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TIME DISTANCE BY AIRPLANE TO PRAGUE:

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Athína	2,5 h.	Budapest	1 h.	London	2 h.	Roma	1,5 h.
Barcelona	2,5 h.	Dublin	2,5 h.	Madrid	2,5 h.	Stockholm	2 h.
Beograd	1,5 h.	Frankfurt	1 h.	Milano	1,5 h.	St. Peterburg	2,5 h.
Berlin	1 h.	Helsinki	2,5 h.	Moskva	2,5 h.	Warszawa	1,5 h.
Bratislava	1 h.	Istanbul	2,5 h.	München	1 h.	Wien	1 h.
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www.czech-airlines.com	Czech Airlines
www.idos.cz	Information about bus and railway timetables
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WELCOME TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC





 \mathbf{W} elcome to a place that can justifiably be expanses of fish ponds into the countryside. referred to as a melting pot of European civilizations. Although devoid of the benefits of a relatively easy task - the highest of them, the proximity to the sea, the Czech Republic, Sněžka, reaches just to a height of 1,602 metres located in the heart of Central Europe, prides above sea level - and you will be rewarded by itself on magnificent scenery and an immense breathtaking views as you will be able to see cultural heritage, an asset that fully offsets this a large part of the country as though from apparent drawback. The concentration of so a bird's eye view. The place with the lowest many tourist destinations in such a small area altitude can be found in Hřensko, on a site is unique even in the European context. The country is enclosed by a belt of extensive Republic and enters Germany. mountain ranges and the majority of its A host of rivers, including the Labe, the frontiers run along this natural boundary. "national" River Vltava (Moldau), which forms the axis of Bohemia, the Morava, the axis of Although in terms of size (less than 79 thousand square kilometres) and number of Moravia, and many others, are suitable for boat inhabitants (10.2 million), the Czech Republic cruises and water tourism. The Czech Republic ranks among the medium-size to small takes good care of its visitors - there is a wide European countries (it is somewhat smaller range of accommodation facilities, restaurants than Austria and somewhat larger than and a well-functioning transportation network. Belgium and its population practically equals A wealth of historical towns, castles and that of Hungary), its territory is a diverse chateaux are prepared to open their gates wide mosaic of regions. That is why it is worth to visitors; alternately, those tired of the hustle taking the effort to travel to individual regions and bustle of civilization can relax amidst in order to get to know their distinctive beautiful scenery. The Czech Republic has one more asset - highfeatures. Moreover, it will not take much time quality services to satisfy even the most sophisas you can travel from one end of the Czech ticated travellers. Available at favourable prices, Republic to the other in a few hours. Many foreigners have chosen this country as they enable foreign visitors to stay in our country as well as make trips beyond its their temporary or even permanent homes, borders. which bears witness to the fact that the Czech Republic is a pleasant country to live in. In the So welcome to the Czech Republic! 1990s, Prague was even compared to the Paris of the 1930s. Not only the forces of nature 1) Landscape in the area surrounding Dubá in the Česká Lípa area have shaped and moulded the picturesque 2) Prague 3) Pernštejn 4) Hluboká nad Vltavou Czech landscape; human beings have also set, 5) Klokoty 6) Luhačoviće Spa 7) Active holiday like little beads, numerous historical towns, thousands of small villages and the glistening



To climb the summits of Czech mountains is where the River Labe (Elbe) leaves the Czech

HISTORY **AT EVERY STEP**

The Czech Republic boasts a vast cultural and historical heritage in the form of castles, chateaux, monasteries and fortified towns, as well as small relics of ecclesiastical architecture. Set romantically in the countryside, they all are mute witnesses from bygone times. Numerous wonders of technology, world-renowned Czech goods and the fame of great figures of the history of art, sport and many other branches of human activity, they all bear witness to the talent and skill of previous generations of the inhabitants of the Czech Republic. Celtic tribes left some of the earliest traces - though almost invisible today - in this country in the form of so-called oppida (large permanent settlements). The first state entity, the Great Moravian Empire, bequeathed us far more distinctive relics - the remains of once powerful fortified settlements. Wellpreserved Romanesque monuments, Gothic churches and monasteries, as well as the historical centres of towns acquaint us with the reign of the monarchs from the Přemyslid and Luxemburg dynasties.

