

CZECH REPUBLIC

Vienna to Prague

A Guided Walking Adventure





Table of Contents

Daily Itinerary	4
Tour Itinerary Overview	12
Tour Facts at a Glance.....	14
Traveling To and From Your Tour	16
Information & Policies	19
Austria at a Glance.....	20
Czech Republic at a Glance.....	24
Packing List	29

Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **optional Flight + Tour Combo**, **Vienna Pre-Tour Extension** and, **Prague Post-Tour Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.



Overview

In the geographical heart of Europe, the Czech Republic holds many surprises for the walker, both dramatic and subtle. Indeed, its ancient glories remain uniquely preserved today—from vast primeval forests to thousands of fairy-tale castles and manors to tiny villages of white-washed cottages topped in shingle roofs. Even the last war left the Republic relatively unscathed. According to Goethe, Prague is “the prettiest gem in the stone crown of the world,” and immerses you in history from the Middle Ages to the 18th century with its pointed stone towers and quaint medieval streets. And while Prague is perennially captivating, it is the small towns and untouched rural landscapes through which you walk that solidify experiences into memories.

On this seven-day adventure, you walk the rooms of Renaissance châteaux, the cobbled squares of colorful Baroque towns, and the quiet streets of villages composed of unique peasant architecture. You enter the forests that cover one-third of the Czech Republic, walk the slopes of its undulating Bohemian hills, and cross meadows carved by great rivers and terraced into pastures and fragrant orchards. Your experience is complete with comfortable accommodations, each unique in style, and authentic meals where you toast your discoveries with excellent Czech pilsner and wine.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Meeting in Vienna. Vineyards of Austria; 6 miles, easy to moderate (options are available to walk 5 miles or 2.5 miles upon request). Transfer to Telc

Upon meeting in Vienna, a scenic hour's drive north arrives in Hollabrunn, a district in Lower Austria's beautiful Weinviertel. Characterized by gentle rolling hills, countless vineyards, and charming villages dotted with pretty white churches, the Weinviertel (meaning "wine quarter") is Austria's largest wine-producing area—its most important grape variety being the peppery white Grüner Veltliner. The morning's walk takes you over quiet country lanes nestled between vineyard-covered slopes and old oak forests. A unique feature of this bucolic landscape is its cellar-lined roads called *Kellergassen*, which connect village to village via an extensive network of wine cellars. Arriving in one of these villages on foot, you are welcomed to lunch at a family-run country inn—perhaps starting with a bowl of creamy garlic soup, followed by an excellent dish of goulash. A short wine presentation ensues, with a chance to sample the region's acclaimed vintages.

Following lunch, you transfer 90 minutes to an area known as the Czech Highlands, a high, undulating territory between Bohemia and Moravia. There, you enjoy a short walk through a landscape of dense woods and numerous

ponds. Time permitting, you stop en route to explore an open-air museum of Czechoslovakian military fortifications dating to the 1930s.

By late afternoon you reach the small town of Telč, situated at the southwest tip of Moravia and undoubtedly one of the most beautiful towns in the Czech Republic. Following a devastating fire in 1530, the entire town was rebuilt in a unified Renaissance style. Its historic center was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site for its cultural and historical importance in 1992. Regarded as the best-preserved of all Bohemian and Moravian Renaissance towns, it features a central square bordered by historic structures displaying a dazzling array of colorful, elaborate façades, covered arcades, and walkways. Other notable features of Telč are its Renaissance chateau, with some Gothic origins, as well as a series of interconnected medieval fishponds, which encircle the town center on three sides. Arriving at your family-run hotel, a 16th-century property bordering the chateau's park, there is time to relax and refresh before a welcome drink and dinner just off the town square as well as a special folkloric performance!



Hotel Anton, Telč

Originally a cooperative distillery, this family-owned property has been recently renovated and offers comfortable three-star accommodations in a peaceful setting. Bordering the chateau park, the hotel is just steps from the historic town square.

DAY 2

"Duke Zak" walk in the Javorice Highlands; 8 miles, easy (options are available to walk 6 miles or 3.5 miles upon request). Transfer to Tábor.

