

The Blaník House of Nature



Velký Blaník and Malý Blaník

Welcome to the Blaník Protected Landscape Area, in the heart of the Central Bohemian Uplands, in a proud region with a subtle and balanced beauty. Welcome to a landscape with a mosaic of forests, meadows, fields, small fishponds and preserved meanders of the river Blanice, dominated by the mythical twin hills of Velký Blaník and Malý Blaník, where between streams of boulders, scree and rocks, old beech and spruce trees grow that witnessed the time of the Czech National Revival. Welcome to a landscape of defunct forts and strongholds, Romanesque monuments and villages that still bear the marks of long-gone Hussite wars, in a typical Czech landscape on the border between Central Bohemia and the Czech-Moravian Highlands.



Morning in a scree wood

The Blaník Protected Landscape Area lies some 60 km south of Prague and forms the central part of the national geopark called The Land of the Knights of Blaník. Forests, fields, meadows and smaller fishponds are interspersed with picturesque villages. The landscape is interwoven by a network of field paths, tree avenues and junctions with stone crucifixes. The local landmark is the forested twin hills of Malý Blaník and Velký Blaník, where original beech woods and mixed scree woods have been preserved in the top parts. They are protected as a nature reserve. The river Blanice is the natural centreline of the area. It flows through numerous meanders

from the south to the north and often inundates the surrounding areas, thanks to which the plant communities of alluvial meadows and willow shrublands have been preserved near the river. Rare plant species can also be found in the peat and waterlogged meadows and wetlands near fishponds. Blaník hill bears the legend of the sleeping knights who are ready to help their nation when it is endangered. It is one of the most well-known legends in Czech history and culture and still appears as a motif in creative, musical, literary and dramatic arts. Visitors come here not only to enjoy the natural beauty but also for culture and history.



The Knight of Blaník, your guide through the Blaník House of Nature

Legend has it that an army rests inside Velký Blaník, ready for the nation's worst times. It is headed by the patron saint of Bohemia, king Wenceslaus. When the time is most tense, the dry oak at Blaník will turn green with fresh leaves and the spring underneath it will become so powerful that the well will overflow and the water will start streaming down the hillside. Then the Jamb Rock in the mountain will open, the knights will wake from their deep slumber and headed by the Czech patron saint, they will come out to fight the enemies, defeat them, and peace will be re-established over the Bohemian lands.



Wetland meadows at the foot of Blaník



Parnassus marsh grass



Eurasian eagle-owl



Na pramenech



Common cottonsedge



Bykovický fishpond



Western marsh orchid



The Blaník House of Nature ('Dům přírody Blaníku') is a visitor centre which runs a permanent outdoor and indoor exhibition showing the natural, cultural and historical monuments of the Podblanicko region. The outdoor exhibition is dedicated to geology. School groups and other visitors are welcome to take part in our specialised programmes both in the House of Nature and outdoors, which can be ordered via the telephone number below. The souvenirs and refreshments we offer on the ground floor are from local producers. The cinema hall in the attic can be used as a conference room or exhibition room.

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The Blaník House of Nature is run by the association: ZO ČSOP Vlašim, Pláteníkova 264, 258 01 Vlašim, CZ
www.csopvlasim.cz

The Blaník Protected Landscape Area is administered and managed by the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, regional office Central Bohemia, The Blaník Protected Landscape Area Administration, Vlašimská 8, 257 06 Louňovice pod Blaníkem, E-mail: blanik@nature.cz, tel.: +420 317 852 654, +420 317 701 884
www.blanik.ochranaprirody.cz

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Did you know that ...

- With its 41 sq.km., Blaník is the smallest protected landscape area in the Czech Republic?
- There are only three species of a very rare mollusc called Unio in the Czech Republic, and all three can be found here in the river Blanice?
- An important Baroque composer, Jan Dismas Zelenka, was born in nearby Louňovice pod Blaníkem in 1679? He composed mostly religious music and wrote 21 masses.
- One of the cornerstones of Prague's National Theatre comes from Blaník?
- The beginnings of the legend of the knights of Blaník date back to the end of the 14th century?
- Gold used to be mined in Roudný near Louňovice? It was the biggest gold mine in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the beginning of the 20th century.
- Relics of huge stone ramparts can be found at Velký Blaník, hinting at the fortified stronghold dating back to 5th century B.C. that stood here?

