

A visit to Prague

Hands up those of you that have been to Prague. I can't think of anyone who hasn't - such is its popularity with visiting tourists. So why do people go there? There are undoubtedly a 101 reasons why you should visit Prague - such is its charm. For those who haven't, it might just be worth booking a trip there. For those not exactly sure where Prague is - let me inform you that it is in the Czech Republic, which is in 'Central Europe - The Heart of Europe!' It is the capital city. Without further ado let me take you on a leisurely stroll around Prague... Known as 'the Paris of the East' and as 'the city of 100 steeples', its crowded old cobblestone streets serve tourists 365 days a year. It constantly tops other top European cities to visit - like London, Paris, Budapest and Vienna. Dozens of airlines fly to Prague, often with cheap airfares, making it a bargain place to visit. From children to old age pensioners, the city is a huge hit with all ages. Prague offers tourists so much more than people expect.

The historical city of 1.2 million is full of stories and legends to discover and hear. Mind you, it is also unfortunately full of stag parties and sometimes suffers from 'too many tourists in your face' syndrome - such is its popularity. Number one attraction must be either Prague Castle, which dates from the 9th century and overlooks the old city, or Charles Bridge that is packed with tourists buying knickknacks from artisans or listening to musicians play. It is said people have been crossing this bridge since 1357! There are more than 80 museums, including the famous Transport Museum, and 70 theatres to visit including the National Marionette Theatre. The International Institute of Marionette Art is also worth visiting as are some great historic cinemas - from 30s art deco to communist designed facades. There are also one or two pubs, to say the least, that serve some magnificent Czech beer like Pilsner and Budweiser.

Prague Castle is where the kings and princes of Bohemia used to live. It is now the seat of Czech President Vaclav Klaus. There are many steps to climb up to the castle. Visitors will see many tiny houses in Golden Lane that in the 16th century were the homes of soldiers. At the top there are the

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magnificent Gothic Cathedral and St Georges Basilica - together with some inspiring views of the city. Beyond is The Old Town, which remains the centre of Prague. In it is the Old Town Square with its famous Astronomical clock. The Jewish Quarter has four synagogues. Some have 15th century graves. The Pinkas Synagogue remembers the Nazi holocaust while the Old New Synagogue is more than 800 years old. Definitely worth a visit!

People like to shop and Prague is definitely the place to do this. Many international top stores have branches here. British stores like Marks & Spencer's, Debenhams, Top Shop together with H&M have outlets here. Certainly tourists love the late night shopping. Treat yourself to buying some famous Czech crystal. Prague has some fabulous restaurants. Take your pick from the many traditional Czech foods to a full international cuisine. Then there is the famous Prague nightlife! Restaurants, wonderful pubs, loud discos, late night walks, cinema, theatre, and strip clubs – it is all here! Taking a stroll is a positive delight. Looking out on the Vltava river from Charles Bridge or from one of the many viewpoints around the city is one way to spend an afternoon. Hop on a paddle boat. Occasionally there are dragon races on the river. Hire a horse and carriage! In the summer suck an ice lolly. Relax in the sun! In the winter visit the delightful Christmas market. Visit a park. For students, learn a language. For aspiring teachers, do a T.E.F.L. course in Prague – I did! Fantastic!

A map is useful to help you get around. With or without one the city's tram and underground system will get you quickly from A to B. The airport and infrastructure have been vastly expanded. Prague also has some fine universities like Charles University. A word of warning – watch out for the really expensive taxis that in certain quarters will no doubt rip you off. Even the city's Mayor got done in one while travelling in disguise a few years ago. Foreign exchange booths are also another mega rip off! Use an ATM! Most people who do visit Prague want to go back though. Be inspired – visit Prague. It's affordable!

EXERCISES

1. **Prague:** Think of three things you know about Prague? Go round the room swapping details.

2. **Geography: Prague:** What part of the world is Prague in? What country is Prague in? What countries surround this country? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps**.

3. **Dictation:** The teacher will read between four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page two - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

4. **Reading:** Get students to read the passage aloud. Swap readers every paragraph.

