

Livingprague Newsletter

January 2023



CHRISTMAS MARKET ON THE OLD TOWN SQUARE

Happy New Year. In the January newsletter I'll tell you about the Spanish Synagogue, I'll tell you what to expect from a visit to Cafe Au Gourmand, we'll take a look at the fascinating history of the Nusle Bridge and for families visiting with kids I'll describe what you can do at the Hamleys toy shop.

The Activity Spotlight is a look at the Karlin Kasarna which historically was an army barracks and is now an outdoor entertainment area. Blast from the Past includes updated information for the Prague Park and Ride system and a heads up about UBER taking over as the official Prague Airport taxi service.

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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Spanish Synagogue

My personal favourite of all the synagogues in the city and official home of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Why visit, what to expect and how it got its name. [Read more....](#)



Nusle Bridge

1973 saw the addition of a brand new bridge in the city. Learn how the plans changed, the unique way that they tested the strength of the bridge, why it has a metro instead of a tram line and the special monument that sits underneath it. [Read more....](#)



Cafe Au Gourmand

Whether you just want to use it as a regular French-style cafe or as a beer garden, Cafe Au Gourmand has some really good food options and the garden is a real treat just 100 metres from the Old Town Square. [Read more....](#)



Hamleys Toy Shop

Probably the most famous toy shop in the world has a branch in Prague. People of all ages will enjoy it here but of course it's aimed at kids so it's worth understanding how the Hamley's Card works if you are coming here for any activities. [Read more...](#)

Blast from the Past (Updated Old Content)



In the Spring of 2023 (supposedly March 2023) UBER will become the official Prague Airport transfer company. There will be different options for getting UBER taxis from the airport so I've just updated the post as a "heads up" while awaiting more detail. [Read more....](#)



Prague P&R is upgrading its facilities, procedures and tariffs. The post was updated to show the difference between the old and new versions. The biggest change is that there is no longer a "CZK100 Night Rate"). Instead you pay a flat rate for the first 24 hours then there's a fixed hourly rate after that. [Read more....](#)

Comment

Being Presidential

Whoever becomes President this month I wish them the best of luck and I truly hope that they can take the politics out of the position. When I first came to Prague, Vaclav Havel was coming to the end of his first term as President of the Czech Republic. Love him or hate him he was an iconic figure and apolitical, somebody who made decisions for the country and not just for a political party or his close associates. I've always thought that the President of a parliamentary democracy should be apolitical, independent and a moral figurehead for the country. We'll see.

Support Matters

As I write this, 10 months ago the first refugees from Ukraine started arriving in Prague by car and train. Like all European capitals, Prague was not prepared for it and worked very hard to get processes in place to manage the situation including announcing a visa allowing 1-year access to health services, benefits and employment. In that 10 months more than 500,000 visas were issued. More than 120,000 adults who settled here just received an early Christmas present that their 1-year visa has been automatically extended. No ifs, no buts, the country just accepts the costs and moves on. The name of the game is to support Ukraine in whatever way we can. And of course our national phrase of support is still Putin, Go Fuck Yourself!

In The News

The Sudeten German Association launched an app this year to help Sudet Germans find ancestors and people who still speak Sudet dialects. Not highlighted was the fact that Sudet Germans still claim ownership of property in Czech after they were kicked out of that “Sudetenland” part of the country ceded as a result of the 1938 Munich Agreement.

The ongoing cost of living crisis has spurred journalists to report on all kinds of aspects of the economy and of course, comparing countries. One of the things which jumped out of the stats was that the citizens of the Czech Republic pay more for their electricity than anywhere else in Europe. Comparing Czech with Germany people can see that it has an average kWh price of czk4.25 compared with the Czech Republic at czk 4.5. Not much of a difference until you calculate it annually and find out that Czechs are spending on average CZK3000 more every year.

