visit each other and gather. Vysočina has also joined the extensive project of family passes, which allow families with children to take advantage of numerous discounts on purchases and visits to leisure-time facilities.

**OUR** Vysočina is an excellent place to live. People here live to a higher age in the cleanest environment, the unemployment has been below the national average on an extended basis, and wages are the fastest growing, compared to other regions. Vysočina is also the safest region. It is a place where one can live well, and do well working or engaging in business, and where you will be welcome on your travels for learning as well as recreation.