

48 HOURS IN PRAGUE

Ediciones Cuello Blanco

48 Hours in Prague

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PRAGUE, THE GOLDEN CITY

Prague is an open-air museum, an endless catalogue of nooks and historical monuments. Five million tourists a year do justice to a city whose urban life is more than a thousand years old. Charming, mysterious, magical, surreal, evidently Kafkaesque, monumental, beautiful. There is something special in its air that attracted Mozart, Beethoven, Dostoevsky, Rodin, and Albert Einstein in their time.

Welcome to the *48 Hours in Prague* guide, the best way to get to know the city of the thousand towers, the gem of Central Europe, the former capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia, the eternal Prague.



SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

Day 1. Thousand-year-old Prague

The first day we will know the secrets of the Old City, visit the heart of the Jewish Quarter and the Frankz Kafka Museum.

08.00 There is no better way to begin our itinerary in Prague than the Charles Bridge, the oldest in the city and one of the most beautiful in the world. To enjoy it without crowds, it is best to go early. Built by the great artist behind the city's renaissance during the 14th century, King Charles IV, this bridge connected the two main urban nuclei of the city in its time, the Staré Mesto (Old Town) and the Malá Strana neighborhood.

The solid stone, the baroque-style statues that give shape to it (replicas as the originals are under the custody of the National Museum), as well as the amazing views that it offers towards the Prague Castle and the Tyn Cathedral give this space a unique and magical appearance. Crossing the Vltava River beneath the two towers that come out onto the old town is an experience worth repeating as many times as possible.



The 30 statues located alongside the bridge give it a unique beauty. The first of them was placed in 1863 in honor of Juan Nepomuceno, a stone figure inspired by the Benini statue of the Sant'Angelo Bridge in Rome. Other important statues are the Crucifixion and Saints Norbert, Wenceslas, and Sigismund, son and grandson of Charles IV.

09.00 We cross the 1,700 ft (520 m) of the bridge and go up towards the Prague Castle, but not without first stopping at Malostranské Square and admiring the inside of the Saint Nicholas Cathedral. If you wish, you could have a cup of coffee there in one of the restaurants that surround the square or walk to Café de Paris (Maltezské namesti 4). A recommendation: there are a lot of money exchange centers where you can buy Czech crowns at a very affordable price.

Built during the 9th century, the Castle is 1,870 ft (570 m) long and 427 ft (130 m) tall. Considered the greatest medieval fortress in the world, it has borne witness to stories and legends that form part of the city's hidden history. During Rudolf II of Habsburg's reign (16th century), there are records that dissidents and rebels were tortured in

the dungeons. In fact, one of the towers bears the name of Dalibor, a knight who was sentenced to death for getting on well with slaves.

The central part of the Castle is crowned by Saint Vito's Church (13th century), the oldest gothic cathedral in Central Europe. This space was the setting for all of the Kingdom of Bohemia's monarchs' coronations in the Middle Ages and holds the remains of bishops, archbishops, and several kings. Next to it is the Museum of the Treasures of the Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, Saint George's Church, and the Castle Gallery. Likewise, the residence of the president of the Czech Republic is currently within the complex. On the east side of the Castle is the Toy Museum and [Lobkowitz Palace](#) located inside a 17th-century building, which houses this important Czech family's works of art. Their collection is one of Europe's richest. Their treasures include works by Canaletto, Brueghel, Elder, and Velázquez. Fine porcelain pieces, ceramics, decorative objects from the 16th to the 20th century, musical instruments, original scores written by Mozart and Beethoven, including the Fourth and Fifth Symphony.



11.00 Let us walk towards Malostranská Square and enjoy the marvelous views of the city from the Castle's old stairs. Another great spot to enjoy Prague from the heights is on the hill of Petrin Park, located just in front of where we are. If we walk downhill, in a few minutes, we will find ourselves in the Golden Lane and Alchemist's Lane, a street where Franz Kafka lived for several years. Alchemists from all over Europe who searched for the formula to create gold used to come together in this narrow street. Close by are the gardens of Wallenstein Palace, home of the Czech Senate. Take a short break and head towards the museum of the author of *The Trial* which is on the street Cihelná.

13.00 The [Franz Kafka Museum](#) exhibits original letters of the author to his father written days before his death, manuscripts, first editions of his books, and drawings of the author. The exhibition space is structured around the most significant moments of the artist's life and his great passions: literature, women, his family history, and his facet as illustrious lawyer member of the city's noble class.

