

**AT THE SUMMIT OF THE ERZGEBIRGE (ORE MOUNTAINS), GERMANY  
KARLOVY VARY (KARLSBAD) AND MARIANSKE LAZNE (MARIENBAD), CZECH REPUBLIC  
17 - 19 APRIL 2007**

OTTALIL  
KOCHUKUNJU JOY, M.A.

Table of Contents

1.	ERZGEBIRG (THE ORE MOUNTAINS) .....	1
2.	EISENACH .....	2
3.	WEIMAR .....	2
4.	CHEMNITZ .....	3
4.1.	Health Resort Oberwiesenthal in the Ore Mountains .....	3
5.	KARLOVY VARY.....	3
5.1.	Karlsbad - the best known Czech spa .....	4
5.2.	Notable Places.....	4
5.3.	Active Relaxation in Karlsbad .....	5
6.	MARIENBAD .....	5
6.1.	The Spa Heritage Of Marienbad .....	6
6.2.	Mineral Bath.....	6
6.3.	Dry Carbon Dioxide Bath .....	6

**1. ERZGEBIRG (THE ORE MOUNTAINS)**

The Ore Mountains (Czech: Krušné hory) are a mountain range in Germany and the Czech Republic. The name is derived from the richness in mineral resources. The mountains form the border between both countries for 150 km, extending from the western border of Saxony to the Elbe River.



Fichtelgebirge in winter

The western portions of the Ore Mountains have the highest peaks. Klínovec (1244 m) on the Czech side and Fichtelberg (1214.6 m) on the German side are the highest mountains of this range. In the west the Ore Mountains adjoin the lower Bavarian Fichtelgebirge. In the east, the Elbe Sandstone Mountains on both banks of the Elbe River may be regarded as the easternmost extension of the Ore Mountains. East of the Elbe, the mountain chain continues as the Lusatian Mountains. The Ore Mountains slope gently away to the north, where the cities of Zwickau and Chemnitz are located in the foothills, but the southern incline is extremely steep.

The Ore Mountains were almost uninhabited during the middle Ages and covered with dense forests. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century the discovery of silver and tin deposits led to the settlement of the mountains. Today the mountains are a popular winter sports resort.

The Ore Mountains were almost uninhabited during the middle Ages and covered with dense forests. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century the discovery of silver and tin deposits led to the settlement of the mountains. Today the mountains are a popular winter sports resort.



Carriage pulled by four horses

The Mountains are famous for many Christmas traditions. As the silver and tin deposits declined, former miners had to look for new ways for their

livelihood. In addition to lace making and weaving, the residents went into wood carving. Nutcrackers, "smoking men", "pyramids" (carousels with figures of the Christmas story or from mining) and Schwibbogen (wooden arcs with candles in the windows, representing a mine entrance) are some of the Christmas gifts made in the Ore Mountains.



Winter in Erzgebirge

The ridge trail runs for 197 kilometres through the natural landscape of the Erzgebirge. From peak to peak, from lookout tower to lookout tower, this trail across the peaks of the Erzgebirge near the border with the Czech Republic offers a very special walking experience. With their varied landscape and great natural beauty, the Erzgebirge are an amazing world of discovery. It is a habitat for many rare animals and plants.

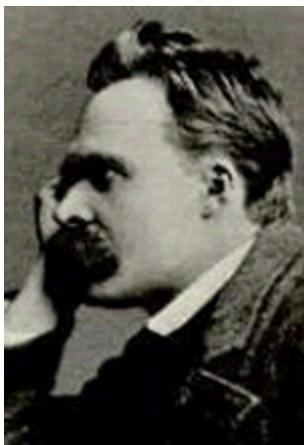
Down the centuries the area's natural riches and special climatic characteristics were important influences on the way it was used. 800 years of mining history have created a remarkable cultivated landscape with a distinctive profile. This is one of Germany's most beautiful mountain landscapes. There are miles of marked trails, even to the highest peaks, and visitors are rewarded with wonderful views of a unique mountain panorama.

The Erzgebirge is known as Christmas country. In June the Saxon-Bohemian Music Festival is jointly held in Teplice in the Czech Republic, in Dresden and in the Erzgebirge Mountains. The shortest route between Dresden and Prague of 150 km leads through these Mountains. Poland is also easily reached from Dresden. The border town of Görlitz with its well-preserved Renaissance centre and its houses built during the period of rapid industrialisation in Germany in the last century is only 100 km from Dresden. It is connected with Dresden's sister city Wrocław (Breslau) by rail. The motorway between Dresden and Görlitz was completed early in 1999. En route to Görlitz one passes Bautzen, the centre of Upper Lusatia, a historic town with a landscape featuring numerous towers.

