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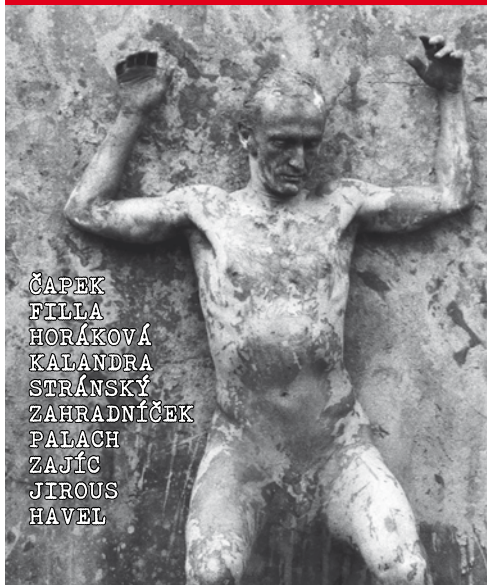


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Currently...

Vladimír Kopecký • an exhibition of the prominent contemporary experimenter, painter, and master of the art of glassmaking • Topič Salon, through 29 November www.topicusalon.cz

Head of Prague • a six km race for eights (rowing boats) in the centre of Prague start at Barrandov Bridge, U-turn between Palacký Bridge and Jirásek Bridge, 2 November www.headofprague.com

Fotograf Festival • exhibitions, educational programme and discussion about photography • various venues in Prague, through 14 November www.fotografestival.cz

In Defiance • an exhibition about Czech architecture from 1969 to 2019 and about freedom for architectural creation • Jaroslav Fragner Gallery, from 8 November to 31 December www.gjf.cz

Wine Tasting • a traditional tasting of the products of domestic winemakers and of roasted goose celebrating the Feast of St. Martin • National Agriculture Museum, 16 November www.nzm.cz

On Flying and Other Dreams • the exhibition takes visitors to the fantastic world of the illustrator and author of children's books Petr Sís • DOX Centre, until 20 January www.dox.cz

Vivaldi, Martinů, and Mendelssohn • concert of the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra Rudolfinum Concert Hall, 16 December www.socr.rozhlas.cz

November 1989 in the Streets of Prague • an exhibition for the thirtieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution • City of Prague Museum, through 26 April www.muzeumprahy.cz

Lamplighter on Charles Bridge • lighting of old gas streetlamps, ca. 4:05 to 4:15 p.m. depending on the • Charles Bridge, from 1 to 23 December www.prague.eu

Devětsil • an exhibition commemorating the important association of Czech avant-garde artists Prague City Gallery, from 11 December to 29 March www.ghmp.cz

New Year's video mapping • a lightshow on the façade of the National Museum will ring out the old year and bring in the new • Wenceslas Square, 1 January www.prague.eu

Fate (Osud) • Leoš Janáček's opera in a production by the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre with supertitles in English • National Theatre, 4 January www.festival-opera.cz

Michael Rittstein • an exhibition of paintings and drawings honouring the seventieth birthday of the Czech artist • Prague Castle Riding School, from 2 November to 5 January www.kulturanahrade.cz

Czech Philharmonic • the leading Czech orchestra under the baton of Semyon Bychkov plays Schubert and Beethoven • Rudolfinum Concert Hall, 15, 16, and 17 January www.ceskafilharmonie.cz

Did you know that...

...you can wear contact lenses thanks to a Czech inventor? His name was Otto Wichterle (1913–1998), and his pathway towards an invention that is now an absolutely normal part of life was quite an adventure. The idea of developing soft contact lenses is said to have come to him from a conversation he had to pass time on a train. The scientist's fellow passenger was reading an article about the possibilities of eye implants, and Wichterle realised that plastic was a better material than metal. He then began developing a material that the eye could tolerate. His research was interrupted in 1958, when Wichterle was dismissed from his university job for political reasons. He found work elsewhere, but he did not remain long at his new job, either. Wichterle kept working on it at home. As incredible as it may seem, he built the first device for manufacturing contact lenses using a children's construction set and a dynamo from a bicycle. Later he replaced the dynamo with a gramophone motor. At this time, the state began to realise that using soft contact lenses went beyond the field of healthcare. Wichterle was therefore permitted to return to work under more dignified conditions. In 1965 a licensing agreement was signed with an American company, but more than ten years later, the



state cancelled all of the licensing contracts. By doing so, the government was trying to avoid dealing with disputes over patents that were being violated by other companies in the USA and also to diminish the successes connected with the name of Otto Wichterle, who was back out of political favour in his own country. Meanwhile, he was responsible for yet another important discovery: thanks to him, socialist industry was able to use silon, a material similar to nylon. He received recognition for his work only after the revolution in 1989, when the totalitarian regime was replaced by a democracy.

