

Dovbush rocks



The Rocks of Dovbush are a fascinating combination of natural wonders and man-made creations located in Ukraine's Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast. This intriguing formation of rocks is included in the Polyantytyskiy Regional Landscape Park and named in honor of the legendary folk hero Oleksa Dovbush.

Dovbush's Rocks are said have been formed some 70 million years ago, when they were still hidden by the sea. The formations are made up of oddly shaped stones, massive caves, shadowy gorges, impressive fortifications, yawning pits, winding labyrinths and mysterious pathways carved from the sandstone. Amongst the 50 m high structures are unique wooden cave buildings, pointing to historical habitation. Archeological discoveries have revealed an observatory dating back to the 10-17th centuries B.C.E. It is believed that this fortress served as a frontier post for Yaroslav Osmomysl during his clash with the Grand Prince of Kiev.

Closely related to the Rocks of Dovbush are the stories of Oleksa Dovbush, leader of the Opryshoks, a group of peasant rebels who opposed feudalism and the Poles in Ukraine. Dovbush was born in Pechenzihyn, a Hutsul village in the Carpathians, in 1700. In time he came to lead a group of outlaws, and has been likened to Robin Hood, assisting the poor by robbing the wealthy. He is believed to have lived amongst the rocky formations now called the Rocks of Dovbush. Oleksa Dovbush soon became a legend, with tales of his activities spreading to various regions of western Ukraine. Feared by the Polish nobility, not even a total of 2 000 soldiers sent to capture him could bring an end to his reign. In fact, it was on a more personal note that he met his finish, when he was betrayed by someone in his organization in 1745. One story claims he was shot by his lover's husband. Another story claims that this vengeful girlfriend betrayed him to his enemies. Whatever the cause of his death, Dovbush was succeeded by companions who continued his legacy. He is now an important figure in local folklore, with several places named in his honor and featuring in various literary and artistic works.

Travelers can explore the historical haunt of Dovbush by visiting the Rocks of Dovbush. The rocks are also popular with rock climbers, with over one hundred routes available that

range from 5.7 to 5.13. The breath-taking complex can be reached from Bubnische by horseback, a traditional carriage or on foot.

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