

The Czech Resort Of Karlovy Vary

24 Hours Of Health And Happiness In Europe's Oldest Resort

Karlovy Vary - A. S. Shakiry

Memories of happy days are unforgettable. They took me back to 1958-1978, when I used to visit the resorts of, the then, Czechoslovakia for rest, and to take advantage of business trips to buy machinery for my footwear and leather factories in Baghdad.



The present visit, about fifty years after my first, came in response to the invitation of the tourism department of the Czech Republic to visit the resort of Karlovy Vary and to convey my impressions to the readers of Islamic Tourism. Here are some details of my visit which only lasted 24 hours because, my

colleague Mr. Motaz Othman, and I were forced to return to London to participate in the World Travel Market.

At the end of the MADi exhibition, organized in Prague from 8th - 10th November 2005, in which we had a stand for our magazine Islamic Tourism, we were visited by Mrs.

Linka Kalintova, from the Czech Republic's Department of Tourism. She arranged our tour to Karlovy Vary and gave us a famous glass to drink spa water.

It was essential to visit the markets and squares of Prague, one of Europe's, and the world's, oldest and most beautiful cities, ➤

known as the "Golden City", famous for its citadels, old buildings, historical bridges, and the Vltava River that crosses it.

After making some purchases, we had supper in an old coffee shop, where Mohamed Mehdi Al-Jawahiri wrote some of his most beautiful poems. The coffee shop was frequented by many famous Arab personalities, including the artist Aziz Ali.

The next day we headed north to Karlovy Vary in a Czech Sokda car. Trees lined the highway, their leaves various shades of yellow, red and brown, typical autumn colours. We arrived at Karlovy Vary, 360 - 644 meters above sea level. We first visited the Moser crystal factory, founded in 1857 that produces uniquely designed, beautifully coloured works of art.

Our next stop was the Park Hotel, one of the most prestigious hotels of Karlovy Vary. We rested for a while and after lunch our official guide took us on a walking tour, where we

discovered twelve hot and cold mineral water sources. Each source is numbered and its water has different curative properties depending on its temperature and mineral composition. That's why we needed our special glass.

Karlovy Vary is one of the oldest and most famous resorts in Europe. It was discovered more than 600 years ago and is visited by tens of thousands of tourists annually who come to rest, search for cures in the clinics and drink its waters. The city is a valley of a great river surrounded by mountains with trees. The Tepla River crosses the city, moderating its temperature and giving it its pure air.

Hotels, resorts and clinics, offering services to all nationalities and pockets, line both banks of the river. The resort prides itself on cleanliness. It is not easy to find litter in the streets, which are mostly reserved for pedestrians. Our guide told us that we could walk inside the environs of the city,

which has 120 kilometers of walking tracks. We could also visit the town of Bykov and its famous citadel, or take a look at the ceramics and porcelain museums and factories in Loket region.

Ours first appointment was at a Zamiki Lazny health club whose specialist staff are experts in all kinds of massages. It is possible to swim in the mineral waters but the number of patrons is restricted to avoid over-crowding. The next day Mr. Marc Krakora took us to his clinic. In fact it is a small hospital that offers numerous services: dental treatment and beauty treatment, anti-aging remedies and sliming programmes. We asked the director what other services were on offer and he replied whatever is required. "For clients who snore we even have the opportune cure".

This clinic is part of the Bristol group and also has a club with sports equipment, swimming pools, Jacuzzi, sauna, Turkish baths and other services offered by luxury health clubs. ➔



- Comprehensive spa treatment
- Therapeutic and Medicinal care
- Relaxation and wellness stays
- Beauty and dermatology Programs
- Incentive events, conferences and congresses
- Complete services in incoming tourism for Individuals and groups in Prague, Czech Republic and central Europe.





We also saw some of the groups other facilities, including two hotels. These were exceptionally luxurious and catered to the needs of Muslim and Arab tourists by providing prayer rooms and ablution facilities. Karlovy Vary is not only a health resort and a sanatorium: it is also an important European cultural center. Every year in May it hosts the medical clubs festival and the international jazz festival. In July there is the classical Mozart festival and the

international cinema festival. There are numerous other cultural festivals, sports competitions and conferences in August, September and November. We only stayed at Karlov Vary for one day. At least a week is required to do this resort justice and to take full advantage of the cultural and curative attractions. As drove to Prague airport we learned that drivers leave their lights on during the day not because of the fog but because of a new

law aimed at ensuring security on the country's highways. Our Czech hosts have to be praised for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us throughout our stay. They say that if you visit Karlovy Vary you will fall in love with the city and return time and time again. This is certainly true in my case and my colleague Motaz said: "I will save a million dollars and I will come here to spend my years of retirement". ■