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INTRODUCTION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the State Castle and Chateau Český Krumlov. This is one of the largest and most important historical monuments in the Czech Republic. It is the second largest castle complex in Czechia after Prague Castle and has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1992.

This tour of the interiors takes approximately 55 minutes. Please do not touch the exhibits on display. Please move around carefully, especially on the stairs, which may be slippery. Photography is permitted but without flash. Thank you for respecting these instructions.



I. nádvoří :

1. Cervená brána
2. Nová lékárna
3. Sloupová síň
4. Staré purkrabství
5. Medvědí příkop
6. Solnice
7. Ledárna

8. Kovárna
9. Sladovna, sýpka
10. Pivovar
11. Kočárovny
12. Nemocnice
13. Dům puškaře

II. nádvoří :

14. Zámecká věž a Hrádek
15. Mincovna
16. Nové purkrabství
17. Máselnice

III. - IV. nádvoří :

Horní hrad

V. nádvoří :

18. Plášťový most
19. Zámecké divadlo
20. Renesanční dům
21. Vrátnice
22. Prachárna

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF ČESKÝ KRUMLOV CASTLE

The first mention of the castle dates back to the 13th century. The House of the “Lords of Krumlov”, who originated from the early Vítkovec (Witiko) family, established their residence here. This branch died out in 1302, and the castle was inherited by the Rožmberk (Rosenberg) family, who owned it for three hundred years.

The Rožmberk family rebuilt the original Gothic castle into a magnificent Renaissance residence, and they strongly supported culture and art at the castle and in the town below. In 1602, the last Rožmberk, Petr Vok, sold the castle and estates to the Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II.

In 1622, Emperor Ferdinand II donated the estate to the Eggenberg family, who owned it for three generations. After they died out in 1719, the castle was inherited by their marital relatives, the Schwarzenbergs, who were the last noble owners of the estate. Since 1947, the castle has been owned by the state.

CASTLE CHAPEL OF ST. GEORGE

The first mention of this chapel dates back to 1334. In the 16th century, it was rebuilt in the Renaissance style, and its current Rococo appearance dates to the 18th century. The chapel was decorated by the Viennese stucco artist Matthias André. The walls are still covered with the original artificial marble.

There are three altars here:

- the main altar with a painting of the Virgin Mary,
- to the right of the main altar is an altar with a painting of St. John of Nepomuk,
- to the left of the main altar is an altar with a painting of St. Anthony of Padua.

The chapel is dedicated to St. George, whose statue is located above the main altar.

In the upper part of the chapel, to the left of the main altar, there is a functioning organ from 1750, made by Fridrich Ferdinand Semrád.



Opposite the main altar and above the seats are unusually placed balconies called “oratories”. This is the heated area of the chapel where the nobility sat during religious services. The servants sat on the wooden benches in the main area of the chapel, where you are now.

RENAISSANCE HALL

The Renaissance Hall is decorated with paintings from the Renaissance period (16th century). It was originally part of a residential complex and served as a passageway to other rooms which you will visit during the tour. On the wall opposite the entrance door hangs a large painting entitled “The Division of the Roses” from 1848 by Johann See. It depicts the legend of how the Vítkovec family’s property was divided, with each of the sons receiving a coat of arms with a rose. The Rožmberks received a coat of arms with a red five-petal rose on a silver background.

The painting also depicts the appearance of Krumlov Castle during the Gothic period.

The bear skins in this hall, as well as in other rooms, are from bears that once lived in the castle moat. The symbols of the Rožmberk family are the bears and the red rose in their coat of arms. The bears are a reminder of the legend of an alleged kinship between the Rožmberks and the Orsinis, an important Italian family. The word “ursa” means “she-bear”, signifying this relationship.

Two large portraits depict representatives of the Rožmberk family. The first is Oldřich of Rožmberk, father of Perchta, the so-called “White Lady.” The second depicts the last Rožmberk, Petr Vok.



The following four rooms are furnished in Renaissance style.

1st AND 2nd RENAISSANCE ROOMS

Originally, this room and the next room were one large room belonging to Vilém of Rožmberk (William of Rosenberg). It originally served as both a reception room and a living room. It was later divided into two smaller rooms.

Today, the first room is furnished as the bedroom of Polyxena of Pernštejn, the fourth wife of Vilém of Rožmberk, whom she married in 1587.

