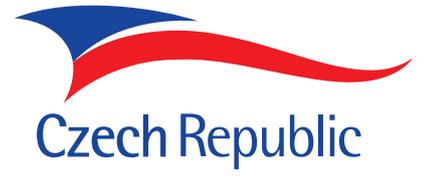
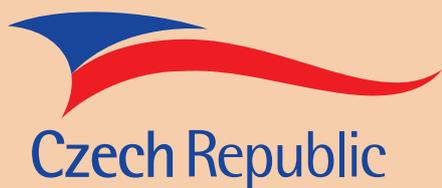


Prague





FLIGHT DISTANCES TO PRAGUE FROM INDIVIDUAL EUROPEAN CITIES (in hours)



PRAGUE A CITY IN THE HEART OF EUROPE

The magic of Prague does not emanate only from the vast number of historical monuments - no matter how remarkable they may be - but rather from the fact that the city as a whole has its own unique appearance and atmosphere. Prague, which extends over a number of hills on both sides of the river Vltava, is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, thanks to its natural location and to more than a thousand years of architectural development. Not only does it have a long architectural tradition, but also a rich artistic, musical and literary history. Over the centuries it has served as an important commercial crossroad and as a meeting place for scientists and artists from around the world. The University in Prague is the oldest university in Central Europe and just a list of all the famous people that are in some way connected with Prague would be long enough to fill a whole brochure.

Although the citizens of Prague are very proud of their city's history, Prague by no means lives only on its famous past. It is a modern European metropolis with all that entails: it offers a wide selection of cultural and sporting activities with clubs for young people as well as bustling commercial avenues and modern administrative centres. Here the past and the present merge in a unique symbiosis.





ARCHITECTURE

Prague is lucky to have escaped both war-time damage as well as ill-conceived reconstruction that has damaged many European cities. Over the years, Prague has grown and changed gradually and organically. At the same time, each era epoch has left its distinctive mark on the streets of Prague. The historical centre is a colourful gallery of all types of architectural styles that range from Gothic to Secession and Modernism. A walk through Prague is like a walk through the centuries or like browsing through a textbook on European architecture.

The oldest record mentioning Prague dates back to the end of the 10th century. Prague Castle (Pražský hrad) was already then the seat of the reigning princes. Prague has thus served as the capital of the Czech



Old Town **1**

Madonna with the Infant Jesus **2**



state for more than a thousand years. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV was the most important monarch of the Middle Ages under whose reign the stone bridge joining both banks of the river Vltava was built, as well as the Gothic St. Vitus's Cathedral (Svatovítská katedrála), the main cathedral of the country. The "Prague Baroque" is a unique term in itself. Prague would not be what it is without the Baroque churches with their beautiful ceiling frescoes, the majestic aristocratic palaces with their extensive gardens, or the statues of saints which line both sides of Charles Bridge (Karlův most).

Prague's Jewish Quarter, with its old cemetery that holds several thousand Renaissance and Baroque tombstones, is one of the most valuable Jewish historical monuments in the world. Its Gothic Old-New Synagogue

Hradčany 3

St. Vitus's Cathedral 4





ARCHITECTURE

(Staronová synagoga), which dates from the end of 13th century, is the oldest preserved synagogue in Europe. It continues to serve to this day as the main place of prayer and synagogue for the Jewish community of Prague.

The most visited historical monument in Prague is Prague Castle. It lies on a raised hill on the left bank of the River Vltava and its characteristic silhouette with the pointed towers of St Vitus's Cathedral is the dominant feature of the panorama of Prague. Over the centuries, the castle complex has undergone numerous alterations. Today, it is also the seat of the President of the Czech Republic. Worth a visit are not only the cathedral, the Old Royal Palace (Starý královský palác) or the Picture Gallery (Obrazárna), but also the extensive gardens that have beautiful views of the city. Those for whom such a sight is not enough can also climb up the tower of the Cathedral from which the whole of Prague

will literally open in front of your eyes. A visit to Prague Castle can be combined with a visit to close-by Strahov Monastery (Strahovský klášter) and a walk through Petřín. At the top of this hill, which can also be reached by funicular railway, is a viewing tower built at the end of the 19th century as a smaller copy of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Here you can also find the remains of the Hunger Wall (Hladová zed'), the old city walls dating from the Middle Ages.