The activities of the most significant monarch from the Luxemburg dynasty, Charles IV, King of Bohemia and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, have left an indelible mark on the face of the Czech Lands. Apart from other glorious deeds, in 1348 Charles founded the Prague University (now named Charles University), the oldest establishment of its kind to be set up to the north-east of the Alps. A number of monuments recall the Hussite Wars, a failed attempt to reform the Catholic Church at the beginning of the 15th century, one hundred years prior to similar attempts in Western Europe, as well as the cultural and spiritual heritage of that time. The historical town of Tábor in Southern Bohemia owes its foundation to the Hussite movement. There is a wealth of Renaissance historical monuments, all bearing witness to the importance of business contacts and the affluence of medieval towns. The influence of the Italian Renaissance is apparent in particular in Prague, whereas the Czech Renaissance style has contributed numerous chateaux and even entire town centres such as those of Telč, Slavonice and Nové Město nad Metují. Touring spectacular Renaissance houses featuring rich sgraffito decoration is one of the unforgettable experiences available in the Czech Republic. The fortunes of the Czech Lands were for a long time interwoven with those of the Habsburg Monarchy. Leaving aside the hardships of the Thirty Years' War and the disputes between the Czechs and their new rulers, this period also witnessed the heyday of Baroque architecture. Scattered all over

the country, the rotund domes of chateaux and ecclesiastical structures testify to the fact that such eminent figures of Baroque art as the Dienzenhofers and G. Santini were commissioned to create their masterpieces here. In addition to Baroque churches and chateaux, surrounded by vast parks and game preserves, the rural countryside, trimmed and landscaped, has acquired new dominant features in the form of alleys and splendid tree-lined avenues. It was also at that time that a unique system of fishponds and lakes was completed in Southern Bohemia. The clash between rationality and romanticism in modern history was reflected in the emergence of



numerous neoclassical and Empire-style historical monuments and landscaped parks, including the Lednice-Valtice natural complex (added to the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage). New towns, town quarters and fortresses were built at that time. The Art Nouveau style, Modernism (e.g. Cubism) and later also Functionalism and social realism have gradually appeared in the Czech Lands.

In 1918 the independent Czechoslovak Republic came into being, a free country and a focal point of Czech, German and Jewish culture. The young Czech Republic, born only a decade ago, is trying to carry on the glorious traditions of that state.





THE GOLDEN CITY OF PRAGUE









"The Mother of Towns", "The Golden City" or "The City of a Hundred Spires", these are just a few of the many attributes that the Czech metropolis nestling above the River Vltava has earned for itself. It is small wonder that Prague is the main destination of

its architectural monuments of all styles, the traditional hospitality of its people and the excellent beer served by Czech pubs, as well as the remarkable mix of Czech, German and Jewish culture all provide Prague with a unique atmosphere thanks to which

the city is considered one of the most beautiful, and not just in Europe. The city's historical centre was rightfully added in 1993 to the UNESCO List of

Castle back in the 9th century by the Přemyslid ruling dynasty triggered the development of the town, located in the fertile basin of the River Vltava, which has been inhabited ever since the Stone Age.

In the 14th century, under the reign of the most famous Czech monarch, Emperor Charles IV, Prague acquired its most beautiful architectural monuments, whereas under eccentric Rudolf II of the Habsburg dynasty, the Mannerist era enveloped the city with a mysterious veil of astrology, and the arts cultivated at the imperial court added many a jewel to its

For lovers of historical monuments, Prague is literally a paradise. The grand Baroque palaces of the Hradčany quarter join forces to form a monumental gateway to Prague Castle, with its magnificent Gothic cathedral consecrated to St Vitus. The Lesser Quarter boasts a profusion of intimate corners and pleasant restaurants; fine burghers' houses blend with splendid aristocratic palaces and charming gardens here. The Old Town of Prague offers its visitors a network of twisting medieval lanes and the Old Town Square, graced with an ancient town hall

cultural heritage. and a renowned astronomical clock. When exploring the remains of the former Jewish town, its synagogues, the Old Jewish Cemetery or the massive collection of the Jewish Museum (one of the most valuable to be found in Europe), you are certain to experience a mysterious spiritual atmosphere. The Charles Bridge, the most beautiful promenade site in Prague, is alive with street artists and musicians.