The portraits next to the entrance door depict Countess Anna Maria of Sulz. She is shown as a child in a 17th-century interior background and as an adult woman. She is wearing a lace-trimmed dress that reflects the fashion of the time.

Behind the bed, you can see a 19th-century copy of the Infant Jesus of Prague. The original is kept in Prague, in the Church of Our Lady Victorious.

The tapestry hanging behind the bed was woven in a Flemish (Belgium) workshop in the 17th century. Similar tapestries are hanging in the next room. They served as decoration as well as thermal insulation for the walls.



The next room is furnished as a banquet room. The tables are set with period pewter tableware used at banquets and large green welcome chalices.

The large portrait between the windows depicts Vilém of Rožmberk, one of the most important owners of the castle. Next to his portrait is a copy of the dress of his fourth wife, Polyxena of Pernštejn.



3rd AND 4th RENAISSANCE ROOMS

On the right, just past the doorway, is a small adjoining room for a page servant. The murals were created by Dutch painter Gabriel de Blonde and were inspired by stories from the Old Testament. Between the windows is a scene of Lot with his daughters, and Sodom and Gomorrah burning in the background. The opposite wall shows the story of Joseph being sold into Egypt.



The table bears a replica of a Renaissance chessboard and a set of golden tarot cards, reminiscent of the favorite games of the aristocracy.

Three cabinets are decorated with intarsia (inlay) – a technique of assembling and gluing different types of colored wood. They were made in Germany at the end of the 16th century and later restored.

In the next room hangs a portrait of a lady in a white dress – this is Perchta of Rožmberk, known as the “White Lady.” She was allegedly unhappy in her marriage, and her husband begged her forgiveness from his deathbed. Perchta refused him, so he cursed her. After her death, legend holds that she has appeared as a ghost on all the Rožmberk estates.



CABINET OF SCIENCE AND CURIOSITIES

(located in the connecting corridor by the staircase)

This room recreates the atmosphere of a personal study or library combined with a collection cabinet. It illustrates the Schwarzenbergs' interest in practical scientific disciplines in the 18th and 19th centuries such as botany, horticulture, geography, technical construction, astronomy, anatomy, chemistry, etc.

CORRIDOR OF COATS OF ARMS

This next large corridor holds another bearskin. The ceiling is adorned with painted coats of arms of the Rožmberk family (red rose on a silver background). The other coats of arms belong to Vilém of Rožmberk and his relatives.



The section below the stairwell holds coats of arms of the subsequent owners of the castle: the Eggenbergs and Schwarzenbergs. The coat of arms of the Schwarzenberg family bears the head of a Turk being pecked by a raven. The Turk's head with a raven is a symbol of victory in the battle near the town of Raab (Győr in present-day Hungary). The raven symbol (German *Rabe*) is related to the name of the town. Adolf of Schwarzenberg conquered the Turkish-held fortress in 1598.



We'll now leave the Renaissance era and ascend the stairs up to the Baroque and Rococo periods.

ANTECAMERA – FRONT CHAMBER

The antechamber is the first room of the extensive set of Baroque suites from the early 18th century; this is where guests waited for an audience and were taken into the reception rooms.



Two large portraits depict the first owners of the castle from the Schwarzenberg family: Adam Franz of Schwarzenberg and his wife Eleonore Amalia. Adam Franz died at the age of 52 during a deer hunt, when he was accidentally shot by Emperor Charles VI.

Other large paintings depict various Eggenberg estates in present-day Italy and Austria. The painting above the fireplace shows Red Court, or “Červený Dvůr”, located near Český Krumlov. This was the Schwarzenberg family’s summer residence.

In the corner of the room stands a large tiled stove; this heated the room as well as food before being served. The food preparation room is opposite the stove. This room also served as a storage space for the most valuable textiles and tableware used for dining. Today, this chamber features tableware used in the 18th and 19th centuries.



EGGENBERG HALL

This hall commemorates the period when the castle was owned by the Eggenbergs. The Eggenbergs were very wealthy and politically influential and were highly respected in the Austrian lands.

They received the Český Krumlov estate as a gift from the Habsburgs. The Eggenbergs financially supported the Habsburgs during the Thirty Years' War and during the Battle of White Mountain. They owned the Český Krumlov estate for three generations. The portraits on the walls introduce us to the individual members of the Eggenberg family and give us a glimpse into the fashion of the time.

