

Prague Visit

When to visit

Summer is best, in my opinion. Prague is about walking around outside. Lots of tourists and some friends visited also in November, but walking outside is a bit limited.

Note for office people from warm weather only countries – in winter, it is cold outside (cold = literally freezing), long walks outside is different from short jump from airport into a taxi: you'll need winter boots, winter cap, gloves, winter coat, or you'll likely get sick.

Using Local Mobile Internet / Data / Voice Service

Pre-paid SIM cards are available from mobile operators, available already at the airport upon arrival.

Vodafone Data SIM for Visitors:

<https://www.vodafone.cz/en/calling/prepaid-cards/data-sim-for-visitors/>

Must Visits

- **Charles Bridge** – ~700 years old. A comment on statues on the bridge is in the appendix.
- Walk across old town. Don't forget to look up, not only at ground level. One can spend a day or two just doing this.
- Astronomical Clock at the Old Town Square
 - The **oldest still operating astronomical clock in the world**, first run in 1410
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague_astronomical_clock
 - every full hour it "performs", so it is worthwhile to be there at such time
- Prague Castle complex <http://www.praguecityline.com/prague-castle>
 - There might be security checks, with long queues, not sure worth the visit in that case (unless one has more time and wants to visit some of the exhibitions inside)
 - Consider going early, the earliest visitors might face no queue versus a 200m long queue of the peak of the day for st. Vitus cathedral
 - I like the royal gardens (in summer), north of the complex. Complex logistics around the castle. Bottle of water costs 10x on site.
- Savoy Café (it's in the ceiling; also open for breakfasts; dates back to 1893)
- Recommend peeks inside of the many churches (and synagogues) around Prague
- look up at the buildings, people miss marvels just looking at the street level

Walks

- Old town
 - it is very large (by walking standards). When filmmakers today want to shoot a movie set in a European city 100 or 200 or more years ago, they come to shoot in Prague.
 - It is interesting to peek into old churches as one walks by them, too many to list

Galleries and Museums

- At the Castle and its vicinity – many (such as medieval paintings)
- Klementinum
 - Includes the Baroque library hall, first opened in 1722
 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clementinum>
 - Tycho de Brahe, Copernicus and other astronomers connection, who looked at the sky and saw things not that popular with some other folks at the time
- National Gallery
 - Many exhibitions in a number of buildings across the city, from old masters to contemporary
 - <https://www.ngprague.cz/en>
- Old Library Strahovsky Klaster www.strahovskyclaster.cz
- Technical museum – the one in München is better and larger, but still worth a visit if one does not visit the München one
- DOX (modern art gallery) <http://www.dox.cz/en/>
- Painting on glass exhibition <http://www.praga.balassiintezet.hu/hu/homehun/7-slideshow/861-roth-miksa-kiallitas-hu/>

Cafes

There are actually good and nice cafes, so really no excuse to abuse oneself in Starbucks and similar ones.

- Café Louvre – 100+ years old, nice stylish interior
- Savoy Café (it's in the ceiling; also open for breakfasts; dates back to 1893)
- Café Imperial (dates back to 1914)
 - <https://www.cafeimperial.cz/en/homepage/>
 - open for breakfasts, worth to book in advance
- many other choices, good guide is the google maps rating: Café N.3 (best cake in Prague), Café Ebel (kosher), Grand Café Orient (cubism styled café, interior and the building), Prostě Dobrý Kafe (best coffee in its neighbourhood in Smichov), Venue (good and nice coffee in the centre)

Cafes suitable for work with a notebook

[List on Google maps](#)

Castles / other old towns – 1 day visits out of Prague

- Karlstejn – the most popular castle in Bohemia
 - All-day trip, easy access by train from Prague
 - Recommend buying tickets in advance as many days as possible via internet - Not many places are available:
 - <https://www.hradkarlstejn.cz/cs/online-vstupenky>

- Recommend taking the longer tour (II. The sacred/holy area including The Chapel of The Holy Cross (Exclusive tour)) bit more expensive, but you will see something worth it
- train connection is quite good. Train leaves from “Smichovske nadrazi” to “Karlstejn”
 - This site has train timetables:
 - <http://jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusymhdvse/spojeni/>
 - 35 minutes ride
- could take an hour to walk to the castle from the train station, depending how fast one walks uphill, results may greatly vary
- Cesky Sternberk <http://www.hradceskysternberk.cz>
- Cesky Krumlov
- Kutna Hora
 - [LINK – National Geographic](#)

Bars and pubs

- U Fleků, the Oldest pub in Prague (before Columbus / 500 years old) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U_Flek%C5%AF
- Others: Rouge Bar, Cuban bar, Hard rock café, Alchemist...

