

SLEEPING

A 2007 headline in the *Mlada Fronta Dnes* newspaper said it all – ‘More hotels than streets’. According to the article, there were 286 named streets in the Prague 1 postal district (the city centre, including Staré Město and Malá Strana), and no fewer than 320 hotels.

Prague today offers a wide range of accommodation options, from cosy, romantic hotels set in historic town houses to luxurious international chain hotels, and from budget hostels and pensions to a new generation of sharply styled boutique hotels. However, it is no longer the bargain it was back in the 1990s – hotel rates have increased sharply and along with the strong Czech crown have put accommodation prices on a par with many cities in Western Europe.

The last five years has seen a huge boom in hotel building in Prague, especially in the four- and five-star sector. The Hotel Josef led the way for boutique hotels in 2002, though it took a few more years before the design hotel concept really began to take off in Prague, with a flurry of new places opening from 2005 on, notably the Yasmin and the Icon.

Luxury hotels are also beginning to pop up all over the place – the long-established Four Seasons in Staré Město and the much newer Mandarin Oriental in Malá Strana are soon to be joined in 2009 by offerings from Kempinski, Rocco Forte and Le Méridien, among others.

However, there is still a dearth of decent budget to midrange accommodation – it’s very hard to find a good double room for less than 3000Kč (around £100/€125) unless you’re prepared to stay in a backpacker hostel.

The oversupply at the top end of the market has resulted in falling occupancy rates in luxury hotels – in mid-2008 sales were down 20% on the previous year. Many places are dropping their prices in an attempt to attract business, so it’s well worth shopping around and looking for special offers or even asking for discounts.

An increasing number of Prague hotels provide specially adapted rooms and facilities for wheelchair users; we have noted these facilities in the individual listings.

Accommodation listings in this book are broken down first by neighbourhood, then by budget, from most to least expensive.

LONGER-TERM RENTALS

More and more travellers are discovering the pleasures of renting an apartment in Prague. Before you scoff at the idea, consider that the extra cost of a very basic self-catering flat near the centre means minimal transport costs, access to cheap local food, and the freedom to come and go as you like.

Many Prague agencies will find a flat for you (see the boxed text, [opposite](#)). Typical rates for a modern two-person apartment with living room–bedroom, bathroom, TV and kitchenette range from around 1500Kč per night for a place in the outer suburbs, to around 3000Kč for a flat near Old Town Square; longer stays can knock the price down to as little as 20,000Kč for a month in a two-person flat in Žižkov. All short-term rental apartments are fully furnished and serviced, meaning that utilities (gas, water, electricity) and bed linen are included in the price, and staff will clean up and change the beds at least weekly.

The real estate section of the weekly [Prague Post](#) (www.praguepost.cz) newspaper also lists agen-

cies and private individuals with apartments to rent by the month.

RESERVATIONS

Booking your accommodation in advance is strongly recommended (especially if you want to stay in or near the centre), and there are dozens of agencies that will help you find a place to stay; some are better than others. The places listed in the boxed text ([opposite](#)) are reliable, and even if you turn up in peak period without a booking, these agencies should be able to find you a bed.

Hotels usually require you to check out on the day of departure between 10am and noon. As to check-in times, there are no hard-and-fast rules, but if you’re going to arrive late in the evening, it’s best to mention this when you book your room.

ROOM RATES

A double room in a midrange hotel in central Prague will cost around 4000Kč in high

ACCOMMODATION AGENCIES

- **Alfa Tourist Service** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 224 230 037; www.alfatourist.cz; Opletalova 38, Nové Město; 🕒 9am–5pm Mon–Fri) Can provide accommodation in student hostels, pensions, hotels and private rooms.
- **Apartments.cz** (Map pp88–9; ☎ 224 990 990; www.apartments.cz; Divadelní 24, Staré Město; 🕒 8am–8pm) Long-established specialist in holiday apartments near the city centre.
- **AVE Travel** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 251 551 011 or 224 223 226; www.avetravel.cz; Praha hlavní nádraží, Nové Město; 🕒 6am–11pm) Convenient offices at the airport, main train station and Praha–Holešovice train station. The branch at the main train station specialises in finding last-minute accommodation.
- **Happy House Rentals** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 224 946 890; www.happyhouserentals.com; Jungmannova 30, Nové Město; 🕒 8am–6pm Mon–Fri) Specialises in rental apartments, both short-term and long-term.
- **Hostel.cz** (☎ 415 658 580; www.hostel.cz) Website database of around 60 hostels and cheap pensions, with a secure online booking system.
- **Mary's Travel & Tourist Service** (Map p121; ☎ 222 253 510; www.marys.cz; Italská 31, Vinohrady; 🕒 9am–9pm) Friendly, efficient agency offering private rooms, hostels, pensions, apartments and hotels in all price ranges in Prague and surrounding areas.
- **Prague Apartments** (☎ 604 168 756; www.prague-apartment.com) Web-based service with range of comfortable, IKEA-furnished flats. Availability of apartments displayed online.
- **Stop City** (Map p121; ☎ 222 521 233; www.stopcity.com; Vinohradská 24, Vinohrady; 🕒 9am–9pm Apr–Oct, 10am–8pm Nov–Mar) Specialises in apartments, private rooms and pensions in the city centre, Vinohrady and Žižkov areas.

season; outside the centre, this might fall to around 3000Kč. Top-range hotels cost from 4000Kč and up, with the best luxury hotels charging 6000Kč and more. The budget options listed in this chapter charge 2000Kč or less for a double room. Note that some mid-range and top-end hotels quote rates in euros, and a few quote in US dollars. At these hotels you can pay cash in Czech crowns if you like, but the price will depend on the exchange rate on the day you settle the bill.

The rates quoted in this chapter are for the high season, which generally covers April to June, September and October, and the Christmas–New Year holidays. July and August are midseason, and the rest of the year is low season, when rates can drop by 30% or 40%.

Even high-season rates can be inflated by up to 15% on certain dates, notably at New Year, Easter, during the Prague Spring festival, and at weekends (Thursday to Sunday) in May, June and September. On the other hand, you can often find much lower rates

from January to March and there are often good internet booking deals from June to August.

Most hostel, pension and budget-hotel rates do not include breakfast; most midrange and top-end hotel rates do.

HRADČANY

Hradčany is the place to stay if you're looking for peace and quiet. You'll be within a short walk of the castle, but when the crowds ebb away at the end of the day the streets are almost deserted.

ROMANTIK HOTEL U RAKA

Map pp70–1

Hotel €€€

☎ 220 511 100; www.romantikhotel-uraka.cz; Černínská 10; s/d from 4000/4500Kč; 🕒 22, 23

Concealed in a manicured rock garden in a quiet corner of Hradčany, the historic Hotel U Raka is an atmospheric, late-18th-century timber cottage with just six elegant, low-ceilinged doubles, complete with timber beams, wooden floors and red-brick fireplaces. With its cosy bedrooms, attentive staff, artistic décor and farmhouse kitchen-style breakfast room, it's ideal for a romantic getaway, and the castle is less than 10 minutes' walk away. Be sure to book at least a few months ahead.

PRICE GUIDE

The categories used in this chapter indicate the cost per night of a standard double room in high season.

€€€	more than 4000Kč (more than €160)
€€	2000Kč to 4000Kč (€80 to €160)
€	less than 2000Kč (less than €80)