Prague also boasts numerous interesting modern architectural buildings. The Modernist Müller house, designed by the famous architect Adolf Loos (who was born in the area of what is

Old Town Square **1**

Troja Chateau **2**

Jewish Cemetery **3**

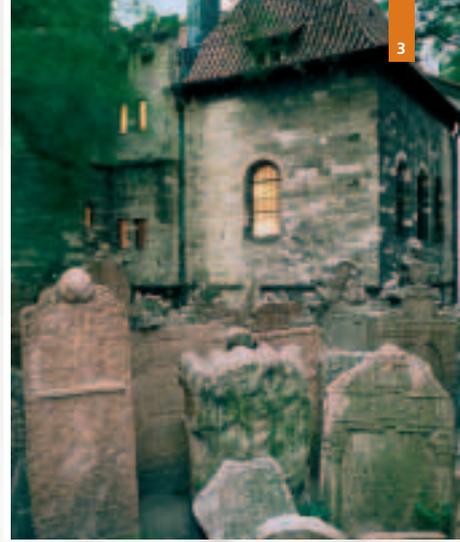
Prague Coat of Arms **4**

St. Vitus's Cathedral - interior **5**





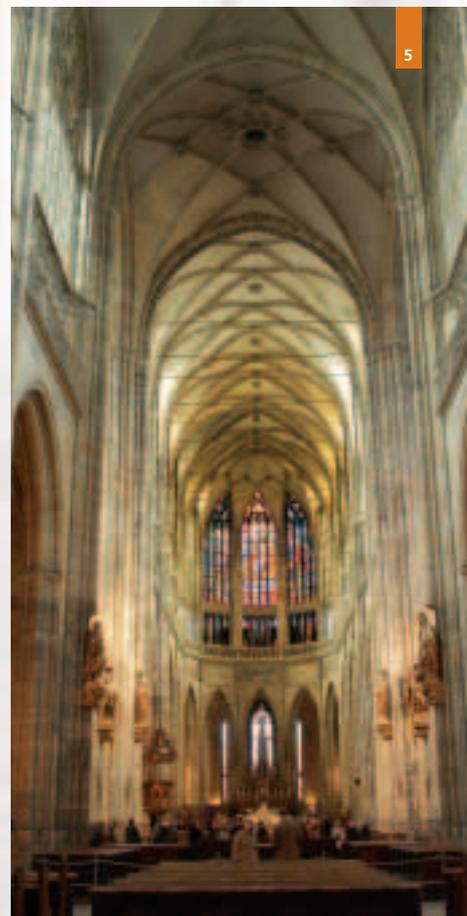
2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4

ARCHITECTURE

today the Czech Republic), has been entered along with the historic centre of the city on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Connoisseurs of architecture also greatly admire the Czech Cubism – buildings inspired by the sharp angles of Cubist painting – and the numerous Functionalist buildings that date from the interwar period. Regarding the more modern architecture, one should mention at least The 'Dancing House' (Tančící dům) – a building situated on the banks of the river Vltava that was designed by the world renowned Canadian architect Frank Gehry, or the Golden Angel (Zlatý Anděl) office development

centre designed by the Frenchman Jean Nouvel. The greenhouse by Eva Jiřičná, a Czech architect based in London, is an excellent example of high-tech architecture, which can be seen in the gardens of Prague Castle, not far from the Renaissance summer palace of Belvedere.

- Powder Gate **1**
- Charles Bridge - Old Town Bridge Tower **2**
- Prague Castle - Matthias Gate **3**
- Danube House **4**
- Old Town Square **5**
- Dancing House **6**





Prague is a city of mystery and romance. One does not have to believe in spells and magic to be enchanted by the seductive atmosphere of the Old Town (Staré Město) and the Lesser Town (Malá Strana). Especially in the evening dusk the winding streets of both districts can appear charged with energy. You can easily believe that you have stepped back a few centuries in time and that around the next corner you will meet one of the famous people of the Prague's past.



MAGICAL PRAGUE

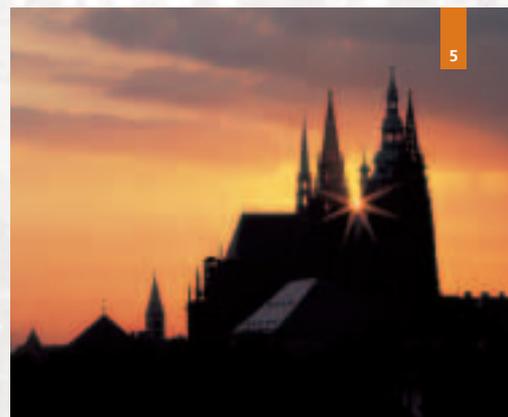
You may for example bump into Franz Kafka, deep in thought about his literary characters, rushing home from the insurance company where he spent the whole day filling out forms on the work-related injuries. Then again, you might also come across Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart strolling by with a small group of actors and singers, going from one party to the next, and who will then in the morning sit down at his piano and, just like that, off the

