

# For People Who Want to Be Prepared

## Introduction

I'd lived here for 21 years before I wrote the first Trip Planner. It was my wife's idea that I find a way to share my experiences in using the city both as a tourist since 1996 and as a Permanent Resident since 2005 but in an easily downloadable format. It's since grown into being a 40 page mini-guide on it's own.

In each section I shall provide one or more [links](#) which will generally take you either to [livingprague.com](#) but also [livingpraguetours.com](#) where appropriate.

If you are in the "thinking about going" stage then this will help tip the balance. If you are in the "planning your trip" stage then this will help in the following ways:

- **How to choose the area to stay based on a few simple principles.**
- **Deciding on the type of accommodation and the pros and cons of each.**
- **Your food and drink options both fast/takeaway and sit-down/relaxing.**
- **Deciding if you want to use public transport and what's involved in that.**
- **Your arrival in Prague whether by Plane, Train, Car or Bus.**
- **Transferring to and from your accommodation.**
- **Practical stuff like changing money and using toilets.**
- **The most popular attractions in the city.**
- **Tours and activity options.**



### **So by the time you've got to the end of this planner you should have been able to:**

Get the accommodation you want in the area you have selected, have a good idea about what you want to see in the city, how you want to get around, where and what you want to eat and where you want to go for entertainment. Did I miss anything?

If you think I saved you time or money consider [Buying Me a Coffee](#).

## Table of Contents

For People Who Want to Be Prepared .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Why Visit Prague?.....	3
The Best Areas to Stay.....	6
Tips on Using Booking/Comparison Websites.....	7
Prague 1 - The Old Town (in Czech - Staré Město).....	8
Prague 1 – Jewish Quarter (in Czech – Josefov).....	9
Prague 1 – New Town (in Czech – Nové Město).....	10
Prague 1 – Lesser Town (in Czech – Malá Strana).....	11
Prague 1 – Castle Area (in Czech – Hradčany).....	12
Prague 2 – Vinohrady.....	13
Prague 3 – Žižkov.....	14
Prague 7 – Holešovice and Letna.....	15
Prague 8 – Karlín.....	16
Accommodation in a Hotel or Apartment.....	17
Apartments – What to Look For.....	17
Hotels – What to Look For.....	18
Wellness.....	18
When is a Hotel not a Hotel?.....	19
Arrival/Departure.....	20
Arrival/Departure by Plane.....	20
Arrival/Departure by Train.....	21
Main Train Station:.....	21
Holešovice Train Station:.....	21
Masarykovo Train Station:.....	21
Arrival/Departure by Car.....	22
Arrival/Departure by Bus.....	22
Airport Transfer.....	23
Private Airport Taxi.....	23
Official Airport Taxi.....	23
Public Transport Bus.....	24
Airport Express Bus.....	24
Shared Shuttle.....	24
Train Station Transfers.....	25
Bus Station Transfers.....	25
Public Transport Essentials.....	26

How to Buy Tickets and Passes.....	26
Practical - Exchanging or Withdrawing Money.....	27
Practical - Using Toilets.....	27
Practical – Safety.....	27
Practical – Pay It Forward.....	27
Practical – Handling Taxis.....	27
Eating and Drinking.....	28
eBooks.....	29
Payment and Tipping.....	29
Street Food.....	30
Takeaways.....	31
Exploring the City.....	33
Private Guide.....	34
Ratings and Reviews.....	34
Scheduled Paid Tours.....	34
Free Tours.....	36
Attractions.....	37
Discounted Entries to Attractions.....	37
Prague City Cards.....	38
Skip the Line.....	38
A Cheap Suggestion.....	38
Things to Do – Activities During the Day.....	39
Pop-up Entertainment.....	39
Street Entertainment.....	40
Theatre/Classical Music.....	40
Scenic Locations.....	40
Things to Do – Activities after 8pm.....	41
Trips and Excursions.....	43
Souvenirs.....	44
Thank You.....	45

## Why Visit Prague?



Figure 1- Wallenstein Gardens

There are many great places in the world so there must be a specific reason for wanting to visit. Let's speculate.

**Cost of living:** Let's not beat about the bush. The cost of living in Central European countries compared with Western Europe is considerably less. Quite frankly, your money will buy you more, higher standard hotel, better quality food and entertainment. So if you want the most bang for your buck then that's a good reason to visit Prague. I don't try and track prices but if anybody uses certain items to budget for a trip then let me know and I'll find out the current cost.

**The Triangle:** Multi-centre holidays are becoming more popular. It means more transfers and travelling but for those who want to see multiple Capital cities in one trip then Prague is usually included with the Austrian capital Vienna and Hungarian Capital Budapest. The order in which you see them is important. Personally I'd say just don't end in Vienna if your budget is running low.

**Cruise Extension:** Whether you are about to start your cruise or you have just finished it then Prague was not the main reason for your holiday but it is a very popular extension. The cruise company will offer it as a 2 or 3 day excursion but it's just as easy to do it on your own or choose my tours.

**Scenery:** Whether you are high overlooking the city, on one of the squares or down by the riverside, there are countless places for scenic memories. If you are looking for that deserted street with the light shining off the cobble stones then that's here.

**Classical Music:** There are so many fantastic musicians here. When you go to a quartet or a quintet they are usually drawn from people like the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra or the Prague Symphony Orchestra i.e. top talent. So all you need to worry about is choosing a couple of outstanding venues.

**Family Connection:** There have been periods in history that people have emigrated and their descendants are drawn back here. It's unlikely that your relatives came from Prague so you'll be including the capital city in your trip but venturing out into the regions as well.

*A tour client once told the story of a lamp he had in his house. It was given to him by his grandfather. When the grandfather arrived in the USA the Czechs were assigned towns to stay in, put on trains and carried to the end of the line. As they arrived at night and it was still 5 miles to the town the train guard gave him the lamp for light and some heat and he kept it eventually passing it down to his kids. It is currently on the client's living room mantelpiece and would you believe that the client's daughter sitting with us at the table did not know the story of the lamp!).*

**The Feel Good Factor:** Czechs are pretty easy going people. They like their food, their drink and their culture. Evening entertainment is an important part of city life so expect a wide range of arts and cultural activities. The locals do swear a bit but it's not over the top. I don't know if it's an historic thing but they definitely like to sit down to eat and drink preferably in enclosed booths in the evening.

**Architecture:** Prague has the most preserved continuous architectural styles in Europe and the central districts have been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1992 as a unique example of architecture and urban development. As you walk around the city you are seeing every architectural style since the 9<sup>th</sup> Century so that includes Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Mannerist, Baroque, Rokoko, the "Neo" classical revivalist period, Avant-garde, Cubism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Modernist.

**Theatre:** Lovers of the arts are frequent visitors to the city. The price of the best tickets here will be a fraction of what you are used to paying. One of the theatres here hosted the 1787 premiere of Mozart's Opera Don Giovanni and is still the only original theatre in the world where he conducted. There are also more theatres per capita than anywhere else in Europe.



## The Best Areas to Stay



*Figure 2 - ST Havels Church viewed from Havelska*

**Best? That has to be quantified.** For some people the best is right in the centre of things. For others it might mean best value or to be closest to a particular venue or attraction.

My definition of “Best” is a combination of location, hotel spec, close proximity to what’s going on or within a 15 minute public transport journey.

At this point it’s worth asking yourself if you are prepared to use public transport like the metro or tram system. I’ll describe the public transport options later but I mention it now because this will give you more accommodation options. Just note that if you think that you’ll be out until the early hours then try to stay on a night-tram route because the metro shuts between 1am and 4am.

For anybody planning a city break at first glance the accommodation options are overwhelming so it’s good to take a bit of time to understand what you are searching for and where etc

## Tips on Using Booking/Comparison Websites

You're going to be hit with terms like Central Prague, Historic Prague, Prague 1, Old Town etc. In fact this is all the same. Central Prague or what can also be called the historic part of Prague is also known as Prague District 1. It is subdivided into 5 smaller areas that used to be towns in their own right. I'll explain these shortly. First see if this helps.

For Prague the first thing I tell people to do on a booking site is list by cheapest price. Then see which option below might fit you:

- 1) You want the widest possible choice for the cheapest options, you don't have to be in the centre and you're ok to use public transport. Tick the boxes for Prague areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10.
- 2) You want to be guaranteed right in the centre with less than a 10 minute walk from the bulk of the attractions and you don't want public transport. Tick **ONLY** the box for "Old Town".
- 3) You want to be anywhere in the historic centre and you're prepared to walk 30 minutes to get to attractions. Tick the "Prague area 1" or if it's divided into the towns then select the Old Town, New Town, Lesser Town or Castle boxes.

