

# The Chateau Garden

60–90 min



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The beginning of the Chateau Garden history dates back to the Renaissance period. The garden was seriously damaged during the Thirty Years War and was renovated in early Baroque style during the episcopate of Bishop Charles II of Lichtenstein-Castelkorn (1664–1695). Its formal composition with a central fountain, flowerbeds and rich sculptural decoration gradually changed during the 18th century according to the development of Baroque thinking.



Kroměříž with the chateau and Chateau Garden, 1593–1598

The first Archbishop of Olomouc Anton Theodor Colloredo-Waldsee (1777–1811), under the influence of enlightenment ideas, expanded the garden and turned it into a sentimentally tuned park between 1790–1800.

The regularly-structured parterre in front of the chateau continued in the naturally-arranged area. The network of paths winding through the trees led the visitor to a wide variety of small buildings and artistic rest spots, such as the hermitage, the labyrinth with an umbrella, the Chinese pavilion, etc.

Archbishop Ferdinand Maria Chotek (1832–1836) came to Kroměříž in the 1830s. Along with the architect Anton Arche (1793–1851), he commenced a radical transformation of the Chateau Garden into a generous landscape park. After Chotek's death, the project was carried out by his successor Archbishop Maximilian Sommerau - Beeckh (1837–1853). During this period the garden went through the greatest boom and gained the present arrangement and area of more than 60 hectares.



Sala Terrena

We will start the Chateau Garden tour in front of the garden facade of the chateau. On its ground floor, there are unusual spaces of **sala terrena**, established in the second half of the 17th century. It used to serve as a representative entrance to the original regularly-structured Baroque garden. Its artistic decoration, referring to both the ancient and medieval spiritual tradition as well as to the relation of man and nature, is very valuable. The garden and the square are connected with a **monumental staircase** designed by the architect Gustav Meretta in the 1870s. A simple wooden ramp preceded the staircase and a gate from the Na Kopečku street was the main entrance to the garden for residents of the city.



J. Fischer, the Colloredo's Colonnade, 1802

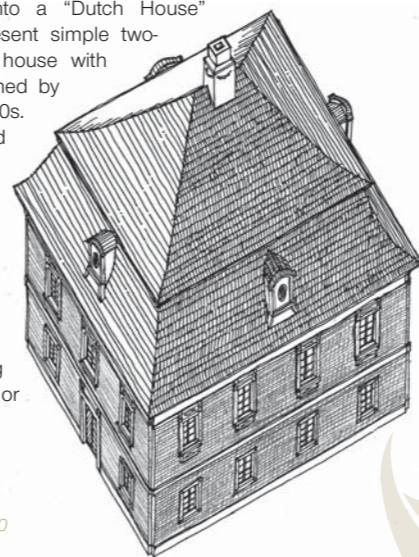
The Colloredo's Colonnade was built between 1795–1799 following the northern wing of the chateau, and the archbishop and his guests used it to enter the garden. The arcaded loggia with a dual arm stairway, decorated with

statues depicting the four seasons allegories, enabled the entrance to the adjoining terraced garden (giardino sekreto) with a fountain and rich floral decorations.

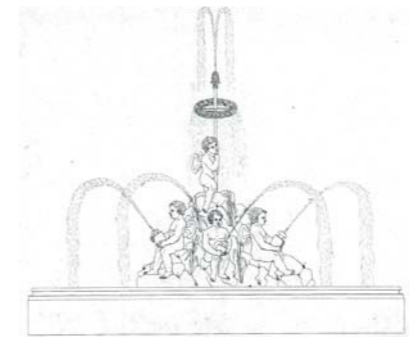
In the adjacent hornbeam bosquette, there is a bronze bust of the Archbishop Ferdinand Maria Chotek, the initiator of the transformation into a landscape park, on a sandstone pedestal.

