10. Notable days in the Czech Republic

1st of January; New Year

This day celebrates the start of the New Year. It usually starts late, as people have been out celebrating late the night before. Many people prepare a big meal including pork for good luck and lentils for prosperity. Stay away from fish or poultry today. Those meals may force you luck to swim or fly away!

Easter Sunday and Monday

Christian holiday celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus. The date is different every year, as it falls on the first Sunday after the spring full moon, so the **first full moon after March 21**. The symbols of Easter are much the same as the symbols for spring, lamb and eggs, representing new life.

1st of May; Labour Day; Workers Day

This day commemorate the efforts of labour unions to improve working conditions for all people. On May 1, 1886, labour unions organized a strike in Chicago to protest against miserable working conditions. At the time, most workers worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. The strikers wanted an eight hours work day. The police attacked the strikers for no reason, killing two and wounding several others. This led to protests in many other places. Today, Labour Day is meant to honour all workers, by giving them a day off.

8th of May; Liberation Day

This day celebrates the end of World War II on May 8, 1945. On this day, the Germans agreed to an unconditional surrender and the country was liberated from Nazi occupation. It's a good time to remember the people who fought and died for our freedom.

5th of July; Cyril & Methodius Day

In 863 St. Cyril and St. Methodius brought Christianity to the Slavic people of central Europe. They also wrote down the standard Slavic language at the time, which was the forerunner of Czech, Slovak, Polish and Russian languages.

6th of July; Jan Hus Day

This day commemorates Jan Hus, a Catholic priest and the rector of Charles university. He was burned at the stake as heretic because of his efforts to stop corruption in the Catholic Church. Because of his beliefs, he became the conscience of the Czech people.

28th of September; St. Wenceslas Day

This day commemorate the anniversary of the death of Prince Wenceslas, son of Vratislav I, Duke of Bohemia. About 935 AD, the Prince was murdered by his brother. He soon became St. Wenceslas, patron saint of the Czech Nation, His fame has spread outside the country, due to his starring role in a popular Christmas carol, Good King Wenceslas.

28th of October; Czechoslovak Independence Day

In 1918 the independent Czechoslovak Republic was founded. After World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated and an independent country was established. Czechoslovakia's first president became Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk.

17th of November; Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day

This day honours the student demonstrations against the Nazis in 1939, as well as the protests against the Communists in 1989. In 1939 huge demonstration took place here against Nazi occupations. The Nazis suppressed the protest, and medical student, Jan Opletal, was shot and killed. On the day of his funeral, hundreds of people, mostly students demonstrated again, and the Germans violently suppressed the protests. The tensions culminated on November 17 when the Gestapo and SS units attacked student hostels arresting more than 1200 students and taking them to concentration camps. Adolf Hitler ordered the closing of colleges.

Fifty years later many students protested again and it's marked as the beginning of the "Velvet Revolution."