Personally what I also do for each search is restrict the class. Initially I look in the 5 star range to see if there are any deals, then 4 star, then 3 star etc. I'm more likely to stay in a 3 star in a great location than a higher class in a poor location.

The [Where to Stay in Prague](#) page gives a brief description of Prague Districts 1 to 10. In the Trip Planner I concentrate on Prague 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8.

In each section I'll describe the area, what to expect, pros and cons and I'll link to specific pages which will identify and place that I personally recommend. I try not to get into pricing as that is often a variable as seasons and demand fluctuates.

In the past I've seen deals right in the centre of town that were cheaper than outlying areas but consider that to be the exception to the rule as Prague 1 is **ALWAYS** the most expensive area to stay.

## Prague 1 - The Old Town (in Czech - Staré Město)



**The Old Town is the geographical centre of the city.** It should be possible to walk between any two points in the Old Town in less than 10 minutes. The Old Town contains the bulk of the tourist attractions that will be on your list with the exception of the castle which is on the other side of the river. From the time you leave your accommodation you'll literally be walking into some of Prague's Top Attractions.

Here are my [Recommended Old Town Hotels](#).

The Old Town contains a lot of pedestrianised and part-pedestrianised areas so for the most part you'll be walking in streets with the only traffic being emergency services, government vehicles or more commonly, delivery vans. At night you'll find the "attractions" will reduce drastically after 6pm when most museums will have closed and there's a quiet period until the evening entertainment gets going @8pm. This 6pm to 8pm slot will be peak time for restaurants.

The Jewish Quarter (Josefov) is within the borders of the Old Town and is considered to be part of it.

**Attractions include:** Old Town Square, Old Town Hall, Astronomical Clock, Calendarium, Marian Column, Prague Meridian, 1621 Memorial, Royal Road, Paris Street, ST Nicholas Church, Jan Hus Monument, Estates Theatre, Tyn Courtyard, Charles Bridge, Klementinum, Book Tunnel, Church of Our Lady Before Tyn, House at the Stone Bell, Little Square, Powder Gate, Bethlehem Chapel, Za Pravdu Memorial, Church of ST Martin in the Wall, Platyz Palace, Havel'ska Street Market, Municipal House, Illusion Art Museum, Museum of Decorative Arts, Rudolfinum (for Jewish sites check the Josefov section directly below).

**Pros:** the tourist centre of Prague, pedestrianised areas, lots of bars and restaurants and most of the publicly accessible historic sites.

**Cons:** most crowded, expensive and not many options for parking.



## Prague 1 – Jewish Quarter (in Czech – Josefov)



*Figure 3: The Old/New Synagogue*

**The thing here is that Josefov is located entirely within the Old Town** but it is designated as the historic area of the Jewish Quarter. Booking comparison sites may list accommodation in this area as being in the Old Town, Josefov or the Jewish Quarter to give themselves a little marketing edge.

In fact there are no hotels in the Josefov area, only apartments. Ah!! I hear you say, what about the Hotel Intercontinental? Well that sits on reclaimed land from the river and is outside the Josefov defined area and is in fact in the Old Town. Once upon a time this area directly bordered the riverside and was segregated for the use of Jewish people i.e. what guides will call the Prague Jewish Ghetto. If you are visiting synagogues then the most popular are all in this area with the exception of the Jubilee synagogue which is in the New Town (not on the Jewish Museum admission ticket so you visit that place separately). Josefov was given town status in 1848 to join the Castle area, Lesser Town, Old Town and New Town hence why it is often referred to as Prague's 5<sup>th</sup> district.

**Attractions include:** Old Jewish Cemetery, Old Ceremonial Hall, Klausen Synagogue, Pinkas Synagogue, Maisel Synagogue, Jewish Town Hall, Old/New Synagogue, Spanish Synagogue, Robert Guttman Gallery, Stolpersteine.

**Pros:** the tourist centre of Prague, pedestrianised areas, lots of bars and restaurants, most of the publicly accessible historic sites and some really nice pre-1910 apartments.

**Cons:** most crowded, expensive and not many options for parking.

You can read more about the area on the [Josefov](#) post.

## Prague 1 – New Town (in Czech – Nové Město)



*Figure 4: Franz Kafka Head at the rear of the Quadrio shopping centre*

**The New Town (bit of a strange name when you consider that it became a town in 1412)** which makes it older than most city old towns) is still Prague 1 but because of the layout of the city you'll find it drifts into the Prague 2 district almost by accident. It begins at the border of the Old Town on that side of the river. Whenever you stumble across anything about Wenceslas Square or the Republic Square then these are New Town locations that are within a 5 minute walk of the Old Town Square.

Here are my [Recommended Hotels in the Wenceslas Square Area](#).

Here are my [Recommended Hotels in the Republic Square Area](#).

The New Town is still historic but compared with the other Prague 1 areas you'll find it fairly modern in appearance. The [Main Train Station](#) is also in the New Town. It's fun to explore the many passages adjacent to Wenceslas Square where you'll find many independent businesses. As the buildings are larger hence the hotels are generally larger as well. If you pass the 3-lane highway or the [Dancing House](#) or cross the river then you have left the New Town.

**Attractions include:** Charles Square, Wenceslas Square, Republic Square, Main Train Station, National Museum, State Opera, Palladium Shopping Centre, Cafe Imperial, Municipal House Cafe, Fantova Kavarna, Lucerna Passage, House of Axes, Powder Gate, Hybernia Theatre, National Theatre, Laterna Magika Theatre, Na Prikope Street, Jubilee Synagogue, Main Post Office, New Town Hall.

**Pros:** Larger hotels make good options for group bookings, on-site parking, good shopping, more "locals".

**Cons:** Less historic appearance, more traffic and generally louder.

## Prague 1 – Lesser Town (in Czech – Malá Strana)



*Figure 5: Lesser Town rooftops viewed from the Castle south garden*

**The Old Town and New Town are on one side of the river whilst the Lesser Town and Castle are on the other side.** If you are seeking a quieter place to stay then it should be on this side and the Lesser Town sits conveniently at the bottom of the hill. Again it's a very obviously historic area much of which is just as old as the Old Town. Booking sites will usually call it by its popular English name i.e. the Lesser Town but also look out for the Czech version i.e. Malá Strana.

There are a couple of larger hotels in converted monasteries etc but in general you are looking at hotels with between 6 and 20 rooms. Similar to the Old Town with low-level buildings, mostly visible Baroque and Renaissance appearance typically with red tiled roofs but the Lesser Town is also known as an area where very important people once lived so it has many formal gardens.

The Lesser Town sits between Manes Bridge (tram and vehicles) on one side and Legion Bridge (tram and vehicles) further upriver. Between them sits Charles Bridge (pedestrianised). The Lesser Town Square (Malostranské náměstí) is best accessed by Tram. There is a metro station called Malostranská but it's on the far side. At either location you can catch Tram 22 or 23 going up to the Castle.

All of my [Recommended Lesser Town Hotels](#) are at most an 8 minute walk from the Charles Bridge.

**Attractions include:** Charles Bridge, Kampa Island, Kampa Museum, Karel Zeman Museum, Little Venice, John Lennon Wall, Traffic Light Alley, Church of ST Nicholas, Church of Our Lady Victorious, Wallenstein Gardens, the Water Wheel, New York Firefighter Memorial, Milada Horakova Memorial.

**Pros:** Historic appearance, quiet, formal gardens.

**Cons:** Limited parking, Czech Parliament building and embassies means increased security checks.



## Prague 1 – Castle Area (in Czech – Hradčany)



*Figure 6: Looking back through the Matthias Gate to ST Vitus Cathedral*

**The Castle area is by far the quietest of all the Prague 1 towns.** After 6pm the Prague Castle historic buildings will have closed and tourist numbers drop like a stone. Only the Castle courtyards will be open until the castle closes at 10pm. With the exception of a couple of restaurants and a brewery it's effectively a dead area after 8pm.

That makes it great for people who want to roam quiet streets after dark because there's nothing else to do.