For kids

- Prague ZOO
 - I visited with a family with a 1 piece of 1 year old girl and it was suitable
 - Prague Zoo Named 4th Best in the World - in TripAdvisor’s 2015 Traveler’s Choice Awards
 - One can take a boat trip from the city centre to the ZOO and back
- Chess lesson / -s, from a professional specializing in teaching chess to children. He is very good; I attended one of the lessons. He can teach adults too.
 - rinatmagsumov1@gmail.com M: +420 773-999-074
- toy / model railways
 - at Andel; <https://www.kralovstvi-zeleznic.cz/>
- chocolate craft – kids make/decorate their own chocolate: ORION Ateliér čokoládovna
 - <https://www.orion-atelier.cz/>

Events, Classical Music and other Concerts, Ballet

Tip: Churches have often great acoustics; sometimes classical concerts are held in churches.

- <https://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/en/programme>
- <https://pragueclassicalconcerts.com/en>
- <https://www.tripticprague.com/classical-concerts>
- Historical battle reenactments, in September, one of the largest ones is the White Mountain battle reenactment
 - <http://bilahora.eu/en/home/>

Special Interests

- History Foto Atelier – have photos made in historical costumes
 - <http://www.history-foto.cz/en/>
 - <https://www.google.com/maps/place/History+Foto+Atelier/@50.0845952,14.4199441,19z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x470b94ee90377287:0xf59680220f4541b5!8m2!3d50.0845943!4d14.4204913>
- Plaques (usually nothing to see at the place other than the plaque, so worth visiting if one is already nearby)
 - Albert Einstein, he lived in this house in 1911-1912, while teaching at the university in Prague
 - Wilhelm Steinitz, the first chess world champion,
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Steinitz
 - Kafka's house
- Prague is a place where cubism met architecture – there are buildings in in the cubism style, including some interiors:
 - Grand Café Orient is located on the first floor of a cubist building with cubist interior design
 - <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Grand+Caf%C3%A9+Orient/@50.0869651,14.4253857,20.5z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x3b85f9bd1f9b632b!8m2!3d50.0870308!4d14.425534>

Getting around

I recommend downloading off line maps to your google map app on mobile, while still on wifi.

Public transport is pretty effective in Prague (rated 6th fastest in the world), google maps navigation has up to date info on that, including real time times. One can purchase paper ticket valid for a single ride, or 3 days; also pay by SMS, or card.

Money

Many places that change money are a rip-off (the worst ones can go to 40% (!) margin). These 2 places in the city centre offer good rates:

- exchange8.cz ? 0.5% margin at VIP rates (above €1K), do not ask for ID, city centre
- Exchange Praha, Jindriiska 12 (near Wenceslav sqr), require ID from \$1K, ? 0.1%, there is often some queueing
- <http://www.alfaprague.cz> 0.2% margin at VIP rates (above €1K), ask for ID above €1K

Words originating from Bohemia and Moravia

- Robot – robot is an artificial word, Capek, a writer devised it from the Czech word *robot* (work), for a machine that does work instead of people
- Howitzer – (*Haubitze* in German), from Czech *houfnice*, i.e. a gun against crowds (“houf”)
- Dollar – Joachimthaler was a coin minted in Joachimsthal, a short version was a Thaler, in some other countries as Toliar, until it got to the US

- Blitzkrieg - The term was first used in the publications of Ferdinand Otto Miksche (born on Moravia), first in the magazine "Army Quarterly", and in his 1941 book, Blitzkrieg where he defined the concept. In September 1939, Time magazine termed the German military action as a "war of quick penetration and obliteration – Blitzkrieg, lightning war."

Discos

- Futurum (80s; ...)
- SaSaZu (www.sasazu.com)
- Radost FX (techno)
- Roxy www.roxy.cz

Further Resources

- The Official Tourist Website for Prague
 - <https://www.prague.eu/en>
- <http://www.expats.cz/entertainment>

Appendix – Tips for Gifts bought in Prague

1. Magnets, post cards etc - Relatively cheap souvenirs are in the Luxor book store on Vaclavske namesti
2. Traditional mass market consumer products:
 - a. Beer (of course):
 - i. Pilsner Urquell (~€1 per bottle in supermarkets)
 - b. Becherovka – herbal / spicy alcohol
 - i. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Becherovka>
 - ii. a bit of this drink atop of icecream is rather nice
 - c. chocolate:
 - i. Studentska Pecet – traditional chocolate, meaning “Student Seal”
 - ii. Jordi’s – few shops have it, higher end chocolate, above Milka, Lindth, etc., beans are sorted by hand. The first chocolate bean to bar maker after 1989. Won global chocolate prizes. Czechoslovakia between the World Wars was one of the top chocolate producers in the world, often producing more than Switzerland.
 1. €4 to €8 per 50g bar
 - iii. Steiner & Kovarik Prague chocolate shops (there are few in the centre)
 - d. Waffles: Karlovarske oblatky, traditional from Karlovy Vary / Carlsbad
3. Art – there is a lot of junk that meets the needs of many tourists. These below are something else:
 - a. Old paintings – Fine Antiques Prague (worth a visit even when not buying):
 - i. [Google maps link](#)
 - ii. €10K to €100K apiece
 - b. Some other art galleries, antique shops
4. Other:
 - a. Dea Orh concept store
 - i. Art, perfumes
 - ii. Prices from CZK 1K to 1m / €30 to €30K
 - iii. [Google Maps link](#)

Appendix – Charles Bridge Statues

Charles Bridge

Statues