The tour continues past the **Gardener's House**, one of the oldest buildings in the garden. It was already depicted in the illustrations of the garden from the 17th century. Its architecture gradually changed from the ground-floor Renaissance house through a baroque building with a mansard roof and an adjoining greenhouse to the 18th-century transformation into a "Dutch House" with red plaster. The present simple two-floor architecture of the house with a hipped roof was designed by Anton Arche in the 1830s.

Richly carved portico and balconies adorned the facade in the second half of the 19th century. The building, which has preserved its original residential function to this day, has always been surrounded by a number of flowers and flowering shrubs – roses, magnolias or hibiscuses.



Gardener's House around 1800



A. Arche, the Cupids Fountain, before 1850

This also applies to **Cupids Fountain**, which was built according to the Archa's project in the 1830s. Originally, it consisted of five angel figures. At the end of the 19th century, a cupid was replaced by a pedestal with a vase. The round pool is full of water lilies in the summer.

Artificially built ruins are other typical structures of the sentimental garden. They should remind a stranger of time volatility and give him some space for meditation in the cool recess. At the time of establishment, in the late 18th century, the Kroměříž ruins were a remarkable structure. They were accessible from the east, where the front was presented as the remains of an ancient temple. After passing a dark hallway, the visitor



J. Fischer, the Ruins, 1802

emerged on the other side of the structure imitating **ruins** of a Gothic cathedral. Before the half of the 19th century, the ancient part of the building was buried. The remaining section completed with a stone arch and fragments of statues began to serve as a place for breeding wild animals and birds. The remnants of a decorative wire cage come from the early 20th century,

when the Archbishop Kohn built facilities for breeding pheasants. A waterfall flowing into a nearby canal gushed from the original Gothic ruins. In the 1830s it became the basis for today's **Chotek's pond** with unevenly shaped banks. In its vicinity we can admire a huge group of plane trees with significantly light trunks, a beautiful specimen of a tulip tree (Liriodendron tulipifera), leaves of which resemble an ancient musical instrument - the lyre, and a pair of Ginkgo biloba trees with fan-like leaves containing substance with beneficial effects on human blood circulation.



Tulip Tree



J. Fischer, the Water canal, 1802

The path has led us to the boundary between "the old garden" and the grand landscaping arrangement realized in the 1830s and 40s on the former city pastures. **The Silver Bridge** spanning the former mill drain connected these two worlds. It was built approximately in 1840 by the architect A. Arche and followed the alley, which was founded in the late 18th century and was called **The Sad Alley**, because dense trees formed dark shade. People also called it The alley of Sighs, because it was and still is a popular place for lovers. At the beginning of the 19th century, the alley served as a gate to several garden structures, out of which **the umbrella** is the only preserved one. Originally, it was surrounded by a shaped-shrub maze.

The bridge offers a view of a subtle metallic trellage from the second half of the 19th century, covered with roses (variety "New Dawn") in the summer, and further behind it, a view of the landscaping arrangement heart. Following the path we are heading to **a group of majestic plane trees**, one of the largest and most beautiful in our country. These giants were planted here as little trees around the year 1840 and today they reach the height of over 40 m. Plane trees are very popular with landscape architects especially for light coloured trunk and branches, which attracts attention in winter as well as during the vegetation period. The surface of the trunk remains smooth even in old age, because the upper layers of bark peel constantly. On the right side there is a group of several species of pine trees dominating the meadow. North American **Jeffrey Pine** (Pinus jeffreyi) has a sparse and airy treetop, because its needles grow in bundles of three at the end of shoots, while the dense

