

# Livingprague Newsletter

January 2025



*Old Town Square*

In the January newsletter we'll take a look at a quirky location for fine dining. We'll do some history about the ST Giles Church and which Czech director used it as a filming location. I'll tell you about the Jachymov work camp and it's connection to a Nobel Prize winner. Finally, I published a video showing some sights and sounds of the Christmas Markets.

The Activity Spotlight is a look at why you might want to visit a Beer Spa this winter. Blast from the Past includes upgraded emergency stop signage on the metro system. There's an updated picture on the Prague Stolpersteine post showing two of only 5 stones in the city that say people were deported but survived.

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

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## Featured New Content

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### Food and Drink – Restaurant Zvonce

A combination of a strange and slightly quirky location combined with fine dining is a restaurant called Zvonce. It's built into a bell tower close to Wenceslas Square. International/Czech cuisine, high quality with a high price. [Read more....](#)



### Attraction/Church – ST Giles

ST Giles, built in 1238 is one of the oldest accessible churches in the city. Built by the Catholic Order of Teutonic Knights to assist travellers between Europe and Jerusalem it has been a victim both of fire and Communism. More recently an Oscar-winning film used it as a filming location. [Read more.....](#)



## History/Politics – Jachymov Work Camp

When communists say that political prisoners were often not executed but were instead sent to work camps let's take a look at one of the famous work camps at Jachymov. Learn what was mined here and why working here was a death sentence. [Read more....](#)



## Video – Christmas Markets 2024

Just my annual stroll around the central Christmas Markets with some tips for enjoying them. This year I included the Christmas Tree light show and a couple of the decorated trams. [See more .....](#)

# Blast from the Past (Updated Old Content)

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Following the death of a blind man who fell onto metro tracks the city transport provider has upgraded hundreds of metro emergency stop points with new hi-viz signage. [Read more....](#)



An update for the Prague Stolpersteine post. I walk past these stones fairly often. Four people from the same family deported from the same building. The two on the left deported first to Terezin in 1941 actually survived. The two (children) on the right were deported the following year and murdered at Treblinka. [Read more....](#)

# Comment

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## Me Me Me

I've been reading a book about a former post-Communism Czech President. Not really an autobiography, it's more of "excerpts from the Presidency". What comes across are his efforts to raise aspirations not just of his immediate staff, we're talking about national aspirations, continental aspirations and in general raising the profile of improving humanity. I look at the current crop of national leaders and I'm struggling to see the humanity. It all seems to be what's best for the one.

## Give me a Reason

Political polls frequently put the right-leaning ANO party at the head of the polls with approximately 33% projected vote total. It would take the combined votes of the next 4 parties to surpass this figure. That's about the same as we have at present i.e. a coalition on one side and the right-leaning parties in opposition. I'm not an ANO supporter but the current trend towards Nationalism and inward view means a lot of voters are attracted by the message. Personally I hope that the smaller parties can take a good look at their own policies and offer a better choice than they do at present.

## In The News

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**2024 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of the Pendolino high-speed train with a top speed of 238Kmh and a life span of 40 years. But it was reported that there is no railway line in the country that can support the top speed of this train and scarily, there are no plans for any such railway upgrade.**

Members of Parliament passed a law to amend the rules for enrolling children into school. Whereas Czech children would be enrolled as normal, non-Czech children would be enrolled 1 month later. This was to allow school principals to see what percentage of non-Czechs had to be accepted and where. Although primarily aimed at the dispersal of Ukrainian children it does affect any child not born here. 52,246 Ukrainian children registered in Czech schools in 2024

**December 21<sup>st</sup> 2024 marked the first anniversary of the mass-shooting event at the Charles University Faculty of Arts located on the Jan Palach Square. Student David Kozák killed 2 teachers and 14 students plus another 25 injured before being cornered by police and then killing himself. The investigation into the police response to the attack is now in it's second year.**

The Supreme Audit Office published some specific figures regarding receipt of European Union funds since joining the Bloc in 2004. Czechia has a net surplus of approximately CZK1 Trillion or in other words in just under 20 years the country has received CZK1 Trillion more FROM the EU than it has paid TO the EU. The argument now is to work out how the money has been spent to the country's advantage. The greater question is has the country met it's convergence targets regarding lifestyle improvements. The answer to that appears to be no.

