

Prague tips 2024

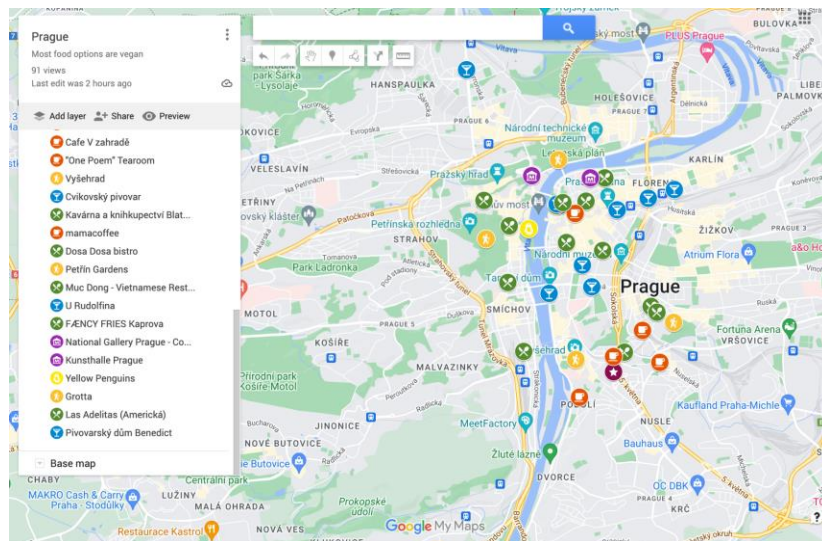
By James Brand, with minor amendments by Filip Smolík

This guide was originally written by James for the visitors of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in 2023 but the information stays valid in 2024 and I believe it will be quite helpful (Filip).

General information

Prague is a very friendly, vibrant and popular city, so hopefully you will enjoy it! It can be very busy during the Summer as lots of tourists visit, but there are lots of things to do and see. I have made this map with some general recommendations for food, drinks and walks, many of the food options are vegan friendly (I originally made it for a vegan friend who was visiting):

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1Zix7Lc5Bv7AQs0A6h5pYbAbiwkNAevQU&usp=sharing>



I tried not to put in the typical tourist things as these are normally well documented already.

If you want more information <https://honest.blog/> is a good place and they have a YouTube channel if you want some distractions.

The following pages are for:

- Language
- Eating and drinking
- Public transport

Language

Many people speak English and Czechs are very friendly, so if you ever need some help, you should be fine speaking English in restaurants, bars, shops.

The nice thing about Czech is the transparent orthography, everything else is really hard... so if you see it you can normally say it.

á	káva ("coffee")	/a:/	a in ah
é	mléko ("milk")	/ɛ:/	a in care
ě	pět ("five")	/jɛ/	ye in yes
í	víno ("wine")	/i:/	ee in seen (same as ý)
ó	dóm ("cathedral")	/o:/	o in more
ú	ústa ("mouth")	/u:/	oo in stool (same as ů)
ů	stůl ("table")	/u:/	oo in stool (same as ú)
ý	výlet ("trip")	/i:/	ee in seen (same as í)
au	auto ("automobile")	/aʊ/	ou in ouch
eu	pneumatika ("tire")	/eʊ/	eu in pneumatic
ou	houba ("mushroom")	/oʊ/	ow in know
c	noc ("night")	/t͡s/	ts in cats
č	číslo ("number")	/t͡ʃ/	ch in church
ď	teď ("now")	/ɟ/	'dyeh' said as one syllable
j	jeden ("one")	/j/	y in yes
ň	kůň ("horse")	/ɲ/	ni in onion
ř	řeka ("river")	/ř/	"rzh" but with the r rolled
š	škola ("school")	/ʃ/	sh in ship
ť	trať ("track")	/c/	"ty" in "best yet"
ž	žena ("woman")	/ʒ/	"s" in "measure"

Some basics, which are very highly appreciated if you use them, are:

dobrý den [dɔbri: dɛn] - hello

This is the formal variant and you use it for most situations e.g. entering a shop or restaurant, it is different from *ahoj* which is the informal variant, if you use the informal form people might look at you weirdly, especially older people

na shledanou [nasxlɛdanɔʊ] - goodbye

This is the formal variant and you use it for most situations, there are informal variants too, such as *čus* from German or the shortened form *nashle*

děkuju [ɟɛkʊjʊ] - thank you

You can add *moc* [mɔts] to make it 'thank you very much', you can also use *díky* [ɟi:ki] which is a bit easier to pronounce

prosím [prosi:m] - please

Also can be used in some situations that do not make sense, e.g. if you open the door for somebody and let them through, they would say thank you and then you can say prosím