The centerpiece of the room is the “Golden Carriage”, made in 1638. The carriage was commissioned by Johann Anton of Eggenberg (second portrait on the left, the man with the red curtain in the background). The carriage was made for a single diplomatic mission in Rome: to announce to the Pope who would be the next emperor. It carried gifts for the Pope and traveled from the city of Rome to the Vatican and back. It was drawn by six black horses, while runners ran alongside it. Their suits have been preserved and can be seen in the alcove to the left of the windows.



BAROQUE DINING ROOM

This dining room is furnished in the style of the first half of the 18th century. The centerpiece of the room is a dropleaf dining table that could seat up to 30 people.



The tableware on the table is pewter, which was slowly replaced by porcelain in the mid-18th century. Porcelain was very expensive and rare in Europe, and only those in high political and social positions could afford it. During the Baroque period, cutlery was used the same as today (knife, fork, and spoon) also became widespread for the first time.

An interesting piece of furniture is the small table by the opposite door. The table is inlaid with ebony, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and turtle shell. It is probably a Dutch work from the 17th century. The parquet floor below your feet is also original. There are three chandeliers, all bearing Bohemian crystal), hanging in the dining room and next two rooms.

BALDACHIN SALON

This parlor is named after the Rococo sofa with its canopy (baldachin). The salon was used for informal visits, social conversation, and games. The Rococo style loved items imported from the Orient. Oriental motifs can be seen on the black inlaid jewelry boxes, upon which are placed Chinese sculptures made of the softest mineral, soapstone. The porcelain table set is reminiscent of popular gatherings where “fashionable” and exotic drinks were served, such as coffee and chocolate. Between the windows hang two Venetian cut mirrors in gilded frames.



BEDROOM OF PRINCESS ELEONORE AMALIA OF SCHWARZENBERG WITH ORIENTAL SALON AND CHAPEL

This bedroom was originally furnished for the visit of Emperor Charles VI. It features a baldachin bed as well as a sofa, chairs, tables, and a writing desk. The desk is decorated with floral inlay – a composition of patterns and shapes made from rare woods of various colors and textures. The two portraits in the room depict Eleonore Amalia's son, Josef Adam, above the desk, while the second portrait above the fireplace is of Eleonora Amalia's husband, Adam Franz of Schwarzenberg.



The bedroom has a small oriental lounge in the corner. Only very private visitors were received in the lounge. The lounge is decorated with illusionist wall painting resembling faience tiles (faience: fine ceramics resembling porcelain). The chandelier in this lounge was made in the oldest European porcelain factory in Meissen in the mid-18th century. The second small adjoining room is a private chapel named the “Chapel of the Ill.” The chapel served as a place for the princess to quietly meditate during her prayers. It features the oldest preserved wallpaper in the castle, dating back to the first third of the 18th century.

DRESSING ROOM AND “FRAUCIMOR” ROOMS

The furnishings in these rooms are noticeably more modest than those of the previous areas. These rooms held all the essentials for storing clothes, applying makeup, and combing hair. The maid’s bed is hidden behind the screen.



The second two rooms are referred to as the “fraucimor”, a derivation of German *Frauenzimmer*, or ladies’ rooms. This is where the court ladies who kept the princess company would gather. The ladies spent their time here doing needlework, entertaining themselves, and other activities.

Now let’s carefully go down the stairs.

MASQUERADE HALL

The Masquerade Hall is one of the largest and most representative rooms in the entire castle. This hall was painted by the Viennese painter Josef Lederer in 1748. He painted a portrait of himself in the first window niche as a man drinking coffee. He even left his signature on the coffee pot.

Josef Lederer painted the entire hall in six months with a single assistant. A playful masquerade party is depicted on the walls and bears a total of 135 painted figures. If you look, you'll see aristocrats, soldiers, Turks, Moors, Chinese, and characters from the Commedia dell'arte, such as Dottore, Pierrot, Harlequin, and others.



This large room was mainly used as a dance hall. It occasionally held theatrical performances as well. Musicians sat upstairs in the gallery, opposite the large mirrors. There are still painted musical instruments and hanging costumes depicted there. This hall is still in use today, mostly for concerts.

This hall is the last hall of our tour. Thank you for visiting and for your attention. We look forward to seeing you again sometime.