Prague is to Kafka as Paris is to Victor Hugo or London to Shakespeare. In the case of this Czech writer, the bond that tied him to the city was based on a complex love-hate relationship. If you would like to follow Kafka's trail around the city, there is a [special tour](#) that lasts an hour and a half and takes you to the most important points of Kafka's life in the city, for example, the house where he was born, located on the street Náměstí Franze Kafky number 3, Kinsky Palace, where he studied junior high, or the Prague Zizhov cemetery, where his remains rest. At the outset of the 20th century, Prague was a meeting place for intellectuals of Jewish origin. One of the main meeting places was the home of Mrs. Berta Fanta, where intellectuals, philosophers, and scientists like Albert Einstein, not to mention Kafka and his writer friend Max Brod, used to come together and chat in unending gatherings.

It is time for lunch. There are many restaurants and coffee shops in the Malá Strana neighborhood, among which the restaurant Gitanes (Trziste 7) and Kampa Park (Na Kampe 8b) on Kampa Island stand out, but we believe that the best options are on the other side of the bridge. Within the old town is [La Bodeguita del Medio \(Kaprova 5\)](#), a

franchise of the famous Cuban restaurant. There is nothing more Kafkaesque than eating a delicious plate of rice with black beans and drinking a mojito in the heart of Prague. In the area surrounding the Old Square is the restaurant Mlejnice (Kozna 14), where they serve delicious goulash, potatoes, and pork prepared Czech-style. After lunch, we can have coffee and dessert at Café Kafka (Siroka 12) or Café Louvre (Národní 20), where Kafka used to go to discuss philosophy. It is curious that the writer, who, according to his biographies, did not drink coffee because he thought it was a substance that killed the human body, was a regular at the coffee shops and that one is even named after him.

16.00 Let us walk towards the Old Square where the Tyn Church is, one of Prague's most representative symbols. Built in the 14th century with its characteristic twin towers, inside it holds a 15th-century pewter baptismal font, in addition to the largest baroque altar in the world (17th century), and astronomer Tycho Brahe's tomb, who became famous during Rudolf II's reign and was known as the alchemist because of his liking of the hidden arts.

In front of the church is City Hall where Europe's oldest astronomical clock is found. Tourists line up here every hour to watch an unusual show. Alongside the clock, a figure of death strikes the time while the apostles parade by. Notice how one of the main rings points to the zodiac house where the sun and moon are.



Now focus on the ground you are stepping on. There you will discover a group of 27 white crosses that mark the place where 27 noblemen were killed for being against Fernando II's reign, after the defeat of the Czechs on White Mountain in 1621. Days after, their heads were displayed on Charles Bridge to intimidate the enemies.

18.00 On the north side of Old Town is Prague's Jewish quarter, also known as Josefov, home of one of Europe's oldest synagogues: the Old-New Synagogue, founded in the 13th century, one of the city's first gothic buildings. The [Jewish Museum](#), which holds more than 40 thousand pieces and 100 thousand books, deserves special attention. The visit includes tickets to the Old-New Synagogue, the Maisel Synagogue, the Spanish Synagogue, the Klaus Synagogue, the Pinkas Synagogue (which has the names of 77,297 Jewish victims from Bohemia and Moravia who were murdered by Nazis inscribed on the walls), and the Old Jewish Cemetery.

In this part of the city we can also find the Rudolfinum, the city's most important concert hall, located inside a neo-renaissance building from the 19th century, the Saint Nicholas Church, and the Saint Agnes

Convent. On one of the streets that connects this part of the city with the Vltava River is Parížská (Paris) avenue, which recreates Paris's glamour and modern spirit. This street, built at the outset of the 20th century, ends on Cechuv most (Cech Bridge), a Parisian-style bridge that connects with Letná Hill, which we will visit later on. If you are in this area, we recommend going to [Bistro Bohemia \(Bílková, 6\)](#) to have a drink.

Let us walk south of Old Town where the Czech artist [Alfons Mucha's museum](#) is which holds more than 100 works and objects of one of the most important Art Nouveau artists.