promiňte ['promiŋtɛ] - sorry

This is the formal version but the less formal promiň is normally fine too, you can even use *sorry* which is quite popular with younger people

pardon [pardɔ:n] - excuse me

Good to use if you accidentally bump into somebody you do not know

ano ['ano] - yes

ne ['nɛ] - no

muži ['muʒɪ] and **páni** ['pa:ɲɪ] - men

ženy ['ʒɛɲɪ] and **dámy** [da:mɪ] - women

This is for toilet signs, in case you need it

Eating and drinking

Tipping and paying, table service

When eating or drinking in restaurants and pubs, it is normal to tip when you pay. This is normally at 10% of the bill. The waiter will normally give you the bill when you are ready and tell you the price, then you would be expected to say a number which includes the tip. You can normally do this by card as well.

Waiter: That will be 180 czk

You: Thanks, you can make it 200 czk

This is a nightmare for me, as I normally try to do everything in Czech and will get the number wrong, so I am normally a generous tipper.

It is normal to have table service, so if you go into a restaurant or pub, just find a table and somebody will come to you.

Paying by card is very normal and most places will expect that, there are some exceptions, but they are rare in the city center. You can normally split the bill too, if you are in a group, just ask before though. This is quite useful if you want to leave and others want to stay. Nowadays, they will often ask you to come to the cashier to do this.

Dietary information

If you have any allergies or dietary restrictions, these are normally written on the menu. You will either see it as a number and the guide is at the back of the menu. Always ask the person who is serving you if you need more information. This information is standardised so it should be available in the same format across all restaurants.

<https://blog.foreigners.cz/standardized-allergy-charts-in-prague/>



- 1 - gluten
- 2 - seafood
- 3 - eggs
- 4 - fish
- 5 - peanuts
- 6 - soy
- 7 - milk
- 8 - nuts
- 9 - celery
- 10 - mustard
- 11 - sesame
- 12 - sulphites
- 13 - lupin/pea
- 14 - seafood



Example of a menu, allergy information is given in the brackets e.g. (1,7) contains gluten and milk. Weight is also given

Beer

The beer is very popular and it is very cheap. Most places serve the standard beers, e.g. Pilsner Urquell, Budvar, Krušovice, Kozel, all of which are very good. There is a craft beer scene too, but they are normally more expensive and I find the quality to be lower than the standard beers. You will normally find *Birell* in pubs too, a non-alcoholic beer.

Typical prices in pubs for 0.5 litres, which is the standard size should be 60-70 czk or 2.50 eur. You can order a small too, which is 0.3 litres and would be about 40 czk or 1.70 eur.

You can even get different quantities of froth/head on Pilsner Urquell beer in some pubs, there is a skill to pouring them, so worth a try if you see it. Hladinka is your standard and Mlíko/milk is for when you are in a rush. Look out for tankové pivo for the highest quality.



You might also see a degrees value on beer menus, e.g. 10°, this is the “stupňovitost” ([Plato degrees](#)). It is not the alcohol content, but the amount of sucrose dissolved in the solution before fermenting. So a 10 has had 10% sucrose. You can estimate the alcohol content from this, to the more standard alcohol percentages you would normally find. Most beers are either a 10, 11 or 12 in the pubs. Source <https://alkoholia.cz/magazin/co-znamena-stupnovitost-piva-obsah-alkoholu-to-neni>

8°	3.2 % ABV
9°	3.6 % ABV
10°	4.0 % ABV
11°	4.4 % ABV
12°	4.8 % ABV
13°	5.2 % ABV
14°	5.6 % ABV
15°	6.0 % ABV

Wine

The Moravian region does really good white wine and is not normally found outside of the Czech Republic, look out for Riesling/Ryzlink and Palava as they are very good normally if you are not a beer drinker. Czech white wines can be really good. Reds are a little bit trickier, it is better to ask for recommendations.