Following breakfast, you explore the picturesque landscape surrounding Telč. A 30-minute drive delivers you to the Javorice Highlands, an area of verdant forests and quiet meadows replete with wildflowers and fishponds. Three walk options all start from Roštejn Castle and lead through forest and rolling fields. Situated in a beech forest on a rocky hilltop, this Renaissance-era hunting lodge was once owned by the Lords of Hradec and the Lechtensteins, and contains



collections of china, ceramics, and tin, as well as an exhibition of highland stonework.

Returning to Telč by midday, you break for lunch at the hotel before joining your guides on a tour of the well-preserved Telč Castle, a sumptuous Renaissance chateau rebuilt from the original Gothic structure in the 16th century. In the

neighboring ornate Chapel of St. George are the remains of the castle's founder, Zachariáš z Hradce, also one of the owners of the Roštejn Castle visited earlier today.

Just over an hour's drive brings you to the medieval town of Tábora by late afternoon. Fascinatingly, Tábora was founded in the 15th century as an egalitarian peasant commune and is known for its maze of narrow cobblestoned streets, elaborate tunnel system, and monumental city walls. Your home for the next three nights is ideally located right on the town's central Žižka Square. After checking in, you reunite for dinner in your hotel's excellent restaurant, known for its updated regional cuisine.

Hotel Nautilus, Tábora

A casually elegant four-star boutique hotel in a fully renovated historic building overlooks Tábora's medieval town square. Original artwork, contemporary and antique furniture, and natural elements throughout are complemented by a wellness center with sauna and Jacuzzi. With an inviting bar, the stylish restaurant showcases contemporary Czech cuisine by an award-winning chef.

DAY 3

Religiosity of our ancestors; 9 miles, easy to moderate (options are available to walk from 4 to 8 miles upon request)

Following a delightful breakfast of freshly baked Czech pastries, eggs, fruit, and an array of cheeses and cold cuts, you set off on foot to explore Tábora's historical center and surrounding countryside, the latter offering numerous walk options of varying lengths. Starting from the main square—site of the Old Town Hall, one of the Czech Republic's most important Gothic buildings and home to a museum dedicated to the Pre-Lutheran Protestant movement—you meander

through a labyrinth of tiny streets and continue around the local lake. Founded in 1492, it is the oldest reservoir of its kind in Central Europe.

Returning to the main square, you set off into the fields and forests along an ancient pilgrimage route to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Klokoty Monastery. This spectacular double-cross-shaped Baroque complex dates to the early 17th century and boasts numerous spires and an idyllic location above the Lužnice River. Descending into the valley, you stop for lunch of homemade Czech specialties. Following lunch, you continue on an undulating path through the rural landscape back to town.

This afternoon there is time to relax at the hotel or explore the winding streets and shops in Tábor before dinner on your own with a number of nearby restaurants to choose from.

Hotel Nautilus, Tábor

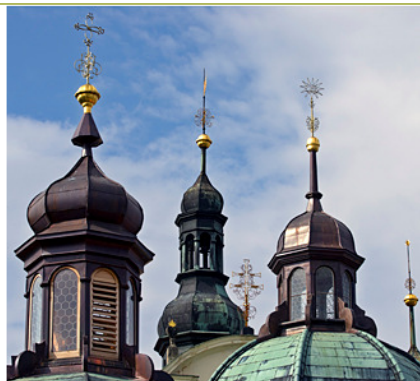
DAY 4

Walk of Eight Villages; 10.1 miles, easy to moderate (options are available to walk from 2.5 to 10.1 miles upon request)

A short transfer of 15 minutes brings you to the start of today's walk that winds through a series of eight rural hamlets, traversing gently rolling countryside alternating between tranquil forest and open views of farmland and meadows. Passing traditional farm buildings and quiet churchyards, there are many possibilities to shorten the walk all the way up to your lunch spot at just over 7 miles. After lunch, you may continue on along undulating terrain, with all options returning to Tábor either by early or mid-afternoon.

This evening, your guides lead you on a short walk through town to the Film Armoury, a unique workshop, filming location, and museum where period armor and props are produced and on display from their use in the successful Czech and international film industry. You enjoy an exclusive tour and lively medieval feast.