...Prague has been struck by devastating floods several times? The most recent was in 2002, when the capital city suffered a 1,000-year flood. Even the Metro was flooded, and traces of the level the water reached can be seen in several stations. People nervously watched the struggle against the floodwaters at the zoo, which is built on the banks of the Vltava River. A seal named Gaston became famous when he found himself in the water and swam all the way to Germany,

where he died of exhaustion, unfortunately. The flooding in 2002 left behind devastation, breaking a 150-year-old record. Back then, Prague also suffered one of the most destructive floods in Bohemia in the modern age. Just imagine: at one of Prague's medieval landmarks – Charles Bridge – the turbulent river waters reached a width of one kilometre. That time, the bridge withstood the surging water, but at other times it was not so fortunate. Piers of the bridge and two of its arches were torn down not long

... the Czech national anthem was originally a song of a blind violinist? It comes from a play written in 1834, in which a violinist named Mareš sings at cobbler's fair. His song begins with the words "Where is my homeland?", and its rhapsodising of the beauty of the Czech countryside resonated well with the patriotic feelings of the Czechs, who were then under the rule of the Austrian Empire. The hit song from the show soon became popular, and it became a patriotic song. The first stanza (today, the second stanza is virtually unknown) was chosen as part of the official national anthem together with the Slovak anthem in 1918 when Czechoslovakia was founded as an independent state. After Czechoslovakia broke up in 1992, the song continued to be used as the Czech national anthem. Recently there were rather heated debates in the Czech Republic over whether the national anthem should be lengthened by adding the unused second stanza. The suggestion for the change came from the Czech Olympic Committee, which complained that the Czech national anthem was one of the shortest, so the Czech athletes did not get much time to enjoy standing on the winners' podium.

afterwards, in 1890. The structure was damaged by timber from rafts that had come loose and collided with the bridge. Two statues also fell into the water – those of St Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier. Charles Bridge also lost some of its sculptures in 1784. The sandstone torso of an angel was actually found by divers in 2004. Not only angels fell into the water, but also, unfortunately, several piers and with them a military guardhouse, including soldiers at their post.

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What's Going On in Prague

Contemporary Czech fine arts. The National Gallery is holding two exhibitions in parallel to present prominent artists of two generations. **Milan Grygar** (*1926) explores the artwork with audiovisual resources. He is the most important Czech artist in the field of the combination of sound, image, and physical gesture. Already in the mid-1960s he was combining drawings on paper with recordings on which he captured the sound of the drawing implements. Representing the new works at the National Gallery is an artist who is two generations younger, **Josef Bolf** (*1971). The recurring motifs on the paintings of this artist include boys and girls immersed in sadness, the interiors of abandoned, damaged hospitals, car crashes, and inhospitable-looking prefab estates. He is presenting his work under the title *A Premonition of Shadow*. You can see this exhibition of Milan Grygar and Josef Bolf beginning on 5 January at the Trade Fair Palace, which is the main building of the National Gallery. As a representative of the “middle” generation between those

artists, there is also the Czech German artist **Jitka Hanzlová** (* 1958). In her cycles of photographs, she explores the individual persons, their environment, and the landscapes where they live. You can discover her works at an exhibition titled *Tišiny* (Silences) from 5 November to the middle of next February.



Concerts to attend. If you like a variety of musical genres and are interested in what the current Czech music scene has to offer, go hear one of the following musicians. All of them are original artists whose music would definitely be successful even beyond the borders of the Czech Republic. The trumpet player **Laco Deczi** belongs to the older generation of musicians, but even at eighty-one years old his performances are like a surge of energy. Come experience it on 14 November at the Rock Café, where he will be accompanied by his band *Celula New York*. The band **Kafka Band** is associated with Germany, and it will be giving a musical interpretation of the literary works of

the Prague German writer Franz Kafka. It will be introducing its musical setting of the novel *America* to the public at the Akropolis Palace on 17 December. Two days later at the Lucerna Palace, **Monkey Business** will appear on stage. The band, known for humour and using the English language, is coming here to complete its autumn tour for the album *Bad Time For Gentlemen*. Listeners will be welcomed by a more intimate atmosphere at a performance of the pianist and composer **Beata Hlavenková**. A musician to her core, her performance will feature borrowings from jazz, classical, pop, and folk music. You can hear her on 23 January at the Akropolis Palace.

Ballet, plays, and movement theatre. The National Theatre offers some plays with English supertitles, so even foreigners can discover the repertory of the leading Czech theatre. For example, there are productions of some classics. At the theatre, you can attend performances with supertitles including William Shakespeare's fanciful tale **A Midsummer Night's Dream** or the play **The Misanthrope** by the famous French dramatist Molière. The conception of the National Theatre for *The Misanthrope* is a description of contemporary society, which is satisfied only with an image of itself. The main character of the moralising pessimist is confronted with young people of Prague's middle class. The same invitation applies to the dramatisation of the novel **Pride and Prejudice**, in which Jane Austen deals with the basic problem of a rural English family in the early 19th century: how to marry off their daughters as quickly and elegantly as possible. If you prefer wordless expression, one of the new productions at the National Theatre is the ballet fairytale **Leonce & Lena**. The choreography by Christian Spuck is based on a play written by Georg Büchner in 1836. The fairytale with its satirically comical basis tells of melancholy Prince Leonce and lovely Lena, who were engaged to be married at birth by their parents. Both rebel against the decision of their royal fathers. On the even of the wedding, independently of each other, they flee to Italy, but there they meet, not recognising each other, and fall in love. There are other smaller theatres in Prague that are worth a visit. For example, the culture space La Fabrika (Prague District 7) presents productions including those of one of the most prominent Czech contemporary dance and movement theatre ensembles – 420People. In the production **The Watcher**, they are joined by the rock band Please The Trees, and



