

Czech Republic

Two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an atlas-full of European countries and cities are touted to travellers as the 'new Prague', or the 'next Czech Republic'. The focus may have shifted slightly to other up-and-coming destinations, but the original Prague and Czech Republic remain essential stops on any European sojourn.

Prague's inevitable transition from communist capital to modern metropolis is now complete, as centuries of history and architectural overachievement compete with energy and impetus. And now, more than ever, is the time to explore the Czech Republic beyond Prague.

Elsewhere, castles and chateaux abound, illuminating the stories of powerful families and individuals whose influence was felt well beyond the nation's current borders. Unravel the history of Bohemia and Moravia and you're delving into the legacy of Europe itself.

Beautifully preserved Renaissance towns that withstood ravages of the communist era link the centuries, and idiosyncratic landscapes provide a stage for active adventures.

Highlights include the audacious cliff-top chateau at Český Krumlov, the discreetly confident university town of Olomouc, and Brno's cosmopolitan buzz. Venture further to quieter gems such as Loket, Telč, Mikulov and Slavonice to uncover the true essence of the Czech Republic.

You'll discover the Czech Republic is more than a match for any new challengers.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 78,864 sq km
- **Capital** Prague
- **Currency** Czech crown (Kč); €1 = 27Kč; US\$1 = 20Kč; UK£1 = 28Kč; A\$1 = 14Kč; ¥100 = 20Kč; NZ\$1 = 11Kč
- **Famous for** beer, ice hockey, Kafka, supermodels
- **Official Language** Czech
- **Phrases** *dobry den/ahoj* (hello/hi); *na shledanou* (goodbye); *děkuji* (thank you); *promiňte* (excuse me)
- **Population** 10.2 million
- **Telephone codes** country code ☎ 420; international access code ☎ 00
- **Visas** citizens of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, the USA and 23 other countries can stay for up to 90 days without a visa; see p154 for details



