

Prague

Overview

Prague is understandably becoming one of Europe's most popular tourist destinations. The capital of the Czech Republic, Prague is situated in the heart of the country astride the Vltava (Moldau) River, and has a reputation as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

The city dates back hundreds of years and has a rich architectural heritage, ranging from Romanesque and Gothic to Renaissance and Baroque, which is remarkably well preserved having survived the Second World War fairly untouched. Unsurprisingly, the historic city centre, with its maze of cobbled streets, countless old churches and courtyards, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992.

The city represents a unique collection of historical monuments. These are dominated by Prague Castle which towers above the city, a specimen of all artistic styles and movements. The city's historical centre is situated on both banks of the Vltava and consists of 6 formerly independent urban units which were unified in the 18th century. These include Stare Mesto (Old Town), Josefov (the preserved part of the former Jewish Town - today a part of the Old Town), Nove Mesto (New Town), Mala Strana (Lesser Town), Hradcany and Vysehrad. Naturally, most of the historical monuments, museums and galleries are concentrated right there.

In 2000 Prague was chosen as a European City of Culture and there is much to see and do. The city is best explored on foot and the Old Town is home to many of the most prominent attractions and best shopping locations, offering a fine selection of crafts and glass.

Wenceslas Square is the centre of modern Prague and the site of the demonstrations that led to the overthrow of Communism. Nearby is the Lucerna Passage, a pedestrian complex running under the Lucerna Palace, which is home to theatres and cafes.

Prague offers an abundance of hospitality. Restaurants offer both international and national cuisine in a range of prices including specialist fish, venison, vegetarian and kosher restaurants. There are wine-bars, beer halls, coffee lounges, internet cafés, confectioneries, tea-rooms and night-clubs with a variety of entertaining programmes.

Exploring the culture and style of country is often best done via its culinary offerings. Czech cuisine is highly appreciated by a majority of visitors. It features plenty of classical dishes, such as pork with sauerkraut and dumplings, sirloin of beef, tomato, dill, mushroom and other sauces with dumplings and beef, or schnitzel with a special potato salad, roasted pork knuckle, or perhaps yeast fruit dumplings strewn with cottage cheese and sugar. There are also many regional specialities including various potato and mushroom dishes as well as desserts, such as famous Bohemian and Moravian cakes.

In Prague a good dinner must be accompanied by the Czech national drink – beer. First among the world renowned beers is Pilsner, brewed in Plzen, the city in Western Bohemia. But many other excellent light and dark beers are also available. These include Budvar, Radegast, Gambrinus, Smíchovské, Kozel, Bernard, Krusovice and many other brands. The fine of delicious Czech and Moravian wines is excellent. Whilst it's traditional for men to visit picturesque beerhouses, and for women indulge in confectioneries with a rich selection of sweet desserts and fine coffees, both men and women enjoy the stylish selection of wine bars. The price of restaurants and bars differs depending on type, standard or location of the establishment.