The other main consideration for this area is that it sits on top of the hill and it's a steep hill. My [Recommended Castle Area Hotels](#) all come with the warning that you will either have to walk the hill, take public transport (tram) or use taxis. Hotels Savoy, Lindner and Questenberk are less than a 2 minute walk from the tram stop at Pohořelec.

**Attractions include:** ST Vitus Cathedral, ST Vitus Great South Tower, ST Wenceslas Vineyard, Old Royal Palace, ST George Basilica, Golden Lane, Old Castle Steps, Lobkowitz Palace, National Gallery, Loreto, New World Street, Strahov Monastery, Strahov Brewery, Petřín Park.

The top of the hill is accessed using either Tram 22 or Tram 23. No Metro.

**Pros:** It's like being in a film set in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, stunning views, very quiet.

**Cons:** Almost nothing to do after 8pm, the hill requires some effort.

## Prague 2 – Vinohrady



*Figure 7: Vinohrady has early 20th Century architecture*

**A clue to the former use of this land before development is in the name Vinohrady (or Royal Vinohrady).** It was a large vineyard and basically the first thing you drove through on your horse and cart having left through the Wenceslas Square New Town gate. The area was developed around the turn of the Century (1890-1910) so it has a very Art Nouveau and Secessionist feel. There are some purpose built hotels but largely it's converted residential buildings.

Here are my [Recommended Hotels in the Vinohrady Area](#).

People who stay in this area want relative peace and quiet compared with the New Town. They want period features, walking distance access to independent bars and restaurants etc plus more of a mix of locals. People who stay here are prepared to walk for 30 minutes to get into the very centre of town but don't mind taking a metro two or three stops (6 minutes). This is not an area known for attractions and hence not considered as a busy tourist area.

**Attractions include:** Riegrový Sady Beer Garden, TV Tower, Tower Park, Vinohradská Pavilon, Church of the Most Sacred Heart, Church of ST Ludmila, Olšany Cemetery

Vinohrady is best accessed via the Metro green line. You have tram options as far as Muzeum and then you either walk or stay on the tram until you get to Charles Square and then walk.

**Pros:** You can walk down streets here and think you are in Paris, independent shops/bars/restaurants, mix of locals and expats.

**Cons:** Except for the parking restrictions I can't think of anything else.



## Prague 3 – Žižkov



*Figure 8: TV Tower, built on an old Jewish Cemetery*

**Wherever you are in the city if you can see the [TV Tower](#) then that's Žižkov.** This is the next area over from Vinohrady so unsurprisingly the architecture is similar. Maybe a little newer in places but considered not to be of the same standard as Vinohrady. When somebody refers to the area as "Bohemian" they are saying it's slightly rough around the edges but dig a little deeper and you can find the creative energy of the area. The recreation area at Tower Park with surrounding bars and a short walk to the Riegrovy Sady Beer Garden means it can be lively.

Hotels in the area will publish themselves as being "only 10 minutes" from the centre but may forget to point out that's after you walked up a hill to catch a tram. People who stay in this area are often not first-timers to the city. They are familiar with public transport and are looking for cheaper 3 star deals so it's popular with repeat visitors. They don't mind staying in smaller more family style hotels.

Here are my [Recommended Hotels in the Žižkov Area](#).

To get to the centre of town is easier by metro but depending on which side of Zizkov you are on there are tram connections that go to Wenceslas Square or Charles Square and a walk to the Old Town from there is around 10 minutes.

**Attractions include:** TV Tower, Tower Park, Riegrovy Sady Beer Garden, Vítkov National Army Memorial

**Pros:** Great for bar hopping, 3 Star hotel deals, lots of locals.

**Cons:** Expect to use public transport, English not widely spoken.

## Prague 7 – Holešovice and Letná



Figure 9: DOX Centre for Contemporary Art

**There are two parts to the Prague 7 district. The upper part is called Letná and the lower part is Holešovice.** Either are accessible by metro and tram connections so people staying in this area will be travelling mostly by public transport. Culturally there is a separation. While Letná feels a bit more Czech, Holešovice has historically been a place where American expats have settled so this has resulted in a lot of bars and restaurants where you'll hear English just as much as Czech.

Here are my [Recommended Restaurants in the Prague 7 Area](#). Let me give you a tip right now .... If you're young at heart stay at Mama Shelter.

**Attractions include:** In the lower Holešovice area tourists will go to the [DOX Gallery](#), the exhibition grounds, sea world, National Gallery Modern Art Collection, the ice-hockey or events at the Tipsport arena or Stromovka Park. The area is a mix of locals and a built-in American (mainly teaching) community. On the higher part i.e. Letná you'll be at the scenic Letná Park beer garden, Hanavsky Pavilion restaurant (scenic), Expo58 Building (scenic), Technical Museum, Agricultural Museum and [Sparta Football Stadium](#).

At the Letná end of Prague 7 you access the centre via the Hradčany metro station or trams stopping at that location take you to the Lesser Town and the Old Town. On the Holešovice side you have a metro station or trams that take you to Republic Square and the New Town.

**Pros:** Nice community feeling, short public transport journey to Prague 1, good deals on longer term accommodation.

**Cons:** Limited accommodation choice.

## Prague 8 – Karlín



**The Prague 8 district is Karlín on one side of the river and the Prague 8 district Kobylišy is on the other.** I know the Karlín side much better as I worked there for two years plus I still visit regularly and I'm happy to make personal recommendations.

[Karlín](#) is an older area than Holešovice but not as developed for tourism so there are not many recognised tourist attractions but you will find galleries and pop-up events. It's a mix of offices and a creative industry. Great place to stay if you want to include the [United Islands of Prague](#) music festival as that is hosted in this district. It's a very residential area with associated schools. The only nightlife (bars and restaurants) after 8pm will be between the Krizikova Metro and Karlín Square. In the summer take a look at the [Karlín Kasarna](#).

People staying in the area are either prepared to walk for 30 minutes to the centre or they are happy to take public transport (trams and metro connect to both to Republic Square and Wenceslas Square) and from either it will be a 5 minute walk to the Old Town Square. Given the choice between Žižkov and Karlín I would choose the latter.

Here are my [Recommended Karlín Hotels](#).

**Pros:** Well connected by public transport, vibrant area during the day, good hotel deals, nice theatre and pubs frequented by locals, Foodie tour area.

**Cons:** No tourism attractions, not much to do at night.

## Accommodation in a Hotel or Apartment

So if we've established the area where you would like to stay then we now have to look at the type of place. The choice is largely hotel, apartment or apartment within a hotel. There is a huge choice in Prague so my aim in this section is to get you thinking about what's important for you. There are some things to consider before you commit yourself to a booking.

### Apartments – What to Look For

Unless you are going to stay in an apartment within a hotel then expect that services will be limited but you can get some great locations. Also factor in additional cost for eating out for breakfast if you are not cooking. If you plan to cook then the basement floors of the Palladium, Kotva, Quadrio and Bila Labut shopping centres have supermarkets. The Mustek metro station also has a supermarket. Look for "Albert" or "Billa" for market options in the city.

We also have things called a "Potraviny" which you should consider as a convenience store. There are different styles of apartments from lofts on Wenceslas Square to private rooms in apartment blocks with parking.

There is a large selection of apartments in the city. Most are self-contained so that means they have a kitchen or kitchenette and you are responsible for your own meals.

Here is my [Guide to Prague Apartments both Central and non-Central](#)

Things to look out for include:

- How do you get the key and/or return it?
- How many sets of keys do you get?
- Can the room temperature be individually controlled?
- Who do you call if you have any issues?
- Is anybody asking for a deposit?
- Are you charged additionally for utility use?
- Studio apartments may only have a fold-out bed.
- Modern Apartments may be ultra-functional but smaller and lacking in character.
- Classic apartments have bags of character and space but often the common areas and bathroom may disappoint.
- In general, apartment kitchens will use an electric hob on a timer switch.
- In older apartments the WC and bathroom are separated.
- Does the apartment have a lift?

## Hotels – What to Look For

Pro Tip: *The Czech style is to pay “per room per night”. Look out for apparently cheap prices as they may be “per person per night”.*

This is all about the spec and the services. The ROOM SPEC (specification) would be expected to clarify the following:

- Size of room in sqm (square metres) including any bathroom.
- Technical equipment in the room (TV, media centre etc)
- Speciality features (anti-allergy etc)
- Air-conditioning individual/central
- Soundproofing
- Bed configuration (a marriage bed is two mattresses in the same frame)

The HOTEL SPEC and services should confirm the following:

- Class by star rating
- Postal address
- Number of rooms
- Room types
- Reception hours
- Parking
- On-site restaurant(s)
- On-site paid services
- Business/conference services
- Pets

## Wellness

If a hotel has any wellness facilities then the gym part is normally free but you'll pay extra for the jacuzzi/sauna/pool. The exception is if the wellness area is treated as a separate business in which case you'll get a guest rate and if you're on a business package it's likely to be free (Kings Court Hotel is an example of that).

