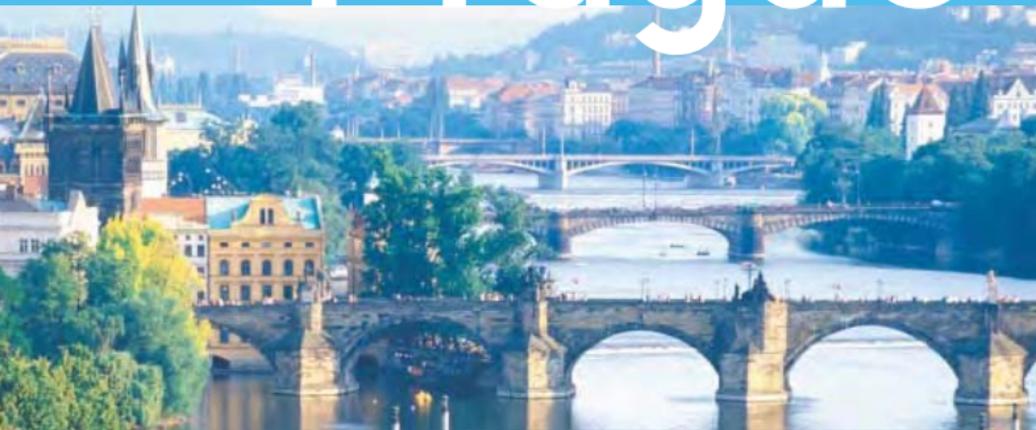


DIRECTIONS

Prague



Up-to-date DIRECTIONS

Inspired IDEAS

User-friendly MAPS

ACCURATE RELIABLE INFORMATIVE



Prague

DIRECTIONS



WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Rob Humphreys



NEW YORK • LONDON • DELHI

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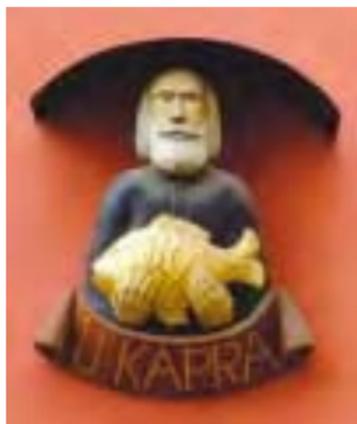
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Prague
Central Prague
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Useful stuff

Prague



Most people come to Prague because they've heard it's a beautiful place, and they're rarely disappointed. With some six hundred years of architecture virtually untouched by natural disaster or war, few other European capitals look as good. The city retains much of its medieval layout and its rich mantle of Baroque, Rococo and Art Nouveau buildings

have successfully escaped the vanities and excesses of postwar redevelopment.



Physically, Prague may have weathered the twentieth century very well but it suffered in other ways. The city that produced the music of Dvořák and Smetana, the literature of Čapek and Kafka and modernist architecture to rival Bauhaus, was forced to endure a brutal Nazi occupation. Then for forty years, during the Communist period, the city lay hidden behind the Iron Curtain, seldom visited by Westerners. All that changed in the 1990s and

When to visit

Prague is now so popular that the streets around the main sights are jam-packed with tourists for much of the year. If you can, it's best to avoid the peak months of July and August, when temperatures soar above 30°C, and you have to fight your way across the Charles Bridge. The best times to visit, in terms of weather, are May and September. The winter months can be very chilly in Prague, but if you don't mind the cold, the city does look good in the snow. Christmas and New Year are perfect: there are Christmas markets right across town, and plenty of mulled wine and hot punch to keep you warm.