Hotel Nautilus, Tábor





DAY 5

Baroque peasant villages; 8 miles, easy (options are available to walk 8 miles, 6.5 miles, 5 miles, or 4 miles upon request). Transfer to Český Krumlov

After breakfast you transfer about one hour from Tábor to the area north of České Budějovice for the day's walk. The route takes you through the peaceful

countryside of Southern Bohemia—rolling hills with only gentle ascents and descents as well as countless villages featuring the best-preserved “Baroque peasant” houses in the country. Dating from the time when farmers and merchants imitated the architectural style of the wealthy nobility, these houses are appreciated for their colorful façades, gables, and white stucco ornamentation. On the quiet streets of these working communities, you encounter the descendants of several generations of farmers who might share stories and a handful of just-picked fruit from nearby orchards. Lunch is at a local restaurant en route. Once again, your guides can offer flexible options to satisfy those interested in shorter and longer walks.

This afternoon you transfer approximately 90 minutes to the enchanting town of Český Krumlov, one of Bohemia's prettiest towns—named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1992 for its historical importance and physical beauty. Situated on the banks of the Moldau River—the *Vltava* in Czech—Český Krumlov is a showcase of elegant Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque buildings housing delightful cafés, pubs, restaurants, shops, and galleries. Cobblestoned lanes lead to your hotel for the next two nights—a charming riverside property in the heart of town. Following time to settle in, you stroll to a dinner of grilled Czech specialties at a neighboring restaurant.

Hotel Dvořák, Český Krumlov

Located in the historical center of Český Krumlov, this 19th-century property offers well-equipped guest rooms with views of the River Vltava and Český Krumlov Castle. The hotel also features a riverside terrace, bar, and on-site restaurant.

DAY 6

Blanský Les and the Czech countryside; 5.5 miles, moderate (options are available to walk 4.5 miles or 1.5 miles upon request). Free afternoon

Following breakfast, your guide(s) offer an introductory walk through the fairy-tale town of Český Krumlov. They are happy to point out the locals' favorite restaurants and cafés for your independent lunch. You then depart for a loop walk in the countryside surrounding the town. In the Blanský Les (literally the Blansky Forest) Nature Reserve, a network of trails passes through a variety of natural habitats and a mixed coniferous-deciduous forest of pine, oak, beech, and ash. A break in the trees opens up every now and then to provide a glimpse of the open countryside.

You return to the center of Český Krumlov by early afternoon; the remainder of the day, including lunch, is yours to enjoy at your own pace. You may choose to browse inviting craft shops and narrow alleyways or explore the jewel of the town—the 13th-century Český Krumlov Château, Bohemia's second-largest castle. This evening, at your final dinner, you toast the week's highlights over with a glass of Moravian wine or the finest Czech beer.

Hotel Dvořák, Český Krumlov

DAY 7

Prague green city walk; 3.5 miles, easy to moderate; Departure from Prague

Bidding farewell to Český Krumlov and Southern Bohemia this morning, you head north on a three-hour drive through the Czech countryside, passing through picturesque villages and farmland to Prague, the nation's capital, with the gold-tipped towers, onion domes, and church steeples defining the skyline of the “City of a Thousand Spires.”

You are welcomed to this UNESCO World Heritage city with a walking tour that begins at Prague Castle, the city's centerpiece dating to the 9th century overlooking the city and famed Charles Bridge. This “city within a city” atop Castle Hill is a complex of buildings composed of Gothic and Romanesque churches, several palaces, gardens, courtyards, and defense towers. Following a



stop to admire the 14th-century gargoyles and unique glass mosaics of the Gothic St. Vitus Cathedral, you sit down to a light lunch.

Taking the route preferred by locals to avoid the more crowded sites, you wind through flower-filled parks and gardens to the tour's departure point, the Hotel Leonardo, located just a few steps away from the Charles Bridge and the Old Town Hall. For departing travelers, your guides assist in arranging taxis to alternative hotels, the airport, or the train station.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Connecting Telč's Past with Its Future: In the Highlands region of the southern Czech Republic, folk traditions are disappearing at an alarming rate. That's why organizations like Kvittek are very important. This folkloric ensemble—its name means “little flower” or “rapscallion” in Czech—provides opportunities for the children of Telč to learn the songs and dances of their past. Catering to local five- to ten-year-olds, the group practices regularly in a local youth center and performs in community events and festivals. Country Walkers is proud to help provide them with costumes, musical instruments, and money for travel. Though this organization rarely performs for groups, you have an opportunity to see them in action on our trip.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof, Vienna, Austria, 9:00 a.m.

