

# Czech Republic

## Country Facts

### **The People**



#### **Nationality**

Czech(s)

#### **Ethnic Composition**

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| Czech    | 90.4% |
| Moravian | 3.7%  |
| Slovak   | 1.9%  |
| Other    | 4%    |

#### **Religious Composition**

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Roman Catholic | 26.8% |
| Protestant     | 2.1%  |
| Other          | 3.3%  |
| Nonaffiliated  | 59%   |
| Unspecified    | 8.8%  |

#### **Languages Spoken**

Czech 94.9%, Slovak 2%, other 2.3%, unidentified 0.8%

#### **Education and Literacy**

*Total population:* 99%

*Male:* 99%

*Female:* 99%

Education is free through the university level.

#### **Labor Force**

*Total:* 5.31 million

*By occupation:*

|             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| Services    | 5.3%  |
| Industry    | 37.6% |
| Agriculture | 4.1%  |

#### **Land Mass Total**

78,866 sq km (30,450 sq mi)

#### **Land**

77,276 sq km (29,836 sq mi)

#### **Water**

1,590 sq km (613 sq mi)

**Land Boundaries**

Total: 2,290.2 km

Border countries: Austria 466.3 km, Germany 810.3 km, Poland 761.8 km, Slovakia 251.8 km.

**Coastline**

0 km, landlocked

**Maritime claim**

None (landlocked)

**Climate/Weather**

Temperate; cool summers; cold, cloudy, humid winters.

**Terrain**

Bohemia in the west consists of rolling plains, hills, and plateaus surrounded by low mountains; Moravia in the east consists of very hilly country.

**Elevation extremes**

Lowest point: Elbe River 115 m (377 ft)

Highest point: Snežka 1,602 m (5,255 ft)

**Natural Resources**

Hard coal, soft coal, kaolin, clay, graphite, timber.

**Land use**

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Arable land     | 38.82% |
| Permanent crops | 3%     |
| Other           | 58.18% |

**Natural hazards**

Flooding.

**Environment - current issues**

Air and water pollution in areas of northwest Bohemia and in northern Moravia around Ostrava present health risks; acid rain damaging forests; efforts to bring industry up to EU code should improve domestic pollution.

**Geography Note**

Landlocked; strategically located astride some of oldest and most significant land routes in Europe; Moravian Gate is a traditional military corridor between the North European Plain and the Danube in central Europe.

**Population**

10,228,744 (July 2007 est.)

**Age structure**

|                    |       |                 |                   |
|--------------------|-------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 0-14 years:        | 14.1% | Male: 738,391   | Female: 698,999   |
| 15-64 years:       | 71.2% | Male: 3,657,877 | Female: 3,627,493 |
| 65 years and over: | 14.7% | Male: 588,531   | Female: 917,453   |

**Growth Rate**

-0.071%

**Life Expectancy***Total population: 76.42 years**Male: 73.14 years**Female: 79.88 years***GDP Per Capita**

US\$21,600

**Infant Mortality***Total: 3.86 deaths/1,000 live births**Male: 4.21 deaths/1,000 live births**Female: 3.49 deaths/1,000 live births***Sex ratio***At birth: 1.06 male(s)/female**Under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female**15-64 years: 1.00 male(s)/female**65 years and over: 0.64 male(s)/female**Total population: 0.95 male(s)/female***Net migration rate**

0.97 migrant(s)/1,000 population

**Capital and Major Cities****Capital with population :** Prague: 1,168,936**Other important cities with population:** Brno: 363,774; Ostrava: 309,919, Plzen 163,442**Birth Rate**

8.96 births/1,000 population

**Death Rate**

10.64 deaths/1,000 population

**Economy & Trade**

The Czech Republic is one of the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Growth in 2000-05 was supported by exports to the EU, primarily to Germany, and a strong recovery of foreign and domestic investment. Domestic demand is playing an ever more important role in underpinning growth as interest rates drop and the availability of credit cards and mortgages increases. The current account deficit has declined to around three percent of GDP as demand for Czech products in the European Union has increased. Inflation is under control. Recent accession to the EU gives further impetus and direction to structural reform. In early 2004, the government passed increases in the Value Added Tax (VAT) and tightened eligibility for social benefits with the intention to bring the public finance gap down to four percent of GDP by 2006. However, due to significant increases in social spending in the run-up to June 2006 elections, the government is not likely to meet this goal. Negotiations on pension and healthcare reforms are continuing without clear prospects for agreement and implementation. Privatization of the state-owned telecommunications firm Cesky Telecom took place in 2005. Intensified restructuring among large enterprises, improvements in the financial sector, and effective use of available EU funds should strengthen output growth.

**Unemployment**

8.4%

**Inflation Rate**

2.7%

**Exports**

US\$89.34 billion f.o.b.

**Imports**

US\$87.7 billion f.o.b.

**Total Trade**

Purchasing power parity

GDP US\$221.4 billion

**Top Export Partners**

Germany 33.5%, Slovakia 8.7%, Austria 5.5%, Poland 5.5%, France 5.3%, UK 4.6%, Italy 4.3%

**Top Import Partners**

Germany 30%, Russia 5.7%, Slovakia 5.4%, China 5.1%, Poland 5%, Italy 4.8%, France 4.5%, Netherlands 4%

**Top Exports**

Machinery and transport equipment 52%, chemicals 5%, raw materials and fuel 9%.

**Top Imports**

Machinery and transport equipment 46%, raw materials and fuels 15%, chemicals 10%.

**Industries**

Metallurgy, machinery and equipment, motor vehicles, glass, armaments.

**Debt - external**

US\$50.2 billion

**Economic aid**

US\$2.4 billion in available EU structural adjustment and cohesion funds.

**Fiscal Year:**

Calendar year

**Business Workweek**

|                   | Monday - Friday           | Saturday - Sunday   |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Offices</b>    | 8a.m. or 9a.m. to 5p.m.   | Closed  |
| <b>Retail</b>     | 9a.m. to 6p.m.            | Saturday 9a.m. to noon.<br>Food stores open between 6 and 7a.m. and close between 6 and 7p.m.<br>Some department stores stay open until 8p.m. |
| <b>Banks</b>      | 8a.m. to 3:30 or 4:30p.m. | Closed  |
| <b>Government</b> | 9a.m. to 5p.m.            | Closed  |

**Note:** Many small shops, offices, and those government services in rural areas often close for an hour at noon....

**Official Holidays**

| Holidays                                | 2005         | 2006         | 2007         |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| New Year's Day                          | January 1    | January 1    | January 1    |
| Easter <sup>1</sup>                     | March 27     | April 16     | April 8      |
| Easter Monday                           | March 28     | April 17     | April 9      |
| May Day                                 | May 1        | May 1        | May 1        |
| Liberation Day, 1945                    | May 8        | May 8        | May 8        |
| Sts. Cyril and Methodius                | July 5       | July 5       | July 5       |
| Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Jan Hus | July 6       | July 6       | July 6       |
| Czech Statehood Day                     | September 28 | September 28 | September 28 |
| Independence Day                        | October 28   | October 28   | October 28   |
| All Saints' Day                         | November 1   | November 1   | November 1   |
| Remembrance of the Velvet Revolution    | November 17  | November 17  | November 17  |
| St. Nicholas Day                        | December 6   | December 6   | December 6   |
| Christmas Eve                           | December 24  | December 24  | December 24  |
| Christmas Day <sup>2</sup>              | December 25  | December 25  | December 25  |
| Second Day of Christmas                 | December 26  | December 26  | December 26  |

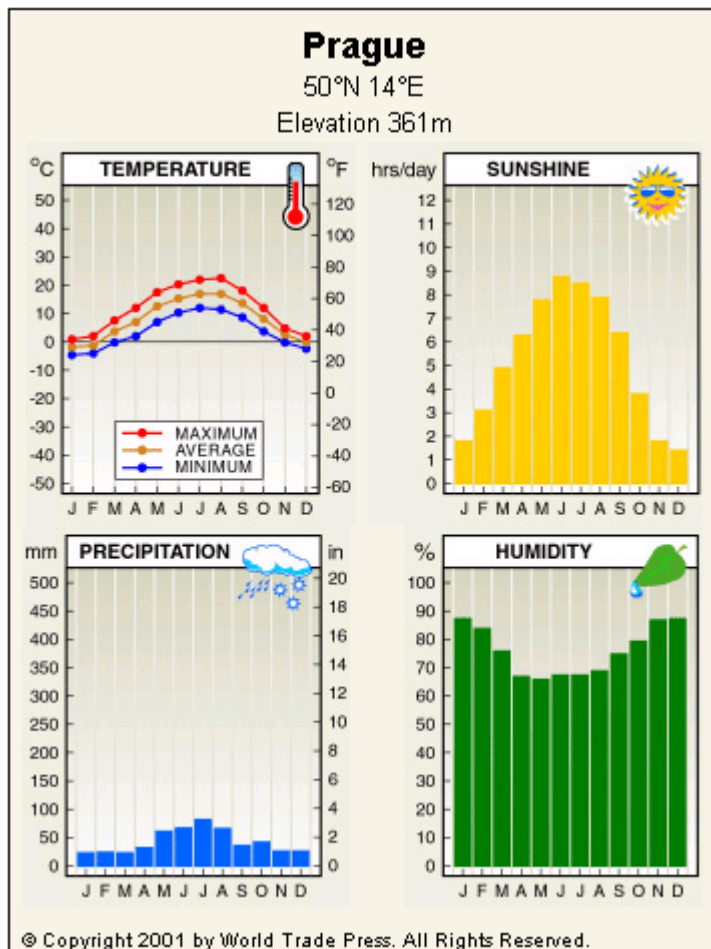
<sup>1</sup> Easter, a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the first Sunday after the full moon and the vernal equinox (fixed in the Gregorian calendar at March 21), and often observed with Good Friday and Easter Monday. In the West, Easter is predicted using the Gregorian calendar, while Eastern Orthodox Christians use the much older Julian calendar, and celebrate 13 days later.

<sup>2</sup> Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. In A.D.320, Pope Julius I fixed the date at December 25 based on the Gregorian calendar. The Orthodox church calculates Christmas using the Julian calendar and celebrates 13 days later on January 7.

**National Holiday**

Czech Founding Day, 28 October (1918)

## Climate



## **Seasons**



The Czech Republic has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. The republic has cold winters with heavy snows and mild summers with frequent thunderstorms. In July the temperatures are about 21°C (70°F), but in January lows average about -1°C (30°F).

## **Regions**

The western region enjoys a moderate climate, with overcast winters and cool summers. The east of the country has a more Mediterranean climate, with mild, wet winters and warm summers. The eastern, northern, and southern hills experience the most snow during the winter months.

# Money and Banking

## Currency

Currency Name: **Czech Koruna**

Sub Currency: **Heller**

Division: **1 Koruna = 100 Hellers**

Symbol: **Kc**

Currency Codes (ISO 4217)

Alpha: **CZK**

Numeric: **203**

Denominations

Banknotes: **20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, 5000** (Korun)

Coinage: **50** (Hellers) : **1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50** (Korun)

## Banknotes

Denominations: **20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, 5000** (Korun)

Click on an image to enlarge

### 20 Korun

Front (Obverse)



**Issue Date:** April 1994

**Size:** 64 x 128 mm

**(F) Detail:** Portrait of Premysl Otakar I and his seal.

**(B) Detail:** An old coin and crown.

**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence under UV. Watermark of Premysl Otakar I. Windowed thread with "20 Kc" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CS".



Back (Reverse)



## 50 Korun

Front (Obverse)



**Issue Date:** September 1997

**Size:** 64 x 134 mm

**(F) Detail:** A pink heart and St. Agnes of Bohemia (Sv. Anežka Česká), daughter of King Premysl Otakar I.

**(B) Detail:** The Letter "A" and an open book.

**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence under UV. Watermark of St. Agnes of Bohemia. Windowed thread with "50 Kc" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR".



Back (Reverse)

## 100 Korun

Front (Obverse)



**Issue Date:** October 1997

**Size:** 69 x 140 mm

**(F) Detail:** A Portrait of King Karel IV.

**(B) Detail:** The letter "B" and the Charles University seal.

**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence under UV. Watermark of Charles IV. Windowed thread with "100 Kc" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR".



Back (Reverse)



## 200 Korun

Front (Obverse)



**Issue Date:** January 1999

**Size:** 69 x 146 mm

**(F) Detail:** A portrait of Jan Amos Komenský (Johannes Comenius).

**(B) Detail:** Textbook for children behind the hands of an adult and a child.

**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence under UV. Watermark of Jan Amos Comenius. Windowed thread with "200 Kč" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR".



Back (Reverse)

## 500 Korun

Front (Obverse)

**Issue Date:** March 1998**Size:** 69 x 152 mm**(F) Detail:** A pink rose and Czech writer Božena Němcová (Barbora Pankel).**(B) Detail:** A Laureate woman.**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence under UV. Watermark of Božena Němcová. Windowed thread with "500 Kč" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR".

Back (Reverse)

## 1000 Korun

Front (Obverse)

**Issue Date:** December 1996**Size:** 74 x 158 mm**(F) Detail:** Tree with exposed roots and Czech historian and politician František Palacký**(B) Detail:** An Eagle and an old building.**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence under UV. Watermark of František Palacký. Windowed thread with "1000 Kč" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR". Optically variable ink on the leaf in the treetop changes from gold to green.

Back (Reverse)

## 2000 Korun

Front (Obverse)



**Issue Date:** October 1996

**Size:** 74 x 164 mm

**(F) Detail:** A portrait of Ema Destinnová, a Czech operatic soprano.

**(B) Detail:** The Muse of music and lyric poetry.

**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence and the text DVA TISÍCE KORUN ČESKÝCH, ČESKÁ NÁRODNÍ BANKA and the author's name O. KULHÁNEK INV with orange fluorescence under UV. Watermark of Ema Destinnová. Windowed thread with "CNB 2000 Kč" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR". Optically variable ink on the strings of the lyre changes from gold to green. Bichrome patterned iridescent strip of overlapping gold and blue with recurring negative 2000s.



Back (Reverse)



**5000 Korun**

Front (Obverse)

**Issue Date:** September 1999**Size:** 74 x 170 mm

**(F) Detail:** A portrait of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the chief founder and first president of independent Czechoslovakia.

**(B) Detail:** Prague architecture.

**Security:** Intaglio printing of the portrait, texts, blind code, and the denomination. Fibers with bluish fluorescence or yellow fluorescence under UV. Watermark of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Windowed thread with "5000 Kc" microtext. Front-to-back register in the form of letters "CR". Optically variable ink on the hexagonal area with the lion's head changes from gold to green. The Iridescent strip has a golden hue when tipped and negatively marked figures running from top to bottom.



Back (Reverse)

**Coinage**

Denominations: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 (Korun) : 50 (Hellers)

Click on an image to enlarge

**50 Hellers**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** May 1993**Diameter:** 19.0mm**Thickness:** 1.70mm**Weight:** 0.90g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Alternately plain and milled**Material:** Aluminum alloy

**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion.

**(B) Detail:** The coin's value.

**1 Koruna**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** June 1993**Diameter:** 20.0mm**Thickness:** 1.85mm**Weight:** 3.60g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Milled (80 grooves)**Material:** Nickel plated Steel**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value and the St. Wenceslas crown.**2 Korun**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** June 1993**Diameter:** 21.5mm**Thickness:** 1.85mm**Weight:** 3.70g**Shape:** 11 sided**Edge:** Plain**Material:** Nickel plated Steel**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value and a Great Moravian button-jewel.**5 Korun**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** June 1993**Diameter:** 23.0mm**Thickness:** 1.85mm**Weight:** 4.80g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Plain**Material:** Nickel plated Steel**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value and a stylised depiction of Charles Bridge and the river Vltava.



**10 Korun**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** May 1993**Diameter:** 24.5mm**Thickness:** 2.55mm**Weight:** 7.62g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Milled (144 groves)**Material:** Steel clad with Copper**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value and the Petrov national monument in Brno.**20 Korun**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** May 1993**Diameter:** 26.0mm**Thickness:** 2.55mm**Weight:** 8.43g**Shape:** 13 sided**Edge:** Plain**Material:** Steel clad with Copper alloy**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value and a figure of St. Wenceslas.**50 Korun**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** April 1993**Diameter:** 27.5mm**Thickness:** 2.55mm**Weight:** 9.70g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Plain**Material:** Outer: Steel clad with Copper;  
Inner: Steel clad with Copper alloy**(F) Detail:** The Czech lion and the coin's value.**(B) Detail:** A group of buildings typical of Prague.

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## Traveler's Checks, Credit Cards, and ATMs

### Currency

The exchange of foreign currency and traveler's checks can be done almost anywhere, at all banks (and their branches), authorized currency exchange offices, major hotels, and border crossings. Visitors cannot reconvert currency when leaving the country unless they have receipts for the original conversion, so keep all evidence of exchange; this is another good reason to use credit cards.

### ATMs

ATMs (bankomat) are widely available and, along with credit cards, receive the most favorable rates of exchange. If you bank with a large, international bank, transactions may be free if you use their ATMs or those of associated banks in other countries. Check with your bank before departure for ATM locations at the destination to which you plan to travel.

### Traveler's Checks

Almost all establishments and businesses in the Czech Republic accept traveler's checks. Travelers are advised to carry traveler's checks in major international currencies, like U.S. dollars, euros, or pounds sterling, to avoid incurring additional exchange rate charges.

### Credit Cards

American Express, Visa, Diners Club, and MasterCard are accepted in most market places in Prague and most other Czech cities. Eurocard and JCB are also accepted on a more limited basis. Wise visitors endeavor to make most large purchases with their credit cards in the Czech Republic, but most shops still prefer crowns. Cash advances on credit cards can also be obtained at main banks in the capital. Most merchants readily accept euros and U.S. dollars. Only rural areas will definitely require cash for every purchase.

When using your credit card, there are things to consider. Your credit card company translates purchases into your own currency when it appears on your credit card statement. However, be aware that most credit card companies now charge a "foreign transaction fee" for converting foreign currency into U.S. dollars—sometimes up to 2% of each purchase transaction! This could add up quickly. Read the fine print of your card disclosure paperwork or call your credit card company to verify. For details regarding merchant acceptability and other available services, you must check with your credit or debit card company.

Travelers should also notify their credit card company when they travel out of the country. Cards and the requisite funds can suddenly be frozen without any notification if credit card security notices unusual activity and flags it as suspicious. In this case, your card will be declined if you attempt to use it, i.e., at the end of an otherwise successful business deal in a restaurant. If this does occur, notify your card company immediately, as it may take 24 hours to reinstate! Have other payment options on hand in case such an occasion does occur.

### VAT / GST

VAT (Value Added Tax) and GST (Goods and Services Tax) are indirect government taxes placed on a product or service at each stage of production in certain countries. This tax does not apply to goods exported to other countries, including purchases made by foreign visitors if the goods are taken back to their own countries. It also excludes services used by foreign business people.

VAT refund is possible in all E.U. countries and specific others: Canada, Croatia, Japan, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, and Turkey.

For additional information, [click here](#).

### American Express

*Prague*

#### Interchange

Vaclavske Namesti 56

Prague 11000

Tel: [420] (234) 711-711

Fax: [420] (234) 711-712 Email: [info@axrep.cz](mailto:info@axrep.cz) Hours: Monday to Friday 9a.m. to 5 p.m.

Additional locations may be found on the AmEx website:

[www.travel.americanexpress.com/travel/personal/resources/tso](http://www.travel.americanexpress.com/travel/personal/resources/tso).

### MasterCard/Maestro/Cirrus ATM Locations

*Prague*

#### Ceska Sporitelna, A.S.

Pocernicka 518

Prague 10

Konevova 4

Prague 3

**Raiffeisenbank, a.s.**

Dejvicka 11

Prague 16000

For other MasterCard ATM locations, see their website at:

[www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html](http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html).

**Visa ATM Locations**

*Prague*

**Kb Prague 4-Chodov, The Park**

V Parku 2308/8

Prague 4, 148 00

Hours: 24 hours

**KB Prague 6 – Repy**

Makovskeho 1349/2A

Prague 6, 160 00

Hours: 24 hours

**Prague 5 - Nove Butovice- Galerie**

Jeremiasova 117

Prague 5, 150 00

Hours: 24 hours

For other Visa ATM locations, visit their website at: <http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>.

**Lost or Stolen Cards and Checks**

Always try to call toll-free, unless only a collect call number is listed, or if you are unable to get through on the toll-free line. Reverse phone charges may be declined if a toll-free number is available to caller.

American Express Lost and Stolen Cards

Toll-free: 800-900-540

Diners Club

In the country: (2) 6719-7450

Out of the country: [420] (2) 6719-7450

MasterCard

Toll-free: 800-142-494

Visa

Toll-free: 800-142-121

## **Money Wiring**

Wire transfers and all sorts of other electronic international transactions are often most easily facilitated by the following two companies and others like them.

**MoneyGram**

There are no MoneyGram agents in Prague. For other MoneyGram locations, see their website at:

[www.moneygram.com](http://www.moneygram.com).

**Western Union**

**Ceska Posta, S.P.**

K Libusi 7

Prague 44

Tel: [420] (2) 4491-0930

Litevska 1

Prague 105

Tel: [420] (2) 6731-0737

**Hypermarket Zlicin**

Skandinavska 25/144

Prague 15505

Tel: [420] (2) 2494-8252

**Raiffeisenbank A.S.**

Dejvice  
Dejvická 11  
Prague 16000  
Tel: [420] (2) 3308-9711

For other Western Union locations, see their website: [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com).

**Banks***Prague***Ceskoslovenska Obchodni Banka a.s.**

Jindřiska 2  
Prague 1, 110 00  
Tel: [420] (2) 2111-1211  
Fax: [420] (2) 2111-1223  
Web: [www.csob.cz](http://www.csob.cz)  
Email: [info.pra-jindriscka@csob.cz](mailto:info.pra-jindriscka@csob.cz)

**Citibank a.s.**

Evropská 178  
Prague 16640  
Tel: [420] (2) 2430-4111  
Fax: [420] (2) 3306-1617  
Web: [www.citibank.cz](http://www.citibank.cz)

**Commerzbank AG**

Jugoslávská 1  
Prague 12021  
Tel: [420] (2) 2119-3111  
Fax: [420] (2) 2119-3699  
Web: [www.commerzbank.cz](http://www.commerzbank.cz)  
Email: [info@commerzbank.cz](mailto:info@commerzbank.cz)

**Czech Export Bank a.s.**

Vodickova 34  
Prague 1, 111 21  
Tel: [420] (2) 284-3111  
Fax: [420] (2) 421-1266  
Web: [www.ceb.cz](http://www.ceb.cz)  
Email: [ceb@ceb.cz](mailto:ceb@ceb.cz)

**Czech National Bank**

Na Příkope 28  
Prague 1, 11503  
Tel: [420] (2) 2441-1111  
Fax: [420] (2) 412-404  
Web: [www.cnb.cz](http://www.cnb.cz)

**eBanka as (Expandia Banka as, Zemská banka a.s.)**

Na Poříčí 37  
Prague 1  
Tel: [420] (2) 2231-1612  
Fax: [420] (2) 2231-1560  
Web: [www.ebanka.cz](http://www.ebanka.cz)

Email: [info@ebanka.cz](mailto:info@ebanka.cz)

**Ěskomoravská Zárùení a Rozvojová Banka a.s.**

Jeruzalémská 964/4  
Prague 1, 110 00  
Tel: [420] (2) 2423-0734  
Fax: [420] (2) 5572-1110  
Web: [www.cmzrb.cz](http://www.cmzrb.cz)  
Email: [info@cmzrb.cz](mailto:info@cmzrb.cz)

**Epic Securities as (European Privatization and Investment Corp./EPIC)**

Karlovo Namestí 24  
Prague 1, 110 00  
Tel: [420] (2) 2223-2425  
Fax: [420] (2) 2223-2121  
Email: [epic@epic.cz](mailto:epic@epic.cz)

**European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**

2nd Floor Husova 5 Betlemsky Palac  
Prague 1, 110 00  
Tel: [420] (2) 2281-4555  
Fax: [420] (2) 2281-4522  
Web: [www.ebrd.com](http://www.ebrd.com)

**HVB Bank Czech Republic a.s.**

HypoVereinsbank Czech Republic as, Bank Austria Creditanstalt as  
Nám. Republiky 3a/2090  
Prague 11000  
Tel: [420] (2) 2209-1111  
Fax: [420] (2) 2111-9622  
Web: [www.hvb.cz](http://www.hvb.cz)

**Komerční Banka a.s.**

Na Příkope 33  
P.O. Box 839  
Prague 1, 114 07  
Tel: [420] (4) 8526-2800  
Web: [www.koba.cz](http://www.koba.cz)  
Email: [mojebanka@kb.cz](mailto:mojebanka@kb.cz)

**Raiffeisenbank a.s.**

Olbrachtova 9  
Prague 4, 140 21  
Tel: [420] (4) 1794-1444  
Web: [www.rb.cz](http://www.rb.cz)  
Email: [info@rb.cz](mailto:info@rb.cz)

**Standard Aval sro**

OB Aval  
Americká 16  
Prague 12000  
Tel: [420] (2) 251-342  
Fax: [420] (2) 2251-8245  
Web: [www.standardaval.cz](http://www.standardaval.cz)

Email: [standardaval@standardaval.cz](mailto:standardaval@standardaval.cz)

**Živnostenská Banka a.s.**

Na Příkope 858/20

P.O. Box 421

Prague 1, 113 80

Tel: [420] (2) 2412-1111

Fax: [420] (2) 2412-5555

Web: [www.zivnobanka.cz](http://www.zivnobanka.cz)

Email: [info@zivnobanka.cz](mailto:info@zivnobanka.cz)



## **Travel Essentials**

### **Visa and Passport**

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| <b>Passport<sup>1</sup></b> | Yes/No |
| <b>Visa<sup>2</sup></b>     | Yes/No |
| <b>Return Ticket</b>        | No     |
| <b>Restrictions</b>         | No     |

#### **<sup>1</sup>Passport**

##### **Required for:**

A passport that is valid for six months beyond date of travel is required by all travelers:

##### **Not required for:**

Nationals of Germany with national ID card.