visitors arriving in the Czech Republic; the appeal of World Cultural Heritage. The foundation of Prague



The New Town (and the Wenceslas Square in particular) is the city's business centre and the focal point of its nightlife. Here you can find the largest number of discotheques, jazz clubs and cinemas. The most important musical event in the city is the Prague Spring International Music Festival, held in May. Apart from it, there is the Prague Jazz Festival and the Dance Prague festival of modern dance, which takes place in June. Abounding in theatres, art galleries and museums, Prague offers a lively cultural scene indeed

Visitors to the town also praise its high-quality municipal transportation system with a dense network of metro stations. All these assets make Prague not only an attractive tourist destination, but also a place suitable for business activities.

1) Panorama of Prague Castle as seen from Charles Bridge 2) Municipal House dating from the high Art Nouveau period 3) View of the town centre as seen from the castle terraces 4) Modern architecture of the Dancing House at the Vltava embankment 5) Old-New Synagogue in the former Jewish Quarter of Prague



THE APPEAL OF CASTLES AND CHATEAUX

The Czech Republic boasts a wonderful cultural heritage in the form of numerous castles and chateaux. Located near Prague, the most famous among them, Karlštejn, was built by Emperor Charles IV as a treasury for the imperial crown jewels and a place for pious meditation. However, it is Zvíkov Castle in Southern Bohemia that is referred to as the jewel in the crown of Czech castles. Other notable structures include the royal castle of Křivoklát, hidden amidst vast forests, and huge Kost Castle, surrounded by the "rock towns" of a scenic area called Český Ráj (Bohemian Paradise). Loket, one of the oldest Czech castles, is situated not far away from the spa town of Karlovy Vary. The Gothic-Renaissance Pernštejn Castle in Moravia, once the seat of a powerful aristocratic family of the same name, is one of the most magnificent structures of its kind.

The Litomyšl Chateau, added to the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage, is a treasure of Renaissance architecture. The Renaissance style has also left its mark on the appearance of Český Krumlov Castle, the former residence of the powerful Lords of Rožmberk and a UNESCO monument. Then there is Jindřichův Hradec Castle and Chateau and the Velké Losiny Chateau, known for ill-famed witch trials, which took place there back in the 17th century. Some of the castles have undergone extensive alterations in a variety of emerging styles, for example, Bouzov in Central Moravia. The one-time seat of the Order of German Knights, the structure was rebuilt in the neo-Gothic style. However, it was the Baroque period that has added







the majority of chateaux to the Czech landscape - the massive Opočno Chateau in Eastern Bohemia, which boasts an arcaded courtyard and a fine collection of paintings, and the Baroque Hospital in Kuks, graced with a magnificent Baroque gallery of the allegories of Virtues and Vices fashioned by the brilliant sculptor M. B. Braun. Located on a small island, the lovely chateau of Červená Lhota in Southern Bohemia is reflected on the surface of a fishpond. Southern Moravia and Central Moravia in particular are rich in Baroque chateau architecture. The Vranov nad Dyjí Chateau, perched high on a rock, was





rebuilt from a castle. The appeal of the Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou Chateau is enhanced by monumental St Margaret's Church standing adjacent to it. The former Archbishop's Chateau in Kroměříž, with its unique gardens, is listed among UNESCO monuments. Looking like they belong in a fairytale, the Romantic chateaux of the latter half of the 19th century rank undoubtedly among the most popular in the Czech Republic. The most prominent representatives of these are the Hluboká nad Vltavou Chateau near České Budějovice in Southern Bohemia, a free replica of Windsor Castle in England, and the Lednice Chateau in Southern Moravia. Located on the border with Slovakia and Austria, the latter chateau boasts an extensive natural park (a rare example of landscaping), dotted with numerous lakes and small decorative structures (a UNESCO monument).