20.00 Prague's downtown has lots of options for dinner or a night on the town. For the younger tourists, we recommend ordering a Pilsen at the [Pub Crawl \(Dlouhá 24\)](#), or having a drink at the restaurant [James Dean \(Kolkovne 1\)](#), where they have live music and decorations set in the fifties. If you are a fan of comics, visit [Cafe Batalion \(Rjna 28\)](#) to admire its extensive gallery of comic strips while you drink a Czech beer. If you have your party shoes on, the best place to go is club Chapeau Rouge (Jakubská 2). On the other side of the river the bars Klub Újezd (Újezd 18) and Blue Light (Josefká 1) stand out. On the contrary, if you prefer a quiet evening, the coffee shop [Au Gourmand \(Dlouhá 10\)](#) and [Cafe Rybka \(Opatovická 7\)](#) are probably your best choice.

Day 2. Nové Město and Zizkov

We will visit Prague's New Town. We will see one of Europe's most remarkable buildings, take a stroll down the elegant Wenceslas Square, and visit the bohemian neighborhood of Zizkov.

10.00 The New Town, Nové Město in Czech, is located south of Prague, in the city's second district. Its neoclassical buildings offer an interesting counterpoint to the older part of the city. One of the main attractions of this neighborhood is the Dancing House designed by Frank Gehry's (author of the Bilbao Guggenheim) architect firm and Vlado Milunic in 1997. The building is also known as Ginger and Fred, as its forms resemble a couple dancing.



Towards the north, on the border with Old Town, there is a small group of blocks and narrow streets with several bars and coffee shops. There are some worth visiting: [Cafe Jericho \(Opatovická 26\)](#), with free wireless internet access, an ideal place to let time pass and watch Prague's modern population on their computers; Café Lounge (Plaská 8), with a more relaxed atmosphere, and Mama Coffee (Vodickova 6). If you prefer, you can return in the evening to have a drink at Absinthe Time (Kremenkova 5), at the brewery U Fleku (Kremenkova 11), or the bar Duende (Karoliny Svetlé 30).

13.00 From here we can walk to Wenceslas Square, where the [National Museum](#) used to be, which closed due to major renovations until 2016. The museum's new premises are located in front of this building. If you are too tired to walk, take the metro on Karlovo Namesty –yellow line– and change trains on Mustek until you reach Muzeum station. Founded in 1818 as the Patriotic Museum of Bohemia, this neo-renaissance palace was built by Josef Schulz, who also designed Prague's National Theater. The square was the setting of the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution which brought about

the fall of the communist regime.



At the feet of the Saint Wenceslas statue, patron saint of Bohemia, starts Vaclavske Mamestí street, a sort of Czech-style Champs Elysées, a wide avenue inspired by French boulevards of a clear commercial and touristic profile. Alongside the avenue, numerous clothing stores, boutiques, coffee shops, book stores, shopping malls, and traditional Czech cuisine restaurants offer their products to tourists and the local population. The famous book store Palac Knih is also located on this street. Next to it is the restaurant Svatého Václava (Vaclavske Namestí 39), where they serve traditional food from the region, the ideal place to recharge batteries and watch people go by.

15.00 Now we head north of Prague, towards the neighborhoods of Letná, Bubenec, and Holesovice, located around Letenske Sady Park, over the river across Stefanikuv Bridge. In this part of the city there are very recommendable cake shops that live up to the reputation Czechs have of good confectioners. A few steps from the Vltavska metro station is [Kavarna Kumbal \(Hermanova 12\)](#), where they serve delicious Kolac, a type of Czech cake made with fresh fruit.

Five streets away is another cute and delicious café, the [Erhartova Cukrárna \(Milady Horákové 56\)](#), a business with a history more than 70 years old. Here, in addition to its coffee shop and extensive variety of pastries, desserts, and pies, they make cakes on-demand for special occasions like weddings and birthdays.

At the foot of Stromovka Park is Prague's old Sparta stadium, which, even though it does not have a museum, it has an official store where they keep documents and several trophies won throughout its history. Two streets away from the stadium is another fantastic cake shop, the [Stylová Cukrárna Alchymista \(Jana Zajíce 7\)](#), a café with an interior design inspired by the period of the First Republic (1918 – 1939), a cozy space. The café has a garden, a main lounge, and does not allow smoking inside.



18.00 We are about to finish our visit to Prague, but we cannot say goodbye before seeing the Zizkov neighborhood. Located in the third district, the best way to get there is by taking the metro again at Vltavska station on line C and transferring at Muzeum station to line A until J.z Pobebrad.