Stoves from Špaček – Tiles and Stove-Making in Prague during the Renaissance. Visitors to the exhibition can learn about stove tile production and stove-making in Prague during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. A unique archaeological find of a pottery workshop in Truhlářská (previously Hrnčířská) Street in Prague's New Town also appears at the exhibition; it was discovered during extensive research of the former George of Poděbrady Barracks on Republic Square



they have created an answer in dance and music to the question of how to face accelerated times, when the latest technology is suppressing the essence of human existence. There is also an existential dimension to the production **Panthera**. It tells of the development of humanity as a thrilling yet horrifying tale of the merciless cruelty and intelligence of a living being. It is based on the book by the Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari. The choreographer explains the theme of the show: "Beside us, Homo sapiens, no other species survived. Why?"

(2003–2006). The exhibition consists of original archaeological finds from the realm of pottery and stove-making as well as daily life and historical pictures, reconstructed production facilities, 3D models, visualisations, and films documenting important stages of the production process. Furthermore, hands-on exhibits and children's activities are prepared for visitors. It can be seen at the House at the Golden Ring (Týnská 630/6) until 29 March.

www.muzeumprahy.cz



The Glory and Misery of the Barrandov Film Studios



Built by the uncle of the first Czech president, Barrandov is called the Hollywood of the East. And a hundred years ago, the cream of society gathered on its terraces. You can come and see the Barrandov Film Studios and learn about Czech cinematography of the past and present.

The origins of the Barrandov Film Studios are associated with the Havel family, to which the first Czech president Václav Havel belonged. It was his uncle Miloš Havel who established the film industry in this country. He had ties to cinematography thanks to his father Václav Havel who built the Lucerna Palace in the centre of Prague at the beginning of the twentieth century. The venue had originally been intended as a hockey stadium, but that turned out to be nonsense, so it was used as a cinema, among other things. It remains a cinema to this day. Lucerna Palace is also worth a visit because of the architecture bordering on art nouveau and modernism. For example, there are two striking arcades with glass coverings that were original for

their day. You will also find there one of the few paternoster lifts still in operation in Prague. There is also a sculpture by a contemporary artist parodying the equestrian statue of Saint Wenceslas, the patron saint of the Czech lands. In the Lucerna arcade, Saint Wenceslas is sitting on the belly of a dead horse, and he will supposedly stay that way until a constitutional monarchy is re-established in this country. Miloš Havel worked at the palace as the director of the cinema, but that was just the beginning of his rise to the status of a film magnate. He founded a distribution company and joined with his equally industrious brother, who wanted to build a luxurious residential complex on the cliffs on the left bank of the Vltava River. Miloš suggested that a modern film studio be created nearby. The place was named Barrandov for a French scientist who did geological research in central Bohemia. Construction began in 1931. When built, the Barrandov Studios had some of the most modern technical equipment in Europe. At the time of their greatest flourishing, the studios had 300 full-time employees and produced nearly 80 films a year. Barrandov became a popular place not only for filmmakers thanks to the residential area built there by Miloš's brother, inspired by a restaurant on a cliff that he went to while visiting San Francisco. In the 1930s and '40s, the Barrandov Terraces were a popular site for the parties of film stars, and crowds of Prague's residents took excursions there on Sundays. They could have lunch in the restaurant in the observation tower, and there was a pool, a volley ball court, and even a beach. When the Communists took power in 1948, the complex was nationalised, and it gradually deteriorated into its current condition, but it is now undergoing renovation that should return the site to its original glory in the next two years. History also affected the fate of the terraces. After the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in

1939, Miloš Havel was forced to sell off his majority share in the company, but he continued to work at the studios. They made both German and Czech films in Barrandov, mostly with comic or historical subject matter. Entertaining the people was in the interest of the occupying forces, of course. After the Second World War, the studios were taken over by the state, then they were privatised in the 1990s after the collapse of socialist Czechoslovakia. The rest of Miloš Havel's story is not the happiest. After the war he faced accusations of collaboration, although he demonstrably used his influence for the benefit of others. He refused, for example, to dismiss the Jewish director, and he often employed artists and film workers simply in order to help them avoid persecution or being sent to the Reich as labourers. The case against him was dismissed in 1947, but two years later Havel was still sentenced to two years in prison. He had been caught trying to escape across the border. He finally succeeded at leaving the country on his second try in 1952. He settled in Munich and died there in 1968. Unfortunately, he did not succeed at resuming his career as a filmmaker in Germany.