# Trivia and Odd Statistics

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**Vaclav Havel was elected to be the last President of Czechoslovakia 35 years ago.**

More than 700,000 eligible Czechs received a Flu vaccination between September and December 2024.

**Czech registered banks currently hold almost CZK11 Trillion in assets.**

31 year-old Josef Dostal, an Olympic canoeist champion, was named Czech Sportsman of the Year 2024.

**In his first year in office, President Petr Pavel issued 4 criminal pardons, 1 legislative veto, 56 State Honours and appointed 169 judges.**

The annual Polar Bear Dip (swimming in the River Vltava) attracted over 300 participants with the youngest aged 13 and the oldest aged 85. Water temperature was 4.3 degrees Celsius.

**Czechia has donated 1 Million Euros to the Ukraine “Drone Coalition” fund specifically set up to pay for unmanned drones to help offset the numerical advantage of the Russian army.**

From January 1<sup>st</sup> an annual motorway vignette will be CZK2440. Hybrid vehicles get 75% off and zero-emission vehicles pay nothing.

**The song that would become the National Anthem of the Czech Republic (kde domov muj) was performed for the first time in the Estates Theatre on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1834.**

There are 28 “Czech Centres” around the world promoting Czech culture.

**In 2023, Prague hosted 7.4 Million tourists. The largest number were Czechs (1.6 Million) then Germans (1.3 Million).**

# Walking Tours

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January and the New Year starts with the last week of the Christmas Markets so I'm actually still doing tours with a Christmas theme. But for Guides we are waiting for January 6<sup>th</sup> and the end of the markets. It brings a silence back to the Old Town Square which you really appreciate having spent the previous 6 weeks trying to be heard above all the crowds and music. It's not Bah-Humbug. It's just a recognition that the old season is over and there will now be a quiet period which will allow for reading, writing and holiday before the Spring season. Getting a lot of interest in private tours this year. Already sorting out details as far ahead as October 2025.

**People might be interested to know that despite the Covid-19 pandemic and the high rates of inflation since then, my scheduled tour prices have stayed the same.**

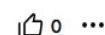
## Review

I picked out the review from "dakota1956". It's not just walking tours. As the reviewer points out, the tours are backed up by two websites with more than 700 pages and posts filled with useful information, reviews of one kind or another, general information and literally thousands of local tips for experiencing Prague.



**dakota1956**

Washington DC • 106 contributions



**Third Reich Tour of Prague with Jason**

Nov 2024 • Couples

We booked a private tour of Prague during the Third Reich years with Jason. He expertly wove historical details with human interest stories over 2.5 hours in Old Town Prague. Jason is a marvelous story-teller, and we were awed at deep knowledge. He is also the author of the LivingPrague website, which is a treasure trove of information about Prague -- it was my go-to reference when I was doing research about the city. At the end of the tour, he steered us to an excellent restaurant, Lokal, which features Czech cuisine at moderate prices. Jason's tours are an excellent value.

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

Written November 23, 2024



## 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 2025 with time for people to buy food/drink as required.



## Activity Spotlight! – Beer Spa

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Beer Spa

It's the New Year and one thing is guaranteed, it's likely to be freezing.

Even people visiting from colder climates will find the humid type of cold we have here somewhat uncomfortable. There's no amount of hats and gloves which is going to stop the cold working its way into your bones if you are outside for extended periods of time. So if hot alcohol stops are not an option then consider an alternative.






There's nothing better than relaxing in a nice bath of mineral water and herbs and just letting it properly warm you up. Plus there's also the side benefit of being able to drink as much beer as you can.

Check the post about [the Beer Spa Experience](#)

# Being Social

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

# Surveys – Help me improve!

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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!

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

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

**EMAIL:** [fun@livingprague.com](mailto:fun@livingprague.com)

**CALL/SMS/WHATSAPP:** +420 603 187856

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