Then we walk to Fibichova street, where the city's tallest building is, the Television Tower. Built during the last years of the communist period, between 1985 and 1992, the tower is 709 ft (216 m) tall and is one of the city's icons. Kafkaesque, surreal, the towers have enormous sculptures of babies that weigh 1,764 pounds (800 kilograms), designed by the artist Sejda, and seem to crawl up the structure.

Located on a hill east of the city, Zizhov is undoubtedly Prague's most bohemian and interesting neighborhood. Away from the masses of tourists, its cultural offer has an alternative air, which is combined with great parks like the Riegrovy and the Mahlerovy, as well as the old Jewish cemetery.

20.00 An example of this alternative spirit is the [Palác Akropolis \(Kubelíkova 27\)](#), a cultural center that has a concert hall, theater, bar, and restaurant. It is a great place to have the first beer, plus the prices are reasonable. Time for dinner. We cross the street and go inside Marianskeho Obrazu (Kubelíkova 22), one of the most traditional restaurants of typical food. Czech food is not particularly famous for its exquisiteness. Pork and potatoes, and meat and purées are very common, but you can be in for a big surprise here with the appetizers.



If after dinner you feel like having a drink, the best options in the neighborhood are the bars [Big Lebowski \(Slavíkova 16\)](#) and Bukowski's (Borivojova 86). This last one is decorated in keeping with the writer's creative universe. It is a bucolic dark place, decorated with books, typewriters, rugs, and antique lamps. Beer, good music, and some of the best cocktails in town to say goodbye to Prague.

MUSEUMS

[National Museum \(80 CZK / Reduced 40 CZK\)](#)

Founded in 1818 as the Patriotic Museum of Bohemia inside a 19th century neo-renaissance building, the National Museum is the oldest museum in the Czech Republic. The building is currently in reconstruction and will not open its doors until the year 2016.

The Museum holds the most important treasures of the country, from archeological pieces, coins, and works of art, to textiles and paintings. This building has been a witness to tragic moments. In 1945, during World War II, it was severely damaged by a German missile. Decades later, in 1968, the main façade was hit by projectiles launched by Soviet soldiers as the Army's way of asserting pressure on the Warsaw Pact.

[Franz Kafka Museum \(180 CZK / Reduced 120 CZK\)](#)

Even though there is no explicit reference to Prague in Franz Kafka's work, it is always present. Under the title "The City of K.: Franz Kafka and Prague" Kafka's permanent exhibition in the Museum is ordered based on two essential themes: Existential Space and Imaginary Topography. The first part of the exhibition analyzes the effects of the author on its native city and the impact the city had on his life, while the second exhibition analyzes the influence that Prague had on the writer's work.

The Museum exhibits first editions of his works, letters, journals, manuscripts, pictures and drawings, 3D installations, audio pieces, and a soundtrack created just for the exhibition.



[Mucha Museum \(180 CZK / Reduced 120 CZK\)](#)

This museum offers the most important exhibition of works by Alfons Mucha (1860 – 1939). Focused on his most prolific period during his stay in Paris, between 1887 and 1904, when he made his most famous works, the exhibit displays drawings, paintings and posters, as well as decorative objects. At the end of the tour there is a reproduction of the artist's Paris studio, as well as personal pictures.

[Prague City Museum \(120 CZK / Reduced 50 CZK\)](#)

Pieces of art, paintings, sculptures, archeological remains, textiles, and baroque, renaissance, and gothic works of art document the history of the city from its foundation in the 9th century to the present time. One of the most important collections this museum exhibits consists of textiles that were found in Tycho Brahe's grave, the famous astronomer from Rudolf II's court.

[Museum of Decorative Arts \(120 CZK / Reduced 70](#)

CZK)

Founded in 1885, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague displays decorative objects and furniture from the 15th to the 20th century. The museum's collection includes objects ordered by techniques. Porcelain pieces, ceramics, crystal, textiles, tapestries, metal objects, among other materials, form part of this vast collection.

Kampa Museum (160 CZK / Reduced 80 CZK)

The Kampa Museum of modern art brings together the greatest amount of works of art made in the 60's and 70's in Central Europe. Pieces by Frantisek Kupka, Czech avant-garde painter and pioneer in abstraction, and by cubist sculptor Otto Gutfreund stand out, as well as of other contemporary Czech artists. The permanent collection includes works of artists like René Roubicek, Václav Cígler, Ales Vesely, and Eva Kmentová.

