

# Malá Strana

PRAGUE CASTLE TO CHARLES BRIDGE | NORTHERN MALÁ STRANA | SOUTHERN MALÁ STRANA | PETŘÍN



## Neighbourhood Top Five

**1** Experience the bustle and throng of **Charles Bridge** (p83), a crowded half-kilometre of baroque statues, busking musicians, postcard sellers, caricature artists, snapshotting tourists and stunning views. Better still, experience the bridge at its most romantic, at dawn.

**2** Gaze at the florid frescoes and *trompe l'œil* trickery that adorn the soaring vaults and domes of **St Nicholas Church** (p86).

**3** Remember the repression of communist-era Prague with a visit to the **John Lennon Wall** (p87), where youths once gathered in a spirit of rebellion.

**4** Admire the faith and passion that has gone into creating the countless costumes worn by the **Infant Jesus of Prague** (p89).

**5** Escape from the crowds with a stroll among the aristocratic fripperies of the impressive – and unexpected – **Wallenstein Garden** (p88).

For more detail of this area, see Map p328 ➔

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Charles Bridge is a victim of its own popularity – too often your visit to Prague's most beautiful location will be spent squeezing through the crowds, trying to catch a glimpse of the view. If you want to experience the bridge at its most atmospheric, set your alarm clock for an early start. Try to arrive around dawn (check <http://timeanddate.com> for sunrise times), and enjoy a leisurely stroll across the bridge in perfect peace before returning to your hotel for breakfast.

### Best Places to Eat

- Elegantes (p93)
- Café Lounge (p91)
- Ichnusa Botega Bistro (p91)
- U Malé Velryby (p91)
- Café de Paris (p91)

For reviews, see p91. ➡

### Best Places to Drink

- Mlýnská Kavárna (p93)
- Klub Újezd (p93)
- Malostranská beseda (p93)
- U Malého Glena (p94)

For reviews, see p93. ➡

### Best Viewpoints

- Petřín Lookout Tower (p90)
- Malá Strana Bridge Tower (p84)
- St Nicholas Church Bell Tower (p86)

For reviews, see p86. ➡

## Explore: Malá Strana

Almost too picturesque for its own good, the baroque district of Malá Strana (Little Quarter) tumbles down the hillside between Prague Castle and the river. The focal point of the neighbourhood is Nerudova street, which links the castle to Malostranské náměstí, Malá Strana's main square, dominated by the soaring green dome of St Nicholas Church. To its north is a maze of palaces and gardens, home to government offices and foreign embassies; to the south are more parks and gardens straggling along the banks of the Vltava before merging into the more commercialised streets of Smíchov.

Once you get away from the crowded pavements of Nerudova and Mostecká – the main tourist route between the castle and Charles Bridge – there are cobbled backstreets to explore, with hidden historic gardens, quaint and colourful house signs perched above doorways, and countless little bars and cafes where you can while away an afternoon.

## Local Life

➤ **Popular Parks** Though it may be picturesque, Malá Strana is also a place of work for many Praguers, filled as it is with government offices, embassies and consulates. Favourite parks where locals relax during lunch break include **Vojan Gardens** and **Kampa Park** (p88).

➤ **Hangouts** Kafičko (p94) and Mlýnská Kavárna (p93) are popular venues for after-work drinks among local artists, journalists and politicians.

➤ **Petřín** Summer or winter, Petřín (p90) is every bit as popular with local families as it is with tourists. On the weekend, the hill's lookout tower and mirror maze are thronging with excited kids.

## Getting There & Away

➤ **Metro** Malostranská metro station is in northern Malá Strana, about five minutes' walk from Malostranské náměstí.

➤ **Tram** Lines 12, 20 and 22 run along Újezd with stops at Hellichová and Malostranské náměstí.

➤ **Funicular** A funicular railway links Malá Strana with the summit of Petřín Hill.