A. Arche, the Silver Bridge, before 1850







Aerial view of Chateau Garden



Honey Locust

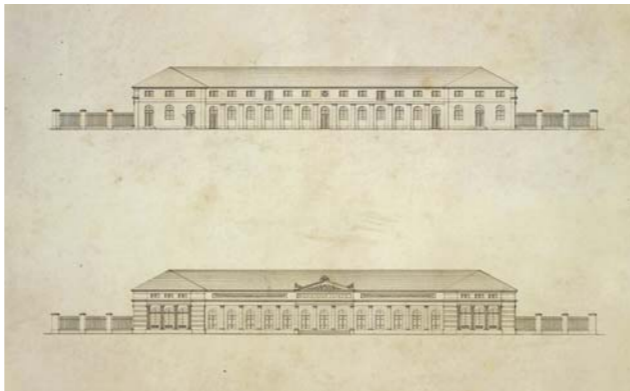


Scots Pine

**Arolla Pine** (*Pinus cembra*) treetop is of a regular oval shape. Two huge trees with nearly horizontal branches belong to the **Eastern White Pine** (*Pinus strobus*) species, also coming from North America.

**Maximilian's Colonnade** is the central point of the landscape park composition. This neoclassical building was constructed on a small hill in 1846 according to a project by the architect A. Arche. The entablature carries the inscription "MAXIMILIAN JOSEPH MDCCCXLVI", above which you can see a coat of arms of its builder, the Archbishop Maximilian Joseph Sommerau-Beckh. In the middle of the pool there stood a large Baroque fountain originally placed in the Flower Garden. A water spring flowing from the pool ran down the small cascades into the lower **Maximilian's Pond**. The structure is also called The Pompeii Colonnade because of busts exposed here in the second half of the 19th century, some of which came directly from excavations of the ancient city of Pompeii. Having become targets of vandals, they were moved to the chateau exposition.

The Maximilian's Colonnade around 1850, 1880 and contemporary state



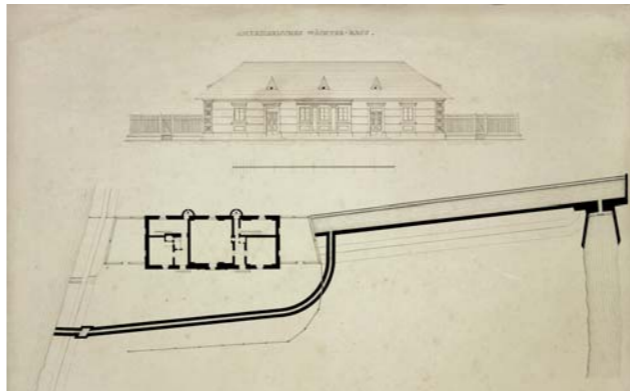
A. Arche, the Maximilian's Court, before 1850

We will cross the bridge under the plane tree canopy and head to a group of trees in the middle of the meadow. North American species of Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) and Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) grow here. The Honey Locust attracts our attention with its fruits in the form of long pods and big thorns growing directly from the trunk and the Black Locust is flooded with sweet-smelling white flowers. You should not miss the exceptional specimen of Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) growing on the right side on the edge of the meadow. Its brown-red trunk branches from the bottom, which is very unusual for this species. When building the park in 1940s, a drainage system of pastures was used to create a pond for hunting waterfowl, soon known as the **Wild Pond**. Its banks were densely planted with shrubs. A small flock of ducks with clipped wings floated on the pond. When flying wild ducks spotted them quietly resting on the water surface, they flew down to them and hunters hiding in the bushes caught them using a net. In the second half of the 19th century, some shrubs were removed from the banks, several islands were created, and a little building in the eastern style was placed on the largest one. It is uncertain whether it was A. Arche's Mandarin House, standing originally near the pond, or whether the so called Chinese Pavilion was constructed along with the island, probably in 1870s.



On the banks of the Wild Pond there is also an airy pavilion composed of roughly shaped columns and beams. It was built in the late 19th century and served as a harbor. Today, the original pier is equipped with handrails and it is a popular view point. In the afternoon you can admire the sunlit trunk of the Scots Pine mentioned above.