National Gallery (240 CZK / Reduced 120 CZK)

The National Gallery's collection brings together a great number of Czech and Slovakian art paintings and sculptures, among them works by such influential artists like Gutfreund, Kupka, Fila, Benes, and Bohumil Kubista.

The international area includes pieces by Picasso, Rodin, Gauguin, Cézanne, Monet, Van Gogh, Renoir, and Klimt. It is, along with the Museum of Czech Cubism, the institution that pays more attention to this movement with pieces like Otto Gutgreund's Don Quixote and Vincenc Benes's Military Funeral, keys to understanding the aesthetic value of this school.

Picasso has an entire hall dedicated just to him, where two self-portraits and abstract paintings stand out. Likewise, it also exhibits pieces by Austrians Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt, as well as by Norwegian Edvard Munch, and Catalan Joan Miró. The baroque art collections in old Bohemia, as well as Czech antique works of art also stand out.

Jewish Museum (300 CZK / Reduced 200 CZK)

Prague's Jewish community was, up until World War II, one of the

largest in Europe and played an important role in the city's intellectual and economical life. An example of this importance is the fact that there are 12 synagogues in downtown Prague. Prague's Jewish Museum has an extensive collection of objects and documents related to the Holocaust. However, it also has an important Jewish art collection that was confiscated by Nazis at that time and later recovered. The museum exhibits pieces by Antonín Machek, Jakub Schikaneder, Bedrik Havranek, Otto Gutfreund, Emil Orlik, Bedrich Feigl, Ludwig Blum, Georg Kars, Robert Guttmann, Jakub Bauernfreund, Ender Nemes, Maxim Kopf, Egon Adler, and Max Ernst. The museum also has a great deal of manuscripts written in Hebrew, German, and Yiddish.

Museum of Czech Cubism (100 CZK / Reduced 50 CZK)

Located in Europe's first cubist building, the House of the Black Madonna, built in the city's downtown between 1911 and 1912 by Josef Gocár, displays the most important collection of Czech cubist art. Greatly unknown in the history of universal art, the cubist school of Bohemia incorporated a great deal of artistic disciplines from painting to design, architecture, sculpture, and other decorative objects, reason why it is considered a unique phenomenon in the world.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND MAPS

Area code

+ 420 23

Emergency number

112

Practical information

The [city council's official website](#) is a fantastic guide that has information on the most outstanding monuments in Prague, a list from A to Z of the most relevant places, information of tours, a selection of the best bars and restaurants divided by categories, and a calendar of cultural and sporting activities. Furthermore, it has a system to reserve hotels, hostels, and pensions, as well as links to purchase theater and opera tickets.

The [Czech Republic's tourism website](#) is just as recommendable, as it offers information on castles, monuments, churches, and the country's main festivities. The Czech Republic has 12 sites included in the Unesco's World Heritage list. This website offers interactive maps and suggestions for traveling and enjoying the country in any time of year.

Lastly, the [city's official website](#) (available in Czech and English) offers news and useful information so that you have the best experience possible in the city.

Prague's currency is the Czech crown. At this [link](#) you can perform the current exchange calculation with regards to your currency.

Museums

The website [Prague Museums](#) has a complete list of museums worth visiting.