Food

Lunch is normally the largest meal of the day, and typical Czech food is heavy on the stomach. (Note by Filip: my American teacher of English writing used to say that “the Czech national vegetable is pork”). Here are some meals that are traditional and nice:

Svíčková - beef in creamy root-vegetable sauce

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sv%C3%AD%C4%8Dkov%C3%A1>

Knedlíky – dumplings (various versions exist, bread-based or potato-based)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kn%C3%B6del>

Guláš - goulash Czech version

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goulash>

Koprová – creamy dill sauce normally with beef

<https://www.cooklikeczechs.com/koprova-omacka-czech-dill-sauce/>

Řízek – fried breaded chicken or pork escalope (Schnitzel in Germany, but note that the veal version is rare in Czechia)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schnitzel>

Vepřo-knedlo-zelo, vepřová s knedlíkem a zelím – pork roast with dumplings and cabbage

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vep%C5%99o_knedlo_zelo

Kulajda - mushroom soup

<https://www.cooklikeczechs.com/kulajda-czech-mushroom-soup/>

Nakládaný Hermelín - pickled camembert cheese

<https://www.anediblemosaic.com/nakladany-hermelin-recipe-czech-pickled-cheese/>

Koláč - sweet dough with topping

<https://www.cooklikeczechs.com/ceske-kolace-authentic-recipe-for-czech-kolache/>

There is a large Vietnamese population in Prague, so you can definitely find restaurants serving non-Czech food easily. There are of course many other options that are worth a try, Georgian and Mexican food is popular, as are the burger and pizza options.

Water

There is a good selection of different waters in most supermarkets, but the mineral waters are particularly good. There are many spa towns in the country and the mineral water is a part of that. Maybe that is why the beer is so good, the water quality is high.

If you are feeling a worn out, have an uncomfortable stomach or are hungover, it is worth trying some of the mineral waters.

My personal favourite is [Vincentska](#) it costs about 50 czk or 2 eur in most supermarkets.

In a restaurant you can normally expect to pay for a carafe/1 liter of tap water, about 30-50 czk or 1-2 eur. They will serve bottled water too. There are three different types normally offered:

Perlivá - sparkling

Jemně perlivá - slightly sparkling

Neperlivá - still

Supermarkets

If you want something quick or want to buy fresh food for your lunch, you can find many supermarkets around. The most common are:

Tesco, Albert, Billa, Lidl, and Penny.

Most have this annoying trend where offers are given if you have the loyalty card, so watch out as the price you see might not be the price you pay.

Most have self-service checkouts, with English as a language option, some of the human checkout assistants can be a little rude if you don't speak Czech.

There are also smaller shops on most streets called *potraviny* or *večerka*. These will stock most basics. A lot of these will be operated by Vietnamese people.

Public transport

Prague is exceptional in terms of getting around by public transport, almost everybody uses it.

Note that IASCL organizers have been granted a free ticket sponsored by the city. Please follow the instructions in a separate email to claim your ticket. Note that this needs to be done before coming to Prague, follow the deadlines in the mail. The subject should read something like [PID lítačka: "Your Ticket for Public Transport in Prague"](#)

There are trams, buses and metro/underground/subway. All of which are covered by the basic transport ticket. There are even night trams, which run through the night and are still covered by the ticket. So all you need to get around is the ticket.

If you are going to/from the airport, there are regular buses that go to the city centre. These are also covered by the standard ticket, so it is the cheapest and relatively easiest option.

Most announcements in trams and buses are in Czech, so it might be a bit hard to understand what stop is next. Most trams and buses will have displays though.



Google maps is very reliable for navigating, so if you need to get somewhere you can normally trust the route given in the app.

If you are British, never say thank you to the driver!

There are also Uber and Bolt as taxi app options, if you are not too comfortable taking the public transport.

Tickets

There are four basic tickets:

30 minute - 30 czk or 1.25 eur

90 minute - 40 czk or 1.70 eur

24 hour - 120 czk or 5.10 eur

72 hour - 330 czk or 14 eur

The times are valid from validation, so if you buy a 24 hour ticket it is valid from the time of validation for 24 hours, not until the end of the day.

Within the time period you can switch to a different bus/tram/metro as many times you like.

You can buy the tickets through the machines, where you will get a paper ticket that you need to validate on the bus or tram. If you are using the metro, there will be validation machines close to the escalators. You can pay by coins or card normally.

To validate the ticket just put it in the validation machine following the direction of the orange arrow, i.e. where the QR code is. You should see a time and date stamp on the bottom. You can also pay by card on most trams. Look for the orange machines and follow the instructions. These tickets are automatically validated. You can only pay by contactless card.



Validation machine

Ticket machine

Ticket

Contactless on tram

Inspectors

It is quite rare to get a ticket inspector to ask for your ticket. But it does happen and you can get a big fine if you do not have one. They are normally plain clothed and will show you a badge quite indiscreetly. So if a random person is showing you a badge like the one below and they have a card reading machine in their hand, just show them your ticket.



Route 23

There is a really nice tram route that goes around some of the nicest parts of the center, this is covered by the normal ticket so if you are feeling tired and want to enjoy some sightseeing it is worth a trip on this tram.

<https://www.dpp.cz/en/entertainment-and-experience/dpp-history/nostalgic-line-no-23>