▼ Cathedral door

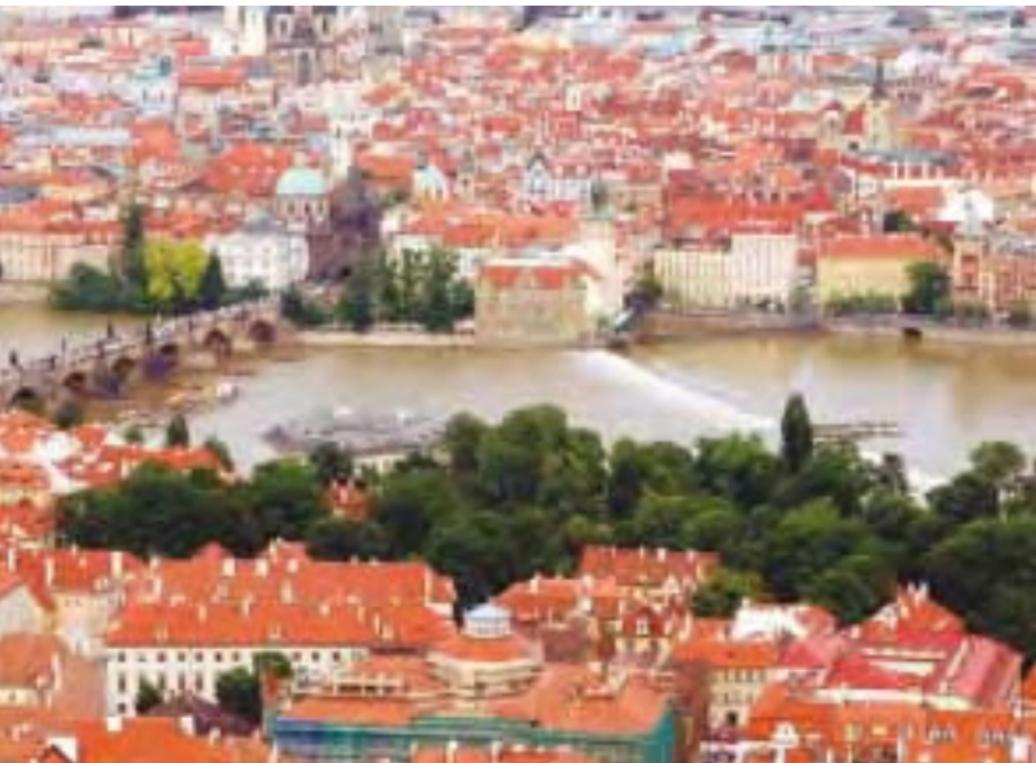


nowadays, Prague is one of the most popular European city break destinations, with a highly developed tourist industry and a large expat population who, if nothing else, help to boost the city's night-life.

The River Vltava winds its way through the heart of Prague, providing the city with its most enduring landmark, the Charles Bridge. Built during the city's medieval golden age, this stone bridge, with its parade of Baroque statuary, still forms the chief link between the old town and Prague's hill-top castle. The city is

surprisingly compact, making it a great place to explore on foot, and despite the twisting matrix of streets, it's easy enough to find

▼ Malá Strana, Charles Bridge and Staré Město





▶ Malostranské náměstí

your way around between the major landmarks. If you do use public transport, you'll find a picturesque tram network and a futuristic Soviet-built metro system that rivals most German cities. And, for the moment at least, it's still a relatively cheap destination, with food and perhaps, most famously beer, costing way below the EU average.

▶ Prague Castle by night



Prague

AT A GLANCE



PRAGUE CASTLE

The city's left bank is dominated by Prague Castle or Hrad, which contains the city's cathedral, the

old royal palace and gardens, and a host of museums and galleries.

MALÁ STRANA

Squeezed between Prague Castle and the river is the picturesque district of Malá Strana, with its twisting cobbled streets, Baroque palaces and secret walled gardens.

STARÉ MĚSTO

The medieval hub of the city, Staré Město – literally, the “Old Town” – is probably the most visited part of the city, and has a huge number of pubs, bars and restaurants packed into its labyrinthine layout.

▲ Changing of the Guard, Prague Castle



▲ Staroměstské, Náměstí and Staré Město





▲ Nerudova, Malá Strana

JOSEFOV

Enclosed within the boundaries of Staré Město is the former Jewish quarter, Josefov. The ghetto walls have long since gone and the whole area was remodelled at the end of the nineteenth century, but six synagogues, a medieval cemetery and a town hall survive as powerful reminders of a community that has existed here for over a millennium.

▲ National Theatre

NOVÉ MĚSTO

Nové Město, the city's commercial and business centre, is a large sprawling district that fans out from Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí), focus of the political upheavals of the modern-day republic.

VYŠEHRAĐ, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

The fortress of Vyšehrad was one of the earliest points of settlement in Prague, whereas Vinohrady & Žižkov are rather grand late-nineteenth century suburbs.



HOLEŠOVICE

Another late nineteenth-century development, Holešovice is home



▲ Old Jewish cemetery, Josefov

▲ Turn-of-the-century mansions, Vinohrady



to Prague's impressive museum of modern art, the Veletržní Palace, and Výstaviště, its old-fashioned trade fair grounds.

HRADČANY

The district immediately outside the castle gates is a wonderfully quiet quarter filled with old palaces housing government ministries and embassies.

WENCESLAS SQUARE

More of a wide boulevard than a square, it was here that Czechs gathered in their thousands during the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

▲ Výstaviště, Holešovice





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12 The big six

You can have a great time in Prague just wandering the streets, wondering at the architecture, but there are six big sights you should definitely make the effort

to see, no matter how short your visit. Few people miss Prague's medieval Charles Bridge and the picturesque Old Town Square, but it's also worth exploring Prague Castle, home to the city's cathedral, old royal palace and gardens; Josefov, Prague's former Jewish ghetto; the Art Nouveau Obecní dům; and Wenceslas Square, where the 1989 Velvet Revolution took place.



▲ Wenceslas Square

The modern hub of Prague, this sloping boulevard was the scene of the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

P.98 ▶ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO



▲ Obecní dům

Café, bar, restaurant, exhibition space and concert hall, this Art Nouveau masterpiece is preserved exactly as built in 1911.

P.101 ▶ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

► Old Town Square

The city's showpiece square, lined with exquisite Baroque facades and overlooked by the town hall's famous astronomical clock.

P.80 ► STARÉ MĚSTO



▼ Charles Bridge

Decorated with extravagant ecclesiastical statues, this medieval stone bridge is the city's most enduring monument.