How Christmas Is Celebrated in the Czech Republic

As in other countries with predominantly Roman Catholic traditions, preparations for the Christmas holidays in the Czech Republic begin with Advent. Advent wreaths are commonly found in Czech homes. Of course, the period is no longer viewed only as a preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ, but also more generally as a prelude to holidays of peace, family, and love, regardless of religious beliefs. The wait is made shorter by **St Nicholas**, who brings gifts even before Christmas. The man with the white beard, dressed as a bishop, and carrying a staff visits homes on 5 December, but you can also run into him on the street. He is always accompanied by a devil and an angel. He rewards good children with sweets and little gifts, but for the less obedient he usually has pieces of coal or potatoes in his basket. The tradition refers to Bishop Nicholas of Myra, who lived in the late third and early fourth centuries. He was famed as a guardian against injustice and for his philanthropy. In Prague there is, for example, a church on Old Town Square that bears this saint's name. The highpoint of Czech Christmas celebrations comes on **Christmas Eve**. The Czech name for Christmas Eve, "Štědrý den" (literally "Generous Day") is actually a mistake. For centuries, it was just called "Generous Evening", i.e. the eve of the birth of the Savior. This was overlooked by a parliamentary decree issued in 1990, which made 24 December a state holiday. Since then, the Czechs and Slovaks have been among the few people in the world with Christmas Eve recognized as a state holiday. Christmas Eve is also the last day of fasting, although the fast is not observed in the Czech Republic. There is, however, an observed superstition that anyone who fasts on the 24th of December will see the "golden piglet". Parents often create this promised reward for their children by



using a reflection from a mirror. The "Generous Day" ends with **Christmas Eve supper**. The traditional meal is fried carp with potato salad. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, carp became a widespread menu item for the holiday meal in Czech homes as an inexpensive food that was permitted on fast days. The original recipe with an almond sauce, gingerbread, and sweet beer was replaced by a Viennese recipe for breaded fried carp. Potato salad did not appear as a side dish until the Second World War. The dish probably has its origins in Russian cuisine. Christmas Eve supper usually ends with the ringing of a bell announcing the arrival of the Infant

Jesus. In the Czech tradition, it is he who puts presents under the Christmas tree. A variety of **customs** are observed on this holiday in many families. For example, keeping a carp scale under your plate should ensure you will have plenty of money in the coming year, and slicing an apple will show whether you will have good luck (if the middle of the apple slice appears as a star) or bad luck (if the core of the slice shows a cross). Unmarried girls can toss a slipper to see which way the toe points, revealing whether they will marry in the year to come. Molten lead is poured, as the shape of the casting helps predict the future, or little boats are made from nutshells and candles and are floated on water. Regardless of people's religious beliefs, they often conclude Christmas Eve by attending Midnight Mass. The following two days are also Czech state holidays. In addition, there is caroling in connection with the **Feast of St Stephen** on 26 December. The holiday season continues with **New Year's Eve celebrations**, although only New Year's Day on 1 January is an official holiday, and festivities extend from 31 December to 6 January. On **Epiphany**, decorations are removed from Christmas trees, and Caspar, Balthazar, and Melchior write their initials K (or C) † M † B † in white chalk above doorways, expressing the wish that Christ will bless the household throughout the following year.

Each year, there is a Procession of the Three Kings in Prague. In 2020, the kings will depart on camels on 5 January at 2 p.m. from St Thomas's Church in the Lesser Town, cross Charles Bridge, and proceed to Old Town Square. There, people can bring gifts for children from needy families and shelters.



Design markets in Prague

Visitors to Prague in the days before Christmas really enjoy the markets, where they can buy original gifts by Czech creators. **Praguemarket** will take place over two November weekends (9 and 10 November and 16 and 17 November, náměstí Republiky – Republic Square). Fifty designers will be presenting their work, mostly from the realm of fashion and fashion accessories or jewellery as well as cosmetics, for example. On the last weekend of November, those interested in Czech design can choose from among several events. At the same time in the centre of Prague, you can go to the **Dyzajn market** (“Design Market”, 30 November and 1 December in front of the National Theatre). There are booths with jewellery, accessories, bags, porcelain, decorations, clothing, toys, and paper goods. Most of the goods are Czech made, but designers from other countries of eastern Europe are also represented. The **Mint Market** at the Prague Exhibition Grounds in Prague District 7 emphasises originality and Czech origins. You can visit the market on two weekends: the last weekend of November and just before Christmas on 21 and 22 December. Between those dates, you can also go to **Czech Design Week** (from 11 to 15 December, Congress Centre). The independent design show presents the work of Czech and foreign designers.