#### **<sup>2</sup>Visas**

##### **Types of visas:**

Tourist, business, transit

##### **\*Length of stay:**

- Single-entry visa valid for six months from the date of issue
- Multiple-entry visa valid for six months from the date of issue
- Transit Visa valid for five days within a six-month period

#### **1. Tourist Visa**

##### **Required for:**

- Nationals of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo (Dem Rep), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Syrian Arab Republic, and all other travelers not listed below.

##### **Not required for:**

- **(Stays up to 180 days)**  
Nationals of Slovak Republic, and the United Kingdom
- **(Stays up to 90 days)**  
Nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, European Union countries, Estonia, French Overseas Territories, Hong Kong (SAR), Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea (Rep), Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macau (SAR), Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, San Marino, Slovenia, Switzerland, Uruguay, United States and Vatican City
- **(Stays up to 30 days)**  
Nationals of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania and Singapore
- **(24 hours)**  
Transit passengers holding onward tickets who do not leave the airport. Except those nationals noted above who DO require a transit visa.

**Duration:** Single or multiple entry visas valid for six months from the date of issue

**Required documents:** Valid passport, 1 completed application form, one passport photo, proof of sufficient funds, plus a fee. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements and other types of visas, check with your consulate or embassy in the Czech Republic or the consulate or Embassy of the Czech Republic in your country.

Contact information in the United States: [www.mzv.cz/washington/](http://www.mzv.cz/washington/)

#### **2. Business Visa**

##### **Required for:**

Anyone entering and remaining in the country for business purposes.

**Duration:** Single or multiple entry visas valid for six months from the date of issue

**Required documents:** Valid passport, 1 completed application form, one passport photo, proof of sufficient funds, letter from employer stating the nature of business (or invitation from host company in Czech Republic stating the nature of business), plus a fee. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements and other types of

visas, check with your consulate or embassy in the Czech Republic or the consulate or Embassy of the Czech Republic in your country.

Contact information in the United States: [www.mzv.cz/washington/](http://www.mzv.cz/washington/)

### 3. Transit visa

#### Required for:

- Nationals of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo (Dem Rep), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Syrian Arab Republic

**Duration:** Transit Visa valid for five days within a six months period

**Required documents:** Valid passport, 1 completed application form, one passport photo, proof of sufficient funds, onward travel itinerary, or return ticket. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements and other types of visas, check with your consulate or embassy in the Czech Republic or the consulate or Embassy of the Czech Republic in your country.

Contact information in the United States: [www.mzv.cz/washington/](http://www.mzv.cz/washington/)

#### <sup>3</sup>Return Ticket

A return ticket is required for those nationals who also need a visa to enter the Czech Republic.

**Note:** Cost for specific visas varies according to nationality, type of visa, and length of stay. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements and other types of visas, check with your consulate or embassy in the Czech Republic or the consulate or Embassy of the Czech Republic in your country.

Contact information in the United States: [www.mzv.cz/washington/](http://www.mzv.cz/washington/)

## Immunization

#### Vaccinations required

None

#### Vaccinations suggested

Hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, measles, chickenpox, influenza, tick-borne encephalitis

#### Duty Free

- Tobacco:**  
200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250 g tobacco
- Alcohol:**  
1 liter of spirits and 2 liters of wine
- Perfume:**  
500 ml of perfume or 250 ml eau de toilette
- Other:**  
Gifts up to Kcs3,000

#### Prohibited or Restricted

- All forms of pornographic literature

## Departure Formalities

Airport departure taxes are included in the ticket price.

#### Taxi

Rounding up the fare by Kcs10 or adding a 10 percent tip for good service is standard.

**Porters**

Porters at first-class hotels and transport depots receive Kcs0.50 (50 haleru) per bag.

**Hotel**

Hotels add service charges to the bill where applicable, and no additional tip is necessary.

**Restaurant**

When service charges are not applied, a 10 percent tip is standard. It is also common to buy your bartender or host a drink, especially if you have been engaging them in conversation.

## **Emergency Information**

### **Police and Crime**



Crime is on the increase in the Czech Republic, especially in more urban settings. Foreign business travelers are often assumed to be carrying lots of valuables. Take basic precautions. Avoid flashy displays of wealth, and dress and behave conservatively. Leave most of your cash, traveler's checks, jewelry, and your camera in your hotel safe. Carry photocopies of your passport instead of the original. Carry cash in a money belt, and use credit cards or traveler's checks for most of your transactions. Laptops and briefcases will require additional security. Do not leave valuables in cars or on tables in cafes. While Czech crime is nowhere near as big a problem as it is in western European cities, businesspeople should still take special precautions at night in urban areas.

### **Emergency Numbers**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| All emergency calls         | 112   |
| Czech Telephone Information | 1180  |
| English-speaking Operator   | 1181  |
| U.S. Embassy<br>(Prague)    | <b>From Prague:</b><br>257-022-000<br><b>From elsewhere in Czech Republic:</b><br>257-022-000<br><b>From outside Czech Republic:</b><br>[420] 257-022-000 |

## Prague: City View



Prague, "the city of a thousand spires" lives up to its name. The city is an architectural Mecca, with styles such as Gothic, Romanesque, art nouveau, baroque, cubist, and many revivalist structures built during the latter part of the 18th century. The city has survived over a thousand years of history, all of which is displayed in each building and square. Today, after the end of 40 years of Communist rule, the city has become a central tourist destination with a population of three million, and UNESCO recognizes it as a prize in the world's cultural heritage.

Prague has a long and turbulent history, starting with the autocratic rule of its first kings, descended from the House of Premysl in the 870s. Prague and Bohemia were incorporated into the Holy Roman Empire in 950, but it wasn't until Bohemia's Golden Age during the Habsburg rule in the 14th and 15th centuries that Prague began to grow into one of Europe's largest and most important cities. The **Prague Castle**, **Charles Bridge**, **Church of Our Lady of Tyn**, and **Old Town Square** are fine examples of the splendor and creativity of those times. During the 19th century, Prague was swept by a resurgence of nationalism for everything Czech, as is evidenced in the architecture of places like the **National Theater**, **State Opera**, and the **Municipal House**.

Culturally shaped by strong Catholic, Protestant, and German influences, the city has a long tradition of learning; the Charles University is one of the oldest in Europe. The city also has an extensive musical and literary history, producing such artists as Antonín Dvorák, Bedrich Smetana, and Franz Kafka, among others. Economically, Prague is the center of metal and machinery production, and with the fall of Communism, it has also developed rapidly as a commercial, financial, and service center. The people are friendly, if at first a bit standoffish; the beer is excellent; and the goulash is not to be missed.

## **Prague: Hotels**

### **Top-end**

#### **Corinthia Towers**

Kongresova 1

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 261-191-111

Fax: [420] 261-211-673

Web: [www.corinthia.com](http://www.corinthia.com)

Email: [towers@corinthia.com](mailto:towers@corinthia.com)

531 rooms; city center; 3 restaurants; cafe; pub; casino; conference facilities (up to 300); business center; secretarial service; in-room data port, direct-dial phone, satellite TV, radio, minibar, hairdryer; non-smoking rooms; laundry/dry cleaning; hairdresser; boutiques; car rental; parking; fitness; sauna; solarium; massage; pool; squash; bowling.



#### **Hotel Pariz (Concorde Hotels)**

U Obecniho domu 1

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 222-195-195

Fax: [420] 224-225-475

Web: [www.hotel-pariz.cz](http://www.hotel-pariz.cz)

Email: [booking@hotel-pariz.cz](mailto:booking@hotel-pariz.cz)

90 rooms, 2 suites, 1 apartment; art nouveau hotel built in 1904; restaurant (Sarah Bernhardt); cafe; bar; fax/photocopy facilities; in-room satellite/pay TV, direct-dial phone, full-size bathrooms with heated floors, soundproofing, radio/alarm clock, minibar, safe, smoke detector, a/c, data port; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning; currency exchange; concierge; babysitting; fitness room; sauna; massage.



**Hotel Savoy**

Keplerova ul. 6

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-302-430

Fax: [420] 224-302-128

Web: [www.hotel-savoy.cz](http://www.hotel-savoy.cz)Email: [info@hotel-savoy.cz](mailto:info@hotel-savoy.cz)

61 rooms and suites; located on castle hill; restaurant; bar; library; conference rooms (up to 35); business center; secretary and translation services; in-room a/c, direct-dial phone, telefax, safe, satellite TV, video recorder, minibar; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning; hairdresser; currency exchange; parking; fitness room; sauna; steam room; massage; whirlpool.

**InterContinental Praha**

Namesti Curieovych 43-5

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-881-111

Fax: [420] 224-811-216

Web: [www.intercontinental.com](http://www.intercontinental.com)Email: [prague@interconti.com](mailto:prague@interconti.com)

364 rooms and suites; city center; 2 restaurants; cafe; bar; conference facilities (up to 700); business center; secretarial service; in-room a/c, minibar, trouser press, color TV, radio, direct-dial phone, electronic safe, hairdryer; Club InterContinental rooms with voicemail, data port, fax machine, printer, VIP amenities; 24-hour room service; laundry/pressing service; beauty salon; boutiques; garage; fitness; sauna; solarium; massage; indoor pool; whirlpool.

**Mövenpick Prague**

Mozartova 26/1

150 00 Prague 5, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-151-111

Fax: [420] 257-153-131

Web: [www.moevenpick-hotels.com](http://www.moevenpick-hotels.com)Email: [hotel.prague@moevenpick.com](mailto:hotel.prague@moevenpick.com)

434 rooms and suites; opposite Mozartmuseum; 2 restaurants; bar; conference facilities (up to 320); business center; secretarial service; in-room satellite TV, minibar, hairdryer; pets allowed; 24-hour room service; laundry services; shops; currency exchange; garage; fitness center; massage; sauna; garden.

**Palace (a Summit Hotel)**

Panska 12

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-093-111

Fax: [420] 224-221-240

Web: [www.palacehotel.cz](http://www.palacehotel.cz)Email: [palhoprg@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:palhoprg@mbox.vol.cz)

124 rooms and suites; Old Town, city center; classical style, period furniture; 2 restaurants; piano bar; conference facilities (up to 80); business center; secretarial and translation services; in-room a/c, satellite TV, minibar, safe, direct-dial phones, data port; 24-hour room service; laundry service; shops; car rental; massage; sauna.

**Prague Marriott**

V Celnici 8

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 222-888-888

Fax: [420] 222-888-889

Web: [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)Email: [praguemarriott@marriott.cz](mailto:praguemarriott@marriott.cz)

293 rooms and 35 suites, 45 executive-level rooms; restaurant; bar; cafe; ballrooms; conference facilities (up to 650); in-room a/c, satellite TV, pay in-room movies, voicemail, data port, safe, minibar; non-smoking rooms; rooms for handicapped; concierge; hair salon; gift shop; underground parking; fitness center; sauna; massage; aerobics; indoor pool; whirlpool; nearby tennis and golf.

**Praha Hotel**

Susicka 20

Prague 6, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-341-111

Fax: [420] 224-311-218

Web: [www.htlp Praha.cz](http://www.htlp Praha.cz)Email: [praha@mbox.dkm.cz](mailto:praha@mbox.dkm.cz)

124 rooms, 40 small suites, 9 grand suites; suburban, quiet, near airport; 2 restaurants; 2 bars; cafe; terrace; conference facilities (up to 108); business center; secretarial service; in-room a/c, minibar, TV, direct-dial phone, balcony/terrace, safe, hairdryer; 24-hour room service; laundry services; florist; shops; car rental; parking; fitness; sauna; solarium; massage; pool; tennis; bowling; volleyball courts.

**Renaissance Prague**

V Celnici 7

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 221-821-111

Fax: [420] 221-822-200

Web: [www.renaissancehotels.com](http://www.renaissancehotels.com)

315 rooms, 12 suites; city center; 3 restaurants; conference facilities (up to 240); business center; secretarial service; in-room satellite TV, data-port, minibar, a/c, safe; 24-hour room service; laundry service; newsstand; fitness; sauna; steam room; massage; solarium; pool.

**Expensive****Hotel Bila Labut (Best Western)**

Biskupska 9

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 222-328-692

Fax: [420] 222-322-905

Web: [www.ctg.cz/hotels/bila\\_labut](http://www.ctg.cz/hotels/bila_labut)Email: [cchotels@login.cz](mailto:cchotels@login.cz)

54 rooms; city center; restaurant; bar; secretarial service; in-room satellite TV, minibar, phone, full bath; room service; parking; fitness; massage; sauna; whirlpool.

**City Hotel Morán (Best Western)**

Nas Morani 15

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-915-208

Fax: [420] 224-920-625

Web: [www.ctg.cz/hotels/moran](http://www.ctg.cz/hotels/moran)Email: [BW-Moran@login.cz](mailto:BW-Moran@login.cz)

53 rooms; city center, near Old Town; restaurant; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phone, hairdryer, minibar, a/c, bath w/shower; laundry service; car rental; parking.

**Diplomat Hotel**

Evropska 15

Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-394-111

Fax: [420] 224-394-215

Web: [www.diplomat-hotel.cz](http://www.diplomat-hotel.cz)Email: [diphoprg@gts.cz](mailto:diphoprg@gts.cz)

Near airport; 2 restaurants; cafe; conference facilities (up to 820); business center; secretarial service; in-room satellite TV, data-port, hairdryer, minibar, a/c, safe; 16-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning; hair salon; newsstand; car rental; airport transfer; limousine service; parking; fitness center; sauna; massage; pool.

**Grand Hotel Bohemia**

Kralodvorska 4

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 234-608-111

Fax: [420] 222-329-545

Web: [www.grandhotelbohemia.cz](http://www.grandhotelbohemia.cz)

Email: [office@grandhotelbohemia.cz](mailto:office@grandhotelbohemia.cz)

78 rooms; city center; historic exterior, modern interior; restaurant; cafe; bar; meeting facilities (up to 140); in-room a/c, direct-dial phone, telefax, answering machine, satellite TV, minibar, hairdryer, safe, bath; laundry facilities; travel agency; babysitting; car rental.



#### **Hotel Esplanade**

Washingtonova 19

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-501-111

Fax: [420] 224-229-306

Web: [www.esplanade.cz](http://www.esplanade.cz)

Email: [reservation@esplanade.cz](mailto:reservation@esplanade.cz)

74 rooms and suites; restaurant; bar; meeting salons (up to 30); conference facilities (up to 70); in-room minibar, satellite TV, safe box, direct-dial phone, data port, smoke detector; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; souvenir shop; drugstore; currency exchange; babysitting service; secure parking.



#### **Hotel Jalta Praha**

Namesti Vaclavske 45

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 222-822-111

Fax: [420] 224-213-866

Web: [www.jalta.cz](http://www.jalta.cz)

Email: [jalta@jalta.cz](mailto:jalta@jalta.cz)

89 rooms; restaurant; Teppanyaki; lobby bar and summer terrace; sushi bar; Internet cafe; in-room a/c, private bath, direct-dial phone, satellite and pay TV, safe box, Internet access, minibar; superior rooms with fax machine.

#### **Hotel Kampa (Stara Zbrojnice)**

Vsehrdova, 16

118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-320-508

Fax: [420] 257-320-262

Web: [www.euroagentur.cz](http://www.euroagentur.cz)

Email: [euroagentur@euroagentur.cz](mailto:euroagentur@euroagentur.cz)

85 rooms; Kampa Island; restaurant; bar; bureau de change; in-room TV, minibar, air conditioning, safe deposit; disabled access; laundry service; parking.

**Hotel Meteor Plaza (Best Western)**

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-192-111

Fax: [420] 224-213-005

Web: [www.hotel-meteor.cz](http://www.hotel-meteor.cz)

Email: [alltours@hotel-meteor.cz](mailto:alltours@hotel-meteor.cz)

88 rooms; city center; historic baroque-style hotel (founded 1307), modern interior; restaurant; wine tavern; buffet breakfast; meeting facilities (up to 40); in-room hairdryer, satellite TV, direct-dial phone, minibar, safe, full bath; hair salon; car rental; parking; fitness room; pool; garden courtyard.

**Hotel President**

Namesti Curieovych 100

116 88 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 222-314-812

Fax: [420] 222-318-247

Web: [www.hotelpresident.cz](http://www.hotelpresident.cz)

Email: [mailbox@hotelpresident.com](mailto:mailbox@hotelpresident.com)

98 rooms, 2 suites; city center, Old Town; 2 restaurants; casino; conference facilities; secretarial service; in-room satellite TV, minibar, safe, bath; fitness; sauna; massage; solarium.

**Hotel U Páva**

U luzickeho seminare 32, Mala Strana

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-533-360

Fax: [420] 257-530-919

Web: [www.romantichotels.cz](http://www.romantichotels.cz)

Email: [hotelupava@tnet.cz](mailto:hotelupava@tnet.cz)

11 rooms; renovated 2000; city center, near Charles Bridge; historic building; restaurant; bar; buffet breakfast; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phone, hairdryer, minibar, bath; pets allowed; laundry/dry cleaning; airport transfer; nightclub

**Hotel U Tri Pstrosu**

Drazickeho nam. 12/76

118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-532-410

Fax: [420] 257-533-217

Web: [www.utripstrosu.cz](http://www.utripstrosu.cz)

Email: [info@utripstrosu.cz](mailto:info@utripstrosu.cz)

14 rooms, 4 apartments; city center, Old Town; Renaissance style; restaurant; cafe/bar; conference room (up to 14); secretarial services; laundry services; in-room TV, minibar, bath w/shower; currency exchange; parking

**Inter-Hotel Ambassador**

Zlata Husa, Namesti Vaclavske 5-7

111 24 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 221-493-111

Web: [www.ambassador.cz](http://www.ambassador.cz)

170 rooms; city center on Wenceslas Square; restaurant; buffet breakfast; bar; casino; conference facilities (up to 600); business center; in-room direct-dial phone, data port, satellite TV, minibar, balcony/terrace, safe box, hairdryer, fax; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; florist; porter; souvenir shop; luggage services; travel agency; airport transfer; limousine service.

**K+K Hotel Fenix**

Ve Smeckach, 30

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 233-092-222

Fax: [420] 222-212-141

Web: [www.kkhotels.com](http://www.kkhotels.com)

Email: [hotel.fenix@kkhotels.cz](mailto:hotel.fenix@kkhotels.cz)

130 rooms; Wenceslas Square; restaurant; bar; conference facilities; business facilities; Internet access; computer facilities; bureau de change; in-room safe deposit, minibar, TV, telephone, air conditioning; fitness club; solarium; sauna; whirlpool; non-smoking rooms; parking.

**Pension U Raka**

Cerninska 10

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 220-511-100

Fax: [420] 220-510-511

Email: [uraka@login.cz](mailto:uraka@login.cz)

6 rooms; in Prague Castle district; inn style, rustic decor; breakfast/reading room; in-room TV, a/c, phone, minibar; parking; limousine service.

**Pod Vezi**

Mostecka 2

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 253-3710

Fax: [420] 253-1859

Web: [www.pragueholiday.cz/podvezi.html](http://www.pragueholiday.cz/podvezi.html)

Email: [aida@ms.easynet.cz](mailto:aida@ms.easynet.cz)

12 rooms; city center, near Charles Bridge, historical building, antique furnishings; restaurant; private basement room; in-room TV, a/c, phone, minibar; parking; guarded parking; massage.

**Prague Hilton**

**Moderate****Andante Hotel**

Ve smeckach, 4

111 21 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel/Fax:[420] 222-211-616

Web: [www.andante.cz](http://www.andante.cz)

Email: [reservations@andante.cz](mailto:reservations@andante.cz), [andante@netforce.cz](mailto:andante@netforce.cz)

Off Wenceslas Square; restaurant; bar; bureau de change; conference facilities; business facilities; computer facilities; in-room internet access, minibar, TV, telephone, air conditioning; mobile phone rental; car rental; bureau de change; safe deposit; pets allowed; childcare; hairdresser; non-smoking rooms; parking.

**Hotel Axa**

Na Porici 40

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-812-580

Fax: [420] 224-214-489

Web: [www.vol.cz/axa](http://www.vol.cz/axa)

Email: [AXApraha@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:AXApraha@mbox.vol.cz)

132 rooms; city center; restaurant; bar; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phones, full bath; pets allowed; laundry services; hair salon; currency exchange; fitness; sauna; massage; pool.

**Hotel Central**

Rybna ulice 8

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-812-734

Fax: [420] 222-328-404

68 rooms; refurbished 1999; quiet street; city center; breakfast restaurant; bar; fax service; in-room satellite TV, minibar, bath w/shower; laundry; currency exchange; nightclub.

**Hotel Julian**

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 284-812-110

Fax: [420] 233-930-078

Web: [www.interacta.cz/accol/julin\\_e.htm](http://www.interacta.cz/accol/julin_e.htm)

Email: [interacta@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:interacta@mbox.vol.cz)

29 rooms, 2 suites; near city center; historic art nouveau building; breakfast room; lounge; meeting room (up to 25); office rental; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phone, minibar, safe, bath; shop; airport transfer.

**Hotel Meran**



Na Městí Václavské 27  
110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 222-241-343  
Fax: [420] 224-230-411  
Web: [www.hotelmeran.cz](http://www.hotelmeran.cz)  
Email: [hotelmeran@volny.cz](mailto:hotelmeran@volny.cz)

40 rooms; Wenceslas Square; restaurant; telephone; fax; in-room minibar, TV, air conditioning; bureau de change; safe deposit; car rental; disabled access; pets allowed; non-smoking rooms.

**Hotel Opera**

Tesnov 13  
110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 222-315-609  
Fax: [420] 222-311-477  
Web: [www.hotel-opera.cz](http://www.hotel-opera.cz)  
Email: [reception@hotel-opera.cz](mailto:reception@hotel-opera.cz)

67 rooms; city center; neo-renaissance building; restaurant; bar; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phone, data port, minibar, bath; currency exchange; car rental

**Hotel Sax**

Janský Vrsek 3  
Prague, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 257-531-268  
Fax: [420] 257-534-101  
Web: [www.hotelsax.cz](http://www.hotelsax.cz)  
Email: [hotelsax@giraffe.cz](mailto:hotelsax@giraffe.cz)

21 rooms, 3 apartments; Small Quarter, quiet, 13 km from city center; mainly business clientele, noted friendly staff; restaurant; buffet breakfast; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phone, minibar, hairdryer, private bath; pets allowed; laundry/dry cleaning; currency exchange.

**Inter-Hotel Parkhotel**

Veletržní 20  
110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 220-131-111  
Fax: [420] 224-316-180  
Web: [www.parkhotel-praha.cz](http://www.parkhotel-praha.cz)  
Email: [hotel@parkhotel-praha.cz](mailto:hotel@parkhotel-praha.cz)

237 rooms; city center, near Exhibition Grounds; modern building; 2 restaurants; cafe; piano bar; casino; conference rooms (up to 140); secretarial service; in-room satellite TV, minibar, a/c, safe; beauty salon; car rental; parking; nightclub.

## Prague: Restaurants

**Note:** Use country code [420] when dialing from outside the Czech Republic.

**Bellevue** \$\$\$

Czech and International

Smetanovo nabřeží 18

Prague 1

Tel: 0800-1188

Panoramic views of Charles Bridge and Prague Castle.

**Circle Line Brasserie** \$\$\$

French/seafood

Malostranské nám. 12

Tel: 257-530-021, 257-530-023

**Fakhredine** \$\$\$

Lebanese

Klimentská 48, Prague 1

Tel: 222-327-970

Hours: 11a.m. to midnight; closed Sundays.

Exotic atmosphere; reservations recommended

**La Perle de Prague** \$\$\$\$

French

Rákosinské nabřeží 80

Prague 2

Tel: 221-984-160

Lovely views of Prague.

**La Provence** \$\$\$

French/Provence

Stupácká 9, Prague 1

Tel: 222-324-801

Notable interior; reservations recommended a few days in advance; 2 bars open at night.

**Parnas** \$\$\$

International and Czech

Smetanovo nábřeží 2, Prague 1

Tel: 224-227-614

Reservations required 24 hours in advance; riverside restaurant with outstanding views of castle; elegant live music.