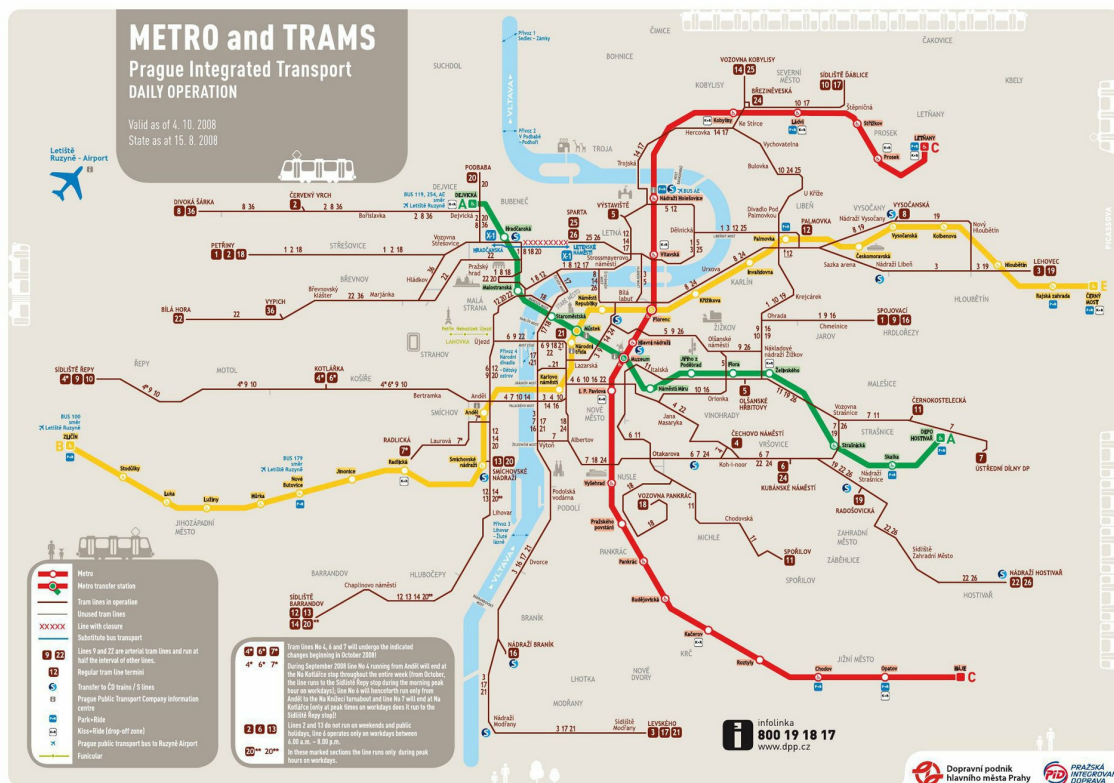
Accommodations

The website [Hotels of Prague](#) offers a comprehensive list of hotels to stay at in Prague. The websites [Booking](#) or [Hostel World](#), are the best to find affordable accommodations.

On the contrary, if you wish to stay at an apartment and enjoy all of the comforts this implies, we recommend the website [Airbnb](#), an online community to lease entire apartments or rooms shared with people who live in the destination city.

Public Transportation

The best way to move around Prague is using the public transportation. The city has a metro with 3 lines and 55 stations, a tram with 26 lines and 628 stops, and extensive bus routes. The units may not be the most modern in the world, especially some of the tram lines, but the transportation system is one of the safest, fastest, and most efficient in the world. Prague's Traffic Office has made this [useful app](#) for smartphones and tablets with tips, maps of the city, metro, and public transportation. It has a cost of \$4.90 USD.



Tours

There are a lot of tours of Prague designed for every taste. The most famous is the [Franz Kafka Tour](#), which covers the most significant places of the author's life in Prague. But it is not the only one. There is a tour to discover the underground city that lies beneath the city, the [Prague Underground Tour](#) as well as a [Ghosts and Legends Tour](#) (Prague is full of them), which takes us deep into the mysterious and mystic part of the city.

On the [Bycicle Tours](#) you will find many tours on bicycle inside and outside of Prague. One of the most attractive is the visit to the Karlstejn gothic castle.

There are other operators that organize tours, with guide included, towards the mining city of Kutná Hora; to Pilsen, headquarters of the Pilsner Urquell brewery, the most famous in the country, as well as tours to the concentration camp Terezín. You can find more information on the websites [Discover Prague](#) and [New Europe Tours](#).

Lastly, the websites [Prague Walks](#) and [Walks](#) have interesting proposals to travel the city by foot.

Map

So that you don't get lost in the city, we offer this interactive map of the Czech capital developed by the website [Enjoy Prague](#).

Population

1,262,106 inhabitants

Area

496 km²

Government

Bohuslav Svoboda, of the Civic Democratic Party, is the mayor of Prague as of the year 2010. Currently, many of the state's competences have been transferred to the city, as the Czech capital is considered a city-state since the year 2000.

GDP

\$38,400 USD per capita.