Places in Prague where famous movies were filmed

Prague’s historical center in particular is not only an attraction for tourists, but also a place popular with foreign film directors. For example, the action in the first film from the series *Mission: Impossible* took place in Prague. Notice that after the explosion of the aquarium, the main hero played by Tom Cruise is running ahead of the water through what is actually Old Town Square. Later, he jumps into the river from nearby Charles Bridge, built at the initiative of Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor. Heath Ledger also used Charles Bridge and Hradčany as a backdrop. In the romantic adventure film *A Knight’s Tale*, those locations were used to represent medieval London. And it is not only in this film that Prague sites have “played” other cities. As agent Ethan Hunt, Tom Cruise also carried out his *Mission: Impossible* in Prague in

a film subtitled *Ghost Protocol*. In this case, Prague venues stood in for Budapest and Moscow. For example, the filmmakers used Prague Castle for scenes in Moscow’s Kremlin. Hradčany Square in front of the castle complex represented revolutionary Paris of the nineteenth century in one of the many adaptations of *Les Misérables*. The chief protagonist Jean Valjean (Liam Neeson) was living there in Martinic Palace. To make the illusion perfect, in several shots the filmmakers “erased” the dominant feature of the neighborhood – St. Vitus’s Cathedral – and replaced it with the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Hradčany also played a role in the film *The Illusionist* with Edward Norton in the leading role. It has also stood in for Schönbrunn in Vienna. The Bond movie *Casino Royale* was likewise filmed in Prague. In the film, Daniel Craig plays James Bond staying at a luxurious hotel in Venice, which was in reality the building of the National Museum on Wenceslas Square. At the National Museum as well as at the Strahov Monastery, for example, Johnny Depp searches for Jack the Ripper in the film *From Hell*. For the purposes of the film, however, both places were shown as part of mysterious London. The Oscar winning director Guillermo del Toro went farther out from the historic center of the city to do filming. In the horror action film *Hellboy* he used the national monument on the hilltop at Vítkov as an institute for the study of paranormal phenomena. The scene from *Wanted* in which Angelina Jolie chases a train was shot at a disused freight depot in the same neighborhood (Žižkov) as the monument. And here is yet another curiosity: for the filming of the thriller *Child 44* with Tom Hardy in August 2013, the Prague Metro was shut down during routine operation for the first time in history.





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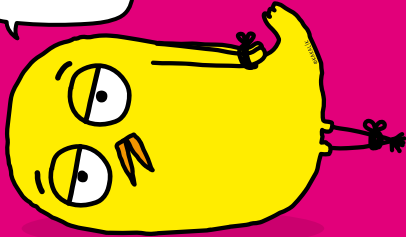


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From Czech History: Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution

Both the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic commemorate 17 November as the anniversary of the 1989 Velvet Revolution that brought to an end the totalitarian communist regime that had ruled Czechoslovakia for 41 years. The name Velvet Revolution was initially coined by journalists in recognition of the fact that the protesters never resorted to violence or armed resistance against intervening police forces. Not a single person was killed.

Illegal hopes

The Velvet Revolution was the culmination of almost half a century of oppression that arrived with the communist coup d'état of February 1948. The communists took to describing the 1948 events as the “victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie”, and the country became firmly embedded in the Soviet sphere. Within a year of the putsch, the Council of Free Czechoslovakia was established – a segment of the population that was unwilling to acquiesce to the new regime and felt the need to obtain unadulterated information from abroad, free of Soviet-dictated ideology. As a result, Radio Free Europe (RFE) was established, funded by the US. The first trial programme was broadcast from the back of a lorry

positioned just outside the country's western border in the summer of 1950. Regular RFE broadcasts from its Bavarian studio in Munich began on 1 May 1951, with the now legendary intro: “This is the voice of free Czechoslovakia, Radio Free Europe.”

Jammed signals

In the following months, broadcasts were made into other communist-ruled countries. Radio Free Europe began to speak in Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian. Of course, the ruling regimes of Czechoslovakia and other communist nations considered the RFE broadcasts as hostile and dangerous. Numerous jamming stations were constructed across Czechoslovakia from the early 1950s onwards to block reception of the broadcasts. The state was spending tens of millions of crowns a year on building and operating jamming towers. Nevertheless, RFE broadcast up to 20 hours a day, every day, on nearly 30 long-, medium- and short-wave frequencies. From its very inception, RFE created an environment for free culture. Its editors and collaborators included numerous leading writers who had emigrated from their native countries, as well as authors who had stayed behind but were unable to publish their works. RFE, for instance, provided a platform for the writings and thinking of Václav Havel, the playwright who became Czechoslovakia's first post-revolution president.

New era

The change to the political, social and economic circumstances of the Czech Republic that came with the collapse of the totalitarian regime was the fulfillment of long-term efforts made by many people both within the country and abroad. With its newfound freedoms,

the country took its first steps to re-establishing democracy, regardless of the difficulties complicating the road ahead. The radio station's mission was also transformed by the dramatic turn of events. Within weeks of the events of November 1989, people were able to tune in to legalized domestic broadcasters. They heard voices that could previously have been enjoyed only in secret. Some of the journalists and newsreaders gradually made their way to television screens, with their way cleared by the dismantling of the demagoguery and half-truths disseminated by the former communist regime's propaganda machinery.

