

So, you're in Prague...

www.tasteofprague.com
hello@tasteofprague.com
(+420) 775 577 275

...Now what?

Here is some general practical information about your stay in Prague. We hope these tips will help you get the most out of your stay.

Enjoying the sights

When?

Prague is a very popular tourist destination and the main sights may, and probably will, get very busy and crowded during the main tourist season (from Easter until the end of September and around Christmas and NYE). If you have ever been to Piazza San Marco in Venice during the high season, you know what we mean.

We do not particularly like crowds. That is why we have one piece of advice if you want to enjoy Prague without the crowds:

Visit the **main sights early in the morning or late in the evening**. For the rest of the day, visit more local sights or the residential districts of Prague. You will get a much more intimate experience and a truer image of what life in Prague is all about.

What?

We recommend that you save some time and visit the residential areas of Prague just around the tourist centre. Of course, you will visit the main sights, too, but let's be honest here: the tourist centre is an empty shell and no locals truly live there. To get an idea how the locals truly live, you must travel elsewhere. With the distances fairly small and the public transport very efficient, it is easier than you might think. Please have a look at some of the other maps and itineraries we have prepared for you.

Getting around

Walking

Prague centre is surprisingly walkable, and we do encourage walking from sight to sight. Please remember that most streets in the city centre are cobblestoned: we recommend comfortable shoes for daily walking. If you insist on heels, locals tend to use the curbs, often the only flat surface on the pavements.

Is walking around Prague safe?

In one word: Yes. We have hardly any violent crime here.

So, you're in Prague...

www.tasteofprague.com
hello@tasteofprague.com
(+420) 775 577 275

Public transport

The Prague public transportation system is cheap, fast, safe and reliable. It comprises three modes of transport: the subway, trams, and buses (which may not enter the centre for environmental reasons).

Subways

The Prague subway system has three lines: the green line A, the yellow line B, and the red line C. They all intersect in the centre. The subway is the fastest way to get from one end of the city to the other but the stops in the centre are very close to each other; therefore, many people prefer to walk within the city centre. The subway operates from 5pm until just past midnight.

Trams

The system in Prague comprises about thirty lines, again mostly intersecting in the centre. In the rush hours, the busier lines may run at intervals of less than five minutes, while over the weekends the intervals may be as long as 20 minutes. The line most loved by foreign visitors is the 22 line which connects some of the major sights in Prague (thus attracting some pickpockets in the past, too).

Night trams

Night trams all meet at the Lazarska station near the Wenceslas Square for about five minutes, so you can switch lines to get from one part of the town to the other in no time. The atmosphere in the trams is often merry, especially over the weekends when students use it to get home from the parties in the centre. They operate in the off-times of the subway system.

Price

The public transport is fairly cheap. Tickets can be bought either at tobacco shops throughout the city, or at subway stops (vending machines or the inspector booths at the entry into the station). Available tickets: CZK 24, which buys 30 minutes in the system; CZK 36, which buys 90 minutes in the system; CZK 110, which buys one day in the system; CZK 310, which buys three days. You can buy a monthly pass for CZK 670. Reduced rates apply to minors (6 to 15 years of age). Purchased tickets must be validated on entry (look for the yellow boxes at the entry to the station), otherwise they are invalid.

Taxis

Taxi drivers in Prague are notoriously bad, although the situation has improved recently. Always try to avoid the urge to call a cab on the street, especially around train or bus stations. There are some stands near the main sights that guarantee fair prices (look for a thumbs up sign) and that show a small table with approximate fares between the main sights and points of interest in Prague. But if you want to act like a local, you should always call a cab by phone from one of the main taxi operators in Prague. This guarantees a cheaper fare [you'll get a text message indicating the approximate fare] and monitored behaviour. The numbers of the two biggest operators are 14014 and 14015.

So, you're in Prague...

www.tasteofprague.com
hello@tasteofprague.com
(+420) 775 577 275

Language

The official language is Czech, one of the hardest languages for non-native speakers to learn. You should get by with English in the centre. Our tip: if you need assistance in English, ask someone younger - English is now the language students pick at schools; however, it was not taught at schools in the Communist era.

Emergency numbers and calling in general

If something comes up, just call us at +420 775 577 275 or +420 603 252 810.
General emergency number: 112, Fire brigade: 150, Ambulance: 155, Police: 158

The Czech country prefix is +420 (00420). If you want to make local calls but don't want to pay roaming fees, get a prepaid sim card. The cheapest cost CZK 150 (USD 7.5), and include CZK 150 of credit (which buys more than 30 minutes of local calls or about 200 MB of data). The three mobile carriers are O2, T-Mobile and Vodafone. Regardless of what they may claim, their offers are almost identical.

