



Best of Czechia



Prague – the cornerstone of a magical labyrinth

No Czech city has been written and talked about as much as Prague, the country's capital.

To stand on one of the most beautiful stone bridges in the world, Charles Bridge, and to look beyond the contours of its silent statues across the Old Town full of winding streets and charming squares up to where Prague Castle, with St. Vitus Cathedral, shines on a hill is to have an experience of which even those who live here their whole lives never tire.

The city of a hundred towers is a mysterious labyrinth in which history intertwines with the present, a magical place where the most influential men in Europe have come together: rulers, generals, alchemists, Jewish scholars... It was here that Rabbi Loew once brought the clay Golem to life; Arcimboldo created his rich portraits from fruit and vegetables; alchemists' laboratories at the court of Rudolph II sought the Philosopher's Stone; Franz Kafka wrote his dark and oppressive works; the compositions of not only Smetana and Dvořák but Mozart and Liszt met with rapturous ovations; the church

reformer Jan Hus preached; and Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Giordano Bruno and Tycho de Brahe pored over astronomical telescopes...

Strolling around Prague today means being part of all the magic and mysteries of the past. The city simply has an atmosphere that no other city in the world can match. You have to become one with it, to let it do its stuff, to become part of it at least for a while – perhaps then it will reveal its secrets to you too.

Experience the Story of Prague Castle as told at a permanent exhibition on a Gothic floor of the Old Royal Palace at Prague Castle. It is a story that carries the secrets of the final resting place of the most important Czech rulers and saints, a place of historical artefacts, a place of historical styles combined in one unique complex, a place that safeguards the Czech Crown Jewels, the St. Vitus Treasure and collections preserved from the past and also a place that is the magnificent seat of the president of Czechia.



prague.eu

Highlights

1. Prague Castle

Climb the Old Castle Steps to Prague Castle and visit its courtyards and the interiors of the Old Royal Palace. From St. Vitus Cathedral, head to the Golden Lane – at one time a haven for alchemists and charlatans.

2. Vyšehrad

Soak up the atmosphere of the Vyšehrad fortified settlement, where prior to the arrival of Christianity pagan princes prayed to forest deities and where today one of the most beautiful churches in Prague stands.

3. Charles Bridge

Take an early morning stroll across the medieval stone bridge, before its magnificent Baroque statues are besieged by crowds of tourists.

4. Old Town Square with the Astronomical Clock

Bear in mind that Old Town Square is the true heart of Prague. What's more, you can take in a procession of Apostles at the Old Town Hall's Astronomical Clock at the top of every hour! Then, while enjoying a beer or coffee beneath Baroque arcades, watch the bustle on the square and admire the towers of Týn Church.

5. The Jewish town of Josefov

Follow in the footsteps of Franz Kafka and Prague's famous rabbis to the narrow lanes of the former Jewish ghetto.

6. Palace Gardens

Relax on the terraces of the Baroque gardens beneath Prague Castle and stroll through the narrow, steep streets of the Lesser Town.

7. Municipal House

Take in a Mozart or Vivaldi concert at the Municipal House, the most magnificent Art Nouveau building in Czechia.

8. Petřín Hill

Surrounded by trees at the top of Petřín, you will forget that you are in the heart of a metropolis.

9. The Infant Jesus of Prague

Visit the Church of Our Lady Victorious, where pilgrims pray to the famous Infant Jesus of Prague for protection and help.

10. Estates Theatre

Visit the Estates Theatre to watch The Marriage of Figaro, where it was personally conducted by the genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1787; the opera has been performed there ever since.

Bathe like a monarch in Mariánské Lázně

If you're looking for a tranquil spot well away from the clamour of the city, Mariánské Lázně is the place for you.

