

Livingprague Newsletter

August 2022



ON THE OLD CASTLE STEPS WITH KAREL HASLER

In the August newsletter I'll describe the classic Czech meal called Svickova and a drink called a „cut“ beer that you might like to wash it down with. I picked a weirdly trivial story about a Czech guy who became an Egyptian and then won a Wimbledon Tennis Championship. I'll also point out some of the little secrets you can find on the doors of the west entry to ST Vitus Cathedral.

The Activity Spotlight is a small exhibition of Russian military vehicles destroyed in Ukraine. Blast from the Past includes how to spot if you get old banknotes in your change which are no longer legal tender and I put a photo of the garden of the Café Truhlarna on the Franciscan Garden post.

Just before you launch into the newsletter take a few seconds to think if your friends or colleagues might find it interesting. If so please consider forwarding to them and they can [subscribe to the newsletter](#) separately if they want.

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Featured New Content



Czech Food - Svíčková

One of the classic Czech meals is Svíčková, a beef sirloin dish likely to be served with a creamy gravy and bread dumplings but there are variations as you'll discover. [Read more....](#)



Famous Czechs – Jaroslav Drobný

Jaroslav Drobný. A man born in Prague who represented Czechoslovakia in two sports. An ice hockey silver medallist in the 1948 winter Olympics who went on to win the Wimbledon Tennis Men's Singles Championship title in 1954 as an Egyptian citizen and died in London as a British subject. [Read more....](#)



The Cut Beer

You'll be spoilt for choice in Prague as far as beer is concerned. Some people like the light coloured beers, others (like myself) prefer the dark. Sometimes they get mixed up in one glass but if you're lucky you'll find a place which serves them both separated in the same glass. It's what we call a "cut" beer. [Read more...](#)



Secrets of the ST Vitus Cathedral Doors

When you walk from the 2nd to the 3rd courtyard at Prague Castle you find yourself staring up at the imposing west entry facade of ST Vitus Cathedral. You'll want to take pictures and maybe go inside so it's quite easy to miss the detail on the entry doors. They tell the history of the building. [Read more...](#)

Blast from the Past (Updated Old Content)



For most people it went unnoticed but there has been a major change in Czech Currency rules. Since the beginning of July 2022 any banknote printed before the year 2000 is no longer legal tender and will not be accepted by shops/services. You can go to any bank and exchange them. I updated my “cash or card” post to show you how you know if you get any old notes. [Read more.](#)



If the weather is fair and I'm in the Wenceslas Square area then Café Truhlarna in the Franciscan Garden is a nice place to stop. Updated post with this photo of the café garden. [Read more....](#)

Comment

Touchy, Touchy!

Whether it was just bad luck I don't know but on one particular day last month I had to step in and diffuse a confrontation with locals on two occasions. Both times it was to do with memorials. Whether my back was turned and kids were climbing on something or a client was leaning on something, an irate local was quick to be in my face telling me to have more respect. A quick apology in one case, a more lengthy discussion for the other. I learned a valuable lesson that I have to explain more clearly to my tour clients how emotional attachments run deep with some of these memorials. A shame that the locals probably did not grasp the fact that I was telling clients about these things specifically because I wanted them to know why Czechs hold them in such high esteem.

Bio Product

Usually Bio products are more expensive than regular products. But not in the case of my next Czech ID card. The country has kindly offered to replace my old paper document with a nice new crisp plastic biometric card for free. Quite what kind of biometric data they are going to want from me I'm not sure. I've never been into the "civil liberties" arguments and I'm of the opinion that if I do nothing wrong then I should have nothing to worry about and it'll make my life a little easier. Of course they'll be able to track all my movements from now on.....

In The News

TV and newspapers are reporting that financial “experts” are saying by the beginning of August we will reach an inflation rate of 20%. Mind you these are the same experts that said we would reach a peak of 9% in March and then see a decline. As I rack my 56 year old brain I cannot ever remember living in a country where inflation was that high. Something to tell my grandchildren one day.

When is an Ambassador not an Ambassador? Well apparently it's our US Ambassador because although Michael J. Dodman is addressed as “Ambassador” that's because he had that rank in Mauritania. In Prague he is the “Charge d'affaires” which makes him the senior diplomat at the US Embassy but President Biden has still not appointed a new Ambassador since the departure of Steven King in January 2021. Czechs are wondering what's the problem! Come on Joe, is it so hard to choose?

Education reform popped up again. For decades the system has tested pupils on their ability to remember and recall what they have been taught. But the idea of testing a pupil on their ability to find out information, verify it and use that information is gaining ground at least as part of a balanced education requirement.

Since 2020, to implement the various restrictions required during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government on occasion, had to resort to something called a “State of Emergency”. This was a last resort for the government as it meant that a parliamentary agreement could not be reached. This has begun heated discussion on whether the “executive” needs more power. In my opinion a legally controlled “State of Emergency” means just that and no extra executive powers are required.

Trivia and Odd Statistics

If you like the T3 “old-style” trams in Prague you can also find them in.....North Korea.

The number of pigs slaughtered on Czech farms (as opposed to an abattoir) reduced from 125,000 to 93,000 over the last 10 years.

General road traffic in Czech increased by 10% in the last 6 years with HGV (Lorries) traffic increasing by 20%.

23% of Czech deaths registered in Q1 2021 had the primary cause of death as Covid-19.

Johann Gregor Mendel, biologist and “father of genetics” was born in present-day Czech Republic 200 years ago.

The Prague Academy for Performing Arts (Film) that we know as FAMU celebrates it’s 75th anniversary this year.

A survey estimated that Czechs hold more than 19 tons of gold in a residential environment as opposed to the National Bank which holds just over 10 tons.

The average life expectancy of Czech men and women is respectively 74.2 and 80.6 years.