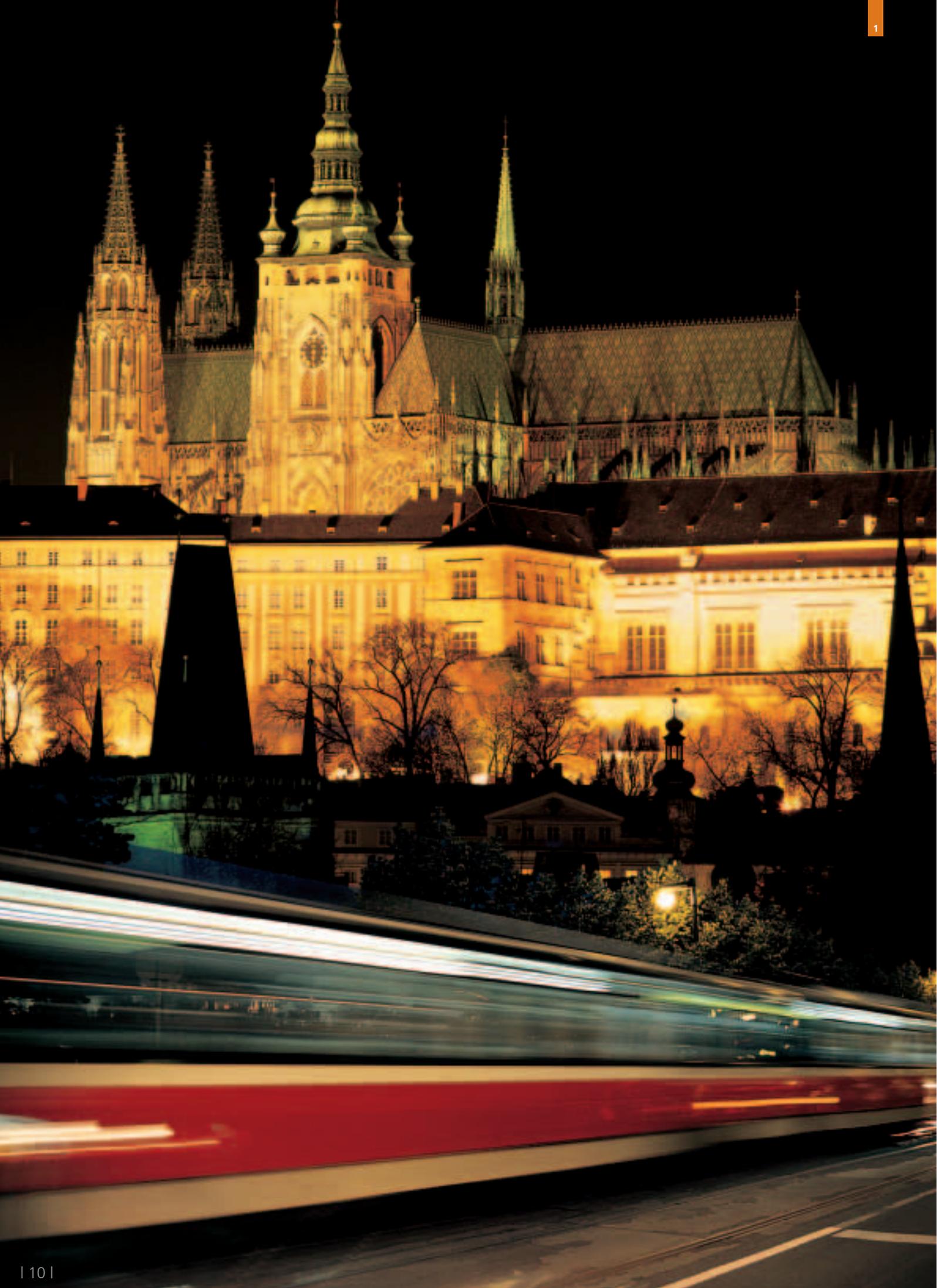
top of his head, create an overture or part of a symphony. Or you might run into one of the many other artists, poets, composers or scientists and inventors who lived at least part of their lives in Prague.