From the time that Premonstratensian monks discovered a healing spring in some woodland it was over 600 years before the place acquired spa status, under the name the Maria Spring. In the 19th century spa facilities began springing up around it faster than mushrooms in the local forests. When the poet Goethe fell passionately in love with the young Ulrika there in 1823, a stay in Mariánské Lázně was an obligatory element of the social season. Guests also included Destinová, Wagner, Chopin, Kafka, Edison and hundreds of others.

Its cast-iron colonnade with a Singing Fountain – which resounds with classics of world music ever odd hour (in operation from April to October) – is a real gem and undoubtedly its most popular sight. If you have a romantic spirit, come back in the evening when the music is accompanied by a light show.

You can then stroll and taste the mineral waters along a colonnade with a stately cast-iron structure and a wooden coffered ceiling. There are close to 100 healing springs with a high mineral salt content in the town and its environs.

Enjoy a mineral bath in the Royal Cabin, which was used by Great Britain's King Edward VII, or in the Emperor Franz Joseph Cabin.

England's King Edward VII opened the first golf course in Bohemia here in 1905. The highlight of the club's history was when, in 2003, it won the right to use the title Royal Golf Club thanks to a generous decision by Queen Elisabeth II. This is just one reason why Mariánské Lázně is the jewel in the crown of Czech spas.

Getting there from Prague:
170 km, 1:50 hour, 2:50 hrs

Nearby sights:
• The town of Chodov Planá
• Teplá Monastery
• Bečov nad Teplou Chateau

marianskelazne.cz



Karlovy Vary – the seductive beauty of spa colonnades

The most famous Czech spa, the importance of which far exceeds the borders of the country, lies in the westernmost part of Bohemia in the charming Teplá river valley.

that runs between the splendid facades of grand houses and colonnades richly decorated with columns. Knowing that Peter the Great, Marie Theresa, Bach, Goethe, Casanova and Beethoven have taken the waters here just adds to the experience.

You will discover another of the town's attractions if, as well as its health-giving waters, you try Becherovka, the famous local herb liqueur. Ascending a spa trail through woods to a height above the town and seeing it laid out deep beneath you is equally enchanting. Karlovy Vary will find a place in your heart and make you want to visit again and again.

If you visit Karlovy Vary at the start of summer you will experience the atmosphere of the biggest international film festival east of Cannes. You might even meet a Hollywood star on the red carpet. kviff.com

Karlovy Vary, with its 12 hot healing springs and famous spring gushing up to 15 metres into the air is the real jewel in the crown of Czech spas.

Legend has it that the now world-famous spa spring was discovered in the 14th century when the hunting party of king and emperor Charles IV happened upon it.

It is hard to resist Karlovy Vary's carefree spirit and the sense of stately calm on the promenade