Thank you for being considerate towards our natural heritage and for:

- camping and lighting fires only in designated places
- driving and parking your car only where permitted
- keeping to marked trails
- riding your bicycle on cycle paths and respecting nature and other visitors
- leaving animals and plants alone in their natural habitats
- not damaging nature and natural monuments
- taking your rubbish with you

Tips for Trips:
'With the Knight to
Blaník Hill' Nature Trail

The Blaník House of Nature is the starting point of an educational trail that runs via the top of Velký Blaník towards Louňovice pod Blaníkem. Its panels will introduce you to the nature and history of this mythical hill. The trail runs 4 km along the red-marked tourist path and features entertaining stops for parents and children. It is not suitable for bikes or prams.

Tips for Trips:
Roudný Gold Mine
Nature Trail

This trail presents the history of the once important gold mine. Approx. 4.5 km in length, it runs through the most important parts of this unique monument. The panels describe the history and operation of the gold mine from the Middle Ages to the 1950s, when the last research was done in this site. The Little Miner called Ruda will explain gold mining on the panels for children. The trail is not suitable for bikes or prams.

Tips for Trips:
Nature Trail in the
Chateau Park in Vlašim

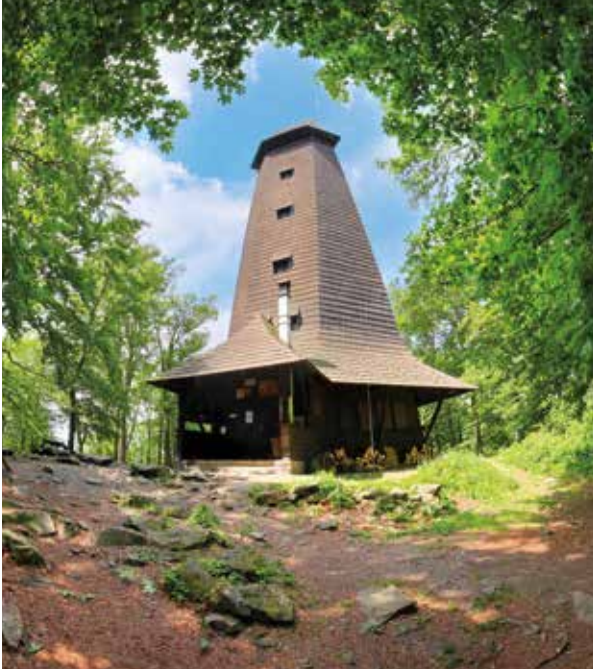
The educational trail in the chateau park in Vlašim is approx. 5 km long with side trails. At 18 stops, it will introduce you to the local cultural monuments and natural values. It connects all the Romanticist buildings in the park. Gaming features will show children the animals, plants and mushrooms they can see here. There are three side trails: the paths of the grasshopper, the otter and the hermit beetle, and three summerhouses that add to the Romanticist character of the park.

www.vlasimskypark.cz

Tips for Trips:
Water House

The Water House is a visitor centre for Želivka, a Special Area of Conservation, and is located at the foot of the Švihov dam, known also as Želivka. You will find a modern exhibition which will introduce you and your children in an attractive way to two aspects of water. It will present water as the environment for aquatic plants and animals and also as a necessary precondition for human life. You can control artificial water streams in the atrium with pumps, small water wheels, dams and water divides.

www.vodni-dum.cz



The top of Blaník



The Gold Mine

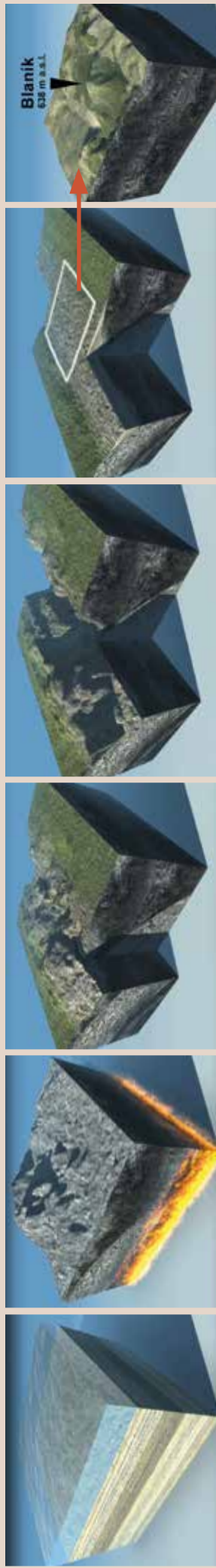


Vlašim chateau park



Water House

Blanická Furrow – a geological structure which runs for more than 200 km from Český Brod via the Podblanicko region to České Budějovice and on to Austria.



Animated sequences taken from a tutorial of the Czech Geological Survey on the Blanická Furrow by Martin Lišec