We reached our destination Health Resort Oberwiesenthal around 2 p.m. after being in the bus for over 12 hours, passing through:

## 2. EISENACH

The birthplace of Johann Sebastian Bach, Martin Luther stayed here at the Wartburg Castle for ten months in 1521 and translated the New Testament from Greek to German, while disguised as "Junker Jörg" to escape trial by Emperor Charles V after the Diet of Worms. Richard Wagner wrote here the famous opera *Tannhauser*.

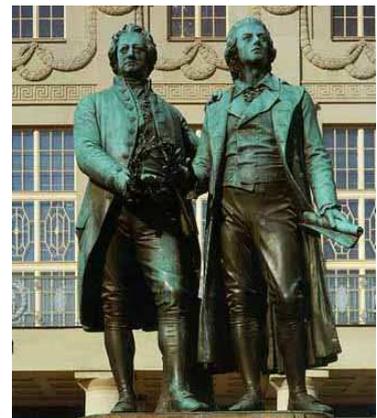


Nietzsche

## 3. WEIMAR

Famous as the city of "Weimar Republic" (1919–1933), the democratic government based on the first-ever German constitution, which was written in Weimar after the Social Democrats declared a Republic in a bloodless revolution on November 9, 1918 during the Great War. Weimar was famous as the birthplace of Humanism. Statue of the founders of German Humanism, Goethe and Schiller - the two German literary giants - stands in front of the National Theatre.

Another famous resident of Weimar was *Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche*, whose philosophy was closely related to the Nazi ideology. Nietzsche, who wrote "*God is dead*," was also the originator of the "*superman*" theory which was the basis for the Nazi idea of the *Herrenvolk* (*Master Race*).



Statue of the literary geniuses  
Goethe and Schiller in Weimar

## 4. CHEMNITZ

The City in Saxony on the Chemnitz River, which grew as a trade center, was devastated in the Thirty Years War (1618–48), and recovered its prosperity after the introduction in late 17<sup>th</sup> century of cotton milling. The city was renamed Karl-Marx-Stadt in 1953 but returned to its original name shortly after German reunification in 1990.

### 4.1. Health Resort Oberwiesenthal in the Ore Mountains

Health Resort Oberwiesenthal in the Ore Mountains in Saxony (south eastern part of Germany) at a height of 914 m is the top city of Germany and home of the successful sky jumper Jens Weißflog. This resort is well known in Germany as well as beyond the borders.

In the summer months you can relish freshness at pleasant temperatures and wonderful view over the mountains. Our hotel is found in a quiet corner, right in the center of Oberwiesenthal



Hotel am Fichtelberg – we stayed here

From Ore Mountains we visited Karlovy Vary and Marienbad – two most famous Spa Resorts in the Czech Republic: (It was an experience for me that there was no border police to control at the entrance point of the Czech Republic, but the police at the exit point in Germany controlled all the passengers in the bus. A German gentleman

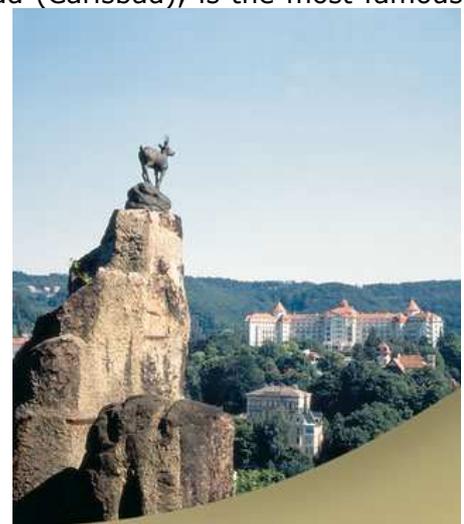
who forgot his identity card in the room had to get down and walk 2 km back to the hotel; we felt sorry for him!)

## 5. KARLOVY VARY

Karlovy Vary, better known by its German name, Karlsbad (Carlsbad), is the most famous Bohemian spa. It was named for the Bohemian King and German and Holy Roman emperor Charles (Karl) IV who supposedly found the springs in 1358 during a hunting expedition. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, royalty came here from all over Europe for treatment. Among the rich and famous who visited Karlsbad are Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, Chopin, and even Karl Marx.

The city is located about a 2 hours scenic drive west of Prague. On arrival in Karlovy Vary we took a walk along the "Park Colonnade" and the "Teplá" River. There are over 60 mineral springs ranging from 10° C to 73.6° C (50° F – 165° F). 13 of these springs are located along our route and could be sampled. We had spectacular views of the city and the mountain as well as the beautiful Russian Orthodox Church of Peter and Paul, the baroque church of St. Maria Magdalene and more.