karlovyvary.cz

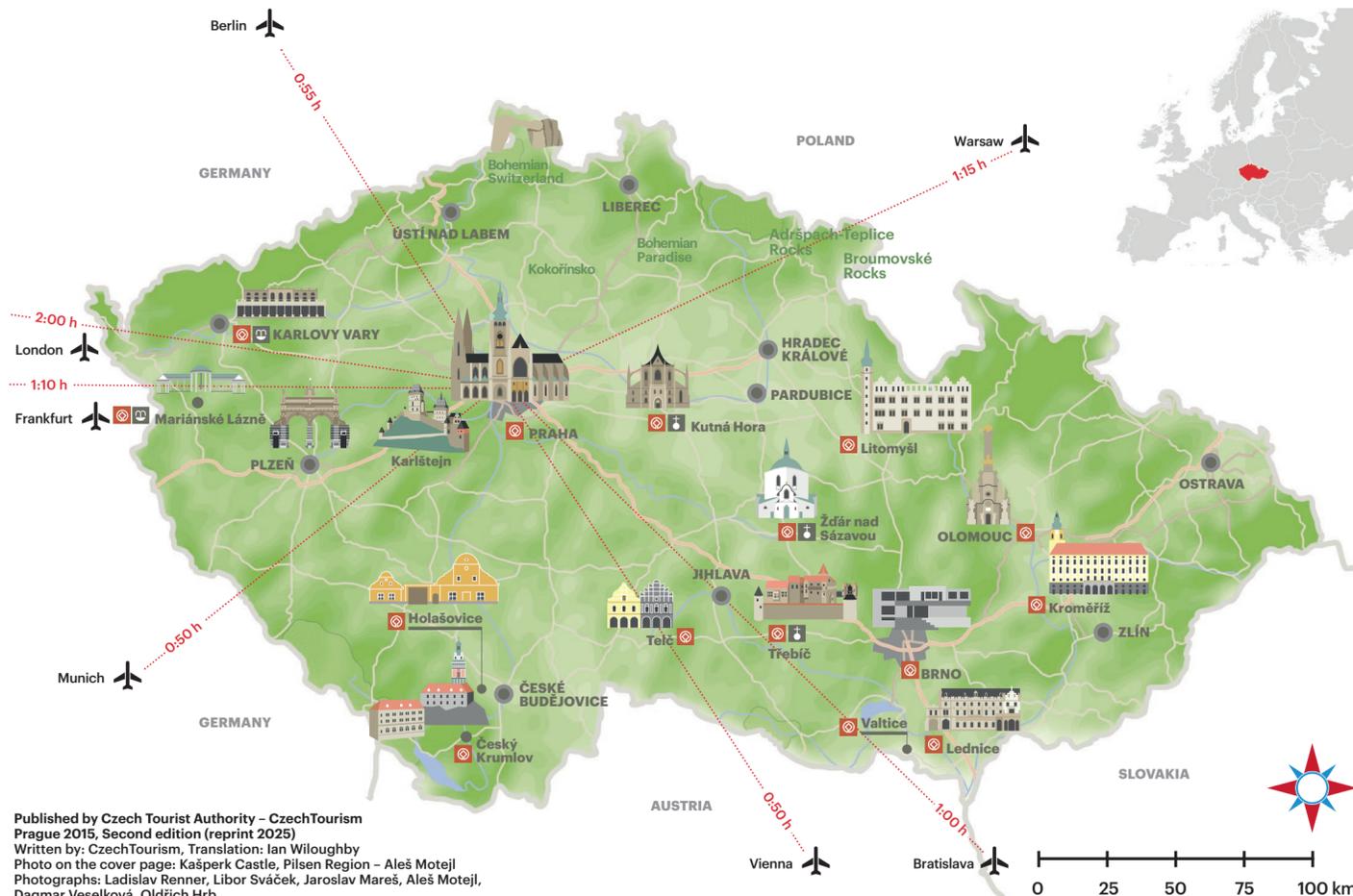
unexpected



steam room

This is the country where a family bike trip feels like a spa day. Visit the Elbe Trail and enjoy a smooth ride through a breathtaking valley. Active holiday or a spa break? Have both at once.

visitczechia.com



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Plzeň

Plzeň – the City of Beer and Culture

The name **Plzeň** carries the aroma of a freshly pulled beer.

However, before you sit down to a half-litre of the best Plzeň (Pilsner) **lager**, take a stroll around the historic centre of this ancient settlement. Be sure to take in the wonderful **Renaissance Town Hall**, built according to a plan drawn up by Italian builder Giovanni de Statia. The **Gothic Cathedral of St. Bartholomew** stands out on Plzeň's skyline, while the **Great Synagogue** (1893) is one of the largest Jewish places of worship in Europe.

It would also be a mistake not to get to know the real spirit of the city. It is in the walls of houses and on the streets and squares and can literally be felt at every step. After all, Plzeň has an artistic and joyful spirit that it shares generously.

The living art that pulses through the streets is greatly complemented by several important theatres, a philharmonic orchestra, galleries, cultural cafés and countless music, theatre and folk festivals. Budding enthusiasts show off art that mashes up genres – in the shadow of the Cathedral of St. Bartholomew, on the busy main street, in park and in underground clubs.