This is a “convenience” thing i.e. a hotel like the Best Western Hotel Majestic Plaza has a wellness (and Beer Spa) on site so if you are staying there you don't need to get changed etc. This is why I always say that if wellness is going to be a major factor in your trip then choose a hotel with on-site wellness facilities as it makes for a much more pleasant stay.



## When is a Hotel not a Hotel?

Even with close to 700 hotels being available in the Prague area it's not so easy to get "Hotel" status. Lots of hoops to go through, lots of regulations etc so how do you get around all that officialdom and still have paying guests?

Well there are some ways. The easiest is to remain as a "Pension" or as we would call it in England, a guest house. But they can't charge as much for the rooms.

Another way is to call yourself a "Residence" which is usually a step in the direction of eventually becoming a 4 star hotel. Residences (in Czech – Rezidence) cannot claim any star rating but you can usually tell from the photos and description that they are aiming at being a 4 star equivalent.

If you see a "Rezidence" with a star rating it means that it is a Hotel but may be advertising itself as both Hotel and Rezidence having formerly NOT having been a hotel. Note that a Rezidence may not have a breakfast room in the building and may offer a "breakfast in the room" service or will direct you to an external café where they have a deal (note external cafes open later – check the time).

And finally when a hotel cannot call itself a hotel. You might not know but at the time of writing this guide you could not claim hotel status if you had dormitories in your building so places like Mosaic House who offer hostel-type services as well as boutique accommodation will have to change their business models to make sure they come under a 4 star rating.

Let's not look too closely at any of the hotel descriptions. Suffice to say that I know the ones that stretch the truth a little too far.

[You're welcome to contact me for any local knowledge I might be able to give.](#)

## Arrival/Departure

### Arrival/Departure by Plane

*In his autobiographical book "To the Castle and Back", Vaclav Havel (first president of the Czech Republic, a man who hated flying) was quoted as saying "I hope they don't name the airport after me".....*

The Václav Havel International Airport (PRG) is about 20km from the city centre. It has two main terminals called T1 and T2. If you are travelling FROM a Schengen country then you will be arriving at T2 so for more detailed info check the [Prague Airport Terminal 2 \(Schengen\) Guide](#).



ALL other commercial passenger traffic including US and UK arrivals will land at T1 and you can read a lot more detail about that terminal in the [Prague Airport Terminal 1 Guide](#). There are hardly any differences in the arrivals process with EU (Chip passport) automatic gates and dedicated EU booths at passport control so if you are not EU you'll be heading for one of the "All Passports" booths. If you are transiting then there is a special transit gate between the "B" gates of T1 and the "C" gates of T2.

Just a note about departure though. T1 is older and has the x-ray machines at the gates. T2 is newer and has the x-ray machines directly after passport control.

This means that T1 users can take bottles of drink into the departure area of the airport but users of T2 cannot. US air carriers have a strict security policy and you'll need to allow extra time for check-in.

Details of Duty free shops at the airport and a video are on the [Prague Airport Duty Free Guide](#).

Prague airport connects to the Public Transport Bus system. There is no tram or metro station. Transfers are explained in the next section.

## Arrival/Departure by Train

The three train stations that serve the city in order of importance are Hlavni Nadraži (main station), Holešovice and Masarykovo.

### *Main Train Station:*

This is the main international station in the city and it is located 300 metres from the top of Wenceslas Square. It has several platforms and depending on where you were on the train you will exit either into the North gate or the South gate. They both arrive on the upper main concourse but have different facilities in the passages. The upper main concourse contains the toilets (you'll need 1 euro or 20CZK) shops and cafes serving snacks.

There are escalators on one side and travelators on the other to get to the lower main concourse which has the restaurants, bank/atm, transport ticket vendors, metro entry (red "C" line) and main station entry via the park.

The sub-ground floor contains a supermarket, the ticket offices and the official luggage lockers. If you need coins then the supervised toilets and the locker area have machines that take Czech banknotes and give change. If arriving by the Airport Express then you are dropped at the front of the station. You then need to go into the station, down the escalator or lift, across the upper concourse, down the travelator and across the main concourse to exit the station to the park/hotels and better taxis. The [Guide to the Prague Main Train Station](#) gives additional details on the station, amenities, layout and nearby hotels. If you are going to be storing luggage at a station then specifically look at my [Prague Bag Storage](#) post.

### *Holešovice Train Station:*

As a rule, Holešovice receives traffic from North East and North West Czech, Poland and Germany (Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin) but trains can run through here and terminate at the Main Train Station. Holešovice is much smaller with only 4 platforms and one common arrivals area from which you exit to the taxi stand or descend into the metro (red "C" line). Apart from newsagents and takeaway food vendors there's not much else.

### *Masarykovo Train Station:*

As a rule, Masarykovo it not an international arrivals station but it does connect with some services to Austria. It's located about 300 metres from Republic Square and connects to the tram system. There is no metro access from the station itself so you must exit and use the entrance to the metro station "Naměstí Republiky".

*Pro Tip: If you book train tickets via the National train operator cd.cz site then if you need to make any changes i.e. departure date/time then you can do this at any of the station offices. If you book via any other site then you have to contact those people online to make any changes.*

## Arrival/Departure by Car

The [Guide to Driving in Czech](#) details all you need to know about driving here and links to my Parking in Prague, Park and Ride pages.

If you cross the border into Czech then you may be considering using the motorway network. For this you WILL need a motorway vignette and the guide to driving in Czech describes how that works (online registration). Motorway services are well situated on the roads and so long as you fill up before you reach “Hlavni Město” then you won’t need to find additional services in the centre of town. If coming from Rozvadov then your last refuel services are on D5 junction 5 Rudna. If coming from Austria/Brno then the last easy services are at D1 junction 6 Průhonice although there is one more before you go into the centre which is smaller.



The “driving” page gives tips and advice about what to look out for in the city and outskirts, your rights in relation to trams and when you have to give way to pedestrians. You need to drive with your headlights ON at all times.

Parking in central Prague is controlled i.e. zoned “reserve” parking spaces indicated by a BLUE LINE around the bay. Metered parking is available in all central Prague areas but you’ll need small change and check the [How to Use a Prague Parking Meter](#) post. There are covered and open-air parking areas in the city and my advice for short-stay is to use a shopping centre car park like the Palladium. For a long weekend or maximum 7 days parking check the [How to use the Prague Park and Ride](#) page.



## Arrival/Departure by Bus

There are two main Bus terminals in Prague. The biggest and most modern is at Florenc which connects to the tram system and also a metro junction between the red “C” line and the yellow “B” line which you access right outside the terminal. The main terminal building has restaurants and toilet/shower facilities. The main bus operators here are Eurolines and Student Agency.

The other terminal is in Anděl (Na Knížeci) and connects to the tramlines for the Lesser Town and New Town plus it has the Anděl metro station 250 metres away.

## Airport Transfer

We've got the desired area and you've got your accommodation booked and you know where you'll be arriving so next up is usually the transfer. This section is specifically about transferring from the Airport but can also apply to a Train or Bus Station where it will generally be cheaper because the stations are in the centre already.

Airport transfers should take between 25 and 60 minutes to the centre depending on the type selected. When you book a return to the airport the transfer company will give you a pick-up time based on your airline and flight departure.

There are choices;

- Official Airport Taxi (can pick up FROM the airport without reservation)
- Private Airport Taxi (can only pick-up from the airport with a reservation)
- Public Transport by Bus (links to the nearest metro station Veleslavin)
- Private Transport by Bus (Airport Express to the Main Train Station)
- Shared Shuttle (various companies)
- Liftago/Uber (Uber is the official airport taxi provider)

I don't assume that everybody wants a taxi nor that only young people take the bus. Any one of the above can be right for you so I'll explain how they all work. I list all the options for transfer on the [Airport Transfer Guide](#).