Medical Care

The Czech universal healthcare system does not apply to foreign nationals (unless they are permanent residents or EU Member State citizens). Doctors and hospitals will require cash payment for treatment; however, the prices are fairly low (you should not pay more than CZK 1,000 for emergency treatment). You can later claim reimbursement from your health insurer. Most doctors will speak at least some English. Most effective drugs are prescription drugs only, but you can get basic pain relievers, anti-allergy medication etc. over the counter.

The most convenient emergency room in the centre is located at Spalena 12.
Alternatively, we recommend a cab ride to the emergency of the ÚVN hospital (also known as "stresovicka nemocnice").

Embassies

For a list of embassies in Prague, please visit <http://www.expats.cz/prague/directory/embassies/>.

So, you're in Prague...

www.tasteofprague.com
hello@tasteofprague.com
(+420) 775 577 275

Shopping and Currency

One thing that is very typical for the Czech society and for Prague especially is the absence of religion. That also means that Sunday is not a big day of rest, and most of the shops in the centre will be open (not so much in the local districts). Shops in the centre usually open at about 9 or 10am, and close anywhere between 6pm and 8pm. We are central Europeans, so no siesta breaks for us. If you need groceries and all the big supermarkets are closed, look for smaller convenience stores, usually owned by Vietnamese owners. They tend to close around 10 pm.

Although a member state of the European Union, the Czech Republic has not adopted the Euro. The legal tender is the Czech koruna (or the Czech crown - CZK). Many shops and restaurants accept Euros and will give the change back in crowns at more or less favourable rates of their choosing.

Hunting for souvenirs

What makes sense?

Jewelry. Many young Czech designers create fantastic pieces that are inexpensive given the quality of design and workmanship and are easy to take home. Of course, the Czech garnet is popular, too, but most of them are fakes. Sorry. Buy them in design shops, not in jewelry stores.

Pottery and glass. Czech Republic has always been a superpower in pottery making and glassworks (Bohemian crystal, anyone?). Now the tradition is carried by young Czech designers who create great pieces of all sizes, shapes and price points.

Fashion. We think Czech fashion designers offer fantastic value and quality for the money. You can buy a unique piece in your wardrobe that will last for a long time, will cost reasonable money and you will be the only one who has it back home.

What does not make sense?

Major clothing brands. H&M? Zara? Tommy Hilfiger? Forget it. You get a smaller selection here but more expensive than at home. Look for a local designer instead.

Cheap tchotchkes sold in the Old Town, especially around the Charles Bridge. The Russian dolls may be cute, but they are not in the least local.

So, you're in Prague...

www.tasteofprague.com
hello@tasteofprague.com
(+420) 775 577 275

Exchanging Money

Please beware of the exchange offices abundant on the streets of Prague. Many of them will try to take advantage of you. The most frequent scam is the use of two rates: one for the conversion of larger sums of money (the one advertised in big letters), and another one, much less favourable, for the conversion of amounts that people usually want to convert. To avoid disappointments and fits of uncontrollable rage (we've been there) in front of the exchange office, we recommend that you ALWAYS ask about the final amount you'll get for the specific amount of money you want to convert ("How many crowns will I get for EUR 200, including commission and all charges?"). Then you do your own calculation, and if it all seems right, then you hand the money over the counter. Once you hand the money over the counter, it's hard to get it back.

The safe alternative is to withdraw cash in CZK from an ATM. Check your bank for the applicable rates.

Tipping

Many people ask us about tipping in restaurants. Yes, we do tip up to or around 10% of the amount of the bill if we are happy. If you are not happy, you do not have to tip at all. We usually round up to the nearest amount that makes sense (e.g. CZK 550 to CZK 600 and so on). If you want to tip like a local, do the following: hand the bill to the waiter and say the amount you want to pay (e.g. if the bill is CZK 550 and you want to pay CZK 600, hand over a CZK 1,000 bill and say "six hundred"). The waiter will say "thank you" and return just the difference between the bill and the amount you want to pay. Saves the hassle of finding coins just to collect them back as tip.

Other FAQs

Can I drink the tap water?

Absolutely. Tap water always beats bottled water in independent tests.

Can I use Euros in the Czech Republic?

Mostly yes in the centre. But you always get beat up on the exchange rate. We recommend paying with Czech crowns.