

Hotels & Hostels

Want more sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to lonelyplanet.com/hotels and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

SLEEPING

top picks

- **Absolutum Hotel** (p227)
- **Angelo Hotel** (p230)
- **Castle Steps** (p219)
- **Czech Inn** (p225)
- **Hotel Aria** (p218)
- **Hotel Josef** (p221)
- **Golden Well Hotel** (p219)
- **Icon Hotel** (p222)
- **Mandarin Oriental** (p218)

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; by the end of 2009, there were more than 600 hotels in central Prague.

Prague 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.

There was a huge boom in hotel building from 2000 to 2009, especially in the four- and five-star sectors. 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.

Five-star hotels also popped up all over the place – the long-established Four Seasons in Staré Město and the newer Mandarin Oriental in Malá Strana were joined in 2009 by no fewer than 10 luxury hotels, including offerings from Kempinski, Rocco Forte and Le Méridien.

But the recession hit Prague’s hotel sector hard, and oversupply at the top end of the market resulted in falling occupancy rates. Many places have dropped their prices in an attempt to attract business, and as this book was going to press the city was once more considered a bargain destination, with average accommodation prices for UK travellers down 38% on 2009. It’s well worth shopping around and looking for special offers on hotel websites.

An increasing number of Prague hotels provide specially adapted rooms and facilities for wheelchair users; we have noted these facilities in the individual listings. Although smoking is banned in public places, hotels are not covered by this law, and many still accommodate smokers; the reviews here include a no-smoking icon if nonsmoking rooms are available. Air-conditioning is standard in midrange and top-end places, but not in budget options.

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, and more and more hoteliers are offering ‘aparthotels’, a collection of serviced apartments with a hotel-style reception desk. The cost of a short-term stay in a self-catering flat is now comparable with a midrange hotel room, and 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, p218). Typical rates for a modern two-person apartment with living room/bedroom, bathroom, TV and kitchen

ette range from around 1800Kč per night for a place in the outer suburbs, to around 3000Kč or 4000Kč 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 bedlinen 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.com) newspaper also lists agencies 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 (p218) are reli-

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)