### Private Airport Taxi

Unless you're on a tight budget then this is my recommended option. If you have a bad experience with an airport taxi you can only complain about an individual (if you remembered to note his name etc). Several different companies operate private transfers from the airport but for consistency and general nice feeling I now recommend only one so I wrote my [8 Reasons for Recommending Them](#).

### Official Airport Taxi

From either terminal as you walk out of the arrivals lounge you'll find the taxi rank. From March 2023 the Official Airport Taxi Provider is **Uber**. In this case you don't have to call them i.e. they will already be there on the rank. English is not guaranteed so be prepared to give them a written name and address for where you want to go. All drivers to be able to take payment by card. The only issue would be after 9-30pm when the number of available taxis will reduce so sometimes I see people waiting for 10-15 minutes for the next taxi.



## Public Transport Bus

The bus routes have now changed. Guides that are not up to date will still show the 119 bus going from the airport to Veleslavin where you transfer to metro/tram. In fact it's now the Trolleybus 59 that goes to the metro station at Veleslavin (green line). Same route, same price but an electric bus.

*NOTE: When you get off the bus it seems that the only option is a flight of steps so if you have large luggage and you need to take a lift/elevator then go past the steps, cross the small road and you'll find the lift on the other side (great design!).*

If you are staying around the Dejvice area and only carrying hand-luggage then you can get away with a 30CZK transport ticket (30 minutes). If you are staying anywhere else then you'll need a 40CZK ticket (60 minutes). Bear in mind that a suitcase of large rucksack requires a luggage ticket (20CZK) or buy a travel pass and you don't need the luggage ticket. You can read about the tickets and how to validate them on the [Public Transport User Guide](#).

*NOTE: If you are aged 65 or over and you are carrying your passport then your personal travel is free on public transport but you do still need to buy luggage tickets if you have large luggage.*

## Airport Express Bus

There is a private operator here called "Airport Express" (AE). You'll need low denomination notes or correct change (driver gives change) or a credit/debit card for contactless payment. The transfer includes one piece of large luggage. It's more expensive than the public bus service but less expensive than the shuttle. It's a point-to-point service from the airport to the main train station (on the way to the main station it will also stop at Republic Square) so if you are staying in the vicinity of Republic Square or Wenceslas Square it might be an option for you. In the bus rank queue at the "AE" pick-up stop (note that the drop-off point is NOT the same as the pick-up point). **Pros:** Comfortable and a good choice if you are the immediate Main Train Station or Wenceslas Square area. **Cons:** no direct transfer to hotel means you'll have to know how to get from the drop-off to the hotel.

Here you can find [Airport Express details](#) in English.

## Shared Shuttle

For anybody offering a shared shuttle the VW Transporter is the vehicle of choice for this transfer. It works out to be about 250CZK cheaper than the taxi transfers. You wait with the van until it has enough people to fill it (which is normally a minimum of 8). You then transfer to the centre and people will get off based on the location of the hotel. Be REALLY CLEAR with the shuttle dispatcher about the name and address of the hotel because if they drop you at the wrong place it's an additional expense on you and an inconvenience to get to the correct place.

**Pros:** Direct to hotel.

**Cons:** May take twice the length of a taxi trip.

## Train Station Transfers

If you have arrived at either Hlavni Nadraži or Holešovice then you have the public transport option by metro. The Private taxi services will collect you from the station based on your arrival details and it's usually 30% cheaper than an airport transfer. I DO NOT recommend using a taxi on the rank.

If you've arrived at Hlavni Nadraži and you do not have a private taxi booked then exit the station from the main concourse adjacent to the metro entry, walk across the park to the Hotel Falkensteiner and ask them to call you a regular taxi.

## Bus Station Transfers

Both central bus stations connect to either Metro or Tram systems but for a private pick-up at a bus station then the same rules apply. You will have been given a specific place for meeting the driver and a contact number.

## Public Transport Essentials

Depending where you are in the city you'll be using either Metro, Tram or Bus. This all comes under something called DPP i.e. the Integrated Prague Public Transport system. I'm going to make an assumption that like 99% of all tourists you will stay and spend your time within the city limits so regular 4 zone tickets apply. If you are aged 65 or over and carrying your passport then you have free public transport. If you are aged 60-64 then you qualify for discounted travel. If you do not want to carry your passport or you do not wish to mess about getting discounted travel or are not yet 60 then regular tickets available to buy are:

- 30 minute ticket
- 60 minute ticket
- 24 hour pass
- 72 hour pass
- Month pass

When I talk about minutes above it means that from the time your ticket is validated (stamped or issued) then you have that amount of time on the system. You can get on and off as you like so long as you are off the system when the time expires. So you have some simple choices 1) If you think you'll be on the public transport a lot and want the convenience of just hopping on and off the system or you think you will make at least 4 journeys per day? Then a pass is better. 2) If you think you'll use public transport occasionally then you just have to consider if your journey will take less than 30 minutes because then you just need the cheaper ticket. The passes are "consecutive time" i.e. if you validated a 24 hour pass at 12pm on Monday it's valid until 12pm on Tuesday.

### How to Buy Tickets and Passes

Everything can be bought from a DPP office 0900-2100. You'll find them at transport hubs like the Train Station, Airport and Metro junction stations. Cash or card accepted. Here's a [List of DPP Offices in Prague](#).

The 24 hour pass and the 72 hour pass can also be bought using a yellow touch-screen machine. You'll need either coins or a credit/debit card which is contactless or has a PIN code.

Somebody with a contactless credit/debit card also has the option to buy a pre-validated 30min, 60min or 24 hour pass on trams (orange box) and metro stations (little yellow box). Read the [How to Use a Touch-Screen Public Transport Ticket Machine](#) post for details of both options and watch the associated video if you intend using the larger "yellow" machines.

Tickets can be bought at a Tabak (newsagent shop/booth) but not the 24/72 hour passes. The Month pass has to be bought at a DPP office 0900-2100.

Any age-discounted travel passes have to be bought at a DPP Office. If you are 60 or over then check the [Exploring Prague Over 60](#) post because it points out various discount and free travel options.

## Practical - Exchanging or Withdrawing Money

On the [Czech Currency](#) post you'll see what our money looks like and the difference in notes after the change in 2022. It's not a closed currency so you can bring it with you when you come here. You can exchange your own currency when you get here. You can use an ATM to withdraw cash. This will be based on your own preference like how much cash do you need and how much does your bank or card provider charge for transactions. Also take a look at whether to use [Cash or Card in Prague](#) and [How a Czech ATM works](#).

## Practical - Using Toilets

On the [Prague Toilets](#) post I've tried to make it easy for people to find a solution if you are caught short. A variety of locations and tips for fixed WC locations plus walking into cafes and restaurants and asking to use the facilities which is not as straightforward as it sounds.

## Practical – Safety

Prague is an incredibly safe place to be and crime against a person is almost unheard of. Keep your bag zipped and close to you and you will avoid issues with pickpockets. Avoid the quayside bridges and parks at night and you'll avoid most of the drug use and homelessness in the city. Understand the [Scams and Frauds](#). Use the pedestrian road crossings because vehicles are required to give way to you on a crossing. Trams DO NOT give way to you on a crossing. Don't allow a drunk person to be separated from your group. Specifically if you are likely to be headed home after 1am then consider booking a place to stay that is on a night tram line or else it's taxi time.

## Practical – Pay It Forward

Read about the [Novy Prostor](#) magazine and how it supports people here. Read about places like [Lokal](#) and [Bistro Strecha](#) where you can pre-pay meals for socially-challenged people.

## Practical – Handling Taxis

Sometimes public transport is not suitable so if you have to use a taxi I wrote posts about [Uber in Prague](#) and the [No Stress Guide to Using Prague Taxis](#) where you'll get tips on how to get a taxi and how to deal with the driver.

## Eating and Drinking



*Figure 10: Czech beef goulash with separated pepper*

I could have put any number of pictures of Czech food but I decided to go for Goulash. Czechs don't generally like spicy food but there will frequently be a pepper on the plate in case you want more heat.

There are a lot of restaurants and cafes here to suit all tastes but the average stay of a tourist in Prague is only two or three nights so that's a maximum 8 meals, 3 of which will probably be breakfast at the hotel. So we have to make your remaining 5 meals something special. Special might be a scenic restaurant, some summer outdoor dining, a top restaurant in the city, a popular location or certain types of food. My advice is to do a bit of research to find places for your evening meal as you'll probably take lunch if you see something you like as you are walking around during the day.