Events for the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution

The main celebrations on 17 November will be taking place at sites connected with the events that unfolded three decades ago: Národní třída (Avenue of the Nation) and Wenceslas Square. Just like thirty years ago, a procession of students will pass through Prague on 17 November, but this time it will be a theatrical re-enactment. There are also many exhibitions where you can learn about the events in 1989 and related history. For example, the National Technical Museum has prepared the exhibition Technology & Dictatorship (until 28 June) presenting the technological resources used by the Communist regime and its opponents. The Museum of Decorative Arts is presenting Images of the Ends of History, which examines Czech visual culture in the period just before and after the Velvet Revolution (through 29 March). The National Gallery will present a photographic review of the year 1989 (from 15 November to 16 February).



An Excursion to the Regions: Southern Bohemia



Southern Bohemia is one of the most frequently visited regions in the Czech Republic. And it's no wonder. A wealth of cultural monuments as well as areas of natural beauty are to be found there. The following is a selection of historical towns in the region that are both worth a visit and within easy travelling distance of Prague. There are ample train and coach connections from the capital. Pick your destination and enjoy a trip that can be both adventurous and educating.

Písek

Písek is generally considered the "Gate" into Southern Bohemia. It is located about 100 kilometres south of Prague. The town was founded on the banks of the Otava river by Czech kings in the mid-13th century. Thanks to local deposits of gold and busy trading and manufacturing activities, the town quickly grew. Probably the most attractive monument in Písek is its stone bridge, the oldest in Bohemia as it was built in the 13th century. The Písek stud farm is another tourist magnet. It was built in the Tudor style and one of the resident stallions, Ardo, served sculptor Josef Václav Myslbek as the model for the famous equestrian statue of Saint Wenceslas found at the top of Wenceslas Square in Prague. One of the earlier model statues is located on the stud courtyard. Písek is

also a town of museums and as such it offers tourists an opportunity to visit the historical water-powered generation station of the royal town of Písek. All the equipment is still in working order.

České Budějovice

Established by Czech King Ottokar II in 1265, the town of České Budějovice is celebrating the 754th anniversary of its founding. The new royal town was meant to provide the previously missing Southern Bohemian base for the king. České Budějovice began to flourish considerably in the 16th century and the town even became the kingdom's capital for a while during the Thirty Years' War when numerous government offices moved from Prague, threatened by Swedish troops. Another boom came in the 19th century when administration relocated to the city from the nearby towns of Tábor and Písek. That and one of the first railway lines to be built in the kingdom connecting the city to Linz in Austria, meant that České Budějovice became a prominent centre of trade and culture. České Budějovice is above all a city of beer. The Budweiser Budvar lager is known to many fans of "liquid gold" anywhere in the world. The brewery itself operates a visitors centre with a multimedia display called The Story of Beer in České Budějovice (Příběh budějovického piva).

In terms of city architecture, one of the most interesting sights is the central square, truly square and one of the largest in Central Europe, with dimensions of 133 metres by 133 metres. The Přemysl Otakar II Square is overlooked by the gothic Black Tower (Černá věž) that offers splendid views of the city's historical centre.

Český Krumlov

Of the three towns, Český Krumlov, is the southernmost one and the trip from Prague takes about three hours by coach. The first written records of the town's existence date back to 1240 and mention a jousting tournament that was taking place at Krumlov castle. That would indicate that the local settlement was by then a highly representative one and well stocked too if it could host a number of knights. The whole town has retained its romantic atmosphere. Taking a stroll through the town means navigating a labyrinth of narrow medieval streets adorned with picturesque gables of burgher houses. The town, boasting a unique atmosphere, has had its historical centre included on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1992. The town's crown jewels are its castle and chateau. The whole compound is fully interconnected and simply demands romantic strolls from courtyard to courtyard in the evening's fading light. The chateau also includes a pen with live bears that has been maintained there for several centuries. However, the main attraction is the chateau's baroque theatre. It is one of Europe's best preserved stages dating from the 18th century, including an almost complete set of costumes, stage properties and theatre technology. Another place certainly worth a visit is the Egon Schiele Art Centrum, devoted to works by Schiele as well as classical art of the 20th century in general.

Points of interest

- ▶ There are numerous beautiful parks and gardens in Prague, occupying approximately 5% of the total urban area. The most beautiful include the former Royal Preserve, now more frequently referred to by its popular name "Stromovka", the complex of gardens on the Petřín Hill, the Vrtbovská Garden (from November to March closed), the gardens at Letná, the Wallenstein Garden (Valdštejnská zahrada), and the Prague Castle gardens.
- ▶ There are ten islands on the Vltava (Moldau) River running through Prague (e.g. Střelecký, Císařský, Dětský). A few years ago, the prestigious traveler's server VirtualTourist.com declared the Prague island of Kampa the second most rewarding urban island in the world.
- ▶ Prague's astronomical clock (Pražský orloj), one of the best-preserved medieval astronomical clocks in the world, is a feature of the tower of the Old Town Hall. It was created by Mikuláš z Kadaně, a clockmaker to the royal court, in 1410.
- ▶ The Jan Žižka Monument on Vítkov Hill is one of the world's largest bronze equestrian statues. It weighs 16.5 metric tons and is 9 meters tall and 9.6 meters long.
- ▶ Charles Bridge was the only bridge in Prague right up until the 19th century. It is the second oldest bridge in use in the Czech Republic.