A rich programme features all kinds of arts events from theatre, music, dance, design and architecture, industrial and Baroque, to exhibitions and even new circus.

Discover the secret of beer-making in the cellars of the Prazdroj (Pilsner Urquell) brewery, which boasts a wonderful gate and a water tower reminiscent of a lighthouse. prazdrojvisit.cz

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 91 km, 1 hrs, 🕒 1:35 hrs, 🚆 1 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Plasy Monastery
 - Kladruby Monastery
 - Horšovský Týn Chateau

visitpilsen.eu



Český Krumlov

Český Krumlov – a medieval gem on the banks of a river

One of the most beautiful historic towns in Europe, included on the UNESCO list of world cultural and natural heritage sites, is located in South Bohemia.

And if you get tired of being lost, take a seat at the chateau theatre's revolving auditorium, tour one of the city's many galleries and museums or board a boat and enjoy the views of the town from the river.

Don't miss the Castle Museum. Its imaginative exhibition includes a model of the castle as it looked in the 16th century, a lapidarium, presentations on life in past eras and even a cinema. The museum is open year round.

Enjoy one of the many theatre performances that take place from spring to autumn from a unique revolving auditorium.

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 173 km, 2:25 hrs, 🕒 3:40 hrs, 🚆 3:00 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Vyšší Brod Cistercian Monastery
 - Lipno Dam
 - Rožmberk nad Vltavou Castle
 - Zlatá Koruna Monastery

Losing yourself in the maze of proud Renaissance and Gothic houses, sombre monasteries and dignified churches is a real delight as there is a new surprise and a new secret around every corner. The town seems like a dream that changes with each exploration.

ckrumlov.cz



Bohemian Paradise

Fascinating rock towns

Bohemian Paradise

Discover the unique harmony of bizarre stone towns, deep pine forests, majestic castles and chateaus and get lost for a while in the Bohemian Paradise rock labyrinth – a UNESCO geopark!

The countless little paths that run through the rocks of Bohemian Paradise's sandstone rock towns and labyrinths are entrancing. You will pass through narrow crevices between rocks and climb between them until you reach wonderful lookout points. The Mariánská Vyhlička is regarded as the loveliest lookout in the Hruboskalské rock town. It affords wonderful views of Ještěd and in particular Hrubá Skála Chateau and the ruins of Trosky Castle.

Thanks to the work of natural forces you can admire effusions of volcanic mountains that today comprise spots overlooking the landscape with amazing views, including from the Kozákov Lookout, from the ruins of Trosky Castle and from Zebín Hill.

Transport from Prague to Turnov:
🚗 90 km, 1 hrs, 🕒 2:00 hrs, 🚆 1:30 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Kost Castle, Sychrov Chateau • Bozkov Caves
 - Škoda Museum in Mladá Boleslav

cesky-raj.info



Bohemian Switzerland

At the Bohemian Switzerland National Park you will discover an unspoilt landscape of sandstone rock towns, gorges and lookout points perfect for walks and biking. The monumental sandstone arch Pravčická brána (Pravčická Gate) is not just a symbol of the national park – it is the largest natural rock arch anywhere in Europe.

A short distance away you will find the Sokolí hnízdo (Falcon's Nest) Chateau, once the holiday retreat of the Clary-Aldringen aristocratic family. At several places in Bohemian Switzerland it is possible to admire springs of crystal clear water that bubble up from large underground lakes.

Transport from Prague to Hřensko:
🚗 130 km, 1:50 hrs, 🕒 1:30 hrs to Děčín From there, buses go to Hřensko-Mezná.

- Nearby sights:**
- Ústí nad Labem • Děčín • Velké Žernoseky

Other rock towns in Bohemia
wonderful Kokořín, Broumovsko, Adršpach-Teplička Rocks

ceskesvycarsko.cz



Kutná Hora

Mysterious Kutná Hora

Kutná Hora, a silver town, deserves its second title „the country's treasure chest“.