If you want to experience the most popular Czech Food dishes then take a look at my [Top Czech Food Picks](#). Or in general you'll find lots of food options and places to eat and drink on my [Food Blog](#). You find my own [Gluten-Free](#) options plus a post about [Nut Allergies and How the EU Allergen System Works](#) if you have food allergies

I make some of my own recommendations on my [Guide to Prague Restaurants](#) where I pick 30 or so of my favourites spread over a number of different cuisines but they are only my own favourite places.

Read my [Cash or Card post](#) for how best to pay for food and drink.

There's a common-sense dress code i.e. in the evening you'd aim for smart whereas in the same restaurant for lunch you'd get away with casual. In many restaurants they do not allow coats and jackets to be put on the backs of the chairs so if they offer a cloakroom service then make sure that you keep your valuables with you.



## eBooks

Specifically for SCENIC PRAGUE RESTAURANTS I wrote an ebook detailing 23 places which could either be used for lunch or dinner all year round. Lots of pictures, translations and descriptions. It's now FREE.

[Download the Scenic Prague Restaurants Guide](#)



Specifically for CZECH FOOD and CZECH BAR FOOD I wrote an ebook detailing 13 places where you can enjoy different types of Czech food in both restaurant and bar environments. Lots of pictures translations and descriptions. It's now FREE.

[Download the Enjoy Czech Food Guide](#)



## Payment and Tipping

I cannot think of any restaurants that do not accept credit cards but it's wise to check before you order that they will accept your means of payment. Visa cards are accepted everywhere but you may find AMEX and Diners are not. If you pay at the table then it's expected that your card is capable of a contactless payment that requires a PIN. If you have an old-style card which does not have the contactless option you may have to go to the bar and use the slot-in option.

With tipping sometimes there's an issue leaving a tip if you pay with plastic. Some places can only charge the billed price and you cannot add any extra so the only option is to leave a cash tip. If you leave cash then give it direct to the staff. Do not leave it on the table.

For places that can accept the tip on the card then you get the remote card reader and it will ask if you want to leave a gratuity. Click yes to enter a value or click no to pay the charged price.

For general tipping we use "round-up". A quick example is if I bought lunch which came to CZK160, I gave the waiter a CZK200 note and said the number 180. He gave me CZK20 change so he got a quick tip of CZK20. So I guess what I normally do is calculate a nice round number that gives a tip of about 10-15%. If I'm in a group we are more likely to give a tip on the card. If I'm on my own I prefer to give a tip in cash.

## Street Food



In general street food is sold in one of two ways. It's either a fixed price or it's pay by weight.

### Fixed Price

A hot dog is an example of a fixed price product. Basically it's anything that is priced per serving.

### Pay by Weight

This is anything priced per/100g so on the squares and in a market there'll be apparently cheap prices like CZK49 (but the little /100g) will be there and what you thought would cost CZK49 actually turned out to cost at least twice as much. At a restaurant for a main meal you'd be eating a weight equivalent to 300g per person but as street food you should be snacking so that brings the weight down to 200g per person. Remember that street food like Bramborák and Halušky are pay by weight so the price you see is per/100g. Read my [pay-by-weight post](#) to be prepared.

**The picture above is Bramborák (grated potatoes and flour) with zeli (sweet white cabbage) on top.**

Not everybody wants a big meal and the price of this type of food makes it attractive. On the main squares like Wenceslas and the Old Town you have fixed location cabins offering takeaway food all year long. These fixed cabins will offer a choice of "fixed price" or "pay by weight" which applies mostly to anything in a bowl or cooked on a spit although Bramborák is also pay by weight.

The other most popular "pay by weight" foods are "Halušky" and "Old Prague Ham". Halušky is Gnocchi and if it's served in the classic style it will be mixed with either red or white cabbage and small pieces of smoked meat. Again this is a popular meal for the vendors to sell because it's deceptively heavy and you don't realise you'll be paying double what you thought.

Hot dogs in the Czech style are served with ketchup or mustard. If you buy the large version called Klobása then you have a choice of in a roll or with bread for @CZK80. Most places will have all the mustard, ketchup and mayonnaise on a separate table for you to help yourself. The cheaper version is a steamed sausage called párek in a long roll for @CZK35. I've now published a [Street Food post](#).

## Takeaways



Food “to go” is just as popular here as anywhere else. There will be stalls around the city that sell the Czech hotdog (párek). The Czech version of a Deli is a “Lahůdky” which is a kind of part cake-shop, part-bakery which also sells hot fried food, soup and open sandwiches (we call them Chlebičky shown above) for takeaway or standing at a table (no chairs). These open sandwiches will be between CZK20 and CZK30. They’ll also sell filled croissants.

Wherever you find an area with bars then a takeaway pizzeria won’t be far away and if you go into the underground passages of many of the metro stations then you’ll find whole pizzas and “by the slice” being sold. A slice of pizza should cost no more than CZK35 but don’t expect the filling to be very deep.

Vegetarian/Vegan takeaway is sometimes based on weight. For the chains like Beas Dhaba and Loving Hut you take a polystyrene box and fill it with whatever you want to eat. When you’re ready you give it to the checkout person who will then weigh it and tell you how much to pay (plus box). An adult would expect to pay CZK160-CZK200.

Asian food is normally a sit-down affair but specifically sushi is a popular take-out meal especially in the summer when people grab the food and head for the river and the parks. It’s by far the most expensive option at @CZK200 for a small maki set rising to CZK500 for Nigiri and Tempura options.

Kebab shops have never really taken hold here as they have done in Germany but we do have them. I have two favourites in the Republic Square area. Eat-in or takeaway, the questions are the same “Doner or Durum”, “same meat or mix”, “chili or garlic sauce”. Expect to pay about CZK110 for a Doner and 130CZK for a Durum in the centre of town. It gets cheaper as you go out further.

What some people consider to be the healthy option. In 2012 I saw my first “Salad Restaurant”, now they are in every shopping centre and train station concourse and scattered throughout the city. Originally labelled as “secretary food” by my colleagues it has become augmented by fresh juices and takeaway fruit. Companies like “Green Factory” and “Ugava” are the main players with a regular salad at @110CZK and a soup for 60CZK. Fresh juices start at 60CZK.

We have Burger King, McDonalds and KFC etc. Just be aware that we don’t call it a “meal”, we call it a “menu” i.e. Big Mac Menu. And speaking of these chains it’s becoming fashionable to use the electronic touch-screens to order and pay for your food. You get a ticket with a number and they call you forward when it’s ready. They’ll call out the number in Czech so keep your eye on the serving screen to see when it’s your turn.

For sandwiches look out for a shop called Bageterie Boulevard. It’s a chain of shops based on the “Subway” business model.

The most common takeaway by far is from the bakery. My own favourite is a company called Ječmínek but you’ll find other options close to any metro or tram stop. At the time of writing a “Pain au raisin” or “butter croissant” was 25CZK. Sometimes it will be the only place to get a coffee if you are about really early in the morning. Read about [Czech Wheel Cakes](#) as a little treat with coffee or [Smazanka](#) which could count as a light lunch.



## Exploring the City



**Well you've not come here to stay in the hotel room the whole time right?** People on a short break almost always have three places in mind to visit. They are the Old Town Square, the Jewish Quarter and Prague Castle. After that the mind goes blank so let me help you out with a few tips. Links in this section go to [livingpraguetours.com](http://livingpraguetours.com).

*Pro Tip: In general, plan visits to Jewish sites on Fridays or Sundays as they'll be closed on Saturdays (see note). There is a version of the Jewish Museum Ticket that also gives you entry to the Old/New Synagogue but it costs more. NOTE: If you are Jewish then you can go into the Old/New Synagogue services but bring your passport and be prepared to answer questions.*

You need to ask yourself the following:

- Do I want to pay and be part of a group being shown around?
- Do I want a private guide?
- Do I want to be shown around but NOT pay?
- Do I want to show myself around?

## Private Guide

I offer all of the scheduled tours below as private tours or we can tailor tour content to your requirement. You can choose your own duration i.e. make them from 2 to 6 hours etc and include specific things that you want to see. The ultimate in flexibility with the tour at your pace and breaks as required.

Just [contact me](#) with your request and I'll quote a competitive price. We agree the requirement and I send you a secure booking link.

## Ratings and Reviews

There have been many times where clients have kindly written [Trip Advisor Reviews](#) so feel free to browse those. I hold the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence as I've been consistently highly rated.