Novotny's landing-stage (Novotného lávka) **1**

Old Town Square – Christmas Market **2**

Prague Castle – sunset **5**







MAGICAL PRAGUE

The extensive park on the slopes of Petřín hill next to Prague castle is a favorite meeting place for lovers. From its hillside there are beautiful views of both the city and of Prague castle, and the park attracts many couples, especially in the spring when the trees are in bloom. On the 1st of May, couples in love stroll through the park so that they can leave flowers at the statue of Karel Hynek Mácha, the greatest Czech romantic poet. Probably every Czech knows by heart the opening verses of his poem "Máj" which tells of the tragic love of the young lovers Vilém and Jarmila.



Prague Castle **1**
Charles Bridge **2**





MUSIC

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart once declared: *“My Prague citizens understand me.”* His works were so popular in Prague that it is said that people sang some of his overtures in the streets. Don Giovanni, one of Mozart’s most famous operas, had its world premiere in 1787 at the Estates Theatre (Stavovské divadlo) in Prague and to this day it forms a part of its repertoire. Antonín Dvořák, the composer of the famous symphony ‘From the New World’ (Z Nového světa), is one of the most famous Czech composers of classical music. Leoš Janáček, Bedřich Smetana and Bohuslav Martinů have also been receiving more recognition lately. Every year, numerous musical festivals and competitions are held

in the Czech Republic, of which the Prague Spring (Pražské jaro) is the most famous.

The Czech Philharmonic, based in Prague’s Rudolfinum, is ranked among the leading international philharmonic companies. Classical concerts are also held in the Municipal House (Obecní dům), which is one of Prague’s most beautiful examples of the Secession architecture. Numerous musical performances are held almost every day in the churches and historical palaces of Prague. Apart from these venues, there are also numerous music clubs and discos in Prague that offer all types of music, ranging from jazz to contemporary electronic music. The

four-story Karlovy lázně Club situated next to Charles Bridge is the largest disco in Central Europe. Prague is also a regular tour destination for world-renowned artists and stars of popular music.

National Theatre **1**

Rudolfinum **2**





MUSEUMS

Apart from the artistic treasures that can be seen directly in the streets of the city or in the churches of Prague, there are also many museums and galleries that are worth visiting. The National Gallery (Národní galerie) holds the largest art collections and its permanent exhibitions are located in several buildings throughout the city. The most extensive is the exhibit of the Czech and international art of the 19th, 20th and 21st century, which is housed in Veletržní Palace. Apart from a selection spanning the history of Czech painting, sculpture, architecture and design, works by leading international artists may also be seen.

Alfons Mucha and František Kupka are probably the most famous Czech artists. Mucha was one of the masters of Art Nouveau. His elegant decorative style was very popular in Paris around the year 1900. František Kupka, whose most important works are owned by the National Gallery, is considered to be a pioneer of abstract painting. The National Museum (Národní muzeum), located in an ornate neo-Renaissance

building in Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí), houses natural science and historical collections. Visitors may also see interesting collections and exhibitions in the Museum of Decorative Arts (Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum), the National Technical Museum (Národní technické muzeum), the Metropolitan Museum of Prague (Muzeum hlavního města Prahy) and others. Most of the museums are generally open every day except Mondays. No visitor to Prague should miss visiting Prague Castle which is itself one of the most significant historical monuments. Also worth seeing is its Picture Gallery (Obrazárna) or the exhibition on the history of the castle complex, which is located in the medieval underground premises of the Royal Palace (Královský palác).

National Technical Museum **1**

National Museum **2**

Franz Kafka Monument **3**





FOOD AND DRINK

Even the lovers of good food and drink will not find themselves lost in Prague. They can choose from a wide range of restaurants that offer both traditional Czech dishes and international cuisine. Czechs are great lovers of beer and to gather in a traditional Czech pub over a half-litre of original Pilsner or Budweiser beer often forms a part even of official state visits.

Coffee houses are also a Central European tradition. The history of some of Prague's coffee houses dates as far back as before the First World War. Probably the most famous coffee house is the Café Slavia, which is located on the bank of the river Vltava across from the National Theatre (Národní divadlo). At its height, it was a lively debating club where artists, actors and writers would meet. Prague is probably the only European city where you can order Absinth - the legendary green nymph and once preferred drink of artistic bohemians.

A more recent phenomenon, popular mostly among the younger generation, are tea rooms. They are often decorated in oriental style with seating on the ground on pillows and they serve teas from around the world. In

some tea rooms it is possible to order a water pipe. Thus, in an instant, busy Europe can seem very far away.