**U Maltežských Rytířů** \$\$

Czech

Prokopská 10, Prague 1

Tel: 257-533-666

Underground cavelike setting.

**U Modré Kachničky** \$\$

Game, duck specialties

Něbovidská 6

Prague 1

Tel: 257-320-308

Hours: noon to 4p.m., 6:30p.m. to midnight.

**V Z-tisí** \$\$\$

Czech, International

Liliová 1, Betlémské náměstí, Prague 1

Tel: 222-220-627

Winner 1997 Michelin Eastern Europe award for top quality. Reservations recommended. Lunch specials.

## **Security Briefing**

### **Street and Organized Crime**



Petty theft is a growing problem, particularly in Prague. Pickpocketing is common at the main tourist attractions, at the main railway station, and on public transport, particularly those routes to and from Prague Castle and other major tourist sites and on the buses to/from the airport. Tram route 22, which runs to and from Prague Castle, is especially targeted. There have also been several cases of theft from hotel rooms and even safes.

There are increasing numbers of cases of theft on the metro involving gangs of up to nine or ten people surrounding their victims and even threatening violence. Subway stations that have been particularly targeted are Muzeum, Mustek, Staroměstská, and Malostranská. Take extra care when traveling on public transport and be aware of the people around you.

Beware of bogus plain-clothes policemen, who may ask to see your foreign currency and passport. If approached, decline to show your money, but offer instead to go with them to the nearest police station. If you suspect that you are dealing with a bogus police officer, you can call 158 or 112 to check their identity. No police officer in the Czech Republic has the right to check your money or its authenticity.

Theft of property should be reported in person to the Czech police within 24 hours to obtain a Police Report Crime Number. It is also possible to obtain this later once you are back in your home country by sending a letter (in English) describing the event to the following address: Policejní presidium – podatelna, Strojnická 27, 170 89 Praha 7, Czech Republic.

There have been a small number of incidents involving drinks being spiked and visitors having their valuables stolen while intoxicated. Never leave drinks or food unattended, or accept drinks from strangers, however attractive the offer might seem.

For reasons of safety and economy, use major taxi companies, such as AAA (23311 3311) or Profitaxi (26131 4151). These companies are usually able to tell you the type, number and color of the car in advance.

Prague City Police advises visitors to Prague of the following:

- Always exchange currency at a currency exchange office or bank, never with vendors on the street as this money is often counterfeit.
- Avoid contact with women acting as street prostitutes, as they are often pickpockets.
- Take care using cash machines.
- Do not buy drugs on the street: sale and distribution is illegal and such drugs are often hazardous counterfeits.
- Be aware of consumption charges in night clubs, as they are often high, and be careful with consumption cards, which carry high financial penalties if they are lost before bills are paid.

### **Organized Crime**

The Czech Republic is a transshipment point for Southwest Asian heroin, and a minor transit point for Latin American cocaine to Western Europe. It also produces synthetic drugs for local and regional markets, and is susceptible to money laundering related to drug trafficking and organized crime.

### **Social Unrest and Cultural Conflicts**

Civil disorder is rare in the Czech Republic, although strikes and demonstrations may occur. Visitors should be vigilant in protecting their security, bearing in mind that even demonstrations meant to be peaceful may turn violent. Protests erupted in June 2007, during a visit from President Bush, against U.S. plans for a radar base near Prague. The Czech government had announced that it would begin negotiations with the U.S. on Washington's plans to build part of a missile defense shield in the country.

Ethnic tensions in the Czech Republic have centered on the Romanies, or Gypsies, who have long been subjected to discrimination and segregation in the country, and more recently, abuse and beatings by skinhead groups. In 1997, then-President Havel urged Czechs to fight "latent racism," when hundreds of Gypsies claimed persecution and began to seek asylum in Canada and the UK. In 1999, the Czech government, bowing to pressures, ordered the demolition of a controversial wall in the northern town of Usti nad Labem, built to segregate the homes of Gypsies from those of other residents. Human rights organizations have criticized the country for not doing more to eliminate discrimination against Gypsies, which they say has grown since the fall of Communist rule.

# Health and Medical

## Health Notes

### General Conditions

There is a national health service that runs the medical system, but it is far from free--even for locals. Only emergency service is provided free to foreigners. A good travel insurance plan is advisable. Czech doctors are skilled, but their facilities are not good by Western standards. Some long-term visitors may consider an evacuation policy in the event of serious illness. Most good hotels have access to multilingual doctors; otherwise, contact your embassy or consulate.

Most illnesses are preventable either through vaccination, or by taking the necessary precautions against infection. All travelers should visit either a travel health clinic or their personal physician four to eight weeks before departure for regular vaccinations and any specific medications needed for travel.

### Vaccinations

**Required:** none

**Suggested:** hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, measles, chickenpox, influenza, encephalitis

### Immediate Concerns

- **Health risks**

Travelers' diarrhea and exposure to: rabies, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease), salmonella, and HIV

- **Food and Water**

Do not drink the tap water or use ice unless staying at a top hotel. Bottled water is readily available. Unless water is boiled and chemically treated, it is not safe to drink. Avoid dining at street stalls, and avoid eating fruits and vegetables unless they can be peeled or are precooked. Dairy products vary widely in quality and should be avoided when possible. Do not eat uncooked fish, as it may contain poisonous biotoxins and/or parasites. Regarding bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("mad cow disease"), there is no evidence of any risk from pork, lamb, milk or milk products. The Centers for Disease Control does not advise against eating European beef, but suggest that travelers who wish to reduce their risk may either abstain from beef completely while in Europe or eat only solid pieces of muscle meat, such as steak, rather than products like sausage or chopped meat that might be contaminated.

- **Insects**

Tick-borne encephalitis is very common in the countryside.

### Medical Precautions

It is prudent for travelers to pack a personal medical kit complete with necessary medications, including syringes, and physician's letter documenting their medical usage. This kit should include extra pairs of contact lenses and glasses, as well as any specific allergy, motion sickness, travelers' diarrhea, or other over-the-counter medication, as particular brands may not be available.

Insect repellents are also recommended, in conjunction with other measures to prevent insect bites, such as protective clothing, bed-netting, and DEET-based repellent. For additional protection, apply permethrin-containing compounds to clothing, shoes, and bed nets. Avoid contact with stray animals, especially farm animals. If bitten, clean wound thoroughly with soap and water, and seek medical attention immediately.

HIV/AIDS is present. Use condoms for all sexual encounters, and avoid blood transfusions or injections.

### Women's Health Issues

Women should pack a personal medical kit to cover a broad range of personal health requirements, including birth control pills and specific medications. Note that differences in climate can cause changes in a woman's pH balance. If prone to bacterial infections, women should pack any necessary supplies to counteract this problem. Women should also consider taking extra vitamin, mineral, and food supplements to ensure optimum physical health. See Women's Health Issues.

## Medical Care

### Prague

*Hospitals and Clinics*

### **Canadian Medical Care**

Veleslavínská 1  
162 02 Prague 6  
Tel: [420] 235 360 133  
Fax: [420] 235 364 640  
Web: [www.cmc.praha.cz](http://www.cmc.praha.cz)  
Email: [cmc@cmc.praha.cz](mailto:cmc@cmc.praha.cz)

**Canadian Medical Care (in The Park)**

V Parku 2308/8  
148 00 Prague 4  
Tel: [420] 272 913 593  
Web: [www.cmc.praha.cz](http://www.cmc.praha.cz)  
Email: [cmcinthepark@cmc.praha.cz](mailto:cmcinthepark@cmc.praha.cz)

**Central Military Hospital**

U vojenske Nemocnice 1200  
Prague 6  
Tel: [420] 220 208 111  
Tel: [420] 220 202 701

**Charles University Hospital Kralovske Vinohrady**

Srobarova 50  
10034 Prague 10  
Tel: [420] 267-161-111  
Fax: [420] 267-312-664  
Web: [www.fnlv.cz/index.htm](http://www.fnlv.cz/index.htm)  
*International Clinic at Charles University General Hospital*  
Namesti Karlovo 32  
Tel: [420] 224-904-347

**Hospital na Bulovce**

Budinova 2  
180 81 Prague 8  
Tel: [420] 226-832-893  
Fax: [420] 266-310-585  
Email: [fnbulred@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:fnbulred@mbox.vol.cz)

**Hospital Na Homolce**

Roentgenova 2  
151 19 Prague 5  
Tel: [420] 259-921-111, 257 272 146, 257 272 025, 257 272 174  
Fax: [420] 257-210-689, 252-923-008  
Email: [oldrich.subrt@homolka.cz](mailto:oldrich.subrt@homolka.cz)

**Hospital v Motole**

V. uvalu 84  
Prague 5  
Tel: [420] 224 433 690, 224 433 681  
Email: [fnmred@bohemnet.cz](mailto:fnmred@bohemnet.cz)

**PolyClinic Narodni**

Narodní třída 9  
Prague 1  
Tel: [420] 222 075 120  
Fax: [420] 224 215 059  
Web: [www.poliklinika.narodni.cz](http://www.poliklinika.narodni.cz)

Email: [poliklinika@narodni.cz](mailto:poliklinika@narodni.cz)

**SOS**

Belgicka 22

Prague 1

Tel: [420] 222-521-912

Christian Faith Line

**Thomayer Hospital (IKEM)**

Videnska 1958

Krc, Prague 4

Tel: [420] 261 081 111

Tel: [420] 261 082 570

*Pharmacies***Dejvicka Lekarna,**

Dejvicka 29

Prague 6

Tel: [420] 224 323 786

**Lekarna Veletrzni**

Veletržní ulice

Prague 7

Tel: [420] 233 371 806

**Lekarna Sporilov**

Božkovská 2967

Prague 4

Tel: [420] 272 774 060

Fax: [420] 272 774 060

**Lekarna U Zlate Koruny**

Náměstí bratří Synků

Prague 4

Tel: [420] 241 741 298

Fax: [420] 261 226 113

*Dentists***Dr. Richard Dvorak**

Baarova 13

Prague 4

Tel: [420] 241 484 722

**Dr. David Urie**

Paprskova 2

Krc, Prague 2

Tel: [420] 261 711 062

**European Dental Centre**

Vaclavske Square 33, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Prague 1

Tel: [420] 224 228 984

Tel: [420] 224 228 993

Web: [www.edcdental.cz](http://www.edcdental.cz)

Email: [edc@quick.cz](mailto:edc@quick.cz)

**MILLENIUM Dental Care**

Dental office, Millennium Plaza, V Celnici 10

117 21 Prague 1

Tel: [420] 221 033 405

Fax: [420] 221 033 406

Web: [www.mdc.cz](http://www.mdc.cz)

Email: [info@mdc.cz](mailto:info@mdc.cz)

*Other***Alcoholics Anonymous**

Na Porici 16

Prague 1



Tel: [420] 224-818-247

## **Health Club**

### **Prague**

#### **Balneum Fitness Center**

Hilton Hotel

Pobfezni 1

Prague 8

Tel: [420] 224-842-013

Daily: 6:30a.m. to 10p.m.

#### **Fitness Club Inter-Continental**

nam. Cuneovych 43/5

Prague 1

Tel: [420] 224-881-525

Weekdays 6a.m. to 11p.m.; weekends 9a.m. to 10p.m.

#### **Nemocnice Na Homolce**

##### **Relaxation Center**

Roentgenova 2

Prague 5

Tel: [420] 242-922-146

25 pools, saunas, solarium, massage, herbal and whirlpool baths.

## Transportation

### Air Travel

Czech Airlines (CSA) provides an extensive domestic air service. There are regular flights between Prague and Ostrava, Brno, and Karlovy Vary, as well as routes linking these destinations with one another.

### Airport

#### Ruzyne Airport

##### ***Transportation to City Center***



Prague's Ruzyne Airport (PRG) lies 11 miles (18 km) northwest of Prague. There are several ways to reach Prague from the airport. The least expensive option to reach the city is to use public transport. Follow the "Centrum Bus" signs in the arrivals area. They will take you to the pickup point for the local buses. Bus number 119 leaves every 8 to 10 minutes between 4a.m. and 11p.m. It will take you to Dejvicka subway station where you can connect with other lines. The bus takes approximately 20 minutes. If arriving late, look for the night bus number 510 in the same area. Bus 510 will take you to the Divoka Sarka station where you can connect with bus number 51 to reach downtown.

CSA (Czech national airline), or Cedaz, operates a bus that leaves daily, three times an hour, from 6a.m. to 9p.m. The bus stops at major downtown hotels. Look for the buses outside of the arrivals area or call [420] 220-114-286. Travel time on the shuttle bus is around 40 minutes.

There is also a taxi rank at the airport. Look for the white airport taxis. They offer a guaranteed rate for the trip. If taking another type of taxi, be sure to confirm the rate with the driver or check to make sure the meter reads "1" rather than "2," the nighttime setting, which will double the fare.

If there aren't any taxis in the rank call them directly from inside the terminal.

#### ***Taxi***

City Taxi [420] 233-103-310

#### ***Car Rental***

You'll find car rental representatives in the arrival area, or you can call them directly from any pay phone in the arrival or departure areas.

|          |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| Alamo    | [420] 233-374-131 |
| Avis     | [420] 221-851-225 |
| Budget   | [420] 220-560-443 |
| Europcar | [420] 224-811-290 |
| Hertz    | [420] 222-231-010 |
| Thrifty  | [420] 224-211-587 |

#### ***Airport Amenities***

There isn't a tourist office in the airport, but you can call the Prague city office, [420] 2544-444 for information.

Located in the arrivals area, you'll find a 24-hour currency exchange booth, duty-free stores, restaurants, cafes, a post office, a left-luggage office, and an ATM. A newsstand also sells telephone cards. A health center operates in the South Area from Monday to Thursday 6a.m. to 2p.m., and on Friday between 6a.m. and 1p.m.

#### ***Health Center***

Tel: [420] 220-113-780, 220-113-781

Ambulance: [420] 220-113-301, 220-113-302

Fax: [420] 220-113-028

### **Airport Contact Information**

#### **Airport Authority**

Prague Ruzyne Airport

160 08 Prague 6

Tel: [420] 220-111-111, 296-661-111

Web: [www.csl.cz](http://www.csl.cz)

#### **General Information**

Tel: [420] 220-113-113, 220-113-318

#### **Airport Security**

Czech Airport Authority, Safety Section/Security of Airport

Tel: [420] 220-111-621

Fax: [420] 220-112-627

## **Airline Numbers**

**Note:** The country code is [420] when dialing from outside the Czech Republic.

### **Prague**

#### **Airlines**

#### **Telephone Number**

#### **URL**

|                           |                  |   |
|---------------------------|------------------|---|
| Aer Lingus                | (2) 24 815 373   | <a href="http://www.flyaerlingus.com">www.flyaerlingus.com</a>          |
| Air Algerie               | (2) 22 231 614   | <a href="http://www.airalgerie.dz">www.airalgerie.dz</a>                |
| Air France                | 800 100 370      | <a href="http://www.airfrance.com">www.airfrance.com</a>                |
| Airzena Georgian Airlines | (2) 72 173 9021  | <a href="http://www.airzena.com">www.airzena.com</a>                    |
| Alitalia                  | (2) 21 629 157   | <a href="http://www.alitalia.com">www.alitalia.com</a>                  |
| American Airlines         | (2) 22 423 4985  | <a href="http://www.aa.com">www.aa.com</a>                              |
| Austrian Airlines         | (2) 27 231 231   | <a href="http://www.aua.com">www.aua.com</a>                            |
| Bangkok Airways           | (2) 24 239 250   | <a href="http://www.bangkokair.com">www.bangkokair.com</a>              |
| British Airways           | (2) 239 000 299  | <a href="http://www.britishairways.com">www.britishairways.com</a>      |
| CSA Czech Airlines        | (2) 239 007 007  | <a href="http://www.csa.cz">www.csa.cz</a>                              |
| Delta Air Lines           | (2) 2494 6733    | <a href="http://www.delta.com">www.delta.com</a>                        |
| Dragonair                 | (2) 22 011 6636  | <a href="http://www.dragonair.com">www.dragonair.com</a>                |
| KLM                       | (2) 23 309 0933  | <a href="http://www.klm.com">www.klm.com</a>                            |
| LTU                       | (2) 23 409 4150  | <a href="http://www.ltu.de">www.ltu.de</a>                              |
| Lufthansa                 | (54) 224 422 911 | <a href="http://www.lufthansa.com">www.lufthansa.com</a>                |
| Qatar Airways             | (2) 42 441 288   | <a href="http://www.qatarairways.com">www.qatarairways.com</a>          |
| Swissair                  | 234 008 227 230  | <a href="http://yourcountry.swiss.com">http://yourcountry.swiss.com</a> |
| Vietnam Airlines          | (06) 0268 1648   | <a href="http://www.vietnamairlines.com">www.vietnamairlines.com</a>    |

## **Taxi**



Radio-taxis provide a way to avoid "black" taxis that overcharge or pull various other stunts. Cabs should be visibly marked with an identification number and the name of the company. Inside the car, check the full price list. Some may include such oddities as a "foreign language fee." Be sure to negotiate a price and ask for a metered-printed receipt before going anywhere. Cabbies have been known to drive away with passenger luggage if not satisfied with the price at ride's end.

Within the city, or from the airport, the driver should set the meter at one. The number two setting should only be used at night, when fares double. Drivers may overcharge by setting the meter at a higher level, leaving it off all together, or by "getting lost."

Drivers may not know (or pretend not to know) their way around, so be sure to carry directions and maps. First-time visitors should allow their hotel concierge to arrange taxi trips.

AAA Taxi [420] 261-043-399

Profi [420] 261-045-555

### **Road Conditions**

First-class roads in the Czech Republic generally meet Western European standards. However, on side roads, drivers should be prepared to encounter uneven surfaces, irregular lane markings, and sign placements that are not clear. Streets in towns are not always in good condition. Non-European drivers should pay special attention to driving on cobblestones and among streetcars in historic city centers.

Highways run from Prague to Plzen, and from Podebrady to Bratislava (Slovak Republic) via Brno.

### **Rules of the Road**

Speed limits are 50 km/h in towns and 120 km/h on highways. Persons driving into the Czech Republic should be aware that a road usage tax sticker is required to drive legally on major highways, including the E-50 motorway. Signs stating this requirement are posted near the border, but they are easy to miss. The stickers are available at gasoline stations on the highways. The fine for failing to display a motorways toll sticker is assessed on the spot. Domestic users of the Czech roadways must purchase a vignette (season ticket) for each year.

A U.S. driver's license must be accompanied by an International Driving Permit (IDP), available from AAA (in the United States only); failure to have the IDP with a valid license may result in denial of an insurance claim after an accident. Other nationalities should check with their embassy or consulate.

### **Czech Motoring Hotline**

Tel: 004-201-230 (English and Czech)

### **Auto Rental**

Cars and motorbikes are readily available for rental in most large towns and cities through Hertz, Avis, Eurodollar, and other companies. A credit card and a valid driver's license is required (no international license needed). Local insurance is mandatory. Age limits vary by rental agency.

Driving is quite orderly, except in Prague, where auto use by foreigners is not advisable. Hired cars with drivers can be procured at reasonable rates and are the standard among foreign executives making short-term visits to Czech cities.

**Note:** Foreign tourists driving themselves are often the target of law enforcement officers hoping to exploit the many obscure rules of Czech driving. Speed limits change often and there are numerous "special equipment" requirements. Beware.

### **Auto Rental Numbers**

#### **Alamo Dvorak**

Vystaviste, Praha 7

#### **Avis Rent-A-Car**

Klimentska 46

Tel: [420] 221-851-225

Prague Airport

Tel: [420] 223-166-739

Fax: [420] 221-851-225

Web: [www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)

#### **Budget**

Reservations, 49 Stresovicha

Tel: [420] 220-610-095

Fax: [420] 220-610-094

Web: [www.budget.com](http://www.budget.com)

### Europcar

26 Parizska

Tel: [420] 224-810-515

Fax: [420] 224-810-039

Web: [www.europcar.com](http://www.europcar.com)

### Hertz

28 Karlovo Namesti, Prague 2

Web: [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)

## Train



Much of the country is accessible by rail, as are many international destinations. A wide variety of classes can be reserved, and overnight travel to other countries is easily scheduled. Trains are a standard form of business travel; the rail lines are comfortable and efficient, and prices are quite reasonable.

Train travel is a great way to meet Czech business travelers and to see a lot of the country in the process. Do make reservations in advance.

**Note:** 'Os' indicates slow train, 'Ex' means express, and 'R' means fast train. Czech rail lines connect to most major European systems.

Railway information [420] 224-224-200.

## Subway

Three different subway lines provide the quickest method to navigate Prague. Look for signs with a white 'M' that indicate a station. Trains run between 5a.m. and midnight, at 2- to 10-minute intervals and operate on a flat-fare basis. The metro is a much more advisable form of travel in Prague than driving a rented auto.

You can purchase tickets at metro stations, newspaper stands, and most large hotels. Validate tickets at the metro stations. If caught with an invalid ticket during a spot check, you will be subject to pay a fine on the spot.

## Bus



Intercity buses cover the areas of the country not accessible by rail. The bus system is comfortable and efficient. Most cities also have a local bus system in the absence of trams.

Trams pick up where the metro leaves off, and they travel the city streets on the surface rather than beneath it.

There are 21 different tram lines in Prague that reach every corner of the city. Tickets are purchased in advance at tobacconist shops or in any shop with a sign posted that reads *Predprodej Jizdenek*.

Trolleybuses, tramways, and municipal buses also operate in Brno, Ostrava, Plzen, and numerous other towns.

Most services run from 4:30p.m. to midnight. All the cities run on flat-fare systems, and passes can be purchased in advance. Tickets are validated in a machine upon entering the tram or bus. A separate ticket is needed for changing routes; spot checks frequently occur. Expect a fine for riding without a ticket or with one that hasn't been validated.

Blue logos on bus and tram stops indicate all-night service.

## Water Travel



Navigable waterways exist in the country. The main river ports can be found in Prague, Ústí nad Labem, and Decín.

## Travel Assistance



### **CzechTourism**

Vinohradská 46, P.O. BOX 32

120 41 Prague 2 - Vinohrady

Tel.: [420] 221 580 111

Fax: [420] 224 247 516

Web: [www.czechtourism.com](http://www.czechtourism.com)

Email: [info@czechtourism.cz](mailto:info@czechtourism.cz)

### **Prague**

#### **Prague Information Service**

Betlemske namesti 2

116 98 Prague 1

Tel: [420] 221 714 444

Web: [www.pis.cz](http://www.pis.cz)

Email: [tourinfo@pis.cz](mailto:tourinfo@pis.cz)

#### **Guides Centre**

Staromestske namesti - Old Town Hall

110 00 Prague 1

Tel: [420] 236 002 562

Fax: [420] 236 002 380

Email: [guides@pis.cz](mailto:guides@pis.cz)

## **Communications**

### **Quick Start**

**Country Code 420**

(Code used to call the Czech Republic from another country)

To call the Czech Republic dial your International Access Code + 420 + area code + local number

**Examples**

From USA 011 + 420 + nine-digit number

From UK 00 + 420 + nine-digit number

From Hong Kong 001 + 420 + nine-digit number

**International Access Code 00**

(Prefix used to make an international call from the Czech Republic)

To call a country from the Czech Republic dial 00 + country code + area code + local number

**Examples**

To USA 00 + 1 + area code + local number

To UK 00 + 44 + area code + local number

To Hong Kong 00 + 852 + local number

**Domestic Access Code None**

(Prefix used to make a call between cities in the Czech Republic)

To call between cities in the Czech Republic dial the nine-digit number

**Examples**

To Prague from within our outside the city: dial the nine-digit number

**Ring Tone** Equal tones, separated by long pauses

**Busy Tone** Short equal on and off tones

**Capital** Prague

**Predominant Language** Czech (official)

**Online Directory** Business Directory: [www.zlatestranky.cz](http://www.zlatestranky.cz)  
Residential Directory: <http://telefonniseznam.o2active.cz/jnp/cz/index.html>

Note: The telephone system in the Czech Republic (and select other European countries) generates metering tones that can disrupt modem transmissions. A fax impulsing tone filter (telephone line filter) is recommended when plugging a digital telephone or laptop computer into a host nation telephone line.



**Dialing Guide**

| <b>How To Call the Czech Republic</b>  | <b>Calls Within the Czech Republic</b>   | <b>International Calls From the Czech Republic</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| Dial your country's IAC + country code for the Czech Republic + nine-digit number*   | <u>Local Calls</u> : Dial the nine-digit number<br><u>Long Distance</u> : Dial the nine-digit number. All calls are local calls.   | Dial the Czech Republic's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number        |
| <b>Example</b><br>A call from the USA to Prague, Czech Republic.<br><b>011 + [420] + nine-digit number*</b>  | <b>Example Local</b><br>A call within Prague.<br><b>Dial the nine-digit number*</b><br><b>Example Long Distance</b><br>A call from Brno to Prague.<br><b>Dial the nine-digit number*</b> | <b>Example</b><br>A call from the Czech Republic to San Francisco, California, USA.<br><b>00 + [1] + (415) + local number</b> |
| <b>IAC</b> (International Access Code) Prefix to get international access from a country.<br><b>DAC</b> (Domestic Access Code) Prefix to call between cities within a country. |  |   |

**City/Area Codes**

**Note:** All numbers in the Czech Republic are nine digits in length, dialed regardless of the origin or destination of a call.