## Scheduled Paid Tours

The following is my offer of scheduled tours which are tours that you just go online, select a date/time and book. You receive an email confirmation, meeting point details and automated reminders.

Remember, if you like a tour but it's not on at the date/time that you want then [contact me](#) and I'll see if I can move things around to suit you.

**Scheduled tours are 2 hours or 2.5 hours, Native English and limited to 6 people so it's a small group and you can choose from the following:**

[Old Town and Jewish Quarter Prague Walking Tour](#) is the original tour on the site. We stay in the Old Town to explore that area and the Jewish area. Lots of top attractions, lots of fun stories, personal anecdotes and some "then and now" pictures. You'll learn how to tell time on the Astronomical Clock. This should be your introduction to the city.



[Prague City Walking Tour](#) starts in the Old Town then goes via the New Town across the river to the Lesser Town and includes the public areas of Prague Castle. This is also my David Černý sculpture tour. A mix of history, culture and art. It's a little more off the beaten path and for people who want to see different districts. Includes a tram trip up to the Castle and Imperial Gardens (summer only for the garden).





[World War Two Prague](#) is a tour of the New Town and Old Town including the Jewish Quarter but it concentrates on events and characters relating directly to World War Two. All the main characters and events are described, Gestapo headquarters, Stolpersteine, then and now photos, memorials and plaques covering 1938 to 1945, from the Munich Agreement to the Prague Uprising.



[Christmas Markets](#) is a tour of the 3 central markets including Wenceslas Square, Republic Square and the Old Town Square plus it includes part of the Old Town and the Jewish Quarter. Optional street food and drink is taken at Republic Square. It's for people who want to explore the centre after dark, grab a hot drink and a snack and end up on the Old Town Square for the Christmas tree sound/light show. It runs from the first Monday in December up to the last Friday before the 24th.



[Prague Architecture](#) is a tour that goes into why the city looks like it does, the influences on the city plus who designed and built much of the central area. It covers building types from 1344 to 1974. It will show you what to look for on classical buildings but tends to concentrate on the Avant-Garde period 1895 to 1930. Great for people who want to know more about the different styles of buildings, architects and the battles between the Modernists and the Revivalists.



We have the phenomenon known as “**Hop on, Hop off**” (HOHO) and it works the same as in many other cities. You buy a pass for 24 or 48 hours and you can get on and off any number of buses during the day in order to get between the tourist sites. There are three circuits in the city. Check my [HOHO post](#) to book online.

**Pro Tip:** *My advice is to hold off on a HOHO tour at least for the first day of your trip when you've had a chance to walk around and see how small the centre actually is. Then if you want to explore outside the centre you can use the Hop on bus to do that.*

***You should experience the difference between navigating a city using a book and being shown around by a knowledgeable human***

## Free Tours



The picture shows a FREE TOUR Group building up. By the time it starts there'll be 20-30 people (to put that in perspective my scheduled tours have a maximum of 6). This has probably got you thinking! Get shown around and then don't pay? Can't be right can it?

Actually you really do a city tour albeit with somebody who may not have an outstanding depth of knowledge about the city and you may be walking around with a lot of people but it's a smart piece of business in a few ways.

- 1) All pretence of "leaving a tip" has gone. Right at the start you are told that the guide lives from money earned on the tours and that you should pay what you think the tour is worth. No pressure then!
- 2) Halfway through the tour you'll stop at a restaurant/café where you'll be "encouraged" to buy something. Tour company gets a kick-back!
- 3) You get a bit tired and want a rest or a toilet stop? They won't wait!

You don't need a business registration here if your income is a gratuity. So the operator gets round all the employment rules and still makes a profit.

It's hit or miss and the business model relies largely on kick-backs. I've heard equal amounts of good things said as well as some real horrors. The problem with FREE tour reviews is that the review is unlikely to be about the person who will be giving you the tour. If you do a free tour then do it between May and September. Before that a new guy will still be learning. After that some guides get fed up at working 8 hours a day for 10% of the tips (boss gets the rest obviously).

## Attractions



If you are using a guidebook to get your info then it will include a similar list of places to that on the [TOP ATTRACTIONS GUIDE](#) but, my pages also give you some inside tips and what to look out for in these places or a nice way to get to them etc plus a stellar list of other things to do in the city.

This planner is to get under the surface and get you looking at how to best explore i.e. discounts and skipping lines etc.

### Discounted Entries to Attractions

There are really 4 forms of discounts so choose which may suit you:

First is simply your age. Take a look at entry ticket prices and you'll usually find options for family pricing, under 6 free and over 65 has 50% off and for over 70s some things are free (Jewish Museum does NOT give a senior discount). If you are a senior (60+) then read [Exploring Prague Over 60](#) for tips on discounted/free transport and entry fees.

Second is a city sanctioned system i.e. a City Tourist Card and in Prague there are different versions that I'll describe below.

Third is local discounts i.e. the Town Hall Pass is an example of this where you can get a discount for visiting multiple locations.

Finally it's booking online as some attractions offer a discount for going through a ticket portal.

## Prague City Cards

If you are intent on really planning your trip to the point of knowing where you want to go and how long you want to stay for and this includes paid attractions then it will be worth you buying a Prague City Card. It's set up for adults or children for either a 2, 3, 4 or 5 day trip. You can easily get your money back in a day if you plan well.

**Pro Tips:** *1) Avoid Mondays as many museums will be closed, 2) You make it worth it by spending a little time in a lot of places, 3) Don't just look at the locations, also check the opening and closing times to fit more into the day and 4) Start as early as you can on the first day.*

I wrote a [Prague City Card Comparison](#) post to help you decide which of the two most popular options are best for you that you can either download online or buy as a physical card in the city.

The Jewish Museum pass is included on the cards but remember that you'll want to spend at least half a day in that area. Likewise for the Prague Castle.

Make your first stop the Tourist Info Centre on the Old Town Square. Even if you are not buying a Prague Card they do a good tourist map with easy to follow directions for you to visit the most popular places.

## Skip the Line

I've compressed all of the other suggestions for saving money, skipping queues and priority entry into the Skip the Line Tips and Tricks post. That now covers things like mobile ticket entry for the Old Town Hall, the Town Hall Pass, advanced purchase tickets for the Klementinum and the Zoo. Also how to skip queues at Jewish Museum sites. Check the [Skip the Line Tips and Tricks](#) post.

## A Cheap Suggestion

Possibly one of the cheaper options is just to get on a tram and ride around the city. A good example of this is the Number 17 which starts in Holešovice outside Stromovka park, cuts across the river and goes past the Old Town all the way down past the National Theatre, Slavonic Island and Dancing House plus you have the views back over the river across to Kampa and up to Petrin Park. Just about the best value trip for 2 euros you can get (approximately 1 euro there and one euro back) or ride for the day for 4 euros with a day pass.



## Things to Do – Activities During the Day



First check the [Activities Blog](#) for anything I've written about things to do.

Make sure to check the [Prague by Month](#) section of the site which I keep updated for interesting things to do which may be a permanent activity, something on for a period of time or a single-day event.

If you just want to dive into activities in Prague then there are different portals that offer services. My own preference is GetYourGuide because I've used them when I travel and if you download the app you can manage your activities in one place so it's just a question of showing somebody a QR code or a ref number when it comes to doing the activity. GetYourGuide is linked with local tour providers in mostly English language but some tours have specialist language options. It's a real mix. I've sprinkled livingprague.com with many specific activities which were related to what I was writing about but there's also many random activities. It covers foodie tours, cafe tours and drinking tours, bike tours, Black-light theatre, City cards, river cruises, access to top attractions, museums and nightlife. See what [Get Your Guide here in Prague](#) has to offer both during the day and after dark.

### Pop-up Entertainment

Prague is no stranger to the regular cycle of shops closing either to relocate or simply because they went bust. Whereas in the UK this would result in a Charity shop or a betting shop appearing, in Prague they do a very good job of making use of the space. We have many dedicated exhibiting shops and spaces for private individuals but the "pop-ups" cannot be planned for and nobody will list them in printed material.

So the first you'll know of a place like this is when you walk past it. It's unlikely to be selling anything. More likely to be a venue for showing some kind of art and giving out business cards for later contact.