Herrengasse 10
1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel 011 43 1 53 404 800

NIGHT 1

Hotel Anton

Telč, Czech Republic
Tel 011 420 567 243 862
Email office@hotel-anton.cz
en.hotel-anton.cz
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 2, 3 & 4

Hotel Nautilus

Tábor, Czech Republic
Tel 011 420 380 900 900
Email info@hotelnautilus.cz
hotelnautilus.cz
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 5 & 6

Hotel Dvořák

Český Krumlov, Czech Republic
Tel 011 420 380 711 020
Email info@hoteldvorak.com
hoteldvorak.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Hotel Leonardo, Prague, Czech Republic, following lunch

EMERGENCY CONTACT

One Call International

Email mail@oncallinternational.com

If communicating from within the US

Text 603.945.0103

Tel 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the US

Tel 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURE DATES AND PRICE

Please refer to our website for the most current list of departure dates, scheduled group tour and private tour prices.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof, Vienna, Austria, 9:00 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Hotel Leonardo, Prague, Czech Republic, following lunch

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 6 to 9 miles per day. On most days there is the option to either shorten or lengthen the walks, thus affording a great deal of flexibility, depending on your abilities. There are slight ascents and descents each day, including steps at castles and in towns. The terrain includes grassy paths, dirt roads, and cobble streets, with walks passing through villages, woods, pastures, and open farmland. The pace on this tour is leisurely, with an emphasis on historical towns and sites, as well as local brewing traditions. The itinerary culminates with a short guided city tour of Prague.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one lunch and one dinner; local wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International

» The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Passenger Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency. Gratuities for your bus driver are included in the tour price, but additional tips are always welcome.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof, Vienna, Austria, 9:00 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Vienna International Airport (VIE), Vienna, Austria
viennaairport.com

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

The most convenient way to travel to Vienna is by air to Vienna International Airport. The Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof, our meeting-point hotel in downtown Vienna, is located 14 miles from the airport.

- Taxi (from the airport): taxi time: 30 minutes; taxi cost: approximately 35-45 euros.
- Airport Bus: Take the Airport Bus from the airport to Morzinplatz, located about half a mile from the hotel (a 10-minute walk or taxi ride at approximately 15 euros).

You may also travel to Vienna by train. Approximate travel times for train travel to Vienna from various cities are as follows: from Prague: 4½ hours; from Budapest: 3 hours; from Munich: 4½ hours. Taxis to the Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof are available outside the train stations (approximately 20 euros). For further rail information including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please call Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website:

raileurope.com. We recommend making reservations in advance for major train routes. You may also consult the Austrian railway website (ÖBB) at oebb.at/en.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof, our meeting-point hotel. To make a

reservation, please contact the hotel directly. We suggest booking a pre-tour room as soon as you have confirmed your arrival date, as this property fills well in advance.

Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof

Herrengasse 10

1010 Vienna, Austria

Tel 011 43 1 53 404 800

Email: ireservations@herrenhof-wien.steigenberger.at

herrenhof-wien.steigenberger.at

The Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof is a four-star hotel located in the historic heart of Vienna, near Vienna's palaces, gardens, shopping, and pedestrian areas. Rates for a classic double room and breakfast start from 170 euros per night.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Hotel Leonardo, Prague, Czech Republic, following lunch

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Ruzyne Airport (PRG), Prague

csl.cz/en

LEAVING PRAGUE

The tour concludes in the afternoon at the Hotel Leonardo, in Prague's historic center.

- Taxi: a taxi to the Ruzyne Airport takes approximately 40 minutes and costs 750 Czech *korunas* (about 30 euros).
- Public transportation: (1) The Staromestska subway stop is located a 10-minute walk from the Hotel Leonardo. From there, take subway line A 15 minutes to Nadraí Veleslavín, where you can take the bus line 119 to the airport. The total journey time is approximately one hour. (2) Take subway line B to the terminal stop Zličín and change to bus line 100 (takes 18

minutes). (3) Take the Airport Express Bus from Prague's Main Railway Station (Praha Hlavní nádraží on subway line C) for a total time of 65 minutes

POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Hotel Leonardo. If so, please contact the Hotel Leonardo directly to make your post-tour reservation.