**Emergency and Assistance Numbers**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| All emergency calls         | 112   |
| Czech Telephone Information | 1180  |
| English-speaking Operator   | 1181  |
| U.S. Embassy (Prague)       | <b>From Prague:</b><br>257-022-000<br><b>From elsewhere in Czech Republic:</b><br>257-022-000<br><b>From outside Czech Republic:</b><br>[420] 257-022-000 |

**Unusual Calling Features**

1. Area codes are not used in Czech Republic.
2. Subscriber numbers in Czech Republic contain nine digits.
3. When calling between cities within the Czech Republic, there is no Domestic Access Code prefix; simply dial the nine-digit subscriber number regardless of the origin or destination of the call.
4. Cell phone numbers in Czech Republic contain nine digits. The first three digits signify the cellular network to which the number belongs.
5. The telephone system in the Czech Republic generates metering tones that can disrupt modem transmissions. A tax impulse tone filter (telephone line filter) is recommended when plugging a digital telephone or laptop computer into a host nation telephone line. Click for further information on Mobile Problems and Solutions.
6. Toll-free numbers start with the prefix '800'.
7. Premium numbers start with the prefix '90'.

**Local Calls**

Local call can be expensive from hotels. If possible, make calls from phone booths on the street.

**International Calls**

Calls assisted by an operator will cost roughly US\$2 a minute to Australia, Canada, Japan, and the U.S. International calls can be placed most conveniently from main post offices or from card phones. Calls to direct-access operators, as below, also provide another means of dialing to the United States and Canada.

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| ATandT Direct | 00-42-000-101 |
| Bell Canada   | 00-420-00-151 |
| MCI           | 00-42-00-001  |
| Sprint        | 00-420-87-187 |

\* Public phones require a coin or card deposit first.

### Cell Phones

| Fixed line to Cell Phone  | Cell Phone to Fixed line  | Cell Phone to Cell Phone  |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Local Calls:</b> Dial the cell phone prefix* + remaining six digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a fixed line in Prague to a 'EuroTel Praha' cell phone in Prague: <b>'601' + remaining six digits of local cell phone number</b></p>  | <p><b>Local Calls:</b> Dial the local nine-digit number.</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a cell phone in Prague to a fixed line in Prague: <b>Dial the local nine-digit number</b></p>  | <p><b>Local Calls:</b> Dial the cell phone prefix* + remaining six digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a cell phone in Prague to a 'EuroTel Praha' cell phone in Prague: <b>'601' + remaining six digits of local cell phone number</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Long Distance:</b> Dial the cell phone prefix* + remaining six digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a fixed line in Prague to a 'EuroTel Praha' cell phone in Plzen: <b>'601' + remaining six digits of local cell phone number</b></p>   | <p><b>Long Distance:</b> Dial the local nine-digit number.</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a cell phone in Prague to a fixed line in Plzen: <b>Dial the local nine-digit number</b></p>   | <p><b>Long Distance:</b> Dial the cell phone prefix* + remaining six digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a cell phone in Prague to a 'EuroTel Praha' cell phone in Plzen: <b>'601' + remaining six digits of local cell phone number</b></p>   |
| <p><b>International Calls:</b> Dial Czech Republic's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local cell phone number.**</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a fixed line in Czech Republic to a cell phone in San Francisco, USA: <b>00 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit cell phone number</b></p> | <p><b>International Calls:</b> Dial Czech Republic's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.**</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a cell phone in Czech Republic to a fixed line in San Francisco, USA: <b>00 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit number</b></p> | <p><b>International Calls:</b> Dial the Czech Republic's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.*</p> <p><b>Example</b><br/>A call from a cell phone in Czech Republic to a cell phone in San Francisco, USA: <b>00 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit cell phone number</b></p> |
| <p><b>*Note:</b> Different cell phone carriers have different cell phone prefixes. See following list.<br/> <b>**Note:</b> Some countries have a unique dialing sequence for incoming calls to cell phones. Refer to the Cell Phone Dialing Guide for the country you are calling.</p>  |   |   |

1. Cell phone numbers in Czech Republic contain nine digits. The first three digits signify the cellular network to which the number belongs.

'601', '602', '606', '607', '720' to '729' - O2  
 '603', '604', '605', '737' - T-Mobile  
 '608', '776', '777', '778' - Oskar

2. When calling a cell phone from within Czech Republic, simply dial the nine-digit number. There is no preceding access code.
3. When making an international call to a cell phone in Czech Republic, dial: Czech Republic's country code [420] + cell phone prefix + remaining six digits of local cell phone number.

### Traveling Cell Phones

#### 1. Will My Cell Phone Work in the Czech Republic?

Yes, if your home country service provider has a roaming agreement with a carrier in the Czech Republic and your phone is compatible; check with your home country service provider on these two issues before you leave. [Click here](#) to find out how.

**Note:** The Czech Republic's cell providers offer digital GSM 900/1800 and 3G technologies.

**Warning!** The telephone system in the Czech Republic (and select other European countries) generates metering tones that can disrupt modem transmissions. A tax impulse tone filter (telephone line filter) is recommended when plugging a digital telephone or laptop computer into a host nation telephone line. Click for further information on [Mobile Problems and Solutions](#).

## 2. Receiving Calls

Provided your home country service provider has a roaming agreement with a service provider in the Czech Republic and your cell phone is compatible with a network in the Czech Republic, your cell phone number travels with you. Your calls get through even if people don't know your location.

## 3. Making Calls

Dialing procedures are the same as for local cell phone users. Refer to the Cell Phone Quick Start.

## 4. Local SIM Cards

The Czech Republic's GSM 900/1800 and 3G cell phone networks allow the use of SIM cards. Cards with various payment options are readily available for use; however, before making a purchase, ensure that your cell phone is not locked to a specific network. [Click here](#) for more details on how SIM cards work.

## U.S. Service Providers

Your phone must be compatible with the frequency band/range your mobile service supports in the country. A GSM quad-band phone supports the four major frequencies used globally. If a multi-band phone is not available to you, check below or with your service provider for specific frequency ranges in the country to determine if your phone is compatible.

Due to the dynamic nature of the cellular communications industry, this information changes rapidly. **Always** confirm service with your provider prior to departure.

| Company                           | Service in the Czech Republic | Frequencies                | Contact Information   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| <a href="#">Cingular Wireless</a> | Yes                           | GSM/GPRS 900/1800          | Tel: [1] (916) 843-4685 (Outside U.S.)<br>Toll-free: (800) 331-0500 (In U.S.)               |
| <a href="#">Sprint-Nextel</a>     | Yes                           | Contact Sprint-Nextel.*    | Tel: [1] (817) 698-4199 (Outside U.S.)<br>Toll-free: (888) 226-7212 (Sprint Worldwide Care) |
| <a href="#">T-Mobile</a>          | Yes                           | GSM/GPRS 900/1800          | Tel: [1] (505) 998-3792 (Outside U.S.)<br>Toll-free: (800) 937-8997 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)    |
| <a href="#">Verizon Wireless</a>  | Yes                           | Contact Verizon Wireless.* | Tel: [1] (880) 922-0204 (Outside U.S.)<br>Toll-free: (800) 922-0204 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)    |

\* Sprint-Nextel and Verizon Wireless operate on CDMA technology. Sprint/Verizon users are required to have a hybrid or GSM-compatible phone. Check with your service provider for details.

## Local Service Providers

### Renting a Cell Phone

Travelers wishing to rent a cell phone may choose one of two options:

1. **Before departure:** Rent a locally compatible phone (short-term rental) *before* departure and have the advantage of cell service immediately upon arrival.
2. **After arrival:** Ask at your hotel for a local cellular phone rental service.

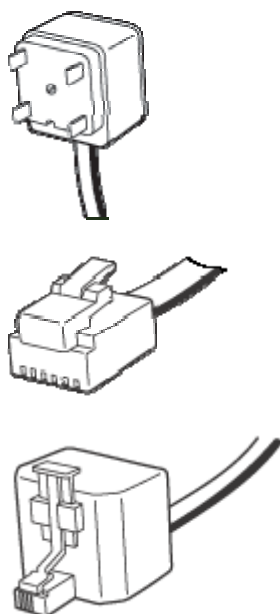
Click for a comprehensive listing of [Cellular Rental Services Worldwide](#).

### Setting Up a Local Account

Another option for cellular phone service is signing up with a local provider in the Czech Republic. This may be the most cost effective option if you intend to stay for an extended period.

| Cellular Systems Available in the Czech Republic          |   |        |  |
|---|---|--------|--|
| Company (Network)   | Digital   | Analog | Contact  |
| 02 (Telefonica 2, formerly Cesky Mobil and EuroTel Praha) | GSM 900/1800, 3G 2100                               | n/a    | Customer Care Center<br>Vyskočilova 1442/1b<br>P.O. BOX 70<br>140 21 Prague, Czech Republic<br>Tel: [420] 720 720 720 (from abroad)<br>Tel: 800-123-456 (Customer Service)<br>Fax: [420] 2 6701 6733<br>Web: <a href="http://www.cz.o2.com">www.cz.o2.com</a>                  |
| T-Mobile (RadioMobil)                                     | GSM 900/1800, 3G, 4G                                | n/a    | T-Mobile Czech Republic a.s.<br>Customer Services Dept.<br>Tomíčková 2144/1<br>149 00 Praha 4<br>Tel: [420] 603-603-603<br>Fax: [420] 603-604-606<br>Web: <a href="http://t-mobile.cz">http://t-mobile.cz</a><br>Email: <a href="mailto:info@t-mobile.cz">info@t-mobile.cz</a> |
| Vodafone  | GSM 900/1800, 3G<br>(3G Network on hold as of 7/06) | n/a    | Vodafone Czech Republic a.s.<br>Vinohradská 167<br>Praha 10<br>100 00<br>Tel: 800 770077<br>Tel: 800 772277 (Business Customers)<br>Web: <a href="http://www.vodafone.cz">www.vodafone.cz</a>  |

### Phone/Modem Plugs



#### **Illustration (c) Copyright 2008 by World Trade Press.**

Newer installations in the cities of the Czech Republic all have RJ-11 or RJ-45 telephone plugs. Telephone / modem plug adapters are available through [Magellans](#) and other suppliers. Please visit the supplier's list found in the sidebar of the [Mobile Connectivity Problems and Solutions](#) section of the Global Road Warrior.

**Note:** The telephone system in the Czech Republic (and select other European countries) generates metering tones that can disrupt modem transmissions. A tax impulse tone filter (telephone line filter) is recommended when plugging a digital telephone or laptop computer into a host nation telephone line. Click for further information on [Mobile Problems and Solutions](#).

## Public Phones

The basic rate for a coin phone is Kcs4. At this point, card phones outpace coin phones, and callers using phone cards will also save some money. By using a 50-credit card, a call will cost Kcs3.50. And by using a 100-credit card, the basic call will cost the caller Kcs3.20.

To call international, callers also have the option of going to the main post offices to place calls. The clerk will assign you a booth, and you pay after the call is finished.



### Coin Telephone Instructions

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert coins
3. Dial number
4. If a tone sounds, more coins will need to be inserted to continue the conversation
5. Upon completion replace the receiver and retrieve any unused coins



### Card Telephone Instructions

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert card
3. Dial number
4. Upon completion, replace receiver and retrieve card

**Note:** A digital display will indicate the amount of units left on the phone card.





### Card Telephone Instructions

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert card
3. Dial number
4. Upon completion, replace receiver and retrieve card

**Note:** A digital display will indicate the amount of units left on the phone card. Buttons on the phone allow for; exchange of cards with interruption of call, instructions in different languages, and volume control.

### Calling Cards



Most pay phones use phone cards, which can be purchased at newsstands, tobacconists, post offices, travel agents, airports, rail stations, metro stations, large department stores and hotels in denominations of 50, 100, and 150. Phone cards cost from Kcs200 to 400.

In general, there are three fundamental types of cards:

1. Local prepaid phone cards
2. International phone cards
3. Home operator calling cards

### Frequently Asked Questions

Click for more detailed information about [phonecards and calling cards](#).

### International Calling Card Suppliers

Click for a comprehensive listing of [International Calling Card Suppliers](#).

### Call Back Services

While you are abroad, a callback company connects you to your home country telephone network to take advantage of rates at home, which are often cheaper.

Travelers must designate a specific location (such as a hotel phone number) prior to departure. While abroad, users phone the callback service office, which will call you back at your location. It will then connect you to the telephone network in your home country and you can dial any number you wish to reach.

The process helps you to take advantage of telephone rates at home. Fees for call back services vary widely, depending on the company and the type of service required. Always check rates first; it may, in fact, be cheaper to call direct and have your associates or family call you back at a designated number.

### Call Back Services Worldwide

Click for a select listing of [Call Back Services](#).

### Fax

Fax service is abundant, primarily because of the problems with the mail service. Most hotels and offices have them. They are also beginning to appear in private shops.

### Postal Service

Mail service is relatively inexpensive, but also rarely efficient. Mail to and from North America takes about 10 days. There are separate windows for many services in post offices so make sure you're in the right one. Use the Q-matic

machine at the entrance to get a queue number for service. Choose which service you require, press the button, take the numbered slip and watch for your number to appear at the counter. Apart from basic postal services, Czech Post also accepts bill payments and charity donations.

**Hours of Service**

Monday to Friday 7a.m. to 8p.m.

**Česká pošta s.p.**

Praha 1, Jindřišská 14

Tel: [420] (3) 221-131-111

Fax: [420] (3) 221-131-402

Web: [www.cpost.cz](http://www.cpost.cz)

Email: [info@cpost.cz](mailto:info@cpost.cz)

## **Business Services**

### **Business Centers**

Business centers provide a range of services that include secretarial, translation/interpretation, and office services, including normal business infrastructure components such as:

- Computer rentals
- Audio/visual equipment rentals
- Cellular phone rentals
- Copy and printing services
- All-inclusive rental of temporary office space and staff

Most large hotels (some of which may be listed here) also have business centers that offer many of the same services that independent centers provide.

#### **Prague BB Centrum**

Building B  
Vyskocilova 1422/A  
Praha 4 - Michle  
Prague, 140 00  
Tel: [420] 244-026-111  
Fax: [420] 244-026-200

#### **Prague Detsky Dum**

Na Prikope 15  
Praha 1  
Prague, 110 00  
Tel: [420] 222-191-111  
Fax: [420] 222-191-200

#### **Prague Praha City Center**

Praha City Centre  
Klimentska 46  
Prague, 11002  
Tel: [420] 221-852-100  
Fax: [420] 221-852-099

### **Courier Services**

#### **Airborne Express Freight**

Eastway Express Courier  
Pristavni 5/1341  
Prague 170 00  
Tel: [420] 222-181-222  
Fax: [420] 222-181-223

#### **EPS (Express Parcel System/Airborne Express)**

Na Cihadle 4, Praha 6  
Tel: [420] 224-313-751  
Fax: [420] 224-312-829

#### **DHL Czech Republic**

Airport Prague-Ruzyne  
Aviaticka 1048/12  
16100 Prague 6  
Tel: 0800-103-000 (from within Czech Republic)  
Tel: [420] 220-300-111 (from outside Czech Republic)  
Web: [www.dhl.cz](http://www.dhl.cz)

#### **Federal Express**

Inspekta  
Tel: [420] 244-002-200

#### **UPS (Czech Parcel Service)**

Komunardu 39, 170 00 Praha 7, Prague

Tel: [420] 266-712-458, 266-712-442

Fax: [420] 266-712-133

## **World Trade Center**

### **World Trade Center Prague**

Seifertova 22

Prague 3

Zizkov, 130 00

Tel: [420] 224-096-379

Fax: [420] 224-096-256

Web: [www.komora.cz](http://www.komora.cz)

Email: [wtcpr@hkcr.cz](mailto:wtcpr@hkcr.cz)

## **Chamber of Commerce**

### **American Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic**

U Boz iho Oka

Mala S tupartska 7

110 00 Praha 1

Tel: [420] 224-826-551, 552

Fax: [420] 224-826-082

Email: [amcham@amcham.cz](mailto:amcham@amcham.cz)

### **Chamber of Commerce Brno**

1 Vystaviste

Areal BVV

648 04 Brno

Tel: [420] 541-159-544

Fax: [420] 541-153-055

Web: [www.ohkbrno.cz](http://www.ohkbrno.cz)

Email: [foreign\\_af@ohkbrno.cz](mailto:foreign_af@ohkbrno.cz)

### **Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic**

Seifertova 22

130 00 Prague 3

Tel: [420] 224-096-111

Fax: [420] 224-096-222

Email: [info@hkcr.cz](mailto:info@hkcr.cz)

# Technical/Internet

## Internet Connection

### Steps to Getting Connected

1. **Get Proper Hardware**  
Ensure you have the proper equipment for the country you are visiting.
2. **Warning!** The telephone system in the Czech Republic (and select other European countries) generates metering tones that can disrupt modem transmissions. A tax impulsing tone filter (telephone line filter) is recommended when plugging a digital telephone or laptop computer into a host nation telephone line. Click for further information on [Mobile Problems and Solutions](#).
3. **Configure Operating System**  
Your operating system may need configuring in order to hook up.
4. **Determine Internet Service Provider (ISP)**  
Make sure you have service where you plug in (and check costs). Options to connect to the Internet include:
  - Global Internet Roaming Service
  - Your own ISP
  - Local ISP
  - Internet Cafe
  - Hotel Business Center or in-room connection (i.e. data-port)
  - Personal computer of a personal contact (friend, colleague)
5. **Plug in**  
When all of the above are checked plug in your modem.
6. **Dial**  
You are now ready to dial your access number (hopefully, a local number exists).

### Global Internet Service Providers

Companies that offer global roaming services have partnerships with local Internet service providers in many different countries. As such, Internet access is provided through a local call. These companies often provide local access in countries where your home Internet service provider does not. Service and rate plans vary greatly. Make sure to do your research prior to departure. Some options include:

- User pays only when using the service
- User pays a subscription rate with added usage fees when in the destination country.

Click [here](#) for a list of global Internet roaming service providers.

### U.S. Internet Service Providers

**Warning!** The telephone system in the Czech Republic (and select other European countries) generates metering tones that can disrupt modem transmissions. A tax impulse tone filter (telephone line filter) is recommended when plugging a digital telephone or laptop computer into a host nation telephone line. Click for further information on [Mobile Problems and Solutions](#).

| Company   | Service in Czech Republic                   | Local Access Numbers  |
|---|---|---|
| <a href="#">America Online</a> / <a href="#">CompuServe</a><br>AOL Intl. Tech Support<br>[1] (703) 264-1184 | Yes<br>AOL Globalnet<br>US\$6/hr. surcharge | <b>Local Access</b> (0) 810200810 (64 baud)<br><b>Local Access</b> (0) 222101010 (28 baud)<br><b>Prague</b> (0) 233090016 (64 baud) |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><a href="#">ATandT GlobalNet</a><br/> Helpdesk (Nationwide):<br/> 00-420-2390-00403<br/> Helpdesk (in United Kingdom):<br/> 00-44-1527-505574</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>**The availability of XN7 numbers is limited to ATandT Remote Access customers who are enabled for ATandT's Extended Access dial-up services, which does include all BIS customers.</p> | <p><b>Beroun</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Bohumín</b> 597-499-701 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Brno</b> 541248090 (14.4k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Brno</b> 532-199-875 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Bruntal</b> 597-499-701 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Ceske Budejovice</b> 386358291 (14.4k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Ceske Budejovice</b> 389-058-900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Cesky Krumlov</b> 389-058-900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Chomutov</b> 477-019-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Decin</b> 477-019-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Domazlice</b> 378-229-903 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Frydek Mistek</b> 597-499-701 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>GSM-direct-EuroTel (Nationwide)</b> 729-980-811 (SLIP/9600/FREE/LIG)<br/> <b>Hodonin</b> 532-199-875 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Hradec Kralove</b> 495212903 (14.4k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Hradec Kralove</b> 498-019-906 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Jicin</b> 498-019-906 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Jindrichuv Hradec</b> 389-058-900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Karlovy Vary</b> 354-929-501 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Kladno</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Klatovy</b> 378-229-903 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Kolin</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Kromeriz</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Kutna Hora</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Liberec</b> 485109416 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Liberec</b> 487-919-903 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Luhacovice</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Melník</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Mikulov</b> 532-199-875 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Mlada Boleslav</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Most</b> 477-019-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Nachod</b> 498-019-906 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Nationwide</b> 800-311-130 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Nationwide</b> 810200810 (V.90/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Nationwide</b> 971-100-577 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Nationwide (Local rate)</b> 5-4442-2201 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG)<br/> <b>Nationwide (Prague)</b> 2-6709-0116 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG)<br/> <b>Neratovice</b> 315-819-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Nový Jicin</b> 597-499-701 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Olomouc</b> 587-410-001 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Olomouc</b> 585243656 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Opava</b> 597-499-701 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Ostrava</b> 596127480 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Ostrava</b> 597-499-701 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Otrokovice</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Pardubice</b> 587-410-001 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Pisek</b> 389-058-900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Plzeň</b> 377456995 (14.4k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Plzeň</b> 378-229-903 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Prague</b> 02-9615-7409 ** (V.90/ISDN/XN7)<br/> <b>Prague</b> 233090016 (V.90/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Prague</b> 234-260-230 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Prague</b> 222101010 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1)<br/> <b>Prague</b> 2-21438197 ** (V.34/XN7)<br/> <b>Prague</b> 2-21438345 ** (V.34/ISDN/XN7)<br/> <b>Roznov pod Radhostem</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Strakonice</b> 389-058-900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Susice</b> 378-229-903 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Tabor</b> 389-058-900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Teplice</b> 477-019-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Trutnov</b> 498-019-906 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Uherské Hradiště</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Ústí nad Labem</b> 477-019-901 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Valašské Meziříčí</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)<br/> <b>Vsetín</b> 576-000-091 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)</p> |
|--|---|---|

|  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
| <a href="#">Earthlink</a>  | No  | None*  |
| <a href="#">Microsoft Network</a> (MSN)  | No  | None*  |
| <a href="#">Verizon Business</a><br>(regular Verizon accounts do not apply;<br>requires Verizon Business account)            | Yes | <b>Prague</b> 2679-90550<br>(ISDN V.34 + K56flex V.90) |
| *Requires dialing a neighboring country where your service offers local access numbers. International dialing charges apply. |     |  |

### Local Internet Service Providers

Provided below is a list of ISPs servicing this country.

**Note:** Please remember that the ISP market is relatively new and constantly expanding. We advise that you check with any ISP company before you leave to ensure that it still exists.

#### **BroadNet Czech a.s.**

Koněvova St. 2747/99  
130 00 Prague 3  
Tel: [420] 271-035-800  
Fax: [420] 271-035-835  
Web: [www.broadnet.cz](http://www.broadnet.cz)  
Email: [ccc@broadnet.cz](mailto:ccc@broadnet.cz)

#### **Czech On Line (Telekom Austria)**

U Nákladového nádraží 8/3153  
130 00 Prague 3  
Tel: [420] 246-000-222  
Toll-free: 800-880-800  
Fax: [420] 246-000-118  
Web: [www.volny.cz](http://www.volny.cz)  
Email: [info@volny.cz](mailto:info@volny.cz)

#### **Euroweb**

Argentinska 38  
170 05 Prague 7  
Tel: [420] 220-385-111  
Fax: [420] 220-385-112  
Web: [www.euroweb.cz](http://www.euroweb.cz)  
Email: [info@euroweb.cz](mailto:info@euroweb.cz)

#### **GTS Novera**

Přemyslovská 2845/43  
130 00 Prague 3  
Tel: [420] 225-252-525  
Toll-free: 800-990-990  
Fax: [420] 225-251-515  
Web: [www.gtsnovera.cz](http://www.gtsnovera.cz)  
Email: [info@gtsnovera.cz](mailto:info@gtsnovera.cz)

#### **INICIA s.r.o.**

Puškinovo nam. 5  
160 00 Prague 6  
Tel: [420] 220-304-050, 224-317-018  
Web: [www.ini.cz](http://www.ini.cz)  
Email: [info@ini.cz](mailto:info@ini.cz)

#### **ipex a.s.**

Roháčova 81  
130 00 Prague 3  
Tel: [420] 242-446-900  
Fax: [420] 544-528-990  
Web: [www.ipex.cz](http://www.ipex.cz)  
Email: [info@ipex.cz](mailto:info@ipex.cz)

#### **Spika Spol s.r.o.**

Dlážděná 4  
110 00 Prague 1  
Tel: [420] 224-232-803  
Fax: [420] 224-238-387  
web: [www.spika.cz](http://www.spika.cz)  
Email: [info@spika.cz](mailto:info@spika.cz)

**SkyNet**

Budova Longin Business Center  
Na Rybnícku 5  
120 00 Prague 2  
Tel: [420] 296-368-636  
Fax: [420] 296-368-600  
Web: [www.skynet.cz](http://www.skynet.cz)  
Email: [praha@skynet.cz](mailto:praha@skynet.cz)

**Telefónica O2 Czech Republic a.s.**

Olšanská 5/55  
130 34 Prague 3  
Tel: [420] 840-114 114  
Toll-free: 800-123-456  
Web: [www.cz.o2.com](http://www.cz.o2.com)

**Tiscali (TISCALI Telekomunikace Česká republika, s.r.o.)**

Sušilova 1337  
500 02 Hradec Králové  
Tel: [420] 844-184-184  
Fax: [420] 226-026-769  
Web: [www.tiscali.cz](http://www.tiscali.cz)  
Email: [info@cz.tiscali.com](mailto:info@cz.tiscali.com)

**Internet Cafes**

For an updated listing of Internet cafés in the Czech Republic, [click here](#) prior to departure, or, upon arrival, ask your hotel concierge.