The Chinese Pavilion



A. Arche, the American Guard House, before 1850

If you have enough time, take the right path from the Beam Pavilion, go over the bridge and along the Wild Pond bank. Pass a small **resting area with a circular bench**, placed in a group of mature spruce trees, behind which you can enjoy a view across the pond, back to the group of the plane trees at the Colonnade. Vast meadows attract butterflies to the cranesbills (*Geranium*) blossoms in the summer, and in the autumn there appear hundreds of meadow saffrons (*Colchicum autumnale*). Visitors, however, often come here to admire the old **Southern Catalpa** (*Catalpa bignonioides*) with a bizarrely twisted trunk. The trunk of the catalpa, planted in the second half of the 19th century, did not probably bear the weight of a quickly growing Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), seeds of which germinated in between the catalpa forked branches, and it disintegrated. In June this North American tree puts forth beautiful, white, trumpet shaped flowers. Its fruit, first green, later brown, is a long, thin pod hanging on the tree all winter.

The path continues among the trees and at the junction it is marked by a **sandstone obelisk**. It could be one of the obelisks depicted in the pictures of the Chateau Garden from the late 17th century. With certainty we can say it was a part of the garden in its Baroque phase, as evidenced by the emblem of Cardinal Wolfgang Hannibal Schratzenbach on its pedestal. It was installed at the current site in the late 19th century.

If you take the left path along the meadow, where a tall mast with a flag was displayed every time the archbishop was staying in Kroměříž, you will see the **American guard house** on the right. Built according to a design by A. Arche in 1840s, it served as a dwelling for the forester, whose responsibility was, among other things, to take care of wild animals living freely in the garden. From the **Red Bridge** you can see the adjacent **Water Lily Pond** with small **rapids**, created by artificially piled boulders. We are getting to an apparent end of the garden, but if you walk through the gate to the neighbouring sports field, you will see the area known as **Max's Court**, historically belonging to the garden. The buildings were built in the neoclassical style, designed by A. Arche in 1840s. The stables and surrounding pastures served as a model farm to present exemplary cattle breeding. Here the visitors could refresh with milk and other dairy products. Today it is a building for stabling horses and a veterinary clinic.

The way back, towards the alley on the pond banks, is guarded by a **monument** of the Archbishop Rudolph Johann of Habsburg, a music lover and founder of Vítkovické železářny (the Vítkovice Ironworks), by the way. The bust, resting on a high sandstone plinth, originally stood in the Flower Garden. It was transferred to this place in 1962.

Both the shorter and the longer tour continue along the banks of the so called **Long Pond**, the largest water area in the Chateau Garden. Its history can be traced from 1750s. At that time there was a small laundry where women washed clothes. On the plan from the late 18th century, we can find a small water area, likely to have served as an archbishopric fish hatchery. When rearranging the garden in the sentimental spirit, this water area was enlarged and transformed into a regular wedge-shaped reservoir supplemented with the Fishing Pavilion at the front. During the transformation of the Chateau Garden into a landscaping park in the first half of the 19th century, the Long Pond was rearranged to the current size and shape. We can find the original intention of the architect A. Arche in contemporary descriptions: "The new park was embellished with a long *Swan lake with the harbour house (fishing house) at the front, where several boats were anchored. A swan temple with a stuffed exemplar of a swan stood on a peninsula at the rear end. A lot of swans, geese and various ducks floated on the lake. At the back, on the water, the poultry had a small village made from wheeled houses.*"

The double row alley running along the bank of the pond is called the **Long Alley**. The existence of an alley in this location is reported as early as the 19th century, when the former pond bank was lined with fruit trees. After the pond was enlarged into the present area, a double row of horse-chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) was planted. It played a very important role in the composition of the new landscape park, because it led visitors to the area know as **Max's Court**. The aging horse chestnut trees were replaced by lime trees.

**Fishing Pavilion** is situated at the front of the pond. Its first predecessor was built here in the late 18th century. In the 1840s, the architect A. Arche gave it a neoclassical design, and in the 1860s, using elements from the artistically rendered cast iron, the construction gained its contemporary appearance.

