



Central Europe

PHRASEBOOK & DICTIONARY

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contents

	Cze	Ger	Hun	Pol	Slv	Sln
chapter contents	9	49	89	129	169	209

introduction	11	51	91	131	171	211
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pronunciation

vowel sounds	12	52	92	132	172	212
word stress	12	52	92	132	172	212
consonant sounds	13	53	93	133	172	213

basics

language difficulties	14	54	94	134	174	214
numbers	15	55	95	135	175	215
time & dates	15	55	95	135	175	215
weather	17	57	97	137	177	217
border crossing	17	57	97	137	177	217

transport

tickets & luggage	18	58	98	138	178	218
getting around	19	59	99	139	179	219
car, motorbike & bicycle hire	20	61	100	140	180	220
directions	21	61	101	141	181	221

accommodation

finding accommodation	23	63	103	143	183	223
requests & queries	24	64	104	144	184	224
checking out	25	65	105	145	185	225

communications & banking

the internet	25	65	105	145	185	225
mobile/cell phone	26	66	106	146	186	226
telephone	26	66	106	146	186	226
post office	27	67	107	147	187	227
bank	27	67	107	147	187	227

sightseeing

getting in	28	68	108	148	188	228
tours	29	69	108	149	189	228

Cze Ger Hun Pol Slv Sln

shopping

enquiries	30	70	109	150	190	229
paying	31	71	110	151	191	230
clothes & shoes	31	71	111	152	191	231
books & music	32	72	111	152	192	231
photography	32	72	112	152	192	231

meeting people

greetings, goodbyes & introductions	33	73	112	153	193	232
occupations	34	74	113	154	194	233
background	34	74	114	154	194	233
age	34	74	114	155	195	234
feelings	35	75	114	155	195	234

entertainment

going out	35	75	115	155	195	235
interests	35	76	115	156	196	235

food & drink

finding a place to eat	36	76	116	156	196	236
ordering food	36	76	116	156	197	236
drinks	37	77	117	157	197	236
in the bar	37	77	117	157	197	237
self-catering	38	78	118	158	198	238
special diets & allergies	38	78	118	158	198	238
menu decoder	39	79	119	159	199	239

emergencies

basics	41	81	121	161	201	241
police	41	81	121	161	201	241

health

medical needs	42	82	122	162	202	242
symptoms, conditions & allergies	43	83	123	163	203	243

dictionary

44	84	124	164	204	244
----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----

index

249

festivals

255

Central Europe





- Polish
- Slovak
- Slovene

*Note: Language areas are approximate only.
For more details see the relevant introduction.*



central europe – at a glance

One of the rewarding things about travelling through Central Europe is the rich variety of cuisine, customs, architecture and history. The flipside of course is that you'll encounter a number of very different languages. Most languages spoken in Central Europe belong to what's known as the Indo-European language family, believed to have originally developed from one language spoken thousands of years ago.

German belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo European language family and is quite closely related to English. You should find that many basic words in German are similar to English words. The Slavic languages originated north of the Carpathians and are now divided into Eastern, Western and Southern subgroups. Czech, Slovak and Polish all belong to the Western subgroup of the Slavic language family, while Slovene belongs to the Southern subgroup. Fortunately (for travellers at least), all these Central European Slavic languages are written in the Latin alphabet. Hungarian is something of a linguistic oddity within Europe. Though classified as a member of the Finno-Ugric language group, making it a distant relative of Finnish, it has no other significant similarities to any other language in Europe – or the world for that matter.

did you know?

- The European Union (EU) was established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It developed from the European Economic Community, founded by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Since the 2007 enlargement, it has 27 member states and 23 official languages.
- The EU flag is a circle of 12 gold stars on a blue background – the number 12 representing wholeness.
- The EU anthem is the 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.
- Europe Day, 9 May, commemorates the 1950 declaration by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman which marked the creation of the European Union.
- The euro has been in circulation since E-Day, 1 January 2002. The euro's symbol (€) was inspired by the Greek letter epsilon (ε) – Greece being the cradle of European civilisation and ε being the first letter of the word 'Europe'.
- The Eurovision Song Contest, held each May, has been running since 1956. For the larger part of the competition's history, the performers were only allowed to sing in their country's national language, but that's no longer the case.

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