Useful information

- ▶ **Prague is the capital city** of the Czech Republic. It has approximately 1.3 million inhabitants on an area of some 500 sq km (193 sq mi). It originated around 1000 A.D. and for many years remained a group of independent villages. Under the rule of Charles IV (14th century) medieval Prague experienced its greatest development. At the turn of the 17th century the city gained further renown owing to Emperor Rudolf II. Between 1918 and 1992 Prague was the capital city of Czechoslovakia, and since January 1993 it has been the capital of the independent Czech Republic. Since 1 May 2004 the Czech Republic has been a member of the European Union, and on 21 December 2007 it became part of the Schengen Area.
- ▶ **Bank holidays** in the Czech Republic: 1 January – New Year, 10 April – Good Friday, 13 April – Easter Monday, 1 May – Labour Day, 8 May – Liberation Day, 5 July – The Day of Missionaries and Saints Cyril and Methodius, 6 July – Jan Hus Day, 28 September – Czech Statehood Day, 28 October – Independence Day, 17 November – Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day, 24 December – Christmas Eve, 25 December – Christmas Day, 26 December – Boxing Day.
- ▶ **Traditional Czech dishes** are a meal of braised beef with cream sauce and bread dumplings and roast pork with dumplings and cabbage, while the traditional Christmas meal is carp. Main courses in restaurants usually cost (depending on the location) from CZK 150 to CZK 300.
- ▶ **Banks and Currency exchange rates**
Most banks in Prague are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. One Euro buys approximately CZK 24.5,

one US dollar approximately CZK 22, and one pound sterling approximately CZK 28.5. We recommend not changing money on the street with strangers; use banks, money exchange offices and hotels. Listed exchange rates are for the purchase of hard currency.

- ▶ **Most shops are open** from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, but business hours are limited on holidays. Stores with sales space in excess of 200 m² are closed on 1 January, Easter Monday, 8 May, 28 September, 28 October, and 25 and 26 December. There are exceptions for pharmacies, filling stations, shops on hospital grounds, and at airports and train stations.
- ▶ **Popular souvenirs** purchased in the Czech Republic include Czech cut glass, porcelain, Becherovka (a traditional bitter herbal liquor), mead, Slivovice (plum brandy), Bohemian garnets, amber, wooden marionettes, art and design pieces, folk art pieces, spa wafers and typical spa drinking cups.
- ▶ **Postal services**
The main post office is open daily from 2 a.m. until midnight. It is located at 14 Jindřišská Street in the very centre of the city, near metro station "Můstek"; the interchange Metro station for the A and B lines.

Public transport information

- ▶ **There are three underground (Metro) lines** operating in Prague – green (A), yellow (B) and red (C). The metro system interconnects all the important places around the city, with tram and bus connections to destinations where the metro does not reach. The public transport network is reliable and covers the city thoroughly. The metro operates daily from 5 a.m. to midnight. Night tram and bus lines provide public transportation after midnight.

**Taxi to
the airport
for €18**



www.transport-in-prague.com





Fare

Tickets		Adult		Child		Senior	
Basic	90 min.	CZK 32	CZK 16	CZK 16			
Short-term	30 min.	CZK 24	CZK 12	CZK 12			
1 day	24 hrs	CZK 110	CZK 55	CZK 55			
3 days	72 hrs	CZK 310	•	•			

○ For children from 6 to 15 years ^(note) of age N.B. and seniors from 65 to 70 years ^(note) of age N.B. that have an Lítačka Card with a „Special fare endorsement“ (endorsement price is 120 CZK), the fare for travel in Prague (tariff zones P, 0 and B) is 0 CZK. Children from 6 to 10 years of age N.B. require only an identification card certified by its issuer (a corporate entity) with name, surname, date of birth and a photograph.

Public transport links to Václav Havel Airport Prague (Letiště)

Bus 119 – “Nádraží Veveslavín” (metro line A) – “Letiště” – 17 min.

Bus 100 – “Zličín” (metro line B) – “Letiště” – 16 min.

Airport Express Bus – Prague main railway station “Hlavní nádraží” (metro line C, with SC, EC, IC and EN type rail links) – “Letiště” – 33 min.

Important telephone numbers:

The EU universal emergency telephone number

112

Fire brigade emergency number

150

Emergency medical service number

155

Municipal police emergency number

156

State police emergency number

158

Information (tel. numbers, information on traffic, cultural events, etc.)