Its silver mining wealth helped the Czech kingdom to flourish.

Its mysteries include cathedrals, monasteries, noblemen's houses, mysterious corners, vaulted cellars and gems of Gothic and Baroque architecture, urban planning and sculpture. In the Middle Ages silver was mined there, coins were minted, trade blossomed and it was even the seat of Czech kings.

Standing beneath the arches of the Church of St. Barbara, one of the most beautiful Gothic cathedrals in Europe, is an awe-inspiring experience. You can also stroll through the courtyard and chambers of the Italian Court, once the palace of King Wenceslas IV, or descend with bated breath into the ossuary of a Cistercian monastery, taking in with a mixture of awe and unease its altars, coats of arms, chandeliers, pyramids and obelisks made from the bones of plague victims. Another attraction is the unique Gothic Stone House, where you can become a medieval craftsman or cook for a while...

Alongside the Church of St. Barbara, the historical heart of the town is the Cathedral of the Ascension of Our Lady and St. John the Baptist, which is included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

When touring the town don't neglect to visit the Stone Fountain and the Italian Court, which served as the central mint and the seat of Czech kings. In the Czech Museum of Silver you can learn about local silver mining in a very lively manner. On the museum tour you will pass – equipped only with a lamp, helmet and miner's tunic – through the 250-metre tunnel of a medieval mine.

The Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region (GASK) is located in a former Jesuit college and focuses on Czech modern art of the late 19th and 20th centuries. GASK also shows contemporary art.

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 84 km, 1:30 hrs, 🕒 1 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Ossuary at Sedlec
 - Zleby Chateau
 - Český Šternberk Castle

kutnahora.cz



Třebíč

Třebíč – a town of tolerance

Jews and Christians side by side, peaceful and friendly neighbours with different faiths but one destiny.

Třebíč's Jewish Quarter is one of the oldest and most valuable in Czechia and is the only Jewish historical landmark outside Israel included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The preserved ground plan, which comprises 116 surviving houses and narrow alleyways, represents the original extent of the ghetto.

You will find various kinds of tombstones in the Jewish cemetery in the centre of Třebíč, with their styles documenting the development of Jewish burial art from the Renaissance to Baroque to Classicism.

The oldest dates from 1625. The cemetery was created in close proximity to the Jewish quarter on the slope Hrádek – i.e., on a hill outside the town, following the Jewish tradition. Covering almost 12,000 square metres, it is one of the largest Jewish cemeteries in Czechia.

When in Třebíč be sure not to miss the Basilica of St. Procopius, while the town's Karlovo

náměstí is one of the largest squares in the country. And climb the lookout tower at the Church of St. Martin for a great view.

Take the educational trail that leads you through one of Europe's best preserved ghettos, a place that reflects the ingenuity of its inhabitants as regards usage of the space allotted to them. Get to know the stories of Třebíč's Jewish settlement!

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 180 km, 1:55 hrs, 🕒 2:45 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Zelená Hora (Green Mountain), Zďár nad Sázavou
 - The town of Znojmo
 - The town of Jihlava

visittrebic.eu



The Church of St. John of Nepomuk

Žďár nad Sázavou – a town marked by Santini's genius

Visit one of Santini's most distinctive works – the Church of St. John of Nepomuk in Zelená Hora.

The building, which has been included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, was intended to celebrate the remarkable figure of St. John of Nepomuk – and you yourself can judge how successful its creators were.

St. John of Nepomuk is symbolised by a five-pointed star, in reference to the legend that a five-pointed crown appeared in the place where he met his death in the river Vltava. The symbol is also visible in other elements of the construction. The church's dome is dominated by a large red tongue, another symbol of torture. It is surrounded by a ring of flames through which the rays of the sun shine, while some windows are also in the shape of a tongue.

