

EUROPE · CITY BREAKS · HISTORY · ARCHITECTURE · CULTURE · HIKING



Czech Republic

Prague's Gothic and Baroque old town is the draw, but it is worth going further: Český Krumlov's castle above a loop of the Vltava, Kutná Hora's bone chapel, the spa colonnades of Karlovy Vary and the sandstone towers of Bohemian Switzerland. Trains are cheap, pubs pour some of the world's best lager, and Moravia makes its own wine.

Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Czech Republic and entry requirements (visas, passport validity).
Last updated by FCDO 11 August 2026.

CAPITAL Prague	CURRENCY Czech koruna (CZK) £1 ≈ CZK 28.94	LANGUAGE Czech	BEST TIME Apr–May, Sep–Oct
DAILY BUDGET £45–£220 ££ Moderate	PLUGS Type C, E 230V · adapter needed	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h direct ~£60–£220 return	TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

The Czech Republic, or Czechia, is roughly the size of Scotland but holds a remarkable density of intact historic towns, largely spared 20th-century bombing. Most first trips centre on Prague, whose castle, Charles Bridge and Old Town Square justify three or four days, with day trips to Kutná Hora and Karlštejn castle. Beyond, southern Bohemia has Český Krumlov and the Renaissance square of Telč, the west has the spa towns of Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně, and Moravia in the east brings Brno, Olomouc and the wine cellars around Mikulov.

Prague is busy from Easter to October and over Christmas, and the Old Town can feel like a theme park at midday; staying in Vinohrady or Karlín, and sightseeing early, helps. Outside the capital, crowds thin quickly and prices drop noticeably. A half-litre of Pilsner Urquell or Budvar in a local pub still costs a fraction of a London pint. The country suits city-breakers, hikers, rail travellers and anyone interested in castles or beer. Younger Czechs usually speak good English; in the countryside, a few words of Czech or German help.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

ARCHITECTURE

Prague Castle and Charles Bridge

Guinness lists Prague Castle as the world's largest ancient castle complex, wrapping St Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace and Golden Lane. Walk down through Malá Strana to the statue-lined Charles Bridge, begun in 1357.
- 2

HISTORY

Český Krumlov

A UNESCO-listed Bohemian town wrapped in a tight bend of the Vltava, overlooked by a vast castle with one of the world's few surviving Baroque theatres. Stay overnight to see its lanes after the day-trippers leave.

3

HISTORY

Kutná Hora

Medieval silver wealth built the soaring Gothic St Barbara's Church, while the Sedlec Ossuary nearby is decorated with the bones of tens of thousands of people, chandelier included. An easy day trip from Prague by train.

4

NATURE

Bohemian Switzerland National Park

Sandstone gorges, pine-topped rock towers and Pravčická brána, Europe's largest natural sandstone arch, near the German border. Check which trails and boat trips are running, as parts of the park closed after a large wildfire in 2022.

5

ARCHITECTURE

Karlovy Vary

The grandest of the West Bohemian spa towns, where visitors sip hot mineral water from spouted porcelain cups along ornate colonnades. It hosts a major film festival each July; quieter Mariánské Lázně is nearby.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Prague

≈ 2.3 million people

Worth at least three days: the castle district and Malá Strana, Charles Bridge at dawn, the Jewish Quarter's synagogues, then beer gardens at Letná and Riegrovy sady away from the crowds.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Ostrava

≈ 980,000 people

A former coal and steel city reinvented around its industry: the Dolní Vítkovice blast furnaces host a science centre and the Colours of Ostrava festival, and Stodolní Street is known for nightlife.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Brno

≈ 730,000 people

Moravia's student-heavy capital has Mies van der Rohe's UNESCO-listed Villa Tugendhat, a vast ossuary beneath St James's Church, and some of the country's best cafés and cocktail bars.

Ranked by metropolitan area: Ostrava's includes the neighbouring industrial towns of Havířov and Karviná. Counted as single municipalities, Brno (about 400,000) is the second city and Ostrava (about 280,000) the third.