Czech Republic is an EU Budget “Net receiver”. That meant that in 2021 the country received CZK88 Billion more than it put in.

There were 69 Czech athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympics.

In 2021 Czech domestic banks saw earnings of CZK70 Billion which was a 50% increase on 2020 but 19% lower than 2019.

11.4 million tourists stayed in Czech in 2021 (50% less than 2019).

Since the 1980s in Czech the ratio of alcoholic men to alcoholic women has reduced from 10:1 to 4:1.

Walking Tours

I definitely have to treat 2022 as a “recovery” year. Business is ticking over, my Trip Advisor ranking dropped because as there is less tour traffic so I’m also getting less reviews but on the other hand I’ve had a lot of “friend referrals” from old tour clients telling their friends about me. It’s clear that a return to normality is going to take a while but I’m in a good place when that happens.

There will be less tour availability for the rest of 2022 as I’ll be in the UK about a quarter of the available time and I’m generally blocking dates and times to allow for travelling. If you have not heard from me then you are not affected. Prospective clients should contact me to see what options or referrals may be available.

Review

Robert was leading a group of five seniors and we adapted the tour as required. I helped them set up their appointments for Covid-19 PCR tests to remove that worry and when I bumped into Robert and his wife the following day (Prague is small!) all had gone well. They treated me to lunch in an historic beer hall.



robertkatzen wrote a review Jun 2022

Huntington Beach, California • 4 contributions • 1 helpful vote



Private tour

Review of: **Small Group Prague Old Town and Jewish Quarter Walking Tour**

Thank you Jason for giving us a great tour during our visit to Prague. We certainly enjoyed your company as well as bringing us to the must sees including your insight into the location. We all appreciated your courtesy to slow the pace due to our friends limited walking and assistance with the Covid testing before returning to USA.

[Read less](#) ▲

Date of experience: March 2022

Gift Vouchers

Read about the Gift Voucher system on the [Gift Voucher page](#). You can buy individual tours as a gift for somebody and by contacting me the recipient of the gift will have options to swap tours or use the credit to upgrade to a private tour etc. Vouchers are valid for 1 year.

Tours and Card Payment

For any Private Tours or for any Scheduled Tours booked directly through a tour calendar, clients can pay the full cost of a tour in advance by card payment with the understanding that refunds are maximum 96% (cost of tour minus any card transaction fee which is out of my control). In this case you first receive a payment request which has to be completed within 48 hours. Then you receive the booking confirmation.

Tours and Cash Payment

If you prefer to pay for a tour either scheduled or private in cash then you need to contact me. We will agree the tour details and I will quote a price in CZK and your own currency equivalent. You will then receive the booking confirmation and payment is made on the tour day at the agreed amount so in this case there is no advance payment and cancellation is free.

Other Tours:

[Old Town and Jewish Quarter](#) is running normally.

[City Walking Tour](#) is running normally.

[World War Two](#) is running normally.

[Architecture Tour](#) is running normally.

[Czech Food and Beer Tasting](#) is suspended due to restaurant/bar closures. Option of food/drink is now only on Private Tours.

[Christmas Markets](#) has restrictions: "tour-only" in 2022 with time for people to buy food/drink as required.



Activity Spotlight! – Destroyed Russian Military Equipment in Letna Park



A destroyed Russian T90-A Main Battle Tank

A strange but topical exhibition of four Russian Military vehicles that were either incapacitated or outright destroyed while trying to capture two major Ukrainian cities.

It's not for everyone but standing next to these things you can't help but be inspired by the bravery of Ukrainian forces trying to get close enough to destroy them. Kill or be killed.






It was especially thought provoking to see what was left of a self-propelled artillery piece which has been causing the most damage to civilian areas.

The exhibits are fenced off so you cannot climb on on into them. Combine this with a trip to the nearby Letna Park Beer Garden.

Check the post about the [Destroyed Russian Military Vehicles](#)

Being Social

Click, Like, Subscribe, Follow, Review. Could I ask you to spend a minute interacting with one or more of the social platforms below that have lots of great content to share. Subscribe and/or follow to stay updated.

	<p><u>FACEBOOK</u>: You can read posts, view short videos, like/share content, follow and message me.</p>
	<p><u>INSTAGRAM</u>: You can view pictures, like/share content and follow me.</p>
	<p><u>PINTEREST</u>: You can view specific genre pictures, save Pins to your boards and follow me.</p>
	<p><u>YOUTUBE</u>: You view full length videos, comment, like/share content and follow me.</p>
	<p><u>TRIP ADVISOR</u>: You can view tour pictures, read and leave a tour review for others.</p>

Surveys – Help me improve!

If you have a bit of time then consider a survey. It's anonymous so I just see answers to questions not who it's from.

It should take no more than 2 minutes on any survey.

The “Quick” survey is an overview. The other surveys are content specific. You do not have to finish the whole survey so feel free to answer as many or as few questions as you want.

Just “Send It” when you're ready. You will be helping me to improve all aspects of the sites.

Quick Survey – 1 minute survey

Accommodation – 2 minute survey

Activities – 2 minute survey

Walking Tours – 2 minute survey

Site Navigation - 1 minute survey

Contact Info – Engage with me!



I've now put so much information, local knowledge, tips and tricks into the Trip Planner that I've now renamed it the Trip Planner and Mini-Guide which you can always [download for free](#).

But even that might not be enough to help. Sometimes all you want to do is ask a quick question, sometimes it's a bit of advice regarding an activity or accommodation etc. You're always welcome to contact me via one or more of the following options. Just keep an eye on your spam folder if using email. I reply within 24 hours.

EMAIL: fun@livingprague.com

CALL/SMS/WHATSAPP: +420 603 187856

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/livingpragueguide/>

