



# Czech Republic

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## Why Go?

Since the fall of communism in 1989 and the opening of Central and Eastern Europe, Prague has evolved into one of Europe's most popular travel destinations. The city offers an intact medieval core that transports you back 500 years in time. The 14th-century Charles Bridge, traversing two historic riverside neighbourhoods, is one of the continent's most beautiful sights. The city is not just about history. It's a vital urban centre with a rich array of cultural offerings. Outside the capital, castles and palaces abound – including the audacious hilltop chateau at Český Krumlov – which illuminate the stories of powerful families and individuals whose influence was felt throughout Europe. Beautifully preserved Renaissance towns that withstood the ravages of the communist era link the centuries, and idiosyncratic landscapes provide a stage for active adventures.

## Best Places to Eat

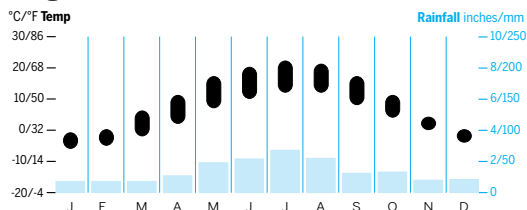
- » Sansho (p114)
- » Aberdeen Angus Steakhouse (p131)
- » Moritz (p145)
- » Koishi (p140)
- » Cukrkávalimonáda (p114)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Golden Well Hotel (p108)
- » Fusion Hotel (p109)
- » Hotel Tempel (p149)
- » Hostel Mitte (p139)
- » Savic Hotel (p109)

## When to Go

### Prague



**May** Prague comes alive with festivals from classical music and beer to fringe arts.

**Jul** Karlovy Vary shows off its arty side at the sleepy spa town's annual film festival.

**Dec** Prague's Christmas Market draws visitors from around the world.

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Crown (Kč)
- » **Language** Czech
- » **Money** ATMs all over; banks open Monday to Friday
- » **Visas** Schengen rules apply; visas not required for most nationalities

## Fast Facts

- » **Area** 78,864 sq km
- » **Capital** Prague
- » **Country code** ☎420
- » **Emergency** ☎112

## Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	21.06Kč
Canada	C\$1	19.84Kč
Euro Zone	€1	25.77Kč
Japan	¥100	21.37Kč
New Zealand	NZ\$1	16.88Kč
UK	UK£1	30.51Kč
USA	US\$1	20.17Kč

## Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 1500Kč
- » **Two-course meal** 300Kč
- » **Museum entrance** 150Kč
- » **Beer** 40Kč
- » **Prague metro-tram ticket** 32Kč

## Resources

- » **Czech Tourism**  
(www.czechtourism.com)

## Connections

The Czech Republic lies along major European road and rail lines and is a convenient hub for exploring neighbouring countries. Prague has excellent rail connections to Dresden and Berlin as well as Krakow, Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna. Major four-lane highways link Prague to German cities, Bratislava and Budapest.

## ITINERARIES

### One Week

Experience Prague's exciting combination of its tumultuous past and energetic present. Top experiences include the grandeur of Prague Castle, Josefov's Jewish Museum, and getting pleasantly lost amid the bewildering labyrinth of the Old Town. Take an essential day trip to Terezín, and then head south to Český Krumlov for a few days of riverside R&R.

### Two Weeks

Begin in Prague before heading west for the spa scenes at Mariánské Lázně or Karlovy Vary. Balance the virtue and vice ledger with a few Bohemian brews in Plzeň before heading south for relaxation and rigour around Český Krumlov. Head east to the Renaissance grandeur of Telč and Brno's cosmopolitan galleries and museums. Use the Moravian capital as a base for exploring the Moravian Karst caves and Mikulov's wine country, before continuing to underrated Olomouc to admire the Holy Trinity Column.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » **Beer** Czechs claim to have the best *pivo* (beer) in the world and who are we to argue?
- » **Dumplings** Every culture has its starchy side dish; for Czechs it's *knedlíky* – big bread or potato balls sliced like bread and meant to mop up gravy.
- » **Pork** Move over beef, *vepřové maso* (pork) is king here. Highlights include roast pork, pork *guláš* (goulash) or pork *vepřový řízek* (schnitzel).
- » **Becherovka** A shot of this sweetish herbal liqueur from Karlovy Vary is a popular way to start (or end) a big meal. Drink it cold.
- » **Carp** This lowly river fish, known locally as *kapr*, is given pride of place every Christmas at the centre of the family meal.