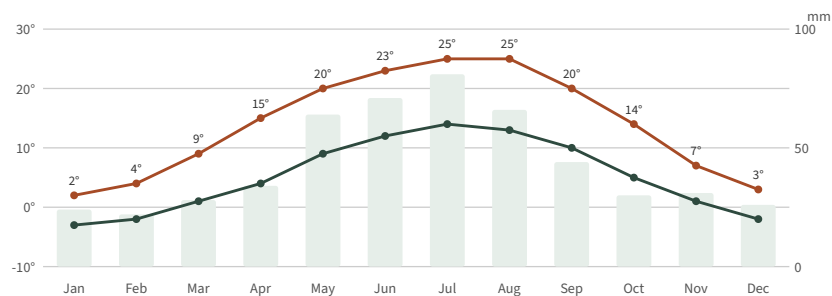
When to go to Czech Republic

Best time: **Apr–May, Sep–Oct.**



Average climate in Prague

— High °C — Low °C Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

May–Jun	Prague Spring International Music Festival Founded in 1946, this classical festival opens every 12 May with Smetana's Má vlast and fills Prague's concert halls, including the Rudolfinum and the Municipal House, for about three weeks.
Jul	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival One of central Europe's oldest film festivals takes over the spa town in early July, with public screenings, affordable festival passes and a relaxed, backpack-carrying crowd.
Nov–Dec	Christmas markets From late November, Prague's Old Town and Wenceslas squares fill with stalls of svařák (mulled wine) and sausages, and just before Christmas street vendors sell live carp for Christmas Eve dinner.

How much does Czech Republic cost?

SHOESTRING £45 per person / day ≈ CZK 1,302 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £100 per person / day ≈ CZK 2,894 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £220 per person / day ≈ CZK 6,366 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Svíčková na smetaně Marinated beef sirloin in a creamy root-vegetable sauce, served with bread dumplings, cranberries and whipped cream; classic Sunday-lunch comfort food.	Vepřo knedlo zelo Roast pork with bread dumplings and braised sauerkraut, the definitive pub plate, best with a half-litre of unpasteurised tank beer.	Smažený sýr A thick slab of breaded, deep-fried Edam or hermelín served with tartare sauce and chips; cheap, filling and on almost every pub menu.
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Getting around

Trains are cheap and frequent: České dráhy, RegioJet and Leo Express run fast services linking Prague with Pardubice, Olomouc, Ostrava and Brno, and regional lines reach most towns. RegioJet coaches cover routes such as Prague to Český Krumlov. Prague's metro, trams and buses share one ticket system. Car hire suits the countryside, but motorways need an electronic vignette. Bolt and Uber work in Prague.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  C E 230V — bring a UK-to-C/E adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +420	TIME ZONE UTC+1 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Round up or add about 10% in restaurants. Tell the server the total you want to pay when settling up, rather than leaving cash on the table.

ETIQUETTE

Say 'dobrý den' when entering shops and small lifts, take your shoes off in homes, and keep your voice down on public transport. When toasting with 'na zdraví', look each person in the eye.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Václav Havel Airport Prague (PRG), Prague; Brno-Tuřany Airport (BRQ), Brno; Leoš Janáček Airport Ostrava (OSR), Ostrava

Visas & entry for Czech Republic

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Czechia, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Czechia are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Rabies

Tick-borne encephalitis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Czech Republic

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Wed 28 Oct 2026

Independent Czechoslovak State Day

Tue 17 Nov 2026	Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day and International Students' Day
Thu 24 Dec 2026	Christmas Eve
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Second Day of Christmas
Fri 1 Jan 2027	Independent Czech State Restoration Day · New Year's Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Sat 8 May 2027	Victory Day
Mon 5 Jul 2027	Saints Cyril and Methodius Day
Tue 6 Jul 2027	Jan Hus Day
Tue 28 Sep 2027	Statehood Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Czech

ENGLISH	CZECH	SAY IT
Hello	Dobrý den	<i>DOH-bree den</i>
Thank you	Děkuji	<i>DYEH-koo-yi</i>
Please	Prosím	<i>PRO-seem</i>
Excuse me	Promiňte	<i>PRO-min-teh</i>
How much is this?	Kolik to stojí?	<i>KO-lik toh STOY-yee</i>

Know before you go

Avoid the exchange booths around Old Town Square, which hide fees in poor rates. Use a bank's ATM, pay in koruna, and decline any offer to convert the charge into pounds.

Buy Prague public transport tickets, or use the PID Lítačka app, before boarding and validate paper tickets; plain-clothes inspectors fine passengers without one on the spot.

Book Prague accommodation early for December and summer weekends, and visit Charles Bridge and the castle before 9am to see them without the tour groups.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.