

River Otava is a tributary on the left hand side of the Vltava. It comes to life at the meeting point of the rivers Vydra and Křemelná near Čeňkova pila. The river flows into the Vltava right below the castle of Zvíkov. The length of the river is 113 km and the last 19 km of the river forms a part of the Orlík Water Reservoir.



The Name Otava comes from the Celtic word Atawa which means a rich river. However, it was not gold nuggets that were found in the river, but only tiny golden flakes. Mostly you cannot even see them. An experiment was carried out which showed that to gain 1 gram of gold from the river, one had to pan 15,000 of these golden flakes. However, gold panning was popular on the river, and the river was known as the 'gold bearing river'. The Otava was also used for floating timber and rafting. Pearl oysters were also fished there.

Gold panning was already practised in the Bronze Age by the Celts. It is estimated that the Celts acquired around 17 tons of gold from the Czech gold deposits, which were used mostly for minting coins. Czech gold made its way abroad, for example to the present day Germany, Serbia, Switzerland and central Italy. Gold panning was continued by the Slavs, and its heyday came in

the Middle Ages during the 12th – 14th centuries. In 1345 John of Luxembourg confirmed the right to pan gold in Sušice.

All **gold panning methods** are based on the principle of letting the heavy gold settle on the bottom of your pan and washing the lighter sand out with water. Special gold panning sluices were also constructed. Water, carrying the gold bearing gravel and sand, was brought to the sluice via a simple water race. Heavy gold was caught in sheep's skin that was attached to the bottom of the sluice. The skin was then thoroughly washed out in a tub and the golden flakes came to the surface.

The heaps of sand and gravel, that had been panned, can still be found between Dlouhá Ves and Sušice. The drier habitat of these mounds, and the small water pools in the ditches between the mounds rich in minerals, provide a home to very specific vegetation. Some extremely rare water and marsh plants can be found in these pools. The wide spectrum of flora is reflected in the equally wide spectrum of fauna.

The Otava is a sought after destination for people enjoying canoeing down the river. The most attractive and most difficult is the upper section, starting at Čeňkova pila, which is really suitable only for experienced canoeists with good equipment. The river is navigable in this part



Length of the route:
3 km (slow walk about 1 hour)

Level of difficulty: easy

Marked: GREEN

Route description:
Svobody Square – Kostelní St – Fuferna River Spa – Luh Woodland Park

Elevation difference: 7 m



only if there is enough water. There are also certain restrictions, as the river flows through a nature park. From Radešov the river is navigable also for open boats but in summer there is often not enough water. The character of the river changes in Sušice, when the river leaves the Šumava mountains, calms down and stops being a mountainous creek. From Sušice the river is more or less always navigable, it is calm with only some very minor rapids. The river is even calmer by Horaždovice; near Katovice the Otava turns into a typical lowland river and past Písek it soon flows into the Orlík Water Reservoir.

Luh Woodland Park

This unique alluvial forest, covering over 25 hectares, can be found in the near vicinity of the historical centre of Sušice. You can enter the woodland park via **Fuferna**, the sports and activity complex, where you will find not only a **rope walk for children and adults** in the treetops, but also mountain scooters, and various other adrenalin-filled activities. There is also a new and modern playground for children, a petanque green, tennis courts, **an athletic stadium with a tartan circle**, **a football pitch with artificial grass**, volleyball courts, a winter stadium with an artificial **climbing wall** and an artificial surface for the summer use of the stadium (in-line sports).

A 4.5 km long stretch of the **Otava cycling path Sušice** starts here, taking you up the river to Dlouhá Ves. The asphalt surface with no cars is a haven for cyclists and in-line skaters. In summer you can also have a dip in the water – the Fuferna River Spa provides you with an ideal opportunity to have a dip in the clean mountainous water of the Otava.

Once you have refreshed your bodies, refresh your soul and visit **the island of Santos** where there are various cultural events organised for people of all ages. The biggest attractions are the Rally of Witches, the May Student Festivities, the Šumava Rocks Festival, the 'Dramasteria' theatre workshop, theatrical events and many others. The beer garden on the island is open from May to September.



When here, be careful and do not forget to look around you, otherwise you might miss the curious eyes of Little Flame the Elf.



PODPŮROENO Z EVROPSKÉHO FONDU
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ONCE UPON A TIME IN SUŠICE....



LITTLE FLAME THE ELF

Nobody really knows where Little Flame the Elf came from but what we do know is that this little elf, who could not sit still, caused lots of trouble in Sušice. He lived by himself, feeling lonesome on the banks of the River Otava. Once in a while he missed people so much that he decided to go to town. All he wanted was a kind word, but they all rushed out to throw a bucket of water over him. He had to jump from one roof to another to save himself; he was crying with fear and little sparks of fire blazed from his eyes.

It was the 20th of June 1707 and Little Flame the Elf decided to go down to the town. The first place where he put his fiery little head was the house of burgher Václav Veisenregner. But nobody was at home. Little Flame headed for the square and within half an hour he visited the Church of St Wenceslas, the Church of the Virgin Mary, the Deanery, the Town Hall, the Municipal House and the Malt House, the Municipal Brewery, the mill and also the hospital. He managed to poke his head into 128 houses, 10 courtyards and 44 cottages but there was nobody who wanted to have a word with him about what a lonely life he led down there by the river, and nobody seemed really interested in his story about the neighbour and his trout and all the trouble they were causing him.

This was the worst fire the town had ever witnessed. All in all 31 people died, either burnt or suffocated. A wise old blacksmith, who was not frightened of fire, decided to find Little Flame the Elf and pay him a visit. He wanted to persuade him to stop causing damage to people. He found the elf on the bank of the river. The elf was sitting on a stone, crying. Sparks were streaming from his eyes. The blacksmith sat down next to him and started to chat to him. To his surprise, the blacksmith found out that Little Flame was not a bad elf, only a very unhappy one, and so the blacksmith hatched a plan to help both the town and the elf.

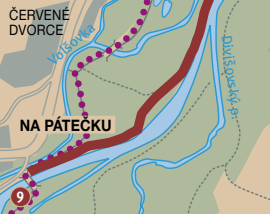
He went to the Town Council and told them everything about his visit to the elf. He suggested that they should hang a bell in one of the corners of the Town Hall and invite Little Flame to live there. Passers-by should wave at him and ask him how he was doing. The elf would certainly be happy in his new home, being surrounded by people, and he would have no need to cry and spread sparks. And if he did decide to leave and visit one of his neighbours, they would all know about it because the bell would start to toll, letting everybody know that Little Flame had left his home.

The Town Counsellors did as advised and thanks to the good hearted blacksmith there were no more fires, or none as bad as the one in 1707. Who knows maybe Little Flame is still living in his bell, smiling at us even now.

AN ENJOYABLE MEANDER ALONG THE OTAVA



- 1 rope park for adults and children
- 2 playgrounds
- 3 winter stadium and climbing wall
- 4 tennis courts
- 5 athletic stadium
- 6 football grounds
- 7 volleyball courts
- 8 swimming
- 9 rest places with playgrounds for children



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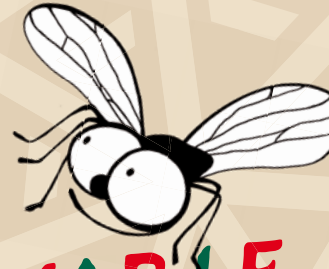
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AN ENJOYABLE MEANDER ALONG THE OTAVA

BEAUTIFUL RAMBLES AROUND SUŠICE



sušice
BRÁNA ŠUMAVY