1188

Useful Czech telephone numbers

1180

Prague contact centre

12444

Roadside assistance

261 104 123

Airport information – nonstop line

220 111 888

International country calling code for the Czech Republic

+420 (00420)

Useful links:

www.czech.cz

official website of the Czech Republic

www.praha.eu

web portal of the City of Prague

www.prague.eu

Prague tourist web portal

www.czechtourism.com

official travel site of the Czech Republic

www.kudyznudy.cz

ideas for trips

www.florenc.cz

website of the Florenc coach terminal

www.cd.cz

Czech Railways website

www.prg.aero

Prague Airport website

www.dpp.cz

website of the Prague public transport operator

www.idos.cz

website timetables of trains, buses and public transport in the Czech Republic and Europe

www.chmi.cz

website of the Czech Institute of Hydrometeorology – information on weather in the Czech Republic



PRAGUE CITY TOURISM INFORMATION CENTRES

- Old-Town Hall
- Rytiřská 12
- Wenceslas Square
- Václav Havel Airport Prague



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

- Václav Havel Airport Prague, Terminal 1 and 2
 - Prague City Hall, Jungmannova 35/29, Prague 1
- Metro stations:
- Můstek • Hlavní nádraží • Anděl
 - Hradčanská • Nádraží Veveslavka



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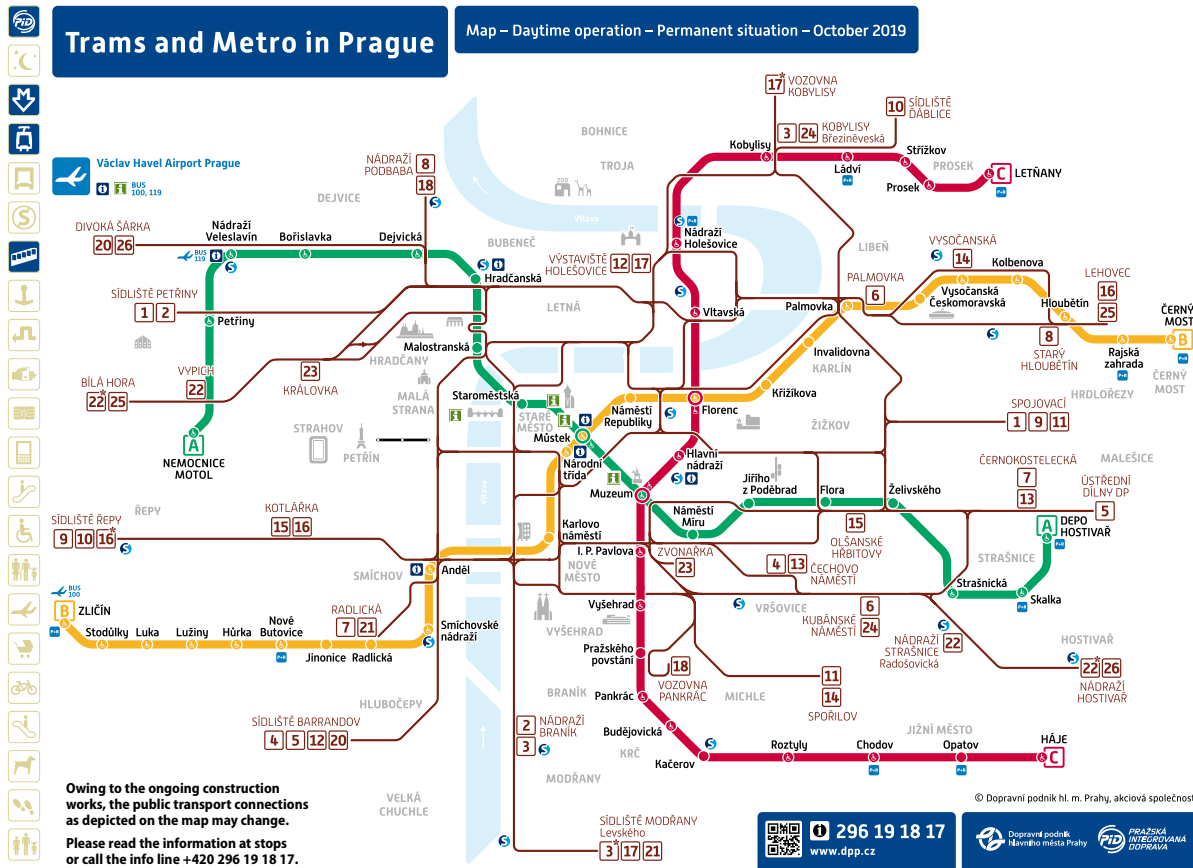
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Trams and Metro in Prague

Map – Daytime operation – Permanent situation – October 2019



- Metro lines with and without barrier-free access stops
- Metro transfer station
- Tram line with terminus
- Only selected connections run to these final stops
- Public transport buses to Václav Havel Airport Prague
- Funicular
- Park and Ride
- Public transport information; Tourist information centre
- Transfer to lines S and other railway lines

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