P.75 ► STARÉ MĚSTO



▲ Prague Castle

Towering over the city, the castle is the ultimate picture-postcard image of Prague.

P.51 ► PRAGUE CASTLE

▼ Josefov

The former Jewish ghetto contains no fewer than six synagogues, a town hall and a remarkable medieval cemetery.

P.91 ► JOSEFOV



Hotels

The food and drink may be cheap, but Prague is no budget destination when it comes to hotels. However,

with so many ancient buildings to choose from, and more competition than ever among hoteliers, the city now has a good selection of places to stay, many of which have real character.



▲ U červeného lva

A classic Prague hotel with original seventeenth-century wooden ceilings and tasteful antique furnishings, including rugs over parquet flooring.

P.136 ▶ MALÁ STRANA



▲ Černý slon

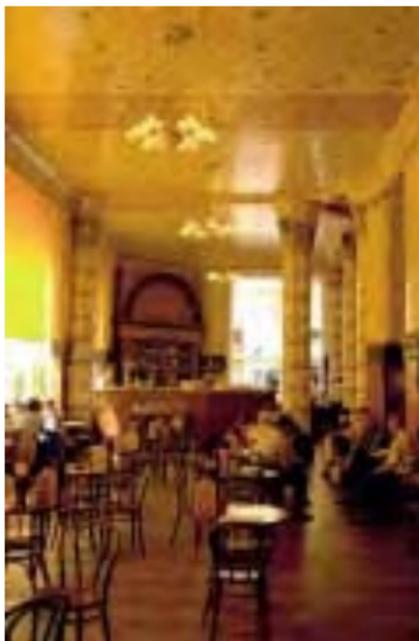
A hotel offering simple rooms tucked away down an alleyway off the Old Town Square itself.

P.137 ▶ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Hotel Imperial

Plain, cheap, hostel-style rooms set in an otherwise extremely ornate 1914 Art Nouveau masterpiece.

P.139 ▶ NOVÉ MĚSTO



▲ Dům U velké boty

For attentive service and stylish antique décor, head for this discreet bolthole in the backstreets of Malá Strana.

P.136 ▶ MALÁ STRANA

► U medvídků

If you're looking for unpretentious, inexpensive and centrally located rooms, try one of Prague's most authentic pubs.

P.137 ▶ MALÁ STRANA



◀ Cloister Inn

A former nunnery hidden in the backstreets of Staré Město.

P.137 ▶ STARÉ MĚSTO

Green Prague

Prague doesn't have a vast number of parks, but it does have a whole host of wonderful hidden Baroque gardens in Malá Strana, several of which are linked via terraces to the gardens around

the castle. The largest green space in the centre is the Petřín hill, accessible via a funicular railway, and boasting great views over the city. Further afield, Vyšehrad's fortress and the woods of Stromovka are good places to lose the crowds in summer.

▼ Royal Gardens

Castle gardens famous for their disciplined crops of tulips.

P.57 ▶ PRAGUE CASTLE



▼ Petřín

This wooded hill on Prague's left bank provides a spectacular viewpoint over the city.

P.71 ▶ MALÁ STRANA





▲ Stromovka

Large leafy park laid out between Výstaviště and the chateau of Troja.

P.128 ▶ HOLEŠOVICE

▼ Kampa

The chief park on the island of Kampa enjoys fine views across to Staré Město.

P.69 ▶ MALÁ STRANA



▶ Vyšehrad

This old Habsburg military fortress is now a great escape from the busy city.

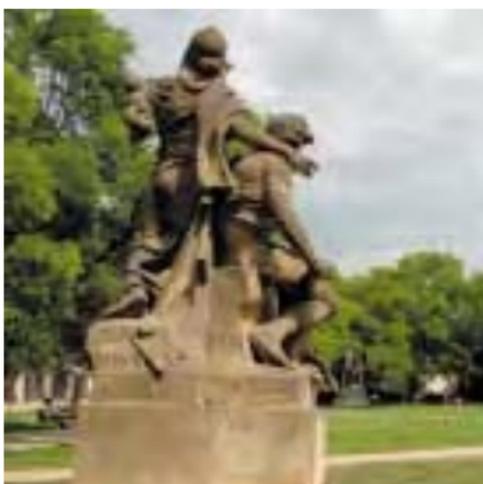
P.115 ▶ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV



▲ Malá Strana terraced gardens

Pretty little Baroque gardens laid out on the terraced slopes below the castle.

P.68 ▶ MALÁ STRANA



Baroque Prague

The full force of the Counter-Reformation was brought to bear on the Czechs, who took to Protestantism en masse in the Renaissance. The legacy of this ideological battle can be seen in the city's enormous wealth of Baroque

art and architecture: great Italianate domes dominate the skyline and melodramatic statuary peppers the streets – most famously, the Charles Bridge.



▼ Cathedral of sv Vít

The Tomb of St John of Nepomuk in the city's cathedral is the most spectacular reminder of the former power of the Jesuits.

P.53 ▶ PRAGUE CASTLE



▼ Old Town Square

Probably the most impressive parade of Baroque facades and gables in all Prague.

P.80 ▶ STARÉ MĚSTO

