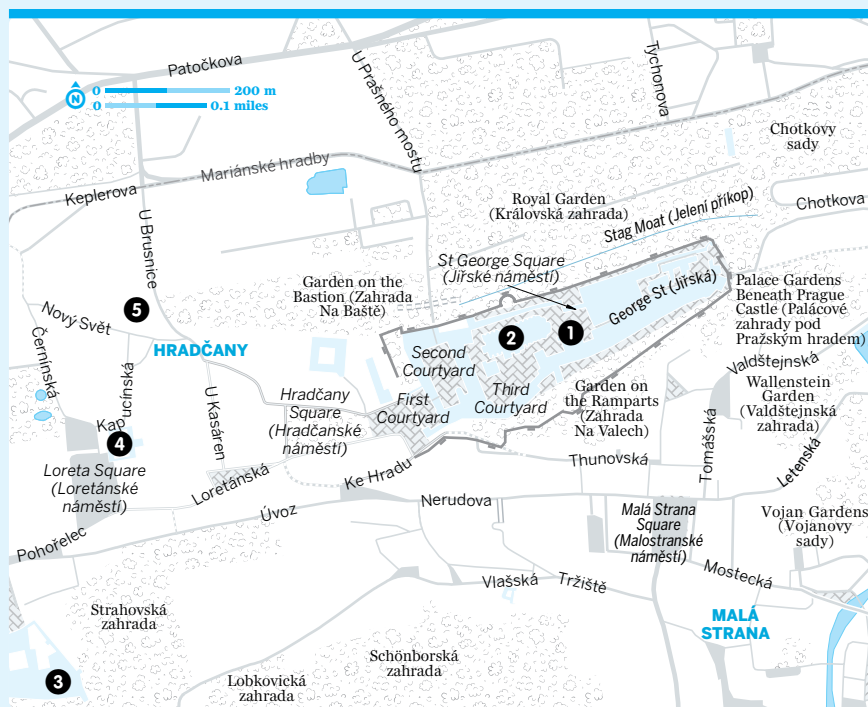


# Prague Castle & Hradčany

## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Explore the historic palaces, churches and glorious gardens of **Prague Castle** (p66).
- 2 Soak up the stunning view from the summit of the **Great South Tower of St Vitus Cathedral** (p74).
- 3 Absorb the atmosphere of ancient wisdom at the **Strahov Library** (p75).
- 4 Admire the baroque beauty of the **Loreta** (p77).
- 5 Wander through the peaceful medieval backstreets of the **Nový Svět** (p78) district.



For more detail of this area, see Map p330 ➔

## Explore: Prague Castle & Hradčany

Weirdly, this can be both the most crowded and the least crowded neighbourhood in the city. While Prague Castle is thronging with tourists, just a few blocks away you can find yourself alone in the cobbled backstreets of Nový Svět.

The castle is the big attraction, of course, but crowds can spoil the experience. To avoid the worst of the crowds, try to visit the castle early or late – before 10.30am or after 3.30pm – and on a weekday if possible. Your ticket is valid for two consecutive days – better two quiet mornings than cramming it all into one crowded day.

Start with the castle's main entrance at the western end, then move through the various courtyards and sights before exiting at the eastern end. You'll need at least two hours to see the main sights, and a full day if you want to visit everything.

Note that you can wander through the castle grounds and gardens without a ticket – this can be a magical experience on a summer evening, when the courtyards are almost deserted – but you'll need a ticket for all of the main historic buildings.

## Local Life

➔ **Hangouts** This may be the most tourist-heavy district in Prague, but there are still some hangouts that are favoured by locals, notably the cool cafe-bar U Zavěšeného Kafe (p80), and the traditional beer hall called Pivnice U Černého Vola (p80).

➔ **Walking the dog** Hradčany residents out for a stroll avoid the crowds by taking to the Stag Moat on the north side of the castle – you can walk in peace from the Powder Bridge east to Pod Bruskou, near Malostranská metro station (April to October only).

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Metro** The nearest metro station is Malostranská, but from there it's a stiff climb up the Old Castle Steps to the eastern end of the castle. Hradčanská station is about 10 minutes' walk north of the castle, but it's an easy, level walk to Hradčany and the castle.

➔ **Tram** Take line 22 from Národní třída on the southern edge of Staré Město, Malostranské náměstí in Malá Strana, or Malostranská metro station to the Pražský hrad stop. If you want to explore Hradčany first, stay on the tram until Pohořelec, the second stop after this one.

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Prague Castle is perched on a steep hill – a sweaty climb in warm weather. To explore the neighbourhood without having to walk uphill, begin at the Pohořelec tram stop (p65) and wander via Strahov Monastery and the Loreta to the castle – all downhill. From the castle it's downhill again through Malá Strana to Charles Bridge.

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Host (p78)
- ➔ Lobkowicz Palace Café (p80)
- ➔ Villa Richter (p80)

For reviews, see p78. ➔

## Best Places to Drink

- ➔ U Zavěšeného Kafe (p80)
- ➔ Pivnice U Černého Vola (p80)
- ➔ Klášterní pivovar Strahov (p80)

For reviews, see p80. ➔

## Best Museums

- ➔ Strahov Library (p75)
- ➔ Story of Prague Castle (p70)
- ➔ St Vitus Treasury (p67)