Hotel Leonardo

Prague, Czech Republic
Tel 011 420 239 009 239
Email info@hotelleonardo.cz
hotelleonardo.cz

The Hotel Leonardo is a four-star boutique hotel in a historic building in Prague's old city near the Charles Bridge. Rates for a classic double room and breakfast start from 135 euros per night.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$350 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

Austria at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days.

For more information, see travel.state.gov.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

CURRENCY

Austria uses the euro (EUR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-

card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

Austria is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Austria country code: +43

Cell phone coverage throughout Austria is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Austria is German.

While knowledge of German is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/german or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in Austria. Plugs have either two round pins and a hole, or just two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see

electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

Austria is in the temperate climate zone, however three distinct regions can be found: most of the country has continental patterns typical for Central Europe, with cold winters and warm and pleasant summer months ranging from May to September, and peak temperatures in July and August; the Eastern edge benefits from milder winters and low precipitation, while at higher altitude, Alpine climate brings high precipitation and long winters. Mountaintop and evening temperatures can be considerably lower than those during the daytime and at lower elevations.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK



Austrian food is wholesome and hearty with meat and dumplings, and famously the breaded and fried veal or pork cutlet *Wienerschnitzel*. Dumplings, called *Knödel*, can be made either sweet or savory according to taste. Beef, sausages, potatoes, and broth soups all are on the menu, as well as fresh lake fish in Austria's lake region. Desserts and baked goods are also key components of the Austrian diet. Almost every village has a bakery with a large selection of rolls, white and rye. Well-loved desserts are, of course, *Apfelstrudel* (apple strudel), *Linzertorte* (a flaky cake with raspberry jam), and *Sachertorte* (two tiers of chocolate cake separated by a thin layer of apricot jam and topped with chocolate icing).

Austria has a number of tempting beverages, from its famous coffee, often served with whipped cream, to first-class wines, to high-quality lager brews. Also

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

appreciated after dinner is Schnapps, fruit brandy from pear, apricot, or raspberry.

LIFE IN AUSTRIA



Shopping and banking hours

Shopping hours: Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; in small towns they may close for one to three hours for lunch, check locally.

Banks are open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (and to 5:30 p.m. on Thursdays).

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served (almost exclusively) from noon to 2:00 p.m. and dinner is served from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

Gratuities in restaurants and bars are included (15 percent) in the total bill; for exceptional service, you could round up the total or leave one to two euros. Taxi drivers could receive one to three euros or a rounded-up total. For luggage assistance, a tip of one to two euros per bag is appropriate.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Austrian tourist board official site

austria.info

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Austrian public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Austrian tourist board's website: austria.info, navigating to "Basic Facts" and "Practical Information."

TRAVEL IN AUSTRIA

Trains

Austrian Railway: oebb.at, Austria's national train company.

Rail Europe: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.)

Other local transportation

Direct flights from the U.S. are available to Vienna, with short internal flights available to smaller cities such as Salzburg (salzburg-airport.com/en) and Innsbruck (innsbruck-airport.com/en). Reaching any destination in Austria is easy on its excellent rail network or via extensive regional bus lines.

Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). Most major car rental agencies are available at Austrian airports and train stations. For more information, go to austria.info and click on “Basic Facts,” then “Practical Information,” and “Driving Regulations.”



Travel Tip

Austrian Aristocracy and Music

Austria's lake district, the *Salzkammergut* (which means roughly “salt room depository”) is brimming with human history. Referred to as “the Cradle of Civilization” because of archeological finds from the 12,000 BC Neolithic Stone Age, things were quiet up through the 18th century when its salt deposits were both mined and carefully guarded, leaving the countryside pristine. The Hapsburg dynasty was in on the secret, however, and appreciated the region's unspoiled beauty and mineral baths for centuries. Into the 19th century, it became a center for Austrian aristocracy to take the waters and enjoy the summer opera season.

- The legacy of the region's cultural heritage is the acclaimed annual Operetta Festival in Bad Ischl, held in July and August: leharfestival.at
- The famous Salzburg Festival, described as one of the best music festivals in the world, also runs from late July through August: salzburgfestival.at

Czech Republic at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days.

For more information, see travel.state.gov.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), and some dollars to exchange.

