

Title:

The Czech Republic - An Introduction

Word Count:

280

Summary:

An introduction to the Czech Republic, for those looking to visit or study this great country of central Europe.

Keywords:

Czech Republic, travel, Prague, Europe, Iron Curtain

Article Body:

Are you wanting to know more about the Czech Republic? Maybe you're planning a visit there, or studying the country for a school project. Read on for some basic information on the central European country.

The country of Czechoslovakia was founded at the end of World War I, after Czechs and Slovaks joined together following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The newly founded state was to exist until 1989, spending the time after the Second World War under Communist control, behind the so-called *Iron Curtain* (a term first popularised by Winston Churchill).

The peaceful "Velvet Revolution" of 1989 saw Czechoslovakia free itself from Soviet control. Two years later, the Czechs and Slovaks were to go their separate ways, seeing the foundation of the Czech Republic (with its capital city, Prague) and Slovakia (capital city: Bratislava). This separation is often referred to as the "Velvet Divorce".

In 1999 the Czech Republic became a full member of NATO and 2004 saw the state join the European Union (EU). This maintains the position of the Czech Republic at the very heart of Europe. Indeed, the land-locked country is bordered by Germany, Poland, Austria and Slovakia.

Of the 10 million inhabitants of the country, more than one million live in the beautiful capital city of Prague, which has become such a favourite for international visitors. Other significant cities include Plzen, famous worldwide for its beers. It is the countries beers that are just one feature that ensures that the country is such a popular destination: leading brands include the likes of Budvar, Pilsner Urquell and Staropramen.

The country's largest export area is in machinery and transport equipment - the economy thus remains largely dominated by the industrial sectors.