**Café.com**

Na Porici 36  
111 00 Prague 1  
Tel: [420] 224-819-435  
Email: [cafeuser@hotmail.com](mailto:cafeuser@hotmail.com)

**Cafe Andel**

Na Belidle 302/27  
150 00 Prague 5  
Tel: [420] 257-324-514  
Email: [rezervace@cafe-andel.cz](mailto:rezervace@cafe-andel.cz)  
Hours: Weekdays 9a.m. to 10p.m., Saturday, Sunday noon to 10p.m.  
Metro: Andel

**Cybeteria**

Na Prikope 23  
110 00 Prague 1  
Tel: [420] 221-637-168  
Fax: [420] 221-637-168

**InetPoint**

Jungmannova 32  
110 00 Prague 1  
Tel: [420] 296-245-962  
Email: [inetpoint@inetpoint.cz](mailto:inetpoint@inetpoint.cz)  
Hours: 10a.m. to 10p.m.

**Internet Café PI@neta (Planeta.cz s.r.o.)**

Vinohradska 102  
130 00 Prague 3  
Tel: [420] 267-311-182

Fax: [420] 267-315-789

Web: [www.planeta.cz](http://www.planeta.cz)

Email: [info@planeta.cz](mailto:info@planeta.cz)

Hours: 8a.m. to 12p.m.

#### **Internet Café SPIKA**

Dlázdena 4

Prague 1

Tel: [420] 224-211-521

Web: [www.netcafe.spika.cz](http://www.netcafe.spika.cz)

Email: [spika@spika.cz](mailto:spika@spika.cz)

#### **Internetcafe Prague**

New Town, Narodní St. 25

Prague 1

Phone: [420] 221-085-284

Fax: [420] 221-085-284

Email: [internetcafe@highland.cz](mailto:internetcafe@highland.cz)

#### **Internetcity**

Chlumecka 8

180 00 Prague 9

Tel: [420] 281-917-770

#### **Netwave**

Na bojisti 8

Prague 2

Tel: [420] 296-186-600

Fax: [420] 269-186-601

Web: [www.netwave.cz](http://www.netwave.cz)

Email: [kavarna@netwave.cz](mailto:kavarna@netwave.cz)

Hours: Monday to Friday 11a.m. to 11p.m., Saturday 3p.m. to 11p.m.

Metro: IP Pavlova

Non-smoking only; fast connections; drinks available.

#### **Terminal Bar Internet Café**

Soukenicka 6

Prague 1

Tel: [420] 221-871-115

#### **Hardware/Software Vendor Support**

##### **Apple**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (408) 996-1010

Web: [www.apple.com/support](http://www.apple.com/support)

##### **Dell**

*Czech Republic:*

Tel: 2 2283 2727 (Notebook warranty support)

*United States International Access:*

Tel: [1] (512) 723-6309

Fax: [1] (512) 728-3653

Tel: [1] 512-728-7424 (International Queue: Latitude or Inspiron / toll call)

Toll Free: 800-285-1653 (Latitude or Inspiron / in U.S. and Canada)

Web: <http://support.dell.com/us/en/home.asp>

##### **Fujitsu**

*Czech Republic:*

Tel: 2 9676 0422 (SCENIC, LIFEBOOK, AMILO)

Tel: 2 3303 2803 (PRIMERGY, SCENIC, LIFEBOOK, AMILO)

Tel: 2 9676 0422 (Pocket LOOX)

Tel: 2 6619 8545-6 (SCALEO, peripherals)

Tel: 8 0011 1155 (Monitors)

Tel: 2 3303 2803 (All other products)

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (901) 259-5790 (Notebooks, Tablets, Desktops and Workstations)

Tel: [1] 408-746-6304 (Software)

Web: <http://www.fujitsu-siemens.com/support/helpdesk.html>

Web: <http://www.computers.us.fujitsu.com/www/contact.shtml?contact>

### **Gateway**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (605) 232-2191

Web: [www.gateway.com/about/contactus/index.php](http://www.gateway.com/about/contactus/index.php)

Web: <http://support.gateway.com/s/faq/c-custserv/csenv9.shtml>

### **Hewlett-Packard/Compaq**

*Czech Republic:*

Web: [http://welcome.hp.com/country/cz/cs/contact\\_us.html](http://welcome.hp.com/country/cz/cs/contact_us.html) (Czech)

*United States:*

Tel: 1 800-474-6836 (HP products) (No direct international line to HP in United States)

Web: [www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact\\_us.html](http://www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact_us.html)

Web: [www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact/phone\\_assist.html#section](http://www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact/phone_assist.html#section)

### **IBM**

*Czech Republic:*

Tel: 2-7213-1316 (ThinkPad and ThinkCentre)

*United States:*

Tel: 1-800-426-7378 (Hardware and software support) (No direct international line to IBM in U.S.)

Tel: 1-800-426-4968 (General information)

Web: [www-307.ibm.com/pc/support/site.wss/document.do?Indocid=YAST-3P2QY&Landsitestyle=lenovo](http://www-307.ibm.com/pc/support/site.wss/document.do?Indocid=YAST-3P2QY&Landsitestyle=lenovo)

### **Microsoft**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (650) 526-6950 (Microsoft Office)

Tel: 1-866-452-4755 (Microsoft Office / U.S. and Canada Only)

Tel: 1-800-936-3500 (Support Customer Care / U.S. and Canada Only)

Web: <http://support.microsoft.com/?LN=en-us&dx=9&dy=13>

Web: <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/hublist>

### **NEC**

*International:*

Tel: [1] (801) 578-5103 (UltraCare Intl. Warranty Service Program)

*United States:*

Tel: 1-800-632-4662 (NEC Display Solutions Monitors)

Tel: 1-866-632-8061 (PowerMate eco systems, MobilePro 780, 790, 900 handhelds, Versa Litepad Tablet PCs)

Web: <http://support.neccomp.com>

### **Novell**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (801) 861-1329 (International Access)

Tel: 1-800-529-3400 (Toll Free in U.S. only)

Web: [www.novell.com/support/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1](http://www.novell.com/support/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1)

### **Palm**

*United Kingdom:*

Tel: [44] (20) 7867-0108

Web: [www.palm.com/intl/Europe-support.html](http://www.palm.com/intl/Europe-support.html)

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (813) 313-4913 (LifeDrive, Palm Handhelds, Tungsten, Zire, Handspring)

Web: [www.palm.com/us/support/using.html](http://www.palm.com/us/support/using.html)

### **Sony**

*United States and Canada:*

Tel: [1] (239) 768-7676 (International Access)

Tel: 1-888-476-6972 (Vaio Computers)

Web: <http://esupport.sony.com/US/perl/support-contacts.pl>

Web: <http://esupport.sony.com/EN/info/software-support.html> (Software Support Numbers)

### **Toshiba**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (949) 583-3000 (International access)

Tel: 1 800 457-7777 (Toll-free in U.S. only)

Web: [www.toshibadirect.com](http://www.toshibadirect.com)

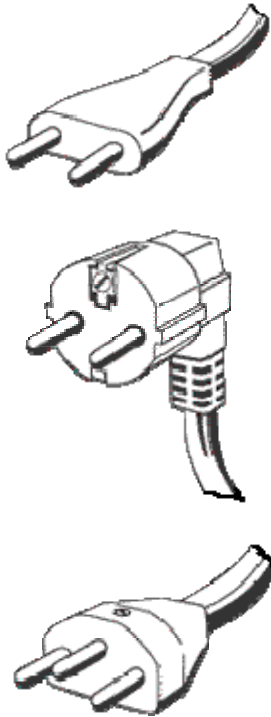
Web: <http://w.askiris.toshiba.com/ToshibaSupportSite/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1>

## **Electrical**

### **Voltage**

220 volts AC, 50Hz, although some parts of Prague use 110 volts.

### **Electric Plug**

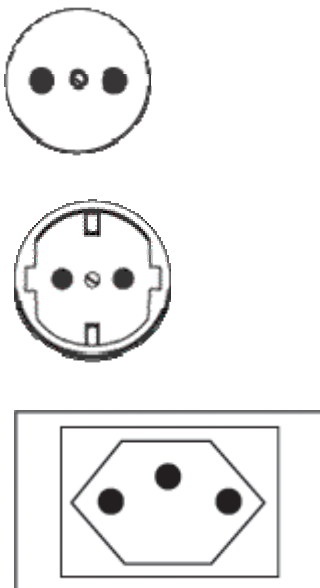


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Electrical plug adapters are available through [Magellans](#) and other suppliers. Please visit the supplier's list found in the sidebar of the [Mobile Connectivity Problems and Solutions](#) section of the Global Road Warrior.

### **Socket**

Typical sockets.







## **Business Culture**

### **Historical Notes**



One of the central themes in the history of the Czech and Slovak Republics and their repeated union and dissolution evokes the epigram about second marriages: "The triumph of hope over reason." In fact, the desires of the Czech and Slovak peoples themselves have counted for little in this family quarrel, the dynamics of which have been dominated by the conflicts between central Europe's empires, namely the Holy Roman, the Habsburg, the Hungarian, the Ottoman, and the Nazi German empires. The most recent divorce was instigated not by the Czech or Slovak peoples themselves, but by quarrelling leaders, in this instance from the post Communist-era political parties. There was much popular sentiment against the split.

In the 5th century A.D., the ancestors of the Czechs settled in present-day Bohemia and Moravia and those of the Slovaks in present-day Slovakia. In the 6th century, the Avars invaded. To counter the invasions, some of the Slavic tribes unified and in 625 established the empire of Samo, centered in Bohemia. The empire dissolved in 658 upon the death of its leader.

After helping Charlemagne destroy the Avar Empire towards the end of the 8th century, the Czech tribes of Moravia were rewarded with part of the area as a fief. The Czechs and Slovaks were united for the first time early in the 9th century when the Moravian kingdom was expanded to include parts of Bohemia, Slovakia, southern Poland, and western Hungary.

As the Bohemian kingdom emerged in the 10th century, the Magyars established the Kingdom of Hungary, which included all of modern-day Slovakia. The two ethnicities would remain separate for nearly a thousand years. The Bohemian kingdom eventually became a fief of the Holy Roman Empire and acquired Moravia in 1029.

The beginning of the 15th century saw the rise of the Hussites (a religious reformist movement) and the onset of religious struggles pitting reformists against Catholics. In 1490, the first of a line of Polish nobles began an absentee rule of both Bohemia and Hungary. In 1525, the Ottoman Turks conquered part of Hungary. The rest, including Slovakia, came under Habsburg rule.

Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph introduced educational and social reforms including the abolition of serfdom and education for peasants. Nonetheless, the Hungarian-Austrian dual monarchy continued the divide between Czechs in the east and Hungarian domination of Slovaks in the west.

In the first half of the 19th century, national revival movements swept the Slavic peoples. In Bohemia, the movement's leaders were a new intelligentsia, largely of peasant origin, who revived the Czech language and created a Czech literature. On October 28, 1918, Czechs and Slovaks were reunited in the new Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Under the pretext of protecting German minorities in the new republic, Hitler invaded on March 15, 1939. After the war, Czechoslovakia came under the Soviet hegemony. The Czech Communist Party eventually suppressed non-Communist opposition.

A reform movement arose in the spring of 1968 led by Alexander Dubcek, who sought to democratize Czechoslovak socialism. Warsaw Pact troops crushed the movement on August 20, 1968. Of all the 1989 rebellions during the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia's "velvet revolution" was the most peaceful. On January 1, 1993, citing numerous irreconcilable differences, among which was the Czech determination to move ahead with economic liberalization, the Czechs and Slovaks parted ways once again. Vaclav Havel, a dissident playwright, became president of the new Czech Republic in February of 1993 and led the country towards its ever-brightening future. His greatest achievement in office was the orderly and welcome admission to the E.U. He stepped down from office in February of 2003 after many years of illness and amidst a waning

domestic reputation. He is still, however, hailed internationally as the "Philosopher King" of Eastern Europe. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004.

The Czechs are heavily involved in anti-terror operations around the world with troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. The country is now also home to US bases as NATO expands eastward. Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek also offered to send troops to Lebanon in 2006.

### **Greetings and Courtesies**



Shake hands upon arrival and departure with everyone, including children. Men usually wait for a woman or an older person to extend their hand first. Czechs do not smile reflexively as a social convention upon meeting someone or as a greeting, and they are generally more formal than Americans, the British, and other western Europeans. These cultural traits have led many foreigners to think that Czechs are cold and unfriendly. The serious demeanor is a sign of respect for the business matters at hand. The straight face is simply a cultural feature, not unfriendliness or coldness per se. Do not use first names until you are invited to do so. Business partners do not ordinarily use first names with each other, and addressing a Czech associate in this manner unless he or she has signaled that it is acceptable may offend. It may take many meetings to establish a friendly rapport on a first-name basis. Titles are important to Czechs. Use them in both verbal address and correspondence.

### **Business Ethic and Framework**

Privatization of formerly state-owned enterprises, accession to the European Union, and a more transparent and independent legal and regulatory system are at the center of the Czech government's business and economic policy. However, although more than 77 percent of output is produced by the private sector, the government continues to hold a significant stake in many large enterprises, including firms in the banking, energy, transportation, and communications sectors. It is unclear when, or if, these holdings will be relinquished. Requirements for E.U. accession, for which the government wants to be prepared by 2003, may provide some pressure for continued privatization in these sectors.

Much of Czech business law is unclear, and the court system is still relatively young and inexperienced. Investors have complained about the slow pace of the legal system and incompetence of judicial officers. Decisions are inconsistent from one court to the next, and commercial disputes may take years to conclude. The bankruptcy courts are facing a three- to four-year case backlog. The government does not differentiate between foreign and domestic investors, or between foreign investors from different countries.

The government awards the "Czech Made" mark to products that are judged to be of outstanding quality, environmentally friendly, and low on energy consumption. To qualify, products must be produced by a company or an entrepreneur registered in the Czech Republic, and there must be a minimum of 60 percent Czech content in the cost of the final product.

### **Decision Making**

Many Czechs have adopted the German propensity for slow, methodical decision making. Patience is essential in doing business here. Foreign businesspeople should prepare to make several visits before any decision is final. Business regulations are in a state of flux, and the law as it pertains to business and the role of government is still evolving. It would be wise to hire a local business lawyer. Avoid depending on your Czech associates or partners for legal clarifications. Czech contact with foreigners was restricted until the collapse of the Soviet Union, and your Czech hosts may appear very formal during your first few contacts. It may take some time to establish a close business relationship.

### **Meetings**

Setting appointments far in advance is not necessary; two- to three-weeks' notice should suffice. If you are hosting a meeting, avoid Friday because many Czechs spend the weekend at country homes and leave as early as possible on Friday. Czech businesspeople are punctual, and they expect foreign visitors to arrive on time or even early. English and German are commonly used as the languages of commerce; however, many businesspeople old

enough to have reached positions of authority will not have studied English. Be prepared to hire a translator. It is also recommended that you have instruction manuals and other literature translated into Czech. Presentations should be detailed and thorough. Proposals should be priced competitively. If you are hosting the meeting, offer your guests basic refreshments. Czechs will typically offer coffee, tea, water, juice, and cookies when they host business visitors.

If your company has been in existence for a while, note its founding date on your card. Because higher education is highly respected, you and other members of your team should also include any titles and university degrees above the bachelor's level on your card.

### **Business Entertaining**

Working breakfast meetings are rare, but many in the Czech business community are becoming accustomed to attending breakfasts hosted by American business visitors. The Czech business day generally starts earlier than in the U.S. and business lunches are fairly common. The noonday meal is typically a more leisurely affair than in the United States; even if you are dining with only one business contact you should expect the lunch to last a solid two hours. Follow your host's lead, but the general rule is to talk business before or after the meal. Insist on paying only if you extended the invitation and are hosting the lunch.

### **Women**



Czech law guarantees equality of the sexes. Women are a very large portion of the Czech workforce and are highly educated, constituting 44 percent of all post-secondary degrees. Despite these statistics, one finds few women in senior positions in either government or the private sector. Women are not represented in significant numbers at upper levels, even in the areas traditionally more open to them such as medicine and education. One explanation for the lack of women in leadership positions is the widely held notion that women are still primarily responsible for domestic work, including child rearing and housekeeping, regardless of their education or professional skills. Although the status of Czech women will probably have little impact on the ability of visiting women to conduct business in the Czech Republic, foreign businesswomen may on occasion be viewed as a novelty. Assertiveness and confidence should suffice to command respect from Czech associates.

### **Business Attire**

Czechs generally follow conservative patterns of business and professional dress. Businessmen usually wear a dark, conservative suit with a white shirt and tie. Women's business attire usually consists of dark skirts and dresses. It is probably safest to dress professionally, but not in an obviously expensive manner because expensive clothing is still not possible for many. On the other hand, because life under the Communist regime was so restrictive, some Czech businesspeople celebrate their newfound freedom by wearing trendy fashions either acquired while traveling or imported from western Europe. Additionally, Czechs dress up for cultural events; to dress casually for evening events in the theater, for example, is considered inappropriate.

### **Politics and Graft**

Whether you call it a bribe or a gift depends on your point of view, but Czechs will, on occasion, give a token of appreciation to government officials for assistance. In a recent study, most of those questioned characterized the transaction as a gratuity given after the service had been rendered, not a bribe extorted by the official. Most also say that such arrangements were much more common before the fall of Communism. The use of well-placed contacts in government and business to achieve personal goals is also something that Czechs think normal and are reluctant to describe as corruption. There have been plenty of accusations of criminal bribery, especially in the areas of government procurement and privatization. Few cases have been prosecuted. Still, most foreign business

visitors and diplomatic observers consider the Czech Republic as one of the least corrupt government bureaucracies among the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The country appeared midway down a list of 54 countries ranked by American businessmen according to the need for bribes in business. This is in part due to the fact that the process of democratization has been more thorough than elsewhere among former Soviet satellites where the former Communist Party nomenklatura has simply renamed itself.

**Business Fraud**

The government has placed a strong emphasis on stifling corruption. Practical results have been slow to materialize. Foreign companies have complained about a range of fraudulent activities or corrupt or convoluted legal and business practices, especially in dealing with the national government's privatization efforts, but also including business and government at the local level. Business and diplomatic observers have said that energy and telecommunication projects are especially subject to behind-the-scenes lobbying by domestic interests. Some investors have complained of a lack of transparency and unethical practices in dealing with private Czech companies such as problems with contract enforcement. Ownership and financial information on companies can prove obscure or difficult to obtain, and investors may have to spend a lot of time and effort to conclude deals.

## **Embassies & Consulates**

### **Australia**

*Consulate of the Commonwealth of Australia*

6th Floor, Solitaire Bldg, Klimentská 10

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Phone: 296-578-350, 296-578-351

Web: [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)

### **Austria**

*Embassy of Austria*

Viktoria Huga 10

151 15 Prague 5, Sm'chov, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-090-511

Fax: [420] 257-316-045

Web: [www.austria.cz](http://www.austria.cz)

Email: [austrianembassy@vol.cz](mailto:austrianembassy@vol.cz)

### **Belgium**

*Embassy of Belgium*

Valdštejnská 6, Malá Strana

118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-533-524

Fax: [420] 257-533-750

Web: [www.diplomatie.be/prague](http://www.diplomatie.be/prague)

Email: [Prague@diplobel.be](mailto:Prague@diplobel.be)

### **Canada**

*Canadian Embassy*

Muchova 6,

160 00 Prague 6, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 272-101-800

Fax: [420] 272-101-890

Web: [www.canada.cz](http://www.canada.cz)

Email: [canada@canada.cz](mailto:canada@canada.cz)

### **Croatia**

*Embassy of the Republic of Croatia*

V Průhledu 9

162 00 Prague 6, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 233-340-479, 233-355-695

### **Denmark**

*Royal Danish Embassy*

Maltézské náměstí 5, Malá Strana

P.O. Box 25

118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-531-600

Fax: [420] 257-531-410

Web: [www.denmark.cz](http://www.denmark.cz)

Email: [prgamb@um.dk](mailto:prgamb@um.dk)

### **Finland**

*Embassy of Finland*

Hellichova 1

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 251-177-251

Fax: [420] 251-177-241

Web: [www.finlandembassy.cz](http://www.finlandembassy.cz)

Email: [sanomat.pra@formin.fi](mailto:sanomat.pra@formin.fi)

### **France**

*Embassy of the French Republic*

Velkopřevorské nám. 2

P.O. Box 102

Prague 1, 118 00  
Tel: [420] 251-171-711  
Web: [www.france.cz](http://www.france.cz)  
Email: [ambafrcz@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:ambafrcz@mbox.vol.cz)

**Germany**

*Embassy of Germany*  
Vlašská 19, Malá Strana  
118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 257-113-111, 257-531-481  
Web: [www.german-embassy.cz](http://www.german-embassy.cz)

**India**

*Embassy of the Republic of India*  
Valdštejnská 6, Malá Strana  
118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 257-533-490  
Fax: [420] 257-533-378  
Web: [www.india.cz](http://www.india.cz)  
Email: [Indembprague@bohem-net.cz](mailto:Indembprague@bohem-net.cz)

**Ireland**

*Embassy of Ireland*  
Velvyslanectví Irska  
Tržišti 13  
118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 257-530-061, 062, 063, 064  
Fax: [420] 257-311-492

**Israel**

*Embassy of the State of Israel*  
Badeniho 2  
170 06 Prague 7, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 233-097-500, 233-097-513, 233-097-515  
Fax: [420] 233-097-519  
Web: <http://prague.mfa.gov.il>  
Email: [info@prague.mfa.gov.il](mailto:info@prague.mfa.gov.il)

**Italy**

*Embassy of Italy*  
Nerudova 20  
118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic  
Tel: [420] 233-080-111  
Fax: [420] 257-531-522  
Web: [www.italianembassy.cz](http://www.italianembassy.cz)  
Email: [neco@nekam.cz](mailto:neco@nekam.cz)

**Japan**

*Embassy of Japan*  
Maltézské nám. 6, Malá Strana  
118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic



Tel: [420] 257-533-546, 257-530-884, 257-011-011

Fax: [420] 257-532-377

Web: [www.cz.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.cz.emb-japan.go.jp)

### **Lebanon**

*Embassy of Lebanon*

Masarykovo nabřeží 14, Nove Mesto

110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 224-930-495, 224-930-029

Web: [www.presidency.gov.lb](http://www.presidency.gov.lb)

### **Netherlands**

*Royal Netherlands Embassy*

Gotthardská 6/27, Bubeneč

160 00 Prague 6, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 233-015-200

Fax: [420] 233-015-254

Web: [www.netherlandsembassy.cz](http://www.netherlandsembassy.cz)

Email: [nlgovpra@ti.cz](mailto:nlgovpra@ti.cz)

### **Norway**

*Royal Norwegian Embassy*

Hellichova 1/458, Malá Strana

118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-323-737

Web: [www.noramb.cz](http://www.noramb.cz)

Email: [emb.prague@mfa.no](mailto:emb.prague@mfa.no)



### **Poland**

*Embassy of Poland*

Valdštejnská 8

118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-530-388



Web: [www.ambpol.cz](http://www.ambpol.cz)

### **Romania**

*Embassy of Romania*

Nerudova 5

P.O. Box 87

118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-534-210

### **Russian Federation**

*Embassy of the Russian Federation*

nám. Pod Kaštany 1

160 00 Prague 6, Bubeneč, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 233-374-100, 233-375-358, 233-371-548, 233-371-549

### **Saudi Arabia**

*Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Na Høebenkách 70

150 00 Prague 5, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-316-597, 257-316-606

Web: [www.mofa.gov.sa](http://www.mofa.gov.sa)

**Switzerland***Embassy of the Swiss Confederation*

Pevnostní 7

P.O. Box 84

162 01 Prague 6, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 220-400-611

Web: [vertretung@pra.rep.admin.ch](mailto:vertretung@pra.rep.admin.ch)**United Kingdom***British Embassy*

Thunovská 14

118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-402-111

Fax: [420] 257-402-296

Fax: [420] 257-402-280 (Consular/Visa)

Web: [www.britain.cz](http://www.britain.cz)Email: [info@britain.cz](mailto:info@britain.cz)**United States of America***Embassy of the United States of America*

Tržišti 15

118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Tel: [420] 257-022-000

Fax: [420] 257-022-809

Web: [www.usembassy.cz](http://www.usembassy.cz)Email: [consprague@state.gov](mailto:consprague@state.gov) (for visa-related questions)

# **The Businesswoman**

## **Women on the Global Road**

Now an established presence in the management workforce and as traveling executives, women may find themselves on the road as much as their male counterparts in seeking to further business opportunities. However, specific gender concerns do need addressing when it comes to conducting business and travel in a country, place, or culture other than one's own. Arming oneself with information in advance will do wonders in overcoming many a difficult situation. The best sources from which to derive helpful hints are other female travelers. Seek them out and inquire of them what to expect, most especially those who have been to the destination to which you will travel. In a pinch, their tips may turn out to be your saving grace. Similarly, upon arrival it is in a woman's interest to observe female behavior in the country of travel to learn what is appropriate and how best to blend in.