Discovering the culture, economic situation and standards of living and other aspects of the Czech Republic, a country in the very heart of



Statue of the Chamois

Europe, is fascinating! The country's natural wonders and its geopolitical strategic importance are amazing, which brings to the forefront as to how even a small European state can significantly contribute to the world's cultural heritage.

Czech culture has firm roots in a rich and plentiful history. Tourists and visitors from all over the world can wonder the awesome sights at some of the most beautiful and oldest pieces of architecture, literature and fine arts.

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in the middle of Europe. Rather than as a country in the middle of Europe, we should speak of the Czech Republic as a country in the heart of Europe – after all, the heart is not to be found precisely in the center of the human body either.

The Czech countryside offers a pleasant combination of mountains, water, meadows and forests. The seasonal changes of weather create a unique environment for various leisure activities, relaxation, sports and agricultural activities, without placing a burden on the environment.

### 5.1. Karlsbad - the best known Czech spa

The best known and the largest spa in the Czech Republic were originated in around 1350.



Zámecké Lázně (Castle Spa)

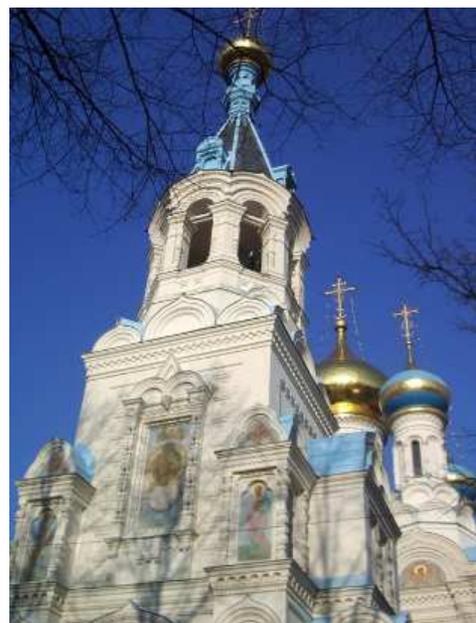
The Roman Emperor and the Czech King Charles IV raised its status in 1370. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century determined the final architectural outlook of Carlsbad. The renowned sights are represented by: The Church of St. Andrew, the Orthodox Church of St. Peter and Paul, the Municipal Theatre, the Mill Colonnade (Mlýnská kolonáda) and the Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene.

The fame of Karlovy Vary has spread into the whole world thanks to its mineral springs. There are 12 healing springs rising in the spa. Their basic compositions are similar but they differ in temperature and

the amount of carbon dioxide and that is why their effects are different as well. The colder springs usually have a slightly purgative effect while the warmer ones make the production of bile and stomach juices slower. The strongest is the spring Vřídlo, rising from the depth of 2000-3000 metres. The temperature reaches 73° C. The temperature of the other springs is around 40° C. The springs cure mainly metabolic disorders; they are also used for inhalations and baths.

### 5.2. Notable Places

The tradition of Czech spas is an inseparable part of the European cultural heritage. Due to the high quality of their curative resources, they have won fame and recognition in Europe and found their place in the history of medicine and balneology. However, Czech spas do not only mean health cures, but also recreation, rest, and a refuge from everyday stress. All of this is combined with a pleasant environment, rich cultural life, sports and entertainment. In addition, you can combine your stay with a trip to any of the romantic chateau parks, medieval castles, churches or monasteries in the surroundings.

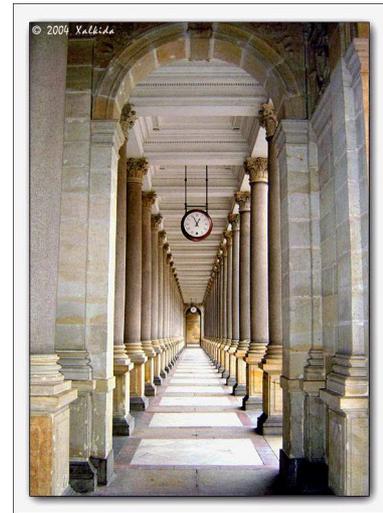


The Russian Orthodox Church of St. Peter and Paul

### 5.3. Active Relaxation in Karlsbad

The oldest 18-hole golf course in the country, golf hall with golf simulator, tennis courts, outdoor and roofed swimming pools, billiard, horse-riding, shooting-range, skateboard, karate, squash, sightseeing flights over the city. The golf course is located about 5 km from the downtown in a very hilly countryside. Difficult terrain challenges technical and physical dispositions of the players. The golf course belongs to the oldest and most beautiful golf localities in the Czech Republic. The holes are surrounded by greenwoods and offer intimate playing environment.

