

WHAT NOT TO MISS IN PRAGUE

The capital of the Czech Republic is one of the most valuable urban conservation areas in Europe. In 1992, the historical core of the city, covering 866 hectares, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List.

Prague represents a unique collection of historical monuments dominated by Prague Castle, which rises high above the city. It brings together all major artistic and architectural styles. The historical core is situated on both banks of the Vltava River and consists of six parts – formerly independent urban units unified in the 18th century: Staré Město (Old Town), Josefov (the preserved part of the former Jewish Town, today part of the Old Town), Nové Město (New Town), Malá Strana (Lesser Town), Hradčany and Vyšehrad. Naturally, most historical monuments, museums and galleries are concentrated in these areas.

Below is a list of Prague's most notable monuments:

PRAGUE CASTLE

A castle was built on this site in the 9th century, and a Romanesque palace was erected here in the 12th century. In the 14th century, during the reign of Charles IV, it was rebuilt in the Gothic style. The Royal Palace was reconstructed into its current form under the Jagiellonian dynasty at the end of the 15th century, when the builder Benedikt Rejt added the now-famous Vladislav Hall. The castle was enlarged in the 16th century, especially after a major fire in 1541. The Spanish Hall, part of a new wing, was added during the reign of Rudolf II. The castle took its final form under Empress Maria Theresa, directed by architect M. Pacassi. After World War I, architect Jože Plečnik renovated the interior and gardens. Today, Prague Castle is the seat of the President of the Czech Republic and serves as the historical and political centre of both the city and the state.

ST. VITUS, ST. WENCESLAS AND ST. ADALBERT CATHEDRAL

The Gothic St. Vitus Cathedral is the spiritual symbol of the Czech









state. Construction began in 1344 under architects Matthias of Arras and Petr Parler, although earlier religious buildings stood on the site, including a 10th-century rotunda. The cathedral took nearly six centuries to complete, with the final phase finished between 1873 and 1929. The cathedral houses the tombs of Czech kings. Parler also built the St. Wenceslas Chapel, decorated with frescoes and semi-precious stones. The Czech Crown Jewels are kept here as well.

OLD ROYAL PALACE

The Old Royal Palace served as the residence of Bohemian princes and kings until the 16th century. It was built on the remains of a Romanesque palace of Prince Soběslav. Gothic and Renaissance reconstructions were initiated by prominent Czech kings Přemysl Otakar II, Charles IV, Wenceslas IV and Vladislav Jagello. Its most remarkable part is the Gothic Vladislav Hall — the largest secular hall of medieval Prague (1487–1500, Benedikt Rejt), featuring a distinctive rounded rib vault. Today, it hosts presidential elections and ceremonial events.



GOLDEN LANE

A row of small houses built into the Gothic fortifications, originally home to 16th-century castle guards and craftsmen. Between 1916 and 1917, Franz Kafka lived in house No. 22.

PETŘÍN LOOKOUT TOWER AND MIRROR MAZE

A reduced copy of the Eiffel Tower (60 m high), built in 1891 for the Jubilee Exhibition. A total of 299 steps lead to the top platform. The nearby mirror maze, also created for the Jubilee Exhibition, features a diorama depicting the "Battle of the Praguers with the Swedes in 1648 at Charles Bridge".

CHARLES BRIDGE

Construction began in 1357 under Master Otto and was completed by Petr Parler. It is the oldest surviving bridge in Prague. Most of its statues and sculptural groups date from the 18th century, including works by Matthias Braun and Ferdinand Maxmilian Brokoff. The bridge is 515 metres long and 10 metres wide.