The **Peacock Farmstead** standing nearby provides facilities for animal husbandry in the Chateau Garden. Its history also goes back to the late 18th century, when a courtyard, used as background for a small farm with cattle, poultry and fruit orchard, was built here. At the end of the 19th century it gained its current form with a richly decorated facade, inspired by Swiss half-timbered houses.



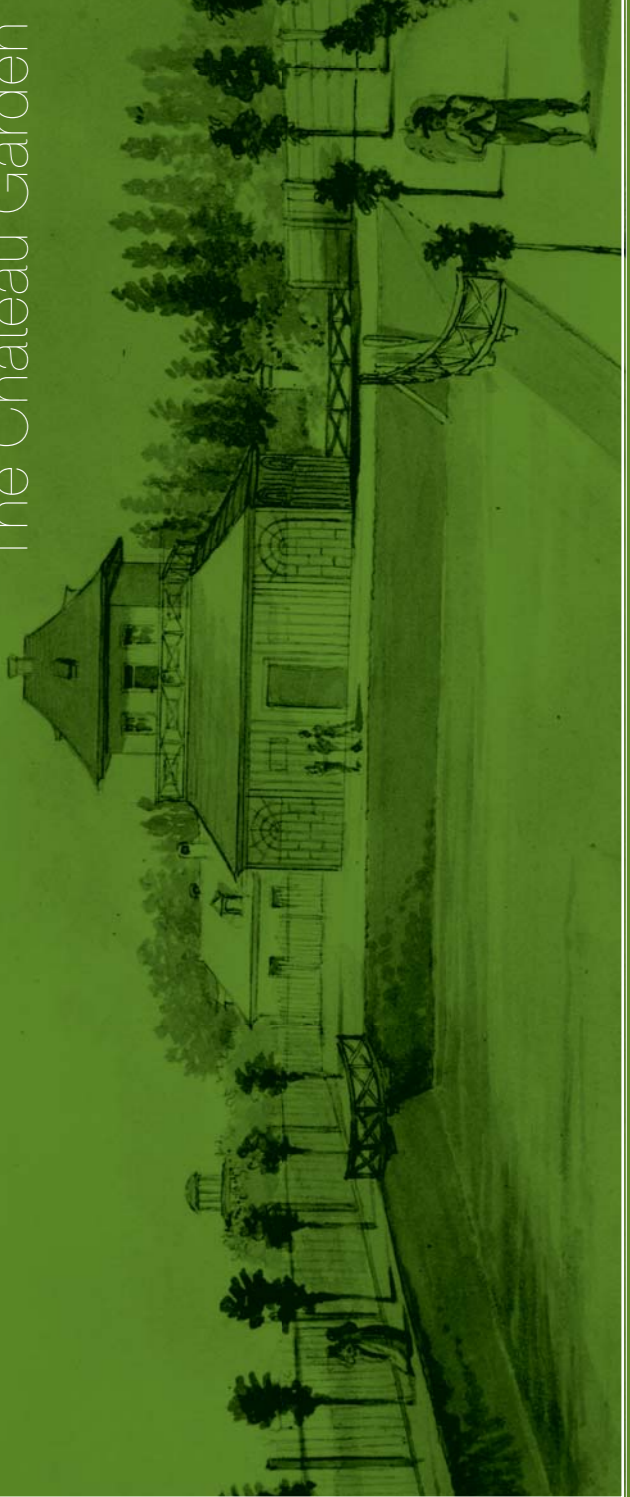
J. Fischer, the Fishing Pavilion, 1802

The Fishing Pavilion

The path leading over the **Vase Bridge** will take you to the entrance gate from the Na Kopečku street.

60-90 min

The Chateau Garden



NÁRODNÍ PAMÁTKOVÝ ÚSTAV  
ÚZEMNÍ ODBORNÉ PRACOVNÍSTVO  
V KROMĚŘÍŽI



NÁRODNÍ CENTRUM  
ZAHRADNÍ KULTURY  
V KROMĚŘÍŽI

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