Czech castles and chateaux not only provide a magnificent historical setting; they are still bustling with activity as they provide impressive venues for historical shows, festivals and exhibitions. Moreover, they offer accommodation, tasting sessions for traditional Czech dishes and an opportunity to spend a whole day, or even a holiday, in their fascinating milieu.

 Karlštejn, the most famous Czech castle
Magnificent interiors of Bítov Castle in Moravia
Romantic Červená Lhota Chateau nestling just above the surface of a South Bohemian fishpond
Participant in a historical celebration at Točník Castle



ECCLESIASTICAL MONUMENTS AND PILGRIMAGE SITES

A thousand years of Christianity have also left a distinct mark on the architectural heritage of the Czech Republic. Catholic churches and monasteries account for the absolute majority of ecclesiastical monuments here, but you will also find interesting monuments of other Christian Churches as well as relics of Jewish sacral architecture here. Traditional celebrations, combined with religious services, fairs and folk dances, are held at numerous sacred sites throughout the country. Many of these celebrations were re-introduced after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The monasteries have got a new lease of life and some of them even provide accommodation for visitors in spaces imbued with rare local colour. Hundreds of pilgrimage sites can be found throughout the Czech Republic, as many as 300 of them dedicated to the Marian cult. Perhaps the most important pilgrimage site in Bohemia is Svatá Hora (Holy Mountain), located above the town of Příbram. The Baroque church in Dobrá Voda in Southern Bohemia was built near a miraculous spring. In the north of the Czech Republic, you can explore a massive Baroque church in Jablonné v Podještědí, with the tomb of St Zdislava, and an impressive high Baroque Marian church in Hejnice. Remarkable pilgrimage churches can be found, for example, in Dub and Křtiny near Brno in Moravia. The Romanesque cum Gothic basilica and the adjacent Jewish town in Třebíč were designated a UNESCO monument. Moravia's chief pilgrimage sites





are the Hostýn Peak with the Chapel of the Assumption, Svatý Kopeček (Holy Hill) near Olomouc and Velehrad, a place associated with the Byzantine missionaries St Cyril and St Methodius and the arrival of Christianity in the Czech Lands. Founded as early as 993, the Břevnov Monastery in Prague recalls the tradition of St Adalbert. A large

Premonstratensian monastery can be found in Teplá near Mariánské Lázně. The nearby Kladruby Monastery, with a monastic church built in the unique Baroque-Gothic style by the architect G. Santini, is a rare example of ecclesiastical architecture. Another masterpiece of this brilliant architect, the













star-shaped St John Nepomuk's Chapel at Zelená hora near Žďár nad Sázavou, has been added to the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage. The monasteries in Předklášteří near Tišnov and Osek near Duchcov are both striking examples of the Cistercian-Burgundy early Gothic style. A visit to the Vyšší Brod and Zlatá Koruna monasteries in Southern Bohemia may provide another opportunity to admire the marvels of Gothic architecture.

1) Interior of a Baroque monastic church in Broumov 2) Remarkably well-preserved Jewish Cemetery in Prague - Josefov 3) Small-scale ecclesiastical architecture set in Baroque-style scenery (the surroundings of Vratětín in Southern Moravia) 4) Originally monastic Romanesque church in Milevsko 5) The Tismická Madonna in Poděbrady 6) Baroque Golgotha near a cemetery church in Moravská Třebová