TRANSPORT



The public transport system of Prague is reliable and safe. Metro runs daily from five in the morning to midnight and some bus and tram lines run throughout the night. Any place in Prague can be reached by public transport. There are direct bus lines from the airport that go to terminuses on the metro and the trip into the centre takes less than half an hour.



SHOPPING

Prague also has much to offer those visitors more interested in shopping or good food and drink, rather than in historical monuments. Leading fashion boutiques, large retail stores and luxury jewellers and perfume shops all have branches in Prague. You can also find many antique shops, art galleries and small shops that offer traditional Czech products. Czech cut glass is also highly famed. The most renowned shopping areas are found in Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí) and in the streets Pařížská, Na Příkopě and Celetná. On the left bank of the Vltava there is also Nový Smíchov which used

to be an old industrial district that is now developing into a modern commercial centre. The old factories have been replaced by modern administration buildings and elegant shopping spaces. Large American-style shopping centres are located on the outskirts of the city. However, the trip to get there will not take more than 30 minutes.



TRIPS



2

Regardless of how a visitor may choose to spend their stay in Prague one thing is certain - they will soon discover that one trip is definitely not enough. And even if they do manage to see all of Prague's churches, museums, galleries, theatres, parks and other points of interest, there will still be many beautiful places to visit in the close vicinity of the city.

For example, just 60 kilometres east of Prague lies the historic mining town of **Kutná Hora**, which became wealthy from mining silver. The original underground mining shafts dating from the Middle Ages are today accessible to tourists. St. Barbara's Cathedral (chrám sv. Barbory), the patron saint of miners, is one of the largest and most beautiful Gothic cathedrals in the Czech Republic



3



In the forest west of Prague lies **Karlštejn Castle**, which was commissioned by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV as a depository for the jewels of the Empire. The Holy Cross Chapel (kaple sv. Kříže), the highest castle tower, has walls and ceiling decorated with gold and semi-precious jewels. Unique in the world is the collection of almost 130 panel paintings dating from the Middle Ages that depict Catholic saints.

Svatá Hora (Holy Mountain) near Příbram, located 60 kilometres south of Prague, is one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in the Czech Republic. The extensive complex on a hill above the city of Příbram is, in its current form, the work of Baroque artists. Even those not of the Catholic faith will be impressed by it and find it charged with immense spiritual and artistic energy. A favorite destination is also the city of **Mělník** and its surroundings which lie 30 kilometres

north of Prague. The area's dominant feature is a Renaissance castle perched above the confluence of the rivers Labe and Vltava. A bit closer to Prague is the castle of **Nelahozeves**, which is of interest not only for its picture gallery, but also as a place where a music festival is held in honour of the composer Antonín Dvořák, who was born there. Apart from Prague, 11 other Czech and Moravian towns and historical monuments are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, all of which can be reached by car in less than 3 hours. Nowhere else in the world can you find this.

- Karlštejn (www.karlstejn.cz) 1
- Křivoklát (www.krivoklat.cz) 2
- Kutná Hora (www.kutnahora.cz) 3
- Konopiště (www.zamek-konopiste.cz) 4
- Mělník (www.lobkowicz-melnik.cz) 5
- Svatá Hora (www.pribram-city.cz) 6
- Nelahozeves (www.lobkowiczevents.cz) 7



IMPORTANT ADDRESSES ON THE INTERNET

- CzechTourism www.czechtourism.com
- Prague Information Service www.prague-info.cz
- Public transport www.dpp.cz
- Czech Airlines www.czech-airlines.com
- Train and bus schedules www.idos.cz
- The Zoo www.zoopraha.cz
- Boat trips on the river Vltava www.paroplavba.cz; www.evd.cz
- Accommodation www.travelguide.cz; www.rekus-rekan.cz
- Restaurants and dining out www.squaremeal.cz



CULTURAL SITES AND MONUMENTS

Prague Castle (Pražský hrad) www.hrad.cz
The Municipal House (Obecní dům)..... www.obecni-dum.cz
The Jewish Museum (Židovské muzeum) www.jewishmuseum.cz
Prague Spring (Pražské jaro) www.festival.cz
The National Theatre (Národní divadlo) www.narodni-divadlo.cz
The National Gallery (Národní galerie)..... www.ngprague.cz
Advance Ticket Sales www.ticketpro.cz;
..... www.ticketsbti.cz

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This symbol denotes official certified accommodation facilities.



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Prague

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