## **Advice for Female Travelers**

Violent crime has risen since 1989 in the Czech Republic. In Prague, sexual violence has also been on the rise since 1989. Still, women need not take any exceptional precautions when traveling in the Czech Republic. By comparison with major urban centers in the West, the Czech Republic, including its major cities, is still a safe place to travel and work for foreign women. Statistically speaking, women will still find Prague safer than many places in the West. Most Czech women report having experienced whistling and catcalls from time to time. Take normal travel safety precautions, such as avoiding deserted streets.

## **Cultural Considerations**

In general, women traveling to a foreign country should adopt conservative tone and behavior to keep any unwanted attention at bay, at least until familiar with the specifics of female roles in the country. The Czech Republic should not prove itself too different from other Western countries as far as women are concerned. Every so often, one will run across annoyances on public transportation from someone who has imbibed too heavily in alcohol.

### **Cultural Tips**

- State your wishes clearly so that mixed signals do not become a problem.
- To repel harassment, ignore sexual advances, exposed genitalia, whistles, and various forms of catcalls; avoid eye contact and do not engage in any conversation. If harassment crosses the point of annoyance, move away quickly and join others in a public space. A loud disparaging comment has done wonders in many a situation. Czech women have a no-nonsense attitude toward most types of harassment.

## **Business Attire**

Czechs generally follow conservative patterns of business and professional dress. Women's business attire usually consists of dark skirts and dresses. It is probably safest to dress professionally, but not in an obviously expensive manner because expensive clothing is still not possible for many. On the other hand, because life under the Communist regime was so restrictive, some Czech businesspeople celebrate their newfound freedom by wearing trendy fashions either acquired while traveling or imported from western Europe. Additionally, Czechs dress up for cultural events; to dress casually for evening events in the theater, for example, is considered inappropriate.

## **Women's Health Issues**

Traveling involves extra stress and health concerns to consider. Change of diet, time zone, and living conditions will take up an enormous amount of physical reserve. Women should consider taking extra vitamin, mineral, and food supplements to ensure optimum physical health. Since many travelers avoid meat in developing countries, supplements are further encouraged. Other points to consider:

- Expect to experience irregular menstrual cycles or none at all due to jet lag, stress, and new and irregular eating and sleeping habits.
- Bring any female hygiene products that you use at home, i.e.: tampons, pads, medication, prescriptions, etc. as they may not be readily available at the time of your arrival or even at all.
- Birth control pills may not work properly if you experience stomach upset or diarrhea. If you vomit within three hours of digesting a pill, take another to ensure proper protection.
- Carry the telephone number or email of your gynecologist at home in case you have urgent questions.

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## Helpful Resources

### Advancing Women

Web: [www.advancingwomen.com](http://www.advancingwomen.com)

### Canasian Businesswomen's Network

Email: [cabninfo@apfc.apfnet.org](mailto:cabninfo@apfc.apfnet.org)

### The International Alliance (TIA)

Email: [info@t-i-a.com](mailto:info@t-i-a.com)

### Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT)

Web: [www.owit.org](http://www.owit.org)

### Women in Technology International (WITI)

Web: [www.witi.org/Center/Offices/About](http://www.witi.org/Center/Offices/About)

Email: [info@witi.org](mailto:info@witi.org)

### Women's Institute of Management (WIMNET)

Web: [www.jaring.my/wimnet](http://www.jaring.my/wimnet)

### Working Woman

Web: [www.workingwoman.com](http://www.workingwoman.com)

## Business Strategies for Women

1. Prepare in advance what to expect, not only in terms of business, but attitude of the local culture towards women.
2. Behave and dress conservatively; it is your first and basic step toward gaining respect.
3. Anticipate equality issues as they will likely surface.
4. Maintain a sense of humor. A foreign country has many oddities, your presence possibly being one of them. Relieve some of the stress with a humorous outlook.
5. Brush off sexual innuendos and comments about appearance and carry on with the business at hand. Keep a cultural outlook on such remarks. If a member of the other delegation becomes a problem or nuisance, take him aside and inform him that it makes you uncomfortable, or tell another member of his delegation to put a stop to it.
6. Exhibit tolerance and understanding for the other culture. Questions about your marital status and family may prove ubiquitous, as it interests people how things work for you.
7. If you are a team leader, prepare your delegation in advance to treat you in a matter-of-fact, supportive fashion. A reaction from a delegation unaccustomed to working with females in authority may be derailed a bit if they observe your role is nothing but routine.
8. Generational attitude differences may exist towards women. Prepare to adjust to them.
9. Professional behavior, a respect for local traditions, and an in-demand service or product will assist you as a businesswoman.

## General Safety Tips

1. Prearrange transportation for your arrival. If possible, befriend someone on your flight with whom you might share a cab.
2. If you are being dropped off in an unlit area, ask your driver to wait until you are safely inside. Women should avoid traveling at night.
3. Find out from your hotel staff where it is safe to go alone and what areas merit avoiding.
4. If you plan on meeting with a stranger, do it in a busy place outside of your hotel.
5. If you encounter someone gesturing or honking for you to stop, do not stop until you have found a busy public place with plenty of lighting before determining the problem.
6. Jogging may not be a wise choice when you are unfamiliar with the terrain. Top-end or expensive-rank hotels often have fitness facilities.
7. If you find yourself on a crowded bus, subway, or train with a male pressing up against you in an obviously sexual way, try embarrassing him by shouting in English. Public shame or humiliation will often keep further advances at bay.
8. Try and look for other women to sit near on public transport. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, get out of it.

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**Hotel Safety Tips**

1. Women should ask for a room on the second floor or higher and near the center of the hallway corridor away from fire exits where would-be assaulters can lurk and escape with more ease.
2. Don't feel shy about asking to see your room before deciding to take it.
3. Do not let anyone except the front desk clerk see or overhear the number of your room.
4. Do not show your room key in public, and keep it under tight security.
5. Avoid stairwells, an easy place for assaulters to hide, and don't travel in elevators alone with male strangers about whom your instincts send you a warning bell.
6. If a stranger is wandering the halls when you plan to enter or exit your room, wait until he leaves. If he doesn't, report him to the front desk.
7. Do not open the door for anyone who knocks whom you do not expect. Use the peephole. Call the front desk if necessary to verify the presence of any hotel staff wishing to enter.
8. When leaving the room, put out the "do not disturb" sign, and leave the TV on if you wish to deter possible thieves.
9. Pack a flashlight should the lights suddenly go out.
10. Take the business card of your hotel before going out in case you get lost. Do not give out the name of your hotel unless absolutely necessary, and do not share with anyone that you are alone. Use your creativity and make up a story if you must.
11. Always lock the door when you are inside the room. A portable extra door-locking device may prove a prudent pre-trip purchase. A rubber doorstopper is also an easy item to pack.

## **Essential Terms**

| ENGLISH               | CZECH                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes                   | Ano                      |
| No                    | Ne                       |
| Good morning          | Dobré ráno               |
| Hello (daytime)       | Dobré odpoledne          |
| Hello (evening)       | Dobry vecer              |
| Hello (telephone)     | Dobry den                |
| Good-bye              | Na shledanou             |
| Please                | Prosím                   |
| Thank you             | Dekuji                   |
| Pleased to meet you   | Tesi mne ze vas poznavam |
| Excuse me; I'm sorry  | Prominte                 |
| My name is ____       | Jmenuji se ____          |
| I don't understand    | Nepozumim                |
| Do you speak English? | Mluvite anglicky?        |

## **BASIC TERMS**

| ENGLISH     | CZECH          |
|-------------|----------------|
| Help!       | Pomoc          |
| Emergency   | Nouze          |
| Stop!       | Stuj!          |
| I am sick   | Jsem nemocny   |
| Food        | Potrava        |
| Water       | Voda           |
| Money       | Peníze         |
| Credit card | Kreditni karta |
| Currency    | Mena           |
| Coins       | Mince          |
| Map         | Mapa           |
| Address     | Adresa         |
| Baggage     | Zavazadlo      |
| Clothes     | Saty           |
| Car rental  | Pujcovna aut   |
| Interpreter | Tlumocnik      |
| Stamp       | Známka         |
| Be (verb)   | Byt            |
| Have (verb) | Míti           |

## **INTERROGATIVE TERMS**

| ENGLISH   | CZECH  |
|-----------|--------|
| How?      | Jak?   |
| How much? | Kolik? |
| What?     | Co?    |
| When?     | Kdyz?  |
| Where?    | Kde?   |
| Who?      | Kdo?   |
| Why?      | Proc?  |

**PLACES**

| ENGLISH                    | CZECH                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Airport                    | Letiste                       |
| Bank                       | Banka                         |
| Bus station                | Autobusova zastavka           |
| Consulate                  | Konsulát                      |
| Doctor                     | Lékar                         |
| Downtown (city center)     | Centrum                       |
| Embassy                    | Vyslanectví                   |
| Foreign exchange           | Smenarna                      |
| Hospital                   | Nemocnice                     |
| Hotel                      | Hotel                         |
| Pharmacy                   | Lékárna                       |
| Police station             | Policajni stanice             |
| Post office                | Postovni úrad                 |
| Railway station            | Nadrazi                       |
| Restaurant                 | Restaurace                    |
| Taxi/Taxi stand            | Taxi / Zastavka taxi          |
| Telephone                  | Telefon                       |
| Toilet                     | Záchod                        |
| Tourist information center | Turisticke informacni centrum |

**OPPOSITE TERMS**

| ENGLISH   | CZECH           |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Cheap     | Laciny          |
| Expensive | Drahy. Nakladny |
| Fast      | Rychly. Rychle  |
| Slow      | Pomaly          |
| Easy      | Snadny          |
| Difficult | Nesnadny        |
| Near      | Blízky          |



|             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| Far         | Vzdáleny         |
| Good        | Dobry            |
| Bad         | Spatny           |
| Hungry      | Hladovy          |
| Thirsty     | Zíznivy          |
| Warm        | Teplo            |
| Cold        | Chladno          |
| Open        | Otevri. Otevreno |
| Closed      | Zavri. Zavreno   |
| Free        | Volno            |
| Occupied    | Obsazeno         |
| Before      | Pred             |
| After       | Po               |
| In          | V                |
| Out         | Ven              |
| In front    | Pred             |
| Behind      | Za               |
| Enough      | Dosti            |
| Too much    | Prilis mnoho     |
| Entrance    | Vchod. Prichod   |
| Exit        | Vychod           |
| Right       | Pravy            |
| Left        | Levy             |
| Straight on | Primo            |
| Above       | Nad              |
| On          | Na               |
| Under       | Pod              |
| Yesterday   | Vcera            |
| Today       | Dnes             |
| Tomorrow    | Zítro            |
| Past        | Minulost         |
| Present     | Soucasnost       |
| Future      | Budoucnost       |
| Always      | Vzdy             |
| Often       | Casto            |
| Sometimes   | Nekdy            |
| Rarely      | Zřídka           |
| Never       | Nikdy            |

## Maps



## **Society and Culture**

### **Time & Punctuality**

#### **General Attitudes Toward Time**

Czech society is formal but no-nonsense, and it can take several meetings to establish a sense of rapport and a more relaxed attitude. Czech businesspeople often work beyond the standard 8-hour day, and weekend meetings occur frequently. Generally, Czechs appreciate punctuality.

#### **Business Engagements**

Always arrive punctually for appointments, whether your business meeting is with an individual or a group. Czechs will normally overlook it if you are unavoidably late by up to 15 minutes, but as a foreigner you should strive to arrive on time and let your Czech counterpart know if you are running late, especially if you run more than 15 minutes behind schedule—the hesame applies when meeting a government official or functionary. It is common for Czechs to be delayed, but you are expected to be on time. Corporate culture varies. When dealing with older people or individuals in the government sector, it's more likely that you Czech counterparts will arrive late for meetings, although long delays are unusual. Younger individuals or people at companies that regularly do business with the west are more likely to be punctual.

Delays due to late starts are usually minimal in the Czech Republic, but you may want to leave an extra 15 minutes between meetings until you know your Czech counterparts better. Public transportation is reliable in major cities, but leave yourself a little extra time if traveling by car.

Many Czech companies will meet deadlines with only a modest amount of flexibility, and if they fail to do so they will usually let you know and offer a plausible explanation. Working overtime to meet deadlines is uncommon in the Czech Republic. If your production or service deadlines are critical, pad your schedule and keep in touch with your Czech counterparts.

#### **Social Engagements**

For most social engagements, it's best to be punctual. For personal meetings with friends and meal invitations in restaurants, arrive on time. When invited for a meal in someone's home, some flexibility is permitted. Most Czechs allow for 15 minutes of flexibility either way, so you can arrive up to a quarter of an hour early or late without giving offense. For parties, 15 minutes late is usual.

### **Women in Business**

#### **General View**

Women in the Czech Republic traditionally took care of the children and did not work outside of the home, but the Communist period led to rapid change, and, by 1976, 87 percent of women were employed. Only about 51 percent of women aged between 15 and 51 are now employed, but women have diversified their range of employment in the post-Communist period and made substantial progress in public life. Women are still mainly employed in traditional sectors like retail sales, health care, education, and social work, where they form 75 percent of the workforce, but they have made inroads into politics and business and are working their way up the management ladder (26% of administrators and managers are now women).

Even though gender equality is recognized, women do almost all the work at home and also involve themselves in domestic financial management. Although many Czech men consider women as the "weaker gender," they treat women with respect and give them certain privileges in the work place.

#### **Legal Rights**

Czech men and women have the same rights over owning and inheriting property. The law gives women the right to vote. There is a wide disparity, however, in terms of salaries when, legally, there should be parity. The law also forbids sex discrimination in employment, but employers do not observe this law, even in their job advertisements. Women earn only 73 percent of what men earn for the same work.

#### **Women in Professions**

Most women work in the civil services or in the private sector (primarily banking and insurance) as lower-level administrative personnel or salespeople.

There are many distinguished female business owners and executives: Olga Girstlova is the founder of GiTy., a largeabling and networking firm, and the president of the Moravian Association of Women Entrepreneurs; Milena Vesela owns the conference management firm ProMoPro; Marie Haisova is director and executive board member

of Agentura Gaia, an eco-feminist NGO; Miloslava Umlaufova runs Triton Management Consultancy Co. and is the head of the Association of Business and Professional Women of the Czech Republic. In 2006, almost 16 percent of Parliamentary seats were held by women.

Czech labor laws prohibit women from working in certain jobs like mining. Pregnant women and mothers of children up to nine months of age are not allowed to perform jobs that may endanger their health, work overtime, or go on long business trips. There are no dress codes for women in their workplace.

Most families are “nuclear,” but if the couple is working and there are children to take care of, then the parents of one of the spouses may stay with them. If the father earns enough to provide for his family, then wives generally prefer to stay home until the children go to a nursery or kindergarten. Although most schools are run by the government, many private schools have mushroomed, despite their cost.

### **Women as Business Owners**

Women-owned businesses are typically small enterprises in the garment and leather industries, agriculture, hunting and forestry, and education. Very few women own heavy manufacturing units or fisheries. About ten percent of women work in their own enterprises, half as many as men.

### **Foreign Businesswomen Visiting the Country**

Foreign women holding positions of responsibility and power in business are not accepted easily in the Czech Republic. A foreign woman must first establish her credibility and ability with her male counterparts. She must shake hands firmly with her male colleagues to demonstrate her honesty and openness, and she must maintain eye contact while talking to establish her trustworthiness. Speak softly and never interrupt someone else's conversation. A good way to show respect and friendship is to learn a few Czech words. When invited to a Czech home, remove your shoes before entering the house.

## **Women in Culture**

### **General View and Position in Society**

Despite the long period of Communist ideology that promoted equality between men and women, there is a conservative streak among people of the Czech Republic regarding the roles of men and women in society. Czech men will still open the door for a woman to enter or leave first, help her to remove her coat, or stand up when she rises to her feet. It took entry into the European Union, however, for the Czech government to enact legislation mandating that employers treat women employees on a par with their male counterparts. The concept of equal treatment for women is also penetrating into other areas of society, albeit at a slower pace.

For instance, not a single political party in the Czech Republic is headed by a woman, and the representation of women in Czech politics is minimal. Although women participate at all levels of the Czech economy, obstacles such as professional segregation, inequality in professional advancement opportunities, differences in pay, and inequality in job opportunities have ensured that very few women occupy senior-level positions in government, science, business, law, and medicine.

The women of developing regions of the country (major cities and places close to the German and Austrian borders) have greater opportunities than women in other regions with inadequate infrastructure and poor employment prospects.

There are no particular dress code restrictions for women in the Czech Republic. Most professional women dress in smart business attire for work, while other working women dress in casual Western attire or in uniforms provided by their employers.

### **Legal Rights**

The principle of equal rights for men and women is enshrined in the Czech Constitution. Women have the same rights as men in the areas of voting as well as inheriting and owning property. However, in actual practice, discrimination against women does exist in various sectors of society. The government has recently set up three institutional bodies dedicated to ending discrimination against women.

Citizens of the Czech Republic have a very liberal view towards abortion, which is legal and easily accessible. However, women below the age of 16 require the consent of a parent or guardian, and those aged 16 to 18 are required to notify parents or guardian after the abortion has been performed.

Women in the Czech Republic can easily initiate a divorce, and the custody of children is almost always given to the mother.

### **Education**

Public education in the Czech Republic is free of charge at all levels, and women have the same access to educational facilities as men. There are no differences between girls and boys in the completion of primary school,

and almost all women receive at least a secondary level of education. The number of women who manage to obtain either graduate or post-graduate university degrees, however, is low when compared to their male counterparts.

Legally, women are entitled to the same job opportunities as men, but men's average earnings are 27 percent higher than the average earnings of women.

### **Dating, Marriage, and Family**

Women in the Czech Republic choose their own mates, and women normally begin dating quite early, sometimes at the age of 15. Couples normally meet in school settings, at the workplace, or at social events.

The minimum age at which a woman or man can marry is 18 years. Under exceptional circumstances, like pregnancy, courts may give permission for a minor between 16 and 18 years old to marry. Since most of the women in the Czech Republic are employed full time, many of them tend to delay marriage, and this has led to a drop in the birth rate.

Under Czech law, polygamy is punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

According to the laws of the Family Code, the bride and groom are required to declare if they will use the common family name of one spouse, keep their original family names, or combine both names. The most popular choice is for both the bride and the groom to take the husband's family name. Most women do not retain their husband's name in the event of a divorce.

Czech society follows the conservative, traditional model of the family, in which the woman is seen to be in charge of all household affairs including childcare. Since most women combine this role with a full-time job, fathers are sometimes offered paid paternal leave to stay at home and take care of the children during their first four years. Childless women do not face any sort of discrimination in the Czech Republic.

In cases of divorce, Czech courts always award custody of the children to the mother. Certain items that are not considered part of the undivided property that belonged to both the husband and wife remain the personal property of the spouse. Pre-nuptial agreements, if they exist, take precedence over everything else. Since men and women have equal rights regarding owning and inheriting property, women can hold assets separate from their husbands.

### **Health**

The standard of medical care for women in the Czech Republic is quite good with well-equipped clinics and hospitals and easy access to gynecologists. Healthcare issues relating to pregnancy are covered by compulsory public health insurance.

Women are permitted to make their own healthcare decisions, including decisions about birth control, which is widely available and accepted.

## **Gift Giving**

### **General**

Czechs expect and value gifts. That said, when you offer a gift the recipient will often refuse to accept it but will eventually, and gladly, accept it after polite persistence on your part. In return you should only accept gifts after a polite initial refusal to indicate that the gift wasn't expected or necessary.

### **Personal and Family Gifts**

Czech people exchange gifts on birthdays, weddings, Christmas, and New Year's Day. A good gift option for birthdays or weddings include locally produced glassware, including wine glasses, candy dishes, vases, and bowls, for which the Czech Republic is known. Christmas gifts can include tree decorations and traditional candles. The list of suitable gifts for holidays also includes cakes, pastries, sweets, and quality liquor. During weddings, the hosts give away huge cakes as gifts. Gifts should be attractively presented, and you can expect them to be unwrapped immediately.

### **Business Gifts**

Generally Czech businesspeople appreciate humble gifts such as good pens, lighters, spirits like scotch or cognac, electronic items like calculators, address books, or laser pointers, and office accessories like business card holders, leather briefcases, business diaries, or office organizers. People who smoke appreciate cigarette lighters. A formal situation may call for a nice bottle of Czech or French wine. Avoid expensive gifts, however, because it can be perceived as showing off your wealth or interpreted as an attempted bribe. Items priced at around US\$15-30 should prove sufficient.

### **Hospitality Gifts**

If you receive an invitation to a Czech home it is expected that you bring a gift for your hostess. Flowers in odd-

numbered bunches (but not 13), a box of good quality chocolates, food or souvenirs from your home country, wine, whiskey, or cognac all serve as appropriate gifts. Sending flowers prior to a dinner party or the following day with a handwritten thank you note is appreciated as well.

### **Taboo Gifts**

Personal gifts such as clothing are not considered appropriate. Avoid all white or purple flowers like lilies, calla lilies, chrysanthemums, white roses, marigolds, heather, and carnations, which are associated with funerals and death, and red roses, which have romantic overtones. Knives, scissors, and letter openers are considered symbols of severing relationships and should also be avoided.

## **Holidays & Festivals**

### **Largely Recognized Holidays Calendar**

Shaded items indicate Bank/ Government Holidays

| <b>Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations</b>                    | <b>2008</b>    | <b>2009</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>Affected*</b> |
|---|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>New Year's Day</u></a>                           | Jan 1          | Jan 1       | Jan 1       | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Easter Sunday and Monday</u></a>                 | Mar 23 - 24    | Apr 12 - 13 | Apr 4 - 5   | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Labor Day</u></a>                                | May 1          | May 1       | May 1       | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Victory Day / Liberation Day</u></a>             | May 8          | May 8       | May 8       | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Prague Fringe Festival</u></a>                   | May 25 – Jun 1 | May- Jun    | May - Jun   | none             |
| <a href="#"><u>St. Cyril and St. Methodius' Day</u></a>         | Jul 5          | Jul 5       | Jul 5       | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Jan Hus Day</u></a>                              | Jul 6          | Jul 6       | Jul 6       | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Czech Statehood Day</u></a>                      | Sep 28         | Sep 28      | Sep 28      | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Independence Day</u></a>                         | Oct 28         | Oct 28      | Oct 28      | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>Freedom and Democracy Day/ Students' Day</u></a> | Nov 17         | Nov 17      | Nov 17      | g, b, o, r       |
| <a href="#"><u>St. Nicholas Day</u></a>                         | Dec 6          | Dec 6       | Dec 6       | none             |
| <a href="#"><u>Christmas Holiday</u></a>                        | Dec 24 - 26    | Dec 24 - 26 | Dec 24 - 26 | g, b, o, some r  |

\*Key:

g = government offices and institutions

b = banks and financial institutions

o = non-retail businesses / offices

r = retail businesses

### **Special Season**

***Masopust:*** Similar to carnival, *Masopust* (Goodbye to meat) is the Czech Republic's Mardi Gras equivalent. *Masopust* celebrations begin on the Feast of the Epiphany (or Three Kings) and last until Ash Wednesday. This season of *Masopust* is a festive time with much merrymaking and masquerading. Throughout the Czech Republic, towns hold their own set of activities to celebrate this season. The most common of these festivities include public processions, music, and dance performances. During these parades participants dress up in a variety of colorful masks and disguises. Special delicacies are enjoyed during this time, especially in the final week before Ash Wednesday. Preparations for these begin on the preceding Thursday, or "Fat Thursday," with the slaughtering of a pig and cooking it with sauerkraut. Czech tradition holds that eating and drinking well on this day will ensure physical strength through the rest of the year.

### **National Holiday Descriptions**

#### **New Year's Day**

**Date:** January 1

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Celebrates the first day of the new year.

**Background:** Ancient civilizations marked their years with the seasons celebrating the beginning of a new year at the time of the vernal or autumnal equinox, or sometimes at the winter solstice. Roman emperor Julius Caesar revised the calendar to start the year on January 1, and the Gregorian calendar we use today follows suit.

**How Celebrated:** Czechs take the opportunity on New Year's Eve to party, and then on New Year's Day to relax and recover. In line with Czech traditions, a New Year's banquet will carry several Czech delicacies including *chlebičky* (a type of sandwich with a variety of fillings), *oříšky* (nuts), and *brambůrky* (chips). For New Year's drinks and toasts, *šampaňské* (champagne) and *šumivé víno* (sparkling wine) are often on hand. Some Czechs still practice an old tradition of eating *vepřový ovar* (boiled pork head) with apples and grated horseradish at the stroke of midnight.