The foundation and development of Carlsbad has always been inseparably connected with the soothing curative effect of its warm mineral springs. They marked the history, architecture, economy and the whole spirit of the city. The springs have fascinated people and have stimulated them since the oldest times. A story of the fantasy world is the popular story according to which Carlsbad springs were discovered by Charles IV, the Czech king and Roman Emperor, at deer hunting in the middle of the 14th century. The foundation of the spa city at the confluence of the Ohře and Teplá Rivers in the reign of Charles IV is sure not to be such an accidental and romantic act as said in the old story, but almost a regular development result for a long-known place with a curative tradition.



Hot Spring Colonnade  
(Karlovy Vary)

## 6. MARIENBAD

The Bohemian spa town Mariánské Lázně is one of the most famous spa destinations in Central Europe. First noted in 1528, the town's mineral waters gained reputation at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. Located among forested hills and surrounded with romantic and elegant pastel spa hotels and houses, the historical town, widely known by its German name, Marienbad, has been a host to such prominent visitors as Goethe, Mark Twain, Wagner, Chopin, Strauss, Freud and Kafka. England's King Edward VII found the spa resort so enchanting that he visited spa for nine years and even commissioned the building of the country's first golf club. Exceptional medical and spa care services such as 24-hour medical emergency and nurse on call, distinguishes Marienbad Spa Hotels.



Sorudel Spring (Karlovy Vary)

They offer Medical Spas that integrate expertise of excellent health care with world class hospitality. They create the best combination of unique healing spa treatments with the traditional and alternative medicine. Spas with curative programs provide services supervised by doctors and well trained medical personnel.

Situated next to the German border, in what was once Bohemia, is the beautiful spa resort of Marienbad, perched up on a high wooded valley. This famous resort pays homage to spa culture through its glorious Edwardian architecture, spa buildings and colonnades, making it a 'must see' on a list of places to see in a lifetime.

On seeing the panorama of elaborately decorated buildings, in clear, crisp highland air, it is clear why royalty were attracted to this spa resort for generations.

Because of its ideal location, Marienbad is also an excellent base from which to see the sights of the country. The capital, Prague, is only 160 km away and the famous spa town, Karlovy Vary, 60 km.

### 6.1. The Spa Heritage Of Marienbad

The pseudo-Baroque cast-iron Colonnade (1889) is the main promenade and an important architectural monument

More than one hundred medicinal springs rise up in the town's vicinity. A drinking treatment alone may often treat a wide range of disorders. The amount of water prescribed varies upon the health condition of the visitor but it is generally between 1.5 - 2 litres per day. The mineral spring water is also used for inhalations and mineral baths which are effective in lowering blood pressure, improving heart and kidney activity and in promoting blood circulation.

Another natural resource used is the medicinal gas, which also promotes blood circulation, accelerates healing and produces positive effects on kidney activity.

Marienbad was founded at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was at the end of this century, a 'golden age', that witnessed an unprecedented boom of the spa town. Prominent visitors included J. W. Goethe, M. Twain, N.V Gogol, J. Strauss, F. Chopin, R. Wagner, T. A. Edison and many other famous artists and celebrities from around the world. King Edward VII of England used to rank among the most regular guests, he visited the town nine times in total and in 1904 he met with the Austrian Emperor, Franz Joseph I, here. Guests are today even able to experience a treatment in his personal bath cabin, with its unique atmosphere and elaborate decoration.



The Colonnade (1889)

### 6.2. Mineral Bath

The bath is taken in mineral water with a high content of carbon dioxide, mineral salts and humic acids at a temperature of 28-34 degree Celsius. Carbon dioxide is absorbed into the skin, which increases the rate of blood circulation having a positive effect on the heart and kidneys. What's more the carbon dioxide baths have an anti-stress effect if taken repeatedly. Various herbal extracts or salts can be added to the mineral baths. The treatment lasts approximately 20 minutes and is followed by a relaxing 20-minute rest in a dry wrap.

### 6.3. Dry Carbon Dioxide Bath

This natural 'Maria's Gas', which seeps out in Marienbad, is used for the treatment. This natural gas is of volcanic origin and contains 99.7% carbon dioxide. The gas is pumped into a plastic bag, which is put around the body. Because the gas can be absorbed through clothes it does not require undressing. The treatment that lasts for 20 minutes improves the blood circulation, has an anti-inflammatory effect, accelerates the healing of wounds and positively affects the function of the kidneys. This gas treatment is also extremely popular since it is known to stimulate production of testosterone and oestradiol. This is why it is successfully used for improvement of the sexual functions of both men and women and for the relief of menopausal symptoms.



Singaina Fountain