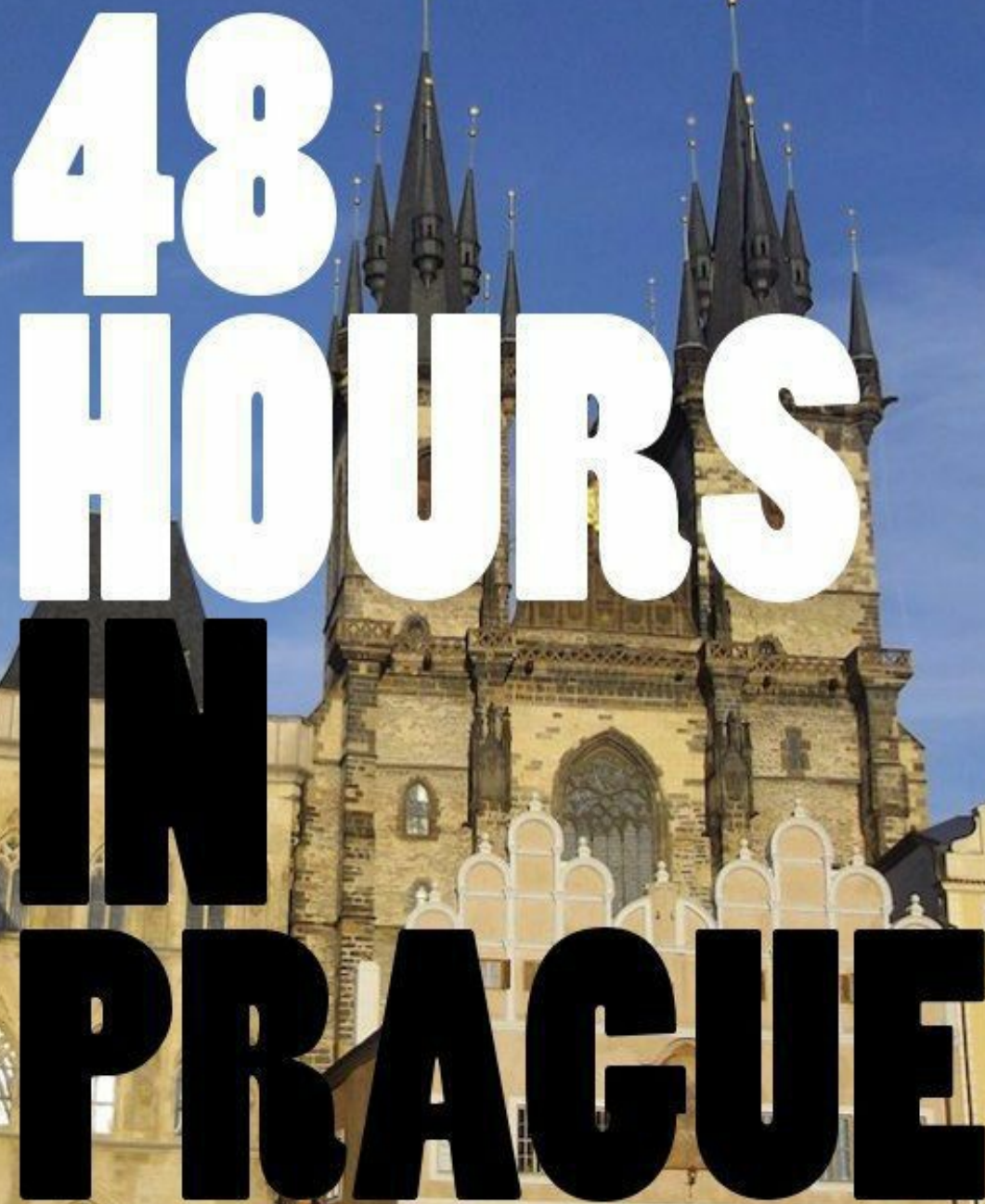
Religion

More than 40 percent of the population is Catholic, 10 percent is Protestant, while the rest profess another type of worship.

MORE EBOOKS

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48 HOURS IN PRAGUE

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Old Town Square in Prague. The main focus is the Gothic architecture of St. Vitus Cathedral, with its multiple dark spires reaching into a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is gathered in the square, some sitting on the ground and others standing. To the right, a yellow building with many windows is visible, featuring signs for 'ALFONS M...' and 'RESTAURANT CAFE U T...'. The title '48 HOURS IN PRAGUE' is superimposed over the image in large, bold, sans-serif font. '48' and 'HOURS' are white, while 'IN' and 'PRAGUE' are black.

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