The most important statue in the church is of course that of the martyr who is standing on a globe and appears to be ascending.

zelena-hora.eu



Brno

South Moravia – a region of architecture and wine

Brno

The second largest city in Czechia is located in the fertile lowlands of South Moravia. Brno is a city where one never feels lost, because despite its size it is intimate and friendly. Its dominant structures are the Gothic castle of Špilberk and the neo-Gothic Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul – even though the two were built 650 years apart.

It is a magical experience to encounter, next to each other, its opulent Baroque churches and modernist exhibition palaces (Brno is the trade fair centre of Czechia), plague monuments, fountains and noblemen's palaces, a monumental neo-Renaissance theatre and numerous Functionalist gems. One of the most important Functionalist buildings in the world, and one of the most fascinating villas, is the Villa Tugendhat. The UNESCO-protected villa was built in 1930 by the world-renowned architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and is a wonderful example of modern architecture.

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 210 km, 2 hrs, 🕒 2:40 hrs, 🚆 2:50 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Slavkov (Austerlitz) Chateau
 - Moravian Karst

ticbrno.cz

The Lednice-Valtice Complex

In a romantic landscape lies a unique complex of historic buildings beautifully set in natural surroundings.

The majestic Baroque Valtice Chateau is on one side and the stately Lednice Chateau, built in the Tudor Gothic style, is on the other, surrounded by a system of artificial lakes and river channels. In between, there are Chinese gazebos, bridges, romantic summer houses, hunting lodges in the Empire style, a colonnade with beautiful vistas and even a minaret from which there is a splendid view of the countryside; this is the Lednice-Valtice Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Climb onto a bicycle and cross a landscape of wine cellars in a wine-growing microregion known as the "Blue Mountains" on the Velkopavlovická Wine Trail. stezky.cz

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 255 km, 2:30 hrs, 🕒 2:40 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- Pálava Protected Landscape Area
 - Mikulov Chateau
 - Valtice Chateau

jjzmi-morava.cz



The Holy Hill near Olomouc

Olomouc – Moravia's 1000-year spiritual centre

In the very heart of Moravia, amidst the most fertile land in the country, in a district known as Haná, proudly stands the ancient city of Olomouc, since time immemorial one of the most important centres of the Bohemian kingdom.

Imbued with a special dignity and spiritual power, it is full of history, a city of Baroque wonder and reverence to God.

Visiting Olomouc is like meeting a wise and venerable old man who has travelled many roads and whose word is worth a hundred books. One is taken aback at every turn by the unexpected number of important and imposing historical landmarks – grand cathedrals, charming little churches, splendid burghers' palaces and monumental monasteries.

It boasts the captivating Bishop's Palace, a masterwork of European Romanesque architecture, Gothic churches and cathedrals, Renaissance palaces with richly-decorated facades – but above all Olomouc Baroque. Wonderful fountains, the Archbishop's Palace,

the Hradisko monastery (known as the El Escorial of Moravia), the pilgrimage basilica on the Holy Hill and, first and foremost, an imposing, UNESCO-protected plague column, the largest Baroque group of sculptures in Central Europe. It also has one curiosity – a workers' astronomical clock from 1955.

The Haná region stands out not just for its hospitable climate but also healthy natural regional specialities. The local cuisine's most famous product is the cheese Olomoucké tvarůžky. Delicious, low in fat and with a distinctive aroma, it is available in various forms in local restaurants. tvruzky.cz

The Holy Trinity Column in the centre of Olomouc is a pinnacle of Central European Baroque and is a UNESCO protected historical landmark.

Getting there from Prague:
🚗 280 km, 2:40 hrs, 🕒 2:20 hrs

- Nearby sights:**
- The Holy Hill near Olomouc
 - Bouzov Castle
 - Helfštýn Castle

tourism.olomouc.eu

