

# Emperor Napoleon in Brno



# Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte

1769–1821



What does the city of Brno have in common with the Emperor of France and military leader Napoleon Bonaparte? You may be surprised to learn that – a lot. In 1805 Napoleon spent in the city of Brno, during the preparations of the tactics for the battle (and also after the battle), more time than on the Austerlitz battlefield itself.

Do you want to experience the atmosphere of Napoleonic campaign personally? See the calendar of events on [www.morava-napoleonska.cz](http://www.morava-napoleonska.cz).

Napoleon Crossing the Alps, 1801, Jacques-Louis David

The city was forced to provide facilities for the Emperor and his army those days: the officers and soldiers were accommodated in burghers' houses and local people had to carry a burden connected with their stay. And this was not all – during the battle (on December 2, 1805) and afterwards there were thousands of injured and ill soldiers treated in local monasteries, convents and hospitals. These places were used also for gathering of the captives. The consequent peace negotiations were – because of typhoid epidemics – relocated from Brno to Pressburg (today Bratislava).

We have prepared a walking route for you – you will visit places connected with these disturbed times and events.





## Obelisk in Denis Gardens

The foundation of the park called "Denis Gardens", with wonderful view on the southern parts of Brno, was initiated by Moravian Governor – Count Mitrovski – in 1814. This was actually the very first public park in Moravia and Silesia – named originally as "Frances Park", in honour of Austrian Emperor Frances I. As a manifestation of thanks that the wars were finally over, the quadrilateral obelisk with the sculpture

of lion in each corner was ceremonially erected here in 1818. The citizens of Brno were really grateful. After occupation of the city the French marshals and generals took over the most sumptuous noble palaces. The ordinary soldiers were accommodated in burghers' houses and monasteries, often even with their horses. But it was not only about the

accommodation, but also about the food and other provisions. The city of Brno had to provide 5000 pairs of shoes for the French army, besides this about 12 tons of meat, 20000 loaves of bread and 14000 portions of oat and hay every day. Moreover, after the battle the city was full of injured soldiers and also prisoners of war. The epidemics of typhoid fever came

and spread quickly, people were dying in dozens. Only the frosts during Christmas time had stopped the deadly disease. The last but not least burden for the province of Moravia were payments of war reparations – the defeated Austria had to pay them to the victorious France, and a significant portion of these reparations were paid by the city of Brno.

