

The municipality Hořice na Šumavě has an eventful history as well interesting present. It will attract attention of visitors coming from Český Krumlov as a natural gate to Šumava (Böhmerwald).

The history of Hořice dates back to 1272 when the local settlement was held by the lords from Kosová Hora. Later it passed into the hands of one line of the Rosenberg family who sold it in 1290 to the Cistercian monastery in Vyšší Brod.

The most valuable memorials include a pillory from 1549. The granite column with two stone bowels to measure tithes reminds of the old judicial authority.

The municipality of Hořice is dominated by the St. Catherine's church from the mid-13th century. The church was not spared numerous fires which may have also given the place its name (the Czech verb "hořet" means "to burn").

Most recently, in 1900, a fire was started by a lightning that struck the church steeple. It had to be pulled down and a new one, built one year later, has survived until now.

Also noteworthy is a system of seven stone fountains, mutually linked, which supplied houses in the square with drinking and service water. The fountains were supplied with drinking water from three wells and service water was drawn from a small pond. This arrangement enabled supply of service water in to the fountains during fires.

In addition to the atypical square, visitors will surely like the local natural swimming pool, marked instructional hiking trail, museum, numerous small pubs, skiing hill in winter etc.

The tradition of Passion Plays in Hořice started in the 13th century, in close connection with harsh living conditions of feudal serfs. The peasant serfs associated their suffering with that of Jesus Christ and believed that they too would be resurrected and that better times would come.

The tradition was renewed in the early 19th century. The first Passion Plays in Hořice were staged in 1816. The author was weaver and collector Paul Gröllhesl, who wrote a text for the Passion Plays titled: "Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ – tragedy in five acts with an introduction", thus actually starting a new tradition of Passion Plays in Hořice.

In 1816–40 the Plays were shown on fast-Sundays and on Easter holidays in local pubs and without any particular costumes. The tradition of Passion Plays and their growing standard made them know even far across the border. In response to favorable reception of the Plays the local residents decided to build a theater building for the purpose. The theater was opened on 25 June 1893 and in the same year the Passion Plays were seen by 40 000 spectators.

During the Second World War the theater served as a warehouse for military material. In 1947 the theater hosted the first Passion Plays in Czech. After 1948 the Plays stopped and in 1960s the theater building was demolished.

An incentive to resume one of the oldest tradition of Passion Plays in Europe came from the Hořice town hall in 1990. The "Society for Renewal of Passion Plays in Hořice na Šumavě". The theater building has been replaced with a picturesque natural open-air theater with five hundred roofed seats. A new text and music were written first and rehearsals started in June 1992. The actors are exclusively local amateurs from Hořice and its immediate vicinity. The Passion Plays have become a continuation of a famous and rich tradition of the old ones and, without exaggeration, one of the regions cultural events with high artistic value.

You can learn more about the entire history and present of the municipality , as well as the closely related history of Passion Plays, at the newly opened exposition of the local museum and along a short instructional hiking trail.