On New Year's Day, special meals include *čočka* (lentils) and *s krupicí* (broth with semolina). For Czechs, these foods are symbolic of money; therefore, eating them is supposed to bring financial prosperity in the coming year. In addition to beginning the New Year, January 1 commemorates the establishment of the Czech Republic in 1993 following the split of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

### Easter Sunday and Monday

**Date:** Varies with to the Christian calendar.

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** A Christian feast day to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter Monday is a public holiday, as Easter always falls on a Sunday.

**Background:** The celebration of Christ's resurrection is one of the most important feasts in Christianity. With its symbolism of new life, the holiday combined with earlier pagan celebrations of spring and took its name from Eastre, an Anglo-Saxon goddess of fertility and springtime.

**How Celebrated:** Easter used to be a religious event for Czechs. However, during Communist rule, the holiday's religious overtones gradually faded and it became more of a festival to welcome the spring. In rural areas some traditional religious practices still exist, such as Mass and Easter caroling. The egg is the most popular Easter symbol in the Czech Republic, and Czechs are very fond of *kraslice* (decorated eggs).

*Pomlázka* is a popular Czech tradition on Easter. Boys lightly whip girls with pussy willow twigs and then drench them with water. In return, the girls reward them with decorated Easter eggs. This tradition stems from pagan times, and was thought to bring health and youth and chase away bad spirits. Though this tradition is still practiced in many villages and towns, much of the symbolism has diminished. Today, girls are less likely to appreciate being whipped or drenched, and are also more likely to reward the boys with shots of alcohol.

### Labor Day

**Date:** May 1

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** A day to honor the working class and their contributions to society.

**Background:** The celebration of Labor Day originated with "the eight-hour-day movement," which advocated balance in a worker's day: eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest. An 1886 labor rally in Chicago promoting the eight-hour workday ended with the death of several demonstrators in the "Haymarket Riot." The international socialist movement declared May 1 as the date to commemorate those who died for the cause and to celebrate the workers' struggle.

**How Celebrated:** With a bitter aftertaste from the Communist period, during which Czechs were forced to participate in the proletariat parades, some Czechs continue to react somewhat negatively to this holiday. Today, May First has become a symbol of spring and love, rather than a tribute to the labor movement. Most Czechs spend this holiday at home with their families.

### Victory Day/Liberation Day

**Date:** May 8

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Celebrates the liberation of Czechoslovakia from Nazi Germany in 1945. The holiday is also called Victory Day or Liberation Day.

**Background:** During World War II, many countries in Europe were subjugated to Nazi rule, which ended with the Nazis' defeat by the Allied Forces. The terms of surrender were first signed on May 7 in Reims, attended by representatives of the U.S., Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union. However, the Soviets refused to recognize their representative General Suslaparov, whom the Kremlin did not officially sanction. Thus, a second signing took place on May 8, 1945.

Czechoslovakia was freed from Nazi Germany by Soviet and American military forces in May 1945. Most Eastern parts of the country were liberated by the Soviet Union, while the western parts were freed by the Americans.

**How Celebrated:** The memories of those who died during World War II are honored. Throughout the Czech Republic, most prominently in Ceska Lipa, Hradec Kralove, and Karlovy Vary, wreath-laying ceremonies at



gravesites are staged. The main wreath-laying ceremony is held at Vitkov Hill at the National Memorial. The ceremony is led by the Prime Minister and President and is attended by the country's leaders. A minute of silence precedes the ceremony, and other activities follow.

**St. Cyril and St. Methodius' Day**

**Date:** July 5

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Commemorates the Slavonic apostles Cyril and Methodius.

**Background:** Methodius and Cyril are two brothers who were born during the Byzantine Empire (approximately in the ninth century) in Thessalonica. Both of them became Christian missionaries in Great Moravia and Khazaria. Methodius and Cyril are recognized for developing and perfecting the Glagolitic alphabet from which the Cyrillic alphabet later developed. They used their alphabet to write Slavonic manuscripts. In addition, around 863, Cyril and Methodius traveled to the Czech Republic. Here they spread Christianity, other elements of European culture, and writing and language. St. Cyril and Methodius' Day was made into a national holiday in 1880, during a revival of Czech national pride and identity.

**How Celebrated:** Holidays in honor of saints are commemorated by more religious Czechs through special religious ceremonies such as Masses or church services. As the saints are credited with spreading literacy as well as Christianity, secular observances tend to focus on language, literature, and education.

**Jan Hus Day**

**Date:** July 6

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Honors Jan Hus, a Czech scholar and theologian.

**Background:** Jan Hus was a rector at the Prague University and a preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. Czechs regard Hus as a revolutionary Catholic reformer, predating Martin Luther by a century. As a proponent of John Wycliffe's heretical teachings (e.g., against the doctrine of Transubstantiation of the Eucharist), he was eventually excommunicated in 1412. Hus's teachings spread throughout Europe. As a result of his defiant statements, the church accused him of heresy and ordered him to denounce his teachings. However, this Hus refused to do and, as a result, he was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415, proclaiming "The truth will prevail"—words that have been immortalized in the Czech presidential emblem.

**How Celebrated:** While Protestant Czechs who are more religious may attend some traditional religious commemorations in honor of Jan Hus, most Czechs are disconnected from the significance of this day and prefer to take advantage of a day off work, particularly since it follows the July 5 holiday. Some local television channels may air a movie about Jan Hus to commemorate the day.

**Czech Statehood Day/ St. Wenceslas Day**

**Date:** September 28

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Feast day of Wenceslas, the patron saint of the Czech Republic.

**Background:** St. Wenceslas, a Catholic Czech prince, was murdered in Stara Boleslav by his pagan brother Boleslav on September 28, 935. Boleslav, who killed his brother upon Wenceslas's arrival at church, succeeded his brother to become the prince of Bohemia. Wenceslas was eventually canonized and has since become a Czech symbol of national identity and statehood.

**How Celebrated:** St. Wenceslas pilgrimages are staged in Stara Boleslav, the site of the Czech patron saint's death. In a ceremony held at Prague Castle, the Czech president awards St. Wenceslas medals to individuals who have contributed to the country's statehood.

**Independence Day**

**Date:** October 28

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Commemorates the establishment of Czechoslovakia from Austria-Hungaria.

**Background:** On October 28, 1918, towards the end of World War I, Austria granted Czechoslovakia independence.

**How Celebrated:** An important Independence Day tradition is the placing of flowers over the tomb of Tomas G. Masaryk (located at a castle in Lany), a foreign revolutionary leader during World War I and the first president of the country. This ceremony is led by the current president and other officials. Hundreds of spectators join officials in a similar ceremony held at the monument on Vitkov Hill, followed by a minute of silence for those who died in battle. In the evening, individuals who have contributed to the Czech Republic's social and cultural development are recognized by the president.

At Zofin, Prague, the day is commemorated by a show from the army band, a military display and a 21-gun salute.

In addition, a series of events are held at Prague Castle, and a public spectacle often takes place in the Wenceslas Square area.

**Freedom and Democracy Day/Students' Day**

**Date:** November 17

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, Retail

**Description:** Commemorates Jan Opletal, a student leader and activist during the reign of Nazi Germany.

**Background:** During a student demonstration on November 17, 1939, against Nazi occupation, a student named Jan Opletal was shot dead. Nazi troops raided student dormitories shortly afterward. The raid led to the execution of an additional nine students and the deployment of a thousand students to concentration camps. Fifty years later, on November 17, 1989, the Communist government allowed students to march in commemoration of Jan Opletal's death. The march developed into a demonstration at the National Avenue in Prague, protesting against the Communist regime. Police attempted to suppress the protestors, injuring 170 students. These events eventually led to a greater national revolt, the beginnings of the Velvet Revolution, and the Communist regime's eventual fall.

**How Celebrated:** A wreath-laying ceremony is held to pay tribute to Jan Opletal. Discussions and forums among students, academicians and public leaders are also held to remember and honor the life and deeds of Opletal. Many Czechs bring flowers and candles to the memorial at Prague's National Avenue to honor those students who died.

**St. Nicholas Day**

**Date:** December 6

**Closures:** None

**Description:** Honors St. Nicholas of Bari, the patron saint of children.

**Background:** St. Nicholas was born in 280 A.D. He became Catholic priest, and later a bishop. As a rich man Nicholas traveled a lot and was fond of giving gifts, especially to children and the needy. However, he preferred that his generosity remain anonymous and therefore chose to deliver his gifts under the cover of night.

Nicholas died on December 6, 343, following a life of good works, wisdom and giving. St. Nicholas was recognized as a saint by the Eastern Catholic Church in 800 A.D. By the 1200s, Bishop Nicholas Day was observed every December 6 in France. Today, the figure of St. Nicholas has evolved into Santa Claus, derived from *Sinter Klass*, the Dutch pronunciation of St. Nicholas.

**How Celebrated:** The streets of Prague are flooded with impersonations of St. Nicholas, the devil and angel figures. These masqueraders visit the homes of friends and family to endow well-behaved children with sweets and gifts and naughty children with coal. Parents often pay students to take on this role. The Christmas tree at Prague Castle is also lit on this day.

**Christmas Holiday**

**Date:** December 24-26

**Closures:** Government, Banks, Business Offices, some Retail

**Description:** A Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Also a time for sharing traditions and gifts with family and friends.

**Background:** Long before the birth of Christ, Europeans celebrated the dark days of December with festivities and fire symbolizing hope for spring and the return of longer days. Although no one is sure exactly when Jesus Christ was born, the 4<sup>th</sup>-century Pope Julius I declared that December 25 would be the official date to celebrate Christmas. In this way, he introduced a Christian element to the mid-winter festivals.

**How Celebrated:** On Christmas Eve, Czech families decorate the Christmas trees in their homes. Throughout the day, they prepare special food to be served at the Christmas Eve dinner. The most popular dishes include potato salad, fried breaded carp fillets, and fish soup with vegetables and croutons. Following dinner, everyone finds their Christmas gifts under the Christmas tree and opens them. Many Czechs claim to be atheists; nevertheless, it is increasingly popular for Czechs to attend Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve at one of the country's spectacular churches.

Most Czechs spend Christmas Day with friends and family. Carp is a traditional Christmas Day food in the Czech Republic; it is cooked and served fresh to visitors. The day after Christmas is also a public holiday to allow continued celebrations and family visits.

**Festivals Description****Prague Fringe Festival**

**Date:** Varies annually between May and June.

**Closures:** None

**Description:** A festival of alternative performing arts.

**Background:** This festival was first held in 2001 and patterned after the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It was founded by Steven Gove and Angus Coull, Scots based in Prague. One of the festivals purposes is to unite people through cultural performances.

**How Celebrated:** This Festival is held at eight different venues. Several performances are held each day. Performances from over 200 artists from a variety of disciplines, including theater, dance, music and comedy, are staged.

## **Lifecycle**

### **Introduction**

More than one quarter of Czechs are practicing Catholics, and there is a small Protestant minority. The majority of Czechs, however, do not practice any religion. Life cycles are generally governed by modern ideas rather than by traditions or religious proscriptions.

### **Birth**

Many moms-to-be begin their preparation for the newborn long before the birth by making or buying blankets, baby frocks, boots, jackets and bonnets. The birth of a child is a special event for most married Czechs, but celebrations are quiet. Close friends and relatives visit whenever they are able and bring gifts for the newborn.

Most births take place in hospitals, and almost all Czech women have skilled attendants assisting when they give birth. Midwives and obstetric nurses do not as a rule deliver babies in hospitals, but provide care during and after birth. Home births, though less common, do occur, with trained midwives delivering the babies.. Women who choose to have a home birth remain under the care of the midwives after the birth.

A Czech newborn is customarily baptized a week after birth. During the baptismal party, the godfather delivers a ceremonial toast and the godmother presents gifts. Godparents vow to protect the baby in times of need and distress. Six weeks after baptism, the parents take the baby to church again, this time to offer thanks.

### **Childhood**

Parents usually take direct responsibility for raising their offspring. When both parents work outside the home, they sometimes hire babysitters to look after the children. Czechs do not normally rely on extended family members for help, though grandmothers, particularly widowed grandmothers, sometimes live with the family and often help look after their grandchildren while parents are working.

Care of children from birth until age three is mostly restricted to the household. The few public care facilities available for this age group are generally considered unreliable. Once Czech children are two or a little older, they are not usually pampered too much.

Children often start nursery school at age three. After about two years, children move on to kindergartens, and at six they start grade school. Most Czech children attend public schools and finish their elementary education at age 11, when they move on to secondary school.

Czech children are often encouraged to join organizations such as Boy Scouts, play sports, or study art outside of school. Left to their own devices, many spend their leisure time watching television or playing electronic games. Outdoor sports such as soccer or football and hockey are also popular, especially among boys.

Czech parents do not usually expect their children to contribute to the family income or do any substantial work around the house. The minimum working age is 15, and this is strictly enforced.

Most parents do not prefer male children over girls. Czech couples most often prefer to have a boy and a girl if they have more than one child, and some first-time parents hope for a daughter.

### **Coming of Age**

There are no traditional rituals or ceremonies to mark coming of age in the Czech Republic. The first mark of growing up is an official identification card issued at the age of 15. At 18, a Czech is legally responsible for his or her actions and can get married, get a driver's license, purchase tobacco and alcohol, and vote.

Czech youngsters are typically expected to complete their education. School is mandatory for children 15 and younger. Once teens complete their mandatory education, they can go on either to a four-year vocational training program or, if they pass a written test, to a college preparatory school.

Although children over 15 are legally permitted to work, it is not common for them to do so. Usually, teens finish vocational training and start to earn a living at about 18, though more than one-third of Czechs go on to higher education and start working later. Usually, young Czechs who work spend their income on themselves rather than contributing to the family income.

### **Dating and Courtship**

Dating and courting are both commonly accepted behaviors in the Czech Republic. By the age of 15 or 16, boys and girls in both urban and rural areas begin to date. Schools, clubs, youth information centers, and coffee clubs are common places where young Czechs meet. Young people in the Czech Republic are typically very social and frequently date in groups. They often enjoy going to movies, coffee houses, clubs, or even to the countryside on weekend trips in mixed groups.

Couples in their twenties prefer to spend time alone with their dates, and more commonly share meals at home or in restaurants, as well as going to the movies or the theater. For very young Czechs, it's common for each person to pay his or her own expenses. As they get older and have their own income, it's more usual for the man to pay for the date. In established relationships, couples tend to be more straightforward with each other and settle expenses pragmatically with whatever funds are at hand.

There is no prescribed period for dating, and young Czechs commonly break off one relationship to get into another. Parents as a rule do not intervene in the social lives of their children, unless they fear serious consequences like pregnancy.

Most Czech women prefer dating men who are independent and earn a decent living. Men usually choose to date women who are physically appealing and well educated. There are no particular taboos for dating, and Czechs are generally free to date whomever they choose, regardless of religious or ethnic group. Some Czech youngsters may seek their parents' approval of their dating partner, though most do not feel obliged to do so. Parental interference is generally unwelcome.

Premarital sex is common among the Czechs. Almost all Czechs have sex before they are married, and most start when they are 17 or 18 years old and have a few partners before they marry. Although society does not exactly condone premarital relationships, it certainly tolerates them. Contraceptive use is not widespread among very young Czechs, though most use modern methods of birth control as they get older.

Dating does not necessarily end in marriage. There are no established courtship rituals in the Czech Republic, but couples generally consider marriage after their relationship is established. A marriage proposal is a private affair between a man and a woman and usually occurs very simply. Traditional customs like leaving a branch sprouting new leaves on a sweetheart's doorstep on May Day have become uncommon. Parents are usually informed once a proposal has been made and accepted, but their approval is not usually sought.

### **Marriage**

Men normally marry in their mid- to late twenties, while women usually marry in their early or mid-twenties. Although Czechs traditionally married young, the average age for first marriage is increasing, and it's more common for people to wait until they are financially secure before they consider marriage. There is no family hierarchy in marriage, and people are free to marry whenever they feel they are ready as long as they are of age. Although only a civil ceremony is necessary, many Czechs prefer to have a church wedding as well, or at least incorporate some traditional customs into the wedding. For example, before the wedding, a baby is placed on the couple's bed to bless them and enhance their fertility. After the marriage ceremony, a bride may switch her wedding veil for a matron's bonnet to signify matrimony. At the wedding reception, it's traditional to break a plate at the feet of the bride and bridegroom, and the newlyweds are expected to clean up together, signaling harmony in everything they do in their married life. The customary finale is for the bridegroom to carry the bride over the threshold of their new home.

Most Czechs live in apartments and a majority live in urban areas. Married couples usually move to their own home after marriage. Some newlyweds do live with their parents for a short time after they're married if they have trouble finding an apartment they can afford.

The husband is the traditional head of a Czech household, and a wife may be solely responsible for the household and children even if she works outside the home. The trend is for marriages to be more egalitarian, and couples commonly make decisions together or share household tasks.

Most couples hope to have the approval of their parents for a marriage, though many are prepared to go ahead with their wedding plans without parental approval if necessary. Parents do usually get involved in planning and paying for the wedding, though they have no influence on how their children run their own household or manage their relationship once they're married.

Extramarital affairs are not culturally accepted, and many Czechs strongly condemn affairs as unethical behavior. In spite of that, one-quarter to one-third of Czechs, more often men, have extramarital affairs. Although affairs are never condoned, Czech society is more lenient towards a man's infidelity than a woman's. Polygamy is illegal and is not practiced.

Wedding anniversaries are special days in the Czech Republic. Close friends and relatives may be invited to a dinner, and guests often bring gifts or flowers. A twenty-fifth anniversary is called *stříbrná svatba*, or a silver wedding, fifty years is celebrated as *zlatá svatba*, or a golden wedding, and a sixtieth anniversary is celebrated as

*diamantova svatba*, or a diamond wedding.

Czech law protects the rights of marriage of both husband and wife equally. Divorce is legal and accepted in the Czech culture. The Czech Republic has one of the highest divorce rates in Europe, with 3.2 out of every 1,000 divorcing in 2004. Before the decree of divorce in a court of law, officials of the court verify documents on rights of property, housing, and finance. Before issuing the judgment of divorce, the court also decides on the rights and duties of parents with respect to the children, chiefly custody rights, support, and maintenance. Divorce proceedings often remain suspended indefinitely until decisions on the children are final. Custody of children is more commonly given to the mother, and the father usually provides maintenance. Long-term avoidance of paying alimony is a criminal offense in the Czech Republic.

There is no taboo on widows remarrying in the Czech Republic. It's common for friends and relatives to encourage widows to enter new relationships and start a new life. However, it's very much up to an individual woman to decide if she wants to remarry or not.

### **Family and Parenting**

Nuclear families are the norm in the Czech Republic, with a husband, wife, and children or stepchildren. Most married couples have one or two children. Large families are rather unusual among Czechs. Though families in rural areas tend to be larger than in urban areas, the trend is changing, and rural families increasingly restrict their family size to one or two.

Most married women of childbearing age use contraceptives, and family planning is a part of everyday life. Abortion is legal until the twelfth week of pregnancy. Married women do not need their husband's consent, but girls under the age of 16 need the consent of their parents or guardians for an abortion. For the most part, abortion is accepted as necessary in the Czech Republic.

Most married couples consider children an important part of their life. Infertility can cause strained relations between marriage partners.

Although most Czech households run on income from both husband and wife, the responsibility of caring for a young child usually falls primarily to the mother. Small numbers of Czech men are increasingly likely to help with housework and the care of young babies. Although marriages are increasingly egalitarian, men often retain the role of head of the household. Decisions are often made jointly, and it's common for both parents to work.

While children are very young, a babysitter or grandmother may come to care for them during the day so that both parents may go out to work. Older children spend the day at school. Families spend evenings together at home, especially on weekdays, watching television, listening to music, or reading. Men commonly get together after working hours at pubs to drink beer and talk. During weekends families go to the movies, eat out, or take the children on short trips. During holidays, urban Czechs often travel to the countryside. Winter sports are favorite activities, and families often ice skate or ski together.

When at home, families prefer sitting together for their meals. Although lunch is considered the main meal of the day, lunchtime is spent at school or work, so families usually spend time together over dinner. Typically, the head of the family is served first, after which the dishes are circulated around the table.

Grandparents, although loved and respected, are not an essential part of the family unit of the Czech Republic. Most grandparents live alone, and the children and grandchildren visit them on weekends and holidays. In some families, grandparents live with a married child and play a role in bringing up the children and managing household affairs.

### **Work / Professional Life**

Most Czechs start working when they are 18 or older, often in their early to mid-twenties. Traditionally, a Czech worker would continue in the same job for life, but today, most Czechs can choose their profession and change jobs at will.

The workday in the Czech Republic is usually 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Government offices normally remain open until 6 p.m. The lunch hour is usually between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. After work, people generally arrive home at about 5 p.m. have dinner before 7 p.m.

Unemployment is relatively low in the Czech Republic. Most women work, but they remain concentrated in traditionally female sectors such as sales, education, and health care, though they are increasingly active in politics, business, and civil service. Czech women rarely receive equal pay for doing the same work as men even though they are legally entitled to it.

It's common for married women and women with children to work. Women who cannot find caregivers for their young children may stay home until their children are old enough for preschool, but usually they are able to reenter the workforce without much trouble.

Men currently retire in their early sixties, while women retire in their late fifties or early sixties depending on how many children they have. The retirement age is gradually increasing, and will be 63 for men and 59 to 63 for

women by 2012.

### **Old Age**

Parents and adult children generally remain in close contact even though they live in separate households. Most senior citizens remain active and enjoy visiting their children and other close relatives.

Elderly people in Czech society tend to spend most of their time with people their own age. Many older Czechs have pensions that allow them to live independently even when they are in poor health, and most prefer to maintain their independence as long as possible. Widowed mothers are more likely than widowers to move in with their married children and help look after grandchildren. In parts of Moravia, family houses are still built to accommodate extended family, and parents live with their children as a rule.

Adult children commonly look after their sick and aging parents. In the Czech society, siblings and relatives who otherwise do not have much social contact come forward to help look after their sick parents. Children collectively decide on what is best for a parent who is incapacitated.

### **Death**

In preparation for burial, a dead body is washed, symbolizing the cleansing of the Holy Spirit. The body is then dressed in new, festive clothing, after which the deceased is placed in a casket on an elevated stand with drapes, with lit candles set around the body. Mourners file past to pay their last respects.

Members of the community watch over the deceased, reciting prayers and psalms while they keep an all-night vigil. At sunrise the next day, mourners process to the cemetery. In the country, it's common for amateur musicians to accompany the mourners to the gravesite. The casket is gradually lowered into a prepared place while a brief service is sung, and mourners sprinkle earth on the casket. After the funeral, the entire family observes a period of mourning that lasts for several months. Czechs observe death anniversaries quietly, usually by visiting the grave and leaving flowers on the tomb.

Christian beliefs about afterlife vary among different denominations and individuals. Most Christians believe in heaven, where believers enjoy the presence of God and freedom from suffering and pain. Almost all Christians believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead. The devout are supposed to experience everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord in heaven, while unbelievers and sinners are condemned to hell and everlasting punishment.

## **Religion**

### **Religions of the Country**

The population of the Czech Republic was traditionally Roman Catholic, but a century-long anti-Catholic nationalist movement followed by forty years of Communist rule left only 27 percent of the population active members of the Church. The majority of Czechs (some 49 percent) declared themselves to be atheists in 2001, and another ten percent had no religious affiliation.

Religious minorities include Protestants (2% of the population), Muslims (20,000 to 30,000 practitioners), and Jews (numbering a few thousand).

### **Basic Tenets**

The Catholic Church believes itself the legitimate successor to the ministry of Jesus Christ through uninterrupted apostolic succession from St. Peter to the present Pope. Like most other Christian faiths, Catholicism is both monotheistic and trinitarian, following one God in three forms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It holds that Jesus Christ, the Son, died and rose from the dead to redeem humanity from its sins. It considers both scripture as well as church teachings and sacraments to be legitimate sources of revelation and grace. The sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is usually celebrated at Mass; Catholics go through a period of study before they may receive communion for the first time, as they believe in the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Human life is sacrosanct in Catholicism, and the Church therefore vehemently opposes activities like cloning, eugenics, euthanasia, and abortion.

An atheist school of thought, based on belief in science, human rights, and rational thought, became widely popular in Europe in the mid-1800s under the banner of the Free Thought Movement. Practitioners were known as "secular humanists," "freethinkers," or "rationalists" and vehemently opposed the Vatican, slavery, and government impediments to free speech and intellectual discovery. Socialism shared much of the same core beliefs in a scientific approach to organizing human society and was in many ways a natural progression for secular humanists.

### **Spiritually Devout or Nominal**

Czechs are not religious or are actively anti-religious by a clear majority (59%). Even among those professing to be Christians, very few attended church regularly (5%) in 2001. The Czechs, however, enthusiastically celebrate "name days," commemorating saints' feast days, which have more of a social significance than a religious one.