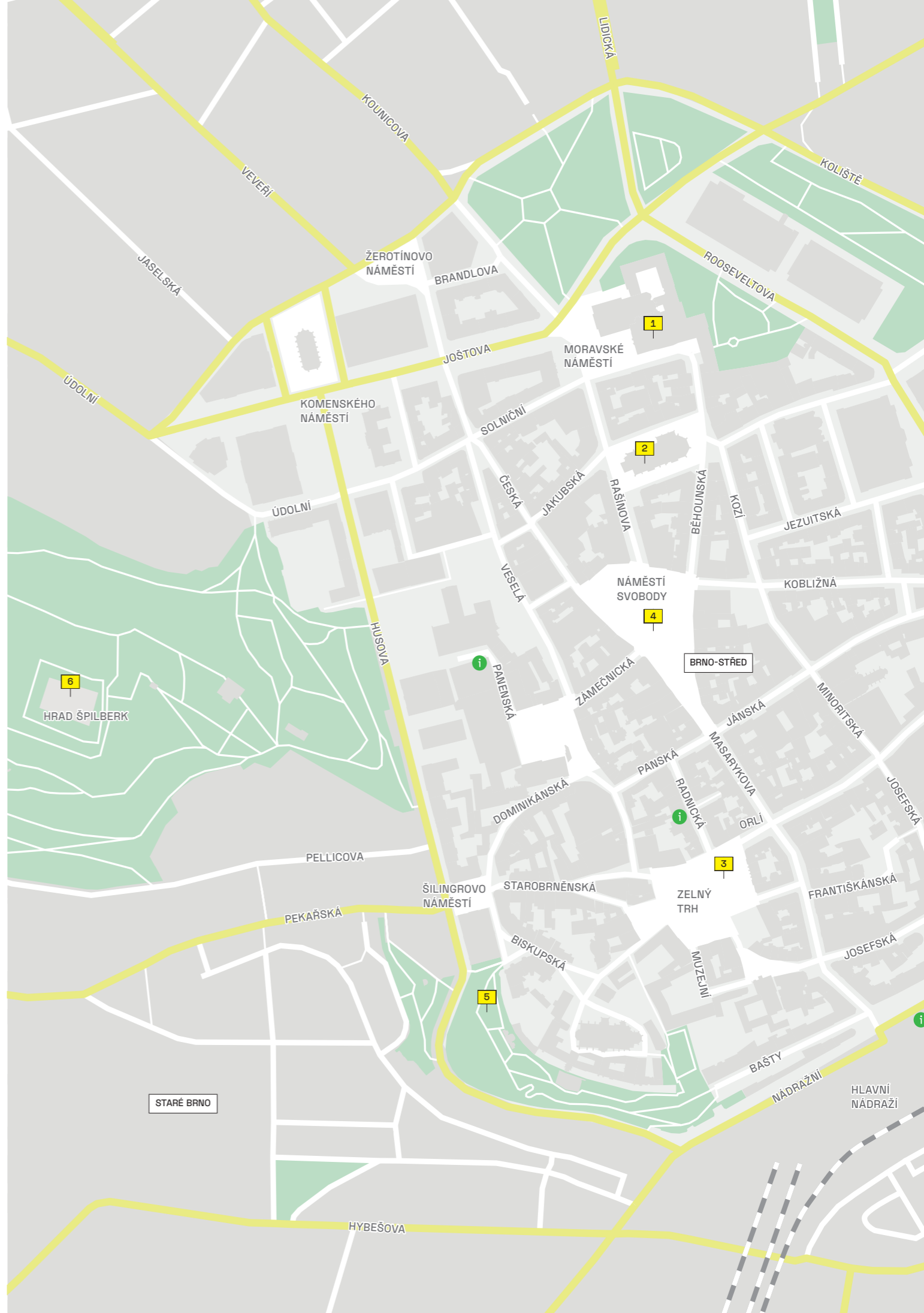


## Špilberk Castle

Napoleon did not have to conquer the castle and fortress Špilberk – its Austrian garrison together with other soldiers and members of noble families left before his arrival (for safer Olomouc). The citizens of Brno were without protection and they had no other option than to surrender to the French army. The Frenchmen gained a lot of provisions without any fight – 60 cannons, 6000 rifles, 3000 quintals of gun powder, besides this a lot of uniforms,

military boots and food. On the other hand Napoleon was rather nervous about the existence of such mighty stronghold in Brno – and on the occasion of his second stay in the city in 1809 he ordered to fill the castle well with the soil and to demolish some important parts of fortification system. He didn't want to have such sturdy castle right "in his back".

After that year the castle and fortress Špilberk has never gained its military importance back. It served as a prison until 1855, then again for more than one hundred years as barracks for soldiers of different armies. Špilberk was twice more changed into the prison during those hundred years – during the WWI and during the first year of Nazi occupation, when there were both military and political prisoners from all over the Europe kept here.







## St James' Church

2 St James' Church (on the right), view from Veselá Gate, 1829

## Governor's Palace

1 Governor's Palace (in the middle), view from Veselá Gate, 1829

The Governor's Palace used to be a part of former Augustinian monastery. During the rule of the Emperor Joseph II the Augustinians were relocated to Old Brno from here, and the building became a seat of the Governor for the province of Moravia. In 1805, first the Emperor of Austria Francis I was accommodated here at the beginning of November, then – after the entry of French

army into the city – also the Emperor of France Napoleon Bonaparte chose this palace for his stay. The memorial plaque on the building commemorates the fact that Napoleon was accommodated here actually three times: before and after the battle of Austerlitz, and then again after the battle of Znojmo in 1809.

Place of the funeral and memorial church service of the French general Valhubert who died in Brno as a consequence of his lethal injury from the battle of Austerlitz. General Valhubert defended the Santon Hill against the Russian commander Bagration's troops and was hit by the grenade shrapnel. Despite his protests he was transported to the military hospital

in Šlapanice and then to Brno, where he died – in spite of all the care – three days later. The funeral in St James' Church was attended by Napoleon himself. After the church service the soldiers carried Valhubert's coffin to the former city graveyard (today park "Tyršův sad") and they fired three salvos. His remains were transported to France later.



## Freedom Square (náměstí Svobody)

3 Cabbage Market (on the left)

4 Great Square (on the right), Josef Maserle, 2nd half of 18th century

## Cabbage Market (Zelný trh)

In October 1805 – shortly before the battle of Austerlitz – part of the Russian army passed by city of Brno. On this occasion the commander-in-chief of allied troops, Russian general Kutuzov – together with his high officers – was accommodated for couple of nights in the Dietrichstein Palace, Cabbage Market. The memorial plaque on the facade of today's Moravian Land Museum commemorates this fact. After the Russians left the city, and when Napoleon's army marched into Brno instead of them, the French marshal Lannes used this palace for his stay. He couldn't enjoy a nice view from the windows anyway. The market – today used

for sale of fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers – has in those days changed into huge smelly slaughter. The Frenchmen asked the city of Brno for 26000 lb of meat every day – it meant some 23 cows. The peasants from neighbouring villages and farms brought the cattle into the town, and French soldiers slaughtered the animals right in this square.

Reduta Theatre, was used as a temporary military hospital and also for gathering of prisoners of war. The interior of the building has suffered so much that those days owner of the theatre Mayer bankrupted and left Brno in 1807.

In 1805 this place was called simply "Great Square" – but you probably wouldn't recognize it today. St Nicolas' Church dominated the square in its middle, but this church was demolished in 1870 and today it is commemorated by a discreet brass

line in the pavement only. During the stay of French troops in Brno there were military parades held daily in this square – until the move of the forces to the battlefield. So the Brno citizens could see so called Napoleon's "La Grande Armée" in its full strength.

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