The Czech Republic reaches the end of it’s EU Presidency turn and will hand over to Sweden in January. As the bill for the last 6 months came in at CZK2.3 Billion I guess it was only fair for people to ask “what did we get?”. Answers like “holding the EU together” and “providing positive direction” don’t translate well in terms of value for the guy on the street. But one very positive aspect was how the country clearly put forward it’s own ideas outside of the “Visegrad 4” grouping of Czech, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. Finally.

Statistics show that more than 120,000 Ukrainian refugees found employment in the Czech Republic between March and September. This had an impact on the overall estimate of support required from the state which had budgeted CZK25 million but expects now that the cost will be roughly CZK20 million for the year 2022.

Trivia and Odd Statistics

A ten-Ducat coin minted in Prague in the early 17th Century sold for CZK10 million.

The 2021 census showed that there were 42 five star hotels in the Prague 1 district.

In December 2021 there were 658,564 foreigners registered in the country and 196,637 were Ukrainian.

Wages in Czech increased by an average of 7.2% in the first half of 2022 but taking inflation into account it was actually an average decrease of 3.2% compared with 2021.

Part of the aid sent to Ukraine in June 2022 included 3.64 million disposable gloves.

The T.G. Masaryk school in Chicago, is one hundred years old.

A CVVM poll showed that 79% of Czechs trust their police.

Czech traffic police are trialling the use of drones to gather statistics on the distance of separation between vehicles with a view to creating a new traffic offence.

Twenty valuable historical artefacts from Syria are currently being restored by Czech and Syrian experts in the village of Terezin.

From 2024, Czech companies can pay their taxes in Euros despite the fact that the Czech Republic is not in the Eurozone.

An average of 90 Czechs die annually due to extreme high temperature events.

In July 2022, employees of the Kaufland supermarket discovered 840 kilograms of cocaine hidden in banana boxes.

The population of the Czech Republic is currently 10.52 Million.

Walking Tours

Tour traffic stays pretty constant for the first week of January as people are catching the last week of the Christmas Markets. Then by the middle of the month it will slow down so I take the time to catch up on some cultural exploration and meeting other guides.

There will be less tour availability until March 2023 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

Based only on recommendations in travel forums two lovely American ladies decided to commit to three separate tours without ever having met me. We covered a lot of the city including finding an apparently abandoned baby after dark (all worked out well in the end).



Perfect Tour Guide in Prague

Dec 2022 • Friends

PRIVATE TOUR with Jason when we arrived and then 2 group tours.

What an amazing time with Jason from Living Prague Tours. We learned so much about history, people, even their Christmas and we even did our own private tour with him the first day to "get acquainted" with this beautiful city. Jason is very friendly, funny and knowledgeable. We spend a part of our day with him our first 3 days. Prague is not easy to "follow signs" to tourist attractions as it is all in Czech. Highly recommend his tours. We felt like we had a new Czech friend. Thank you Jason !!



[Review of: Small Group Prague Old Town and Jewish Quarter Walking Tour](#)

Written December 2, 2022

This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC. Tripadvisor performs checks on reviews.

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.

Tours:

[Private Tours](#) are arranged as required.

[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. The option of food/drink is now only on Private Tours.

[Christmas Markets](#) has restrictions: "tour-only" in 2023 with time for people to buy food/drink as required.



Activity Spotlight! – Kasarna Karlin



The old parade ground at Karlin Kasarna

If I told you that we had a mid-19th Century army barracks that you might like to visit then I expect this would not be high on your list of places to visit.






Now if I told you that it's a great outdoor space with an associated bar/cafe, there's a volleyball court to rent or just to watch the games. Let's add a sauna, summer cinema and a swimming pool where you can enjoy your beer/coffee actually in the actual pool area.

Open from 11am for a light snacks and the bar continues up to 10pm so support the guys who run this as a place as a venue for the arts and entertainment for the public.

Check the post about the [Kasarna Karlin](#)

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.

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CALL/SMS/WHATSAPP: +420 603 187856

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