**Religious Conflict**

The religions of the Czech Republic generally co-exist peacefully. However, there have been several anti-Semitic incidents in recent times. The Czech Republic has a small but well-organized right-wing movement with strident anti-Semitic views. In 2004, 80 tombstones were vandalized in a Jewish cemetery, and a Holocaust memorial was damaged twice in the three months after its construction. The government regularly monitors the activities of skinheads and neo-Nazis.

**Secularism**

A strident secular movement, consisting of atheists and free thinkers, is thriving in the Czech Republic. The country is reputed to be one of the most thoroughly secular countries in Europe.

**Superstitions**

One legend about St. Wenceslaus, the nation's patron saint, says that he will awaken an army of knights who are sleeping under a Czech mountain and lead them to the country's rescue in its direst hour.

**Religious Clerics**

Religious clerics have no special status, authority, or influence in Czech society. After the end of Communism in 1989, religious activity in the Czech Republic surged slightly, but that has not been enough to change the fact that the majority of Czechs remain committed atheists and free thinkers.

The Roman Catholic Church has seminaries in Prague and elsewhere to train its clerics.

**State Regulations**

The Czech government provides about US\$117 million per year to religious organizations, divided proportionately among 20 organizations based on the number of clergy. Out of this, clerics are paid salaries amounting to US\$32 million. The rest of the money is used for the medical, educational, and charitable activities of the religious organizations, including maintenance of religious buildings and memorials.

**Religion and Public life**

Religion has no authority in or impact on public life. Although a few religious schools do exist, public schools do not teach religion to students. The government allows religious broadcasting without interference. .

**Religious Holidays**

Religious holy days that are recognized as national holidays are Easter Monday, Christmas Eve, Christmas, and St. Stephen's Day (December 26).

**Religious Ceremonies**

The main religious ceremonies of the Czech Republic are Roman Catholic ones like baptisms, weddings, and the celebration of the Eucharist. A popular destination for religious pilgrimages is the Catholic church that shelters the statue of the "Infant Jesus of Prague."

**Government and Religion**

The Constitution of the Czech Republic guarantees full religious freedom (or the freedom to have no religion) and strictly protects this right.

The Czech Republic is a highly secular and non-religious country and religion has little influence in government and politics. However, the government does not take an anti-religious or controlling stand but, on the contrary, provides funding for the activities of religious groups. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for religious affairs. The government has recognized 26 religious groups. Judaism was officially recognized only in 1989 and the Center for Muslim Communities received official registration in 2004.

The country has a two-tiered system of registration for religious communities as per the 2002 law on "Religious Freedom and the Position of Churches and Religious Associations." The first level registration (for groups with at least 300 members) grants limited tax benefits and makes annual reporting necessary. At the second level, religious groups (with at least 10,000 members) become eligible for state funding.

**Persecution**

The Czech government does not persecute outside religions and proselytizing is legal in the country. Evangelical groups like Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), for instance, are actively engaged in missionary activity. Anyone is free to possess Bibles or other religious literature in the country, and foreign visitors are free to display their religious symbols and icons.

**Religious Tolerance**

With its secular and non-religious nature, Czech society has a high degree of religious tolerance. However, Jews have had to face personal threats and vandalism to their religious property from a small group of anti-Semitic neo-Nazis and skinheads.

Foreign missionaries and evangelical groups will face no opposition from local people. Rather, they would probably have to contend with the indifferent attitude of an irreligious people.

**Protocols for Foreigners**

Foreign visitors are free to participate in the religious activities and rituals of the Czech Republic, but non-Catholics attending Catholic Mass should refrain from taking the communion bread and wine. Visitors do not need to be aware of any particular religious caveats in public, aside from the courtesy of behaving respectfully at places of worship.

## **Cultural Stereotypes**

**Stereotypes of Czechs as accepted by foreigners****Nothing to Smile About**

*Everybody in the Czech Republic walks around frowning as if it were the worst day of their lives.*

Czechs are not the most smile intensive people in the world, that is for sure, and face-to-face encounters with strangers are apt to draw a very blank look from the average Czech citizen. This is common in central and Eastern Europe, so it is not a solely Czech reaction. However, once an acquaintanceship or friendship is established, Czechs demonstrate some of the warmest interpersonal skills around. Time inverts all frowns.

**Food and Beverage**

*The Czechs are a hearty bunch, intent on living well with two focal points in their lives: Beer and Dumplings.*

The Czechs do have the highest per capita consumption of beer in the world (156.9 liters per year, well ahead of second place Ireland at 131.1), and it is wise for visitors to acquiesce to the Czech claim of having the best beer as well. The food is rich and Czech portion sizes make American cuisine look like health spa fare. Now that the scarcities of socialism have given way to the well-stocked larders of market economics, the Czechs can give free rein to their pursuit of table and tap.

**Cultured Revolution**

*The Czechs handled the transition from socialism with the restraint that comes from being a well-ordered society.*

The bloodless Velvet Revolution that saw off Czechoslovakia's socialist government and Moscow's grip was seen as the epitome of how an orderly and highly cultured nation can make dramatic political and economic changes without spiraling into anarchy. The resultant splitting of the country into the Czech and Slovak Republics was another amicable procedure of which everyone involved is justly proud. The Czechs and the Slovaks should give lessons.

**Tragically Hip**

*As nice as the Czechs are, they seem to be aping the styles of the U.S. and the E.U. without regard for their own.*

The Czechs, especially young Czechs, see "the West" as the future and perhaps the only future. Learning English means a ticket to higher wages and a better life even if they work locally. Admission to the E.U. has only heightened this appeal. Music, clothes, art, and attitude are being adopted (and to some degree adapted) as part of the package. The rest of the world is doing it, so why not the Czechs?

**Use and Abuse**

*Expats should understand that many of their Czech friends are using them to access greater possibilities.*

Websites are chockablock with complaints or questions by expats (usually Yanks or Brits) living in the Czech Republic about how they get swarmed with offers for dinner and companionship from local Czechs (male and female alike). Some expats see this as an example of the friendly Czech nature while others (naively) think it is due to their own personal charm. Mostly the Czechs just want to practice their English or other foreign languages and hopefully make some contacts for future opportunities. They have quickly learned the art of networking, albeit unidirectional.

**Stereotypes of Czechs as accepted by the Czechs****Well Educated**

*We Czechs have always known that education is the key to success in any society and we want the best.*

One thing that foreign firms have never been disappointed with when setting up shop in the Czech Republic is the high quality of the education system and the graduates it turns out. Obtaining an upper level degree from a top school is a goal of just about anyone with management-level goals. Now that the Czechs have access to all of



Europe's universities, a temporary "brain drain" might be in the offing.

### **European Hearts**

*The Czechs have always been European at heart and now we are in the heart of Europe.*

Geography, politics, and culture have coalesced to put the Czechs in a position they have been searching for since the 1890s. Besides being one of the best-preserved cultures in Europe, the Czechs also have an inherent dynamism and drive that have given them early access to the E.U. and NATO, with a desire to become real players on the global stage. By all accounts, the E.U. and NATO have gained a member with an ability to make major contributions to both organizations.

### **Roughly Better**

*For all of our cultural pursuits and high level of education, we enjoy being a little rough around the edges.*

Czechs make much of their cultural history and their contributions to Europe's music, art, literature, and architecture, but they also have a healthy sense of self-deprecation that keeps them from taking themselves too seriously. This is after all a beer-drinking country and also the original home of the Bohemian lifestyle. Czechs have a high opinion of themselves, but they know that there is plenty of room at the top.

### **Looking Outward**

*The Czech Republic is a small landlocked country but we can handle ourselves in the global arena.*

Czechs know that they will have to depend on other nations for both political and economic progress in the short- and the long-term. As a small player within the E.U. it will need to bind together with other players of equal size on some issues and with large players when necessary. Its work with the U.S. in Iraq put it at odds with the E.U. powerhouses France and Germany, but its ability to look at the big (or bigger) picture and a need to assert itself drove this decision. Czechs have a long history of skillfully playing many sides against the middle.

### **Czechs Only**

*We have worked long and hard to build this country and we don't need any "immigrants" living off our efforts.*

One of the not-so-dark secrets about the Czech Republic is that the ethnic Czechs are not particularly happy with the Roma (gypsy) segment of the population. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia has criticized the Czech Republic (as well as Slovakia and Hungary) for discrimination against the Roma including wrongfully assigning Roma children to special schools for learning disabilities. The Czech Government has also been accused of grossly underestimating the number of Roma ghettos in the country. This problem dates back centuries and may have an effect on relations within the E.U.

## **Superstitions & Folklore**

### **General**

More than half of the Czech Republic's population is unaffiliated with any formal religion, but a quarter of the country's population is Roman Catholic, and celebrate various feast days. In fact, the Catholic communities of the country have a great number of holidays and traditions, scattered all throughout the year, wherein many traditional practices, some predating Christianity, are observed. The Christmas (*Vánoce*) alone, and the days surrounding it, is combined with numerous superstitious beliefs and rituals.

The country also has a great tradition of celebrating the Holy Week, with the *Velký pátek* being the most distinct among all the days because of the many traditional customs attached to it. The Czechs also mark important life events, such as weddings, with the observance of various beliefs and practices.

The superstitions that the country has are mostly rooted in folk tales and legends. Even though most of their superstitious beliefs are not as popular as they once were.

### **Selected Superstitions**

#### ***Velký Pátek (Good Friday)***

Good Friday is often associated with mourning, grief, prayer, and fasting, and with one-quarter of its people belonging to the Catholic faith, Good Friday is closely observed in the Czech Republic. The popular name for Good Friday is *Velký Pátek*. On this day, Czech Catholics observe fasting and abstinence, and meat is not eaten until the church rings its bells on Saturday evening.

*Velký Pátek* is also a day when certain superstitious beliefs and practices are resurrected. Czechs have a tradition of cooking and preparing breads and cake on this special day. Generally, baking bread on this day is believed to protect a house from fire. There are also practices regarding the preparation of the bread. This includes the cooking of the Czech holiday bread, which is the coffee cake that may be eaten or cut only on Easter Sunday, when the priest announces "*Kristus vstal z mrtvých!*" which literally means, "Christ is risen." In some instances, Czech also mark bread with the sign of the cross before eating or cutting it. And even before baking it, some imprint a cross on it for God's blessing to come.

Aside from the beliefs and practices mentioned above, Czechs have also coupled some folk beliefs and romantic superstitions with their observance of the *Velký Pátek*: In order to drive out sicknesses from their homes, women bring their quilts outside, in the open air. Water that is dipped in before the sunrise is believed to have healing powers. Thus, on this day, Czech wake up very early in the morning and immediately go to the nearest river or brook to wash their bodies with cold water, after which, they cross the river or brook barefooted, for there is a belief that these practices will bless them with good health for the rest of the year. Some Czech families also bring their daughters to a well to wash her, for this is believed to make them beautiful.

Czechs are also wary of working on the day of the *Velký Pátek*, because some believe that, aside from being a sign of disrespect, this will bring bad luck. There is even an archaic saying that goes like this: “*Na Velký pátek zemi nehýbej*” or “On Good Friday, do not move the soil”.

A saying is also what describes another superstitious belief related to *Velký Pátek*: “*Velký pátek deštivý dělává rok žíznlivý*” which means, “A rainy Good Friday makes for a thirsty year.” The saying manifests the belief that the weather on the day of *Velký Pátek* will most likely be the kind of weather that the country will have for the rest of the year.

Legend has it that it is harmless for anyone to look up straight to the sun on this day. Another belief is that Mt. Blaník opens when Good Friday comes. According to stories, in that mountain lie the spirits of Czech knights who have the power to save their nation from great troubles.

The mysteries associated with Mt. Blaník originated from an ancient story, in which a woman, with her child, went to the mountain before the sun rose on the day of the *Velký Pátek*. The mountain is said to have opened, and a great quantity of gold welcomed the mother and child. The woman hurried to fill the apron she was wearing with as much gold as it could hold. As the apron could hold only a little gold, the woman ran back to her home to get a larger container, leaving her child on the mountain. Upon her return, the sun has already risen and the mountain has closed, with her child locked inside. The woman went back to the mountain the following year, also before sunrise. The mountain opened and she found her child inside it, still healthy.

There is also a grim Czech legend that foretells the end of the Earth. It is said that a stone maiden figure lies on mountaintops. An unfinished shirt is said to be in her lap. When *Velký Pátek* comes, the woman is said to sew a single stitch on the time of the Passion. Only one stitch is sewn every year. By the time the woman has completely sown the shirt, the earth will face its end.

### ***Velikonoce (Czech Easter) Superstitions***

The Czechs' version of Easter, called *Velikonoce*, originated from the word *Velike Noci* which means “Great Nights.” It was formerly just a time of anticipation for the coming spring, and any religious practices were banned under Communist rule. Presently, although the Czechs have rekindled the religious associations of Easter, it is observed mainly as festivities.

#### ***The Pussy-willow***

During the time of Easter, pussy-willow twigs are believed to bring youthful energy and good health to anybody who is whipped using them.

#### ***Řehtačka***

The *řehtačka* is a wooden rattle that is made on Green Thursday (*Zelený čtvrtek*) before Easter. It is used by boys, who at night rattle these *řehtačka* all around the village, making loud noise that can be heard all over. This act is to drive away Judas.

#### ***Pomlázka***

A *pomlázka* is a braided whip made from pussy-willow twigs. The term literally means “make younger” which, like the pussy-willow twigs, is believed to grant anyone who is whipped by it with a youthful exuberance and joy for the rest of the year. The belief in this ritual dates back to the pagan times. Formerly, Czechs believe that the act would drive away evil spirits as well as sicknesses. Unlike the other practices and beliefs, the *pomlázka* is still widely popular among Czechs even up to this day. However, it is not taken that seriously; most people do it just to have fun.

Other superstitions observed on the days leading to Velikonoce are the following:

- On Ugly Wednesday, a person who eats honey will be protected from snake bites.
- Also on this day, some people throw into wells breads with honey and butter, because they believe that this will make the wells overflow with water throughout the year.
- People should also smile at each other on this day, because failure to do so will bring sadness to them for the rest of the year. Frowning on this day means that you will frown every Wednesday for the rest of the year.
- On Green Thursday, children are awakened very early in the morning to bathe naked in the river. This ritual cures their laziness.

- White Saturday is considered to be a very lucky day for farmers to sow. Farmers pour ashes on their fields, to spur productivity. And shaking the trees will make them fruitful.
- If it rains on White Saturday, there will be frequent rainfall for the rest of the year.

### **Witch Burning**

On the 30th day of April every year, Czechs perform a ritual “Burning of the Witches.” They gather around an effigy of a witch, which is burned on a bonfire that they have made. The Czechs have an old belief that witches are responsible for making winter very long and that their powers weaken once the weather gets warmer. Thus, by burning the witches, the people will eventually get rid of the dreaded cold.

### **Czech Christmas (Vánoce) Superstitions**

The Catholic population of the Czech Republic have a very colorful way of celebrating Christmas, or *Vánoce*. It used to be that Czechs marked the day before Christmas as one reserved for fasting. Children have a belief that a golden piglet (*zlaté prasátko*) will appear to them if they continue to fast. It was also believed that if there is an odd number of people sitting at a table, their guests will come ahead of the expected time of arrival. Additionally, Christmas Eve is a good day for observing rituals regarding abundance and fertility as well as taboos and fortune telling.

#### **Fertility and Abundance**

In able to secure abundance and fertility, leftovers from the Christmas dinner are put together and are buried under the ground or under the trees. People let cows eat butter, rose-hips and bread with parsley, for they believe that this food will ensure the abundance of milk for the coming year. Hens are provided with barley, peas and grain to guarantee their egg productivity; and knocking on beehives is thought to provide security for the bees by the time the winter comes.

#### **Predicting the Future**

Czechs have a special twig that they call *barborka*, the name of which was derived from St. Barbara's Day (celebrated on the fourth of December) or the day when this special twig should be cut from a fruit tree, which they believed could help predict the future. For instance, girls would often cut several twigs, each representing a certain boy. The boy assigned to the twig that bloomed first on Christmas Eve was believed to be the boy that the girl would marry. The shaking of a fence or bush could also predict where the girl's future groom lived. The shaking was accompanied with a chant that goes like this: “I'm shaking this fence, calling on all my saints. Let the dog bark, where my love is today.” Some women also practiced the throwing of a shoe over the shoulders, towards a door. The position of the shoe upon its landing was believed to have a bearing on the girl's fate: if it pointed towards the door, a marriage could be expected within a year.

#### **Taboos**

Czech taboos can be traced to belief in the spirits of the dead. For instance, people are cautious of sweeping on Christmas Eve, for it may hurt the souls of their departed ancestors. Other practices that would yield the same effects on the spirits of the dead are:

- milling of grains
- crushing of fruits
- hurriedly getting up from the table
- lifting of fallen objects
- dispensing water on the courtyard
- painting the walls
- knitting
- sewing
- spinning
- threshing
- weaving
- winding

Injured souls of the dead manifest their revenge through bad harvest and other misfortunes. Other taboos on Christmas Eve are selling, lending, buying, sneezing, sitting across a door, and borrowing. Any of these may bring catastrophes, bad fortune, and other punishments from the spirits.

Aside from the beliefs and practices mentioned above, the Czechs still have a wide array of Christmas superstitions and customs. Here are some of them:

#### **Christmas Dinner Superstitions and Customs**

- Before the first star appears on the sky, any lights in the house should not be lit.
- The guests coming for Christmas dinner should total an even number because otherwise, death and bad fortune awaits.
- It is believed that one's home will be protected from burglars and thieves if by Christmas dinner, a rope is tied on the legs of the dining table.
- A person should not sit with his or her back facing the door.
- People should get up from the table after the dinner all at the same time because there is a belief that the first person to get up will be the one to die first.

#### Plants and Foods

Some foods and plants, as well as spices are closely linked with various superstitions like the following:

- Garlic is believed to grant its eaters with protection and strength, which is why Czechs do not forget to include garlic in their Christmas dinner. People usually prepare a bowl of garlic and put it under their dinner tables.
- Likewise, a pot of honey is put under the dinner table, for it is believed that honey provides protection against evil forces.
- Eating mushrooms on Christmas dinner will give you strength and health. The Czechs usually prepare *Kuba*, which is a mixture of garlic, onions, barley, dried mushrooms and other spices. It usually serves as an appetizer.
- People dip bundles of grain in Holy Water and they sprinkle them over their homes on Christmas Eve for they believe this practice will prevent their houses from fires in the coming year.
- Providing the goats with apples to eat on Christmas dinner will make their milk sweet.

#### Wealth

Even though the Christmas celebration in the Czech Republic is marked with a great degree of spirituality rather a sense of materialism, the people still adhere to certain practices that they believe will bring financial rewards.

- Fish scales are believed to bring financial blessings all year long. Usually, they are carried inside the wallet or purse to make sure that the carrier will not run out of money. On Christmas dinner, they are either put under the dinner plates or under the tablecloth, for this is believed to bring wealth to the family.

Other superstitions include the following:

- A person should make sure not to cross a field up until the celebration of the midnight mass, or else he will die.
- A person will face poverty if he or she was not able to present a gift to someone on Christmas Eve.
- A pregnant woman usually anticipates the arrival of their first visitor or guest on Christmas Eve, because there is a belief that the sex of the first visitor to come will also be the sex of the child that she is carrying.

Most of the superstitions and rituals mentioned above, however, have already lost their popularity among the Czechs.

#### **Czech Wedding**

The wedding customs and superstitions in the Czech Republic originated from the early beginnings of Christianity in the country. The popular practices are believed to bring joy to the family as well as provide fertility to the couple. They are also meant to give protection against hunger, illness, death of children, hatred, misunderstandings, evil spirits. Some specific practices and their corresponding superstitions are as follows:

- The nieces of the couple to be wed are usually the flower girls. They walk ahead of everyone else in the wedding procession and sprinkle flower petals. The act is believed to enamor the fertility goddess, which ensures that the couple will bear a good number of children. This ritual is thought to have originated from a pagan custom.
- Immediately after the wedding ceremonies, the invited friends of the groom will block the church's exit with a rope decorated with empty bottles, ribbons, and flowers. For the couple to be allowed to get out of the church, the groom needs to pay. This ritual is believed to shed the groom's sins committed in his youth or bachelor days.

- Before the wedding reception, a plate should be broken at the bride and groom's feet. After which, the couple should sweep the broken pieces together. This ritual has its origins from superstitious beliefs that say that the chips of the plate will bring happiness, and by jointly cleaning the pieces away, the couple's married life will be blissful and pleasant.

Another wedding custom is the sneaking of the bride's friend into her yard and planting a tree with colored eggshells and ribbon decorations. The belief is that for as long as the tree grows there, the bride will continue to live.

These wedding customs and beliefs are still upheld by the Czechs to this day. Aside from the superstitions linked with this celebration, the symbolic meanings associated with the rituals help keep the practices alive.

### **Other Superstitions**

#### *Actions*

- The lady of the house should not get up first from the table on Christmas dinner, or the hens will not sit over their eggs.
- If a bell breaks, a bad event will come. Before Hitler invaded the Czech Republic, a bell broke.

#### *Animals (Barn-owl and Birds)*

- A dead barn-owl that is attached to a person's door would protect his or her cattle from lingering evil spirits.
- If a person breaks a mirror, expect that for the next seven years, bad fortune will come upon him or her.
- If a bird is flying around over a person's house, a family member will soon die.

#### *Children*

- Elders believed that eggshell rattles with pebbles inside them would prevent evil spirits from harming their children.

#### *Dreams*

- Having a dream about a body of water means the dreamer will die.

#### *Drinking Beer*

- There is a variety of popular superstitions regarding drinking of beer in Czech Republic. One says that bad fortune will come someone's way if he or she pours beer into a mug that still holds some different kind of beer.
- If someone is offering a toast, a person should be sure to clink mugs with others he is drinking with. Failing to do this would mean that the good health that the toasting should have provided would not come.
- Do not look away from someone's eye while drinking; this will result in seven years of bad sex.

#### *Funerals and Death*

- A person who died from suicide should not be buried in the cemetery; instead, his or her body should be laid on a crossroads.

#### *Special Days (Holy Innocents Day)*

- On the feast of the Holy Innocents, celebrated on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, Czechs do not wash their clothes, because there is a belief that in doing so, they will be tired all year long. Additionally, the act would result in the low productivity of livestock. This superstition originated from the belief that washing laundry on this day means that you are using the murdered innocent's blood to clean your clothes.
- Sewing is also prohibited on Holy Innocents Day. for it will result into the children's eyes being poked.

## **International Trade**

### **Wood Packaging Material**

Although Czech Republic is a contracting party to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as of the present moment Czech Republic has not formally adopted and implemented the IPPC's ISPM 15 (*International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures: Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade*).

\*ISPM 15 is produced by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Czech Republic is a contracting party to the IPPC.

The IPPC is a legally binding international agreement, but the standards developed and adopted by the Convention are not legally binding under the IPPC. However, World Trade Organization (WTO) members such as Czech Republic are required to base their phytosanitary measures on international standards developed within the framework of the IPPC. Phytosanitary measures that conform to the ISPMs are presumed to be consistent with the relevant provisions of the SPS Agreement.

ISPM 15 requires certain phytosanitary procedures, in particular heat treatment or methyl bromide fumigation, relating to wood packaging material (including dunnage) made of raw wood in use in international trade; the phytosanitary procedures are meant to minimize the risk of introducing and spreading certain pests that live and breed in raw wood.

For the full text (21 pages) of ISPM 15 in PDF format, [click here](#).

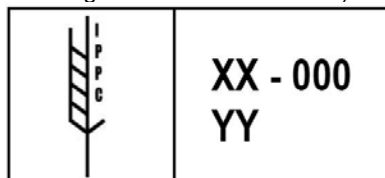
### **Requirements of ISPM 15**

Wood packaging material in the form of:

- Packing cases, boxes, crates, drums, and similar packings
- Pallets, box pallets, skids, and other load boards
- Pallet collars
- actually in use in the transport of objects of all kinds, except:
- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or any combination thereof

**The wood packaging material shall:**

- Be subject to one of the approved measures as specified in Annex I To FAO ISPM 15 (currently, *heat treatment or methyl bromide fumigation*)
- **Display a mark with:**
  - The two-letter ISO Country Code (in place of **XX** in the image below)
  - A code identifying the producer (in place of **000** in the image below)
  - The code identifying the approved measure applied to the wood packaging material in the mark as specified in Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (in place of **YY** in the image below; examples are **HT** For "Heat Treatment" and **MB** for "Methyl Bromide Fumigation")
  - Where "debarking" is required, the letters "DB" shall be added to the abbreviation of the approved measure included in the said mark
  - The logo as specified in Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (this logo is the ippc trademarked graphic symbol shown in the image below on the left side)



- **Markings should be:**
  1. Permanent and not transferable
  2. Legible and visible, preferably on at least two opposite sides of the article being certified

DUNNAGE, i.e. wood used to wedge or support non-wood cargo, including that which has not kept its natural round surface except:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and presseur, or a combination thereof
- Be marked in accordance with Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (see directly above under "**Display a mark with:**")
- If not, at a minimum it should be made from bark-free wood that is free from pests and signs of live pests