## Street Entertainment

The street artists and performers are almost always to be found on the [Royal Road](#) (it links Republic Square with Prague Castle) including Charles Bridge or the big squares like Wenceslas or Republic Square. These guys can perform or in some cases just sit there (an example is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExD5MjpPBJI>) and the object is to get you to put money in their hat or box.

Specifically for street performers who do not have a licence then they can play but they cannot sell anything so you'll see that whenever the police are around they shut the box with the CDs ☹️

City supported events are normally to be found either in the open air i.e. the squares or the parks and usually involve large boards with pictures which can be entertaining and/or informative. They also support art being shown in the passages i.e. Lucerna is a favourite location for this type of art.

## Theatre/Classical Music

As you walk around the city you'll be peppered with options for theatre performances and classical music. There are 5 big theatres in the city (dress code is smart or smart-casual). Classical music may be a "quintet" or "quartet" or it may be the larger Prague Symphony or Prague Philharmonic etc etc.

It's a high level of music so accept that the musicians will be great and concentrate on the venue. Start at the [Experience Prague Culture or Die Trying](#) post because there are decisions to be made and that post will help with direction and ultimately booking tickets. For classic opera my favourite venues are the National Theatre and the Estates Theatre. For classical music if you like really small venues (50 pax or less) then look for the Lobkovice Palace at the castle. Slightly larger venues (100-200 pax) include the Spanish Synagogue, the Mirror Chapel at the Klementinum, ST George Basilica at the castle and ST Nicholas Church Old Town.

My two favourite large venues (200+ pax) are ST Nicholas Lesser Town and ST Clements Old Town. Check any program details to see if they have an afternoon matinee performance i.e. the Estates Theatre regularly does Don Giovanni in the afternoon.

## Scenic Locations

Again, I wrote about restaurants in scenic locations, it's free so [Download the Scenic Prague Restaurants Guide](#). Some little noticed parts of Prague are the rooftops. Several of these places have scenic cafes and restaurants where the public can go.

On the corner of Wenceslas Square and Jindrisska you have Duplex, the Old Town Square has U Prince (Black Angels bar), Kotva department store has T-Anker on the roof. At the weekend in the summer they often open the rooftop of the Lucerna Passage.

At the top of the steps on the right, you'll find the [Prague Castle Vineyard](#) (also called the ST Wenceslas Vineyard) with both scenic café and restaurant options.



## Things to Do – Activities after 8pm



In Prague “evening” is after 6pm when you start hearing Czechs say to each other “Dobrý Večer” i.e. good evening! Between Spring and Autumn you’ve still got the tour options mentioned earlier.

In the summertime it’s still light and many of the attractions will be open for another hour or so but in winter it’s already dark and most of the main tourist places have closed or will be closing shortly.

Restaurants we went through earlier and don’t forget the [Prague River Cruise Review](#) for dinner cruises so this section is divided into three:

- Bars
- Music Clubs
- Culture

By Bars I mean regular bars which may have some kind of theme so it opens around 11am and closes around 1am but there are exceptions. I list all my personal favourites on [The Prague Bar Guide](#). That page is sectioned to give you a better idea of what to expect for different genres.



By Music clubs I mean places that will not open before 7pm and will close around 5am. Most of these places are listed on [The Prague Nightlife Guide](#) where I also show you some local resources for a more in-depth search of the Prague music scene.



An example of smarter “walk-in” music clubs/lounges could be the OneClub or M1 Lounge. Full-on dance club like Karlovy Lazne, Lavka and Zlaty Strom are all within 100 metres of each other.

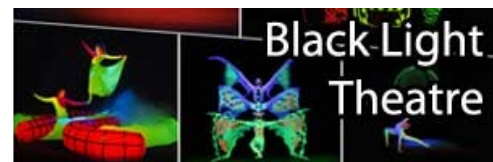
Also look out for themed events i.e. Dance Union in Vinohradská has one of the biggest hip-hop dance events on a Saturday and the biggest Latino dance night on Wednesdays. Jazz clubs have their own page on [The Prague Jazz Club Guide](#) where I list a good selection of places with different jazz genres and also a selected list of bands to look out for. The jazz clubs open late in the afternoon and usually the last set will finish between midnight and 1am.

Summer on the river is very nice so if you are a Jazz fan you've got the [Jazz Boat](#) which is an evening cruise with food but the food is optional in which case you should eat first but make sure you are at the boat dock BEFORE departure time as there is no refund if you miss the boat.

On the [Guide to Prague Performance Culture](#) I list all the different kinds of performances available in the main 5 theatres here and any dress code applicable. You'll soon see that Ballet is most often performed at the National Theatre but if you want a concise version with only the popular bits then the Hybernská theatre would be your choice. Likewise if you want modern dance and performance you'd go straight to the Laterna magika. I also post details of smaller private performances in some pretty spectacular venues and combined dinner/recital events.



On the [Guide to Black Light Theatre](#) I describe what Black Light performances are like, where best to sit in the hall and links to the best Black Light locations. Black Light performances are usually finished by 9pm so you've easily got enough time to see one of these, eat afterwards and still have time for a club later.



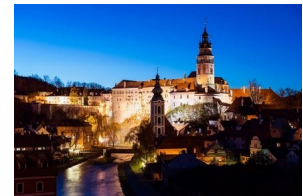
## Trips and Excursions

For the first time visitor here for 3 days or more or somebody that's been to Prague before I usually point people to four places:

**Kutna Hora**. People will usually know it as the place with the bone church. On the post I give you organised tour options and tips if you want to travel by yourself and do it either as a half-day or a whole day as you also have the Mint and ST Barbara's Cathedral.



**Cesky Krumlov**. Probably the most scenic town outside of Prague and very popular in the summer (especially the 5 Petal festival in June). I point out organised options and self-guide transport options. It's a 3 hour trip just to get there so you are looking at a 10 hour trip which includes lunch and a guided tour.



**Karlovy Vary**. It's a stunningly elegant spa town and you'll definitely want to try some of the mineral waters but mainly it's all about lunch and learning about crystal and glass. This is a whole-day trip. Different providers offer slightly different trips.



**Plzen**. My mother-in-law is from Plzen so it must be good! It's not just a trip to the brewery although that does form the bulk of visits. There's a pleasant square, cathedral, riverside and Dino Park for the kids. Easy to get there by train from Prague.



For a full list of recommended places to go outside of Prague, tips for getting there and things to do just look at the [Trips from Prague](#) category.

## Souvenirs

You don't want to be weighed down with souvenirs of your stay or gifts for friends etc but consider the following:

**For Kids** – We have a famous character here called Krtek which is Czech for “Mole”. In any toy shop you'll find him in various sizes and in bigger book shops you'll find his adventures translated into English.

**For All** – Marionettes are popular in Czech as they were always seen as the poor person's theatre. You can get them in various sizes, materials and quality. Great talking point using a famous Czech marionette character as a house decoration but if you give them to kids be prepared to spend long hours undoing the knots.....

**For Adults** – During your stay you may have had the chance to try an aperitif called “Becherovka”. If you tried it neat then it's a shock but take a bottle back with you and next time you try it add a thick fruit juice like pear or apricot. Fantastic (in the winter version you heat the juice).

**Beer Glass** – You've tried the beer now take home a glass. You'll find that glass/crystal/souvenir shops will have a couple of shelves of metric beer glasses so if you liked your Pilsner/Gambrinus/Kozel/Staropramen beer, then relive your visit to Prague in your own home.

**Garnet** – I wrote about the Bohemian Garnet a long time before I found a place that I was sure actually sold it. If you know somebody with a January birthday then Garnet is their birthstone. The page at <https://livingprague.com/prague-life/bohemian-garnet-prague/> shows you how to spot the real thing, a recommended place to buy it and discount options from 10% off for EU Nationals to 21% off i.e. tax-free for non-EU Nationals.

**Miniature buildings** – I had not seen this before I came to Prague but then having worked all over Europe I found that many cities have them. Basically they are miniature copies no more than 10cm high of buildings, often famous structures but others not so well-known and are often swapped between collectors.

## Thank You

**So that's it.** If I'm correct that's more than 40 pages of tips, tricks and recommendations. I hope that it will help you prepare for your trip.

If there is anything that you want to know that's not covered here or if you have any questions feel free to [Contact Me](#).

Also if you are in the planning phase and you want to get a feel for the city I'd invite you to view Interesting Content and Odd News from Prague or in other words [Subscribe to the Monthly Newsletter](#).

If you think I saved you time or money consider [Buying Me a Coffee](#).