CURRENCY

The Czech Republic uses the koruna (CZK). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

The Czech Republic is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus 6 hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Czech Republic country code: +420

Cell phone coverage throughout Czech Republic is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of the Czech Republic is Czech.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/other/quickfix/czech.shtml or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in the Czech Republic. Outlets take type-E plugs with two round pins and a hole or standard European type-C plugs with two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

The Czech Republic has a continental climate. From May through September, the daytime temperatures range from the high 50s to the mid-80s. From late June to early September, the temperature will usually be in the higher end of this range. While generally sunny without being unbearably hot, the Czech Republic does experience some rainy weather in early spring and late fall. Evening and early morning temperatures will be cooler than daytime temperatures.

Average temperatures in Prague for the following months are as follows (high/low): May, 64/45; July-August, 73/53; September, 65/48.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK



Typical Czech cuisine is simple and hearty. Traditional dishes are wild mushroom soup or goulash (the region's culinary strong points), or fried cheese with cabbage salad. Grilled, braised, or stewed meats (beef, pork, poultry, or wild game), accompanied by a potato dish, are popular dinner items, and are often served

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

with either a cream sauce (called *svickova*) or a lighter sauce flavored with dill or tomato. Dumplings—often made of potato and flour and sometimes filled with fruit—are a Czech mainstay and specialty of the region.

Vegetarians can be accommodated with advance notice, though choices may be limited as there is not a wide variety of vegetables available. Of course, a Czech dinner would not be complete without a beer featuring the distinctive flavor of hand-picked Bohemian hops and ranking among the best in the world (see “Travel Tip” below). The country also produces several excellent wines in the hills of South Moravia.

Travel Tip

Pivo = Beer. Deeply rooted in Czech history and culture, beer has been produced in the Czech Republic since the 12th century. The earliest brewing took place in monasteries, with commercial breweries eventually taking over production into the 19th century in towns whose names have become synonymous with beer worldwide—such as Plzeň and České Budějovice (Pilsen and Budweis, respectively, in German). The majority of Czech beer is pilsner lager, which ranges in color from pale (*Světlé*), to amber (*Polotmavé*), to dark (*Tmavé*), and finally to black (*Černé*). Wheat beer (*Pseničné pivo*) is also brewed. *Na zdraví!* ... To your health!

LIFE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Shopping and banking hours

Smaller shops and stores, and those in smaller towns, are generally open Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Shopping malls and supermarkets are open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Mealtimes

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants and cafés, lunch is served from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

In restaurants and cafés, it is customary to leave 10 percent of the total. For taxi drivers, 10 percent of the fare or rounding up is appropriate.



For luggage assistance, about 20 crowns (korunas) per bag.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Czech tourist board official site
czechtourism.com

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Czech public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. For a list of public holidays, see czechtourism.com/a/days-off/ and for festivals, czechtourism.com/events/.

TRAVEL IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

A wealth of travel information is available at czechtourism.com.



Airports

The majority of international flights arrive at Prague's Ruzyně International Airport (prg.aero/en/), with short connecting flights to other regions in the Czech Republic.

Trains

Czech Railways: cd.cz/en/default.htm, the national railway company site with schedules, fares, and pass options.

Rail Europe: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.).

Travel Tip

If you rent a car, please note that all passenger cars must have a sticker affixed to the windshield in order to use the highways (called the "vignette"), which is proof of payment of the highway user fee. The vignette can be purchased at any filling station, and a 10-day fee is 310 CZK.

Other local transportation

In addition to rail and airlines, the Czech Republic has an extensive bus network that, for some towns and cities, may be faster and less expensive than, though perhaps not as comfortable as, rail. For more information, see the comprehensive website for bus, rail, and other public transport:

jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusymhdvse/spojeni

Most major car rental agencies are available at airports and train stations. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide

assistance). For more information contact Country Walkers, or go to

czechtourism.com.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 6-9 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Comfortable shoes for city tours or evening strolls on uneven, cobblestone streets
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts

- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual
- » Light jacket or sweater for evening strolls

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one to two liters)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel.
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)

- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hanging toiletry kit (due to the historic nature of the hotels on this tour, there may be limited bathroom counter space)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Alarm clock (not all hotels have alarm clocks or provide wake-up calls)