SPAS - PLACES FOR RELAXATION AND RECUPERATION

 \mathbf{W} ith its rich natural resources of mineral and thermal water and peat, exploited for medical purposes by 35 spas, the Czech Republic can rightly be ranked among the spa superpowers. In addition to outstanding results in the treatment of numerous diseases, ranging from disorders of the locomotive and nervous systems to diseases of the skin, the stateof-the-art spa facilities offer plentiful opportunities for active forms of relaxation and recuperation, as well as for cultural experiences. Wellness programmes in particular are becoming increasingly popular with visitors as they offer relaxation during spa procedures and the joy of movement and rest. With its twelve thermal springs of mineral water Karlovy Vary is the largest and most famous of the Czech spa resorts. The spa has built its fame ever since the 14th century, when it was founded by Emperor Charles IV. The spa resort, nestling in the picturesque valley of the River Teplá, has played host to a number of monarchs, politicians and prominent artists, including Goethe, Mozart and Tsar Peter the Great. Every June, the celebrities of today arrive in Karlovy Vary to attend the International Film Festival, the most important event of its kind in Central Europe. Apart from remarkable successes in curing diseases of the digestive organs, Karlovy Vary offers its guests active relaxation at tennis courts or a golf course, as well as strolls in charming scenery enveloping the town centre. Apart from Karlovy Vary, the elegant spa of Mariánské Lázně and the neoclassical spa of Františkovy Lázně form the famed triangle of West Bohemian spas. At the foot of the Krušné (Ore) Mountains lies Jáchymov, the first radon spa to be established in the world, where the research scientist Marie Curie Sklodowska made









HEALTHY AND ACTIVE HOLIDAYS

The Czech Republic is a country that seems as though it was made for those seeking relaxation or excitement. Visitors can not only expand their cultural horizons and knowledge of history here; they can, so to speak, "warm up" while pursuing their sports or hiking objectives. Nature lovers can find a plethora of well-marked hiking and cyclo-tourist trails here, especially in the Šumava (Bohemian Forest), the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, the Polabí Region and Southern Moravia. There are many watercourses suitable for boat or raft trips. The vast expanses of fishponds and reservoirs, including Lipno, Orlík and Nové Mlýny, are ideal for yachting, surfing and fishing, or just for idling away one's time on their banks.

If you wish to leave the hustle and bustle of urban life and explore the lovely Czech landscape from above, you can avail yourselves of the services, including observation flights, of the numerous sports airports scattered throughout the country. Dozens of sports facilities, located in practically every large town, and tennis courts and playing fields, built even in the smallest of hamlets, offer ample opportunities not only for advanced athletes, but also for casual sportsmen.

Golf enthusiasts will certainly appreciate the more than dozen golf courses, all situated in magnificent natural settings. The most renowned among them can be found in the spa resorts of Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně. Rural farms offer horse riding trips, sandstone, limestone and granite rocks (Bohemian Paradise, the Kokořín area and a range of others) provide people with an opportunity to test their skills while tackling a variety of climbing routes. In winter, modern mountain centres and skiing grounds, particularly those in the Krkonoše









Mountains, are open for winter sports enthusiasts. A country of ice hockey players, the Czech Republic offers modern winter stadiums as well as fishponds turned into skating rinks for visitors. Boasting a vibrant cultural scene, the country offers so many theatres (including open-air ones such as in Český Krumlov), music festivals and productions (The Prague Spring), film festivals (Karlovy Vary, Uherské Hradiště), theatrical festivals and cinemas that practically everyone can make their choice. Those eager to explore local or regional traditions should visit one of the many folklore festivals that are staged in this country throughout the year. These events provide an opportunity to learn about traditional songs and dances, as well as the secrets and specific features of local cuisine. Alternatively, visitors can take trips acquainting them with excellent Czech beer, delicious Moravian and Czech wines and traditional brandies and liqueurs (Becherovka produced in Karlovy Vary, plum brandy from the Wallachian Region and rowanberry brandy produced in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands).







 Krkonoše (Giant Mountains), the highest mountains in the Czech Republic, is a tourist destination in both the winter and summer
Biking is one of the best ways to get to know the Czech Republic

3) Prachovské skály (rocks) provide many opportunities for sports activities 4) Landscape in the foothills of the Šumava is suitable for romantic strolls

5) Many watercourses and expanses of water offer opportunities for angling

6) The country is interwoven with a dense network of marked hiking trails

7) Lake Lipno, the largest reservoir in the Czech Republic, is a paradise for yachting enthusiasts

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> 1) Jindřichův Hradec 2) Czech landscape 3) Pustevny in Moravskoslezské Beskydy 4) Wine cellars near Petrov in the south of Moravia 5) Prague Castle as seen from the Vrtbovská Garden 6) Krkonoše (Giant Mountains) in winter



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PRAGUE, one of the most beautiful destinations









This symbol denotes official tourist information centres

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