5. **Vocabulary:** Students look through the article. Underline/highlight any vocabulary you do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through & explain any words or phrases you do not understand.

6. **The article:** Students look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about Prague?
- c) Will you be going to Prague this year?

7. **Let's think!** Think of five reasons to visit Prague. Then add five things you might do there. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

Five reasons to visit Prague	Five things to do in Prague
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **Let's debate:** In pairs. Students A think Prague is the best European city for tourists to visit. Students B think otherwise – choose an alternative city. Explain why.

9. **Let's talk! In Prague:** In pairs. You are in a pub in Prague. One of you is a barman/barmaid. The other is a tourist just in off the street who wants a drink. The tourist orders one at the bar, then gets talking to the barman/barmaid about where to go in Prague. *5-minutes*.

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10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Which cities are mentioned?
- 2) Prague Castle dates from when?
- 3) Name the bridge.
- 4) What is helpful to get you around?
- 5) What is the word of warning?

Student B

- 1) How many people live in Prague?
- 2) Name the beers.
- 3) Name three things you can do in Prague.
- 4) What is Prague known as?
- 5) What can you hop on?

11. A day in Prague: In pairs/groups. Choose to be one of the following. What might that person do or see during a typical day in Prague? Create a short story about it. Tell it to your partner. Maybe interact your story lines.

1	Tour guide	3	Tourist
2	Taxi driver	4	Museum attendant

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

12. The economic issues of Prague: Think of two economic advantages and two economic issues Prague faces today. Compare & discuss with your partner.

The teacher will choose some pairs to hear their points in front of the class.

13. Prague: In pairs discuss the following about Prague...

1	As a capital	5	Major events in Prague
2	The Old City	6	The tourists!
3	The airport	7	Shopping in Prague
4	The Czech crown	8	Its pubs!

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

14. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **A visit to Prague**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

15. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Prague _____
- b) Charles Bridge _____
- c) Prague Castle _____

DISCUSSION

**Note: A previous visit to Prague will benefit students here.
For students who have NOT been to Prague – IMAGINE a little!**

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS

- 1) Is Prague overrated? Why? Why not?
- 2) How would you get to Prague?
- 3) How long *would/will* it take you to get to Prague?
- 4) Have you ever been ripped off? If yes, where? When?
- 5) What do you think of Czechs?
- 6) Where is the best place to go shopping in Prague?
- 7) What do you think of the Prague trams and its underground system?
- 8) What do you think of Prague airport?
- 9) Give three examples of how Prague has changed over the last 25 years.
- 10) Would you like to study English in Prague?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you think of Prague?
- 2) Is Prague cheap?
- 3) Why do tourists go to Prague?
- 4) Have you ever been ripped off in Prague? How?
- 5) What do you think of Prague taxis?
- 6) Are there too many tourists in Prague?
- 7) Where's a good place to stay in Prague?
- 8) Where's a good place to eat in Prague?
- 9) Where's a good place to drink in Prague?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's brainstorm! Your city / town

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

You have been asked to organise a tour around your city/town next week for a group of foreign tourists. Choose a spokesperson who can present your ideas to the class at the end of your preparation about where you will take them. Why here? Present it visually or use the board etc. Try to be imaginative!

Your city / town

The teacher can moderate the session

GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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Hands up those of you that have been to Prague. I can't think of anyone who hasn't - such is its (1)_____ with visiting tourists. So why do people go there? There are (2)_____ a 101 reasons why you should visit Prague - such is its charm. For those who haven't, it might just be worth booking a (3)_____ there. For those not exactly sure where Prague is - let me inform you that it is in the Czech Republic, which is in 'Central Europe - The Heart of Europe!' It is the capital city. Without further (4)_____ let me take you on a leisurely (5)_____ around Prague... Known as 'the Paris of the East' and as 'the city of 100 steeples', its crowded old (6)_____ streets serve tourists 365 days a year. It constantly tops other top European cities to visit - like London, Paris, Budapest and Vienna. (7)_____ of airlines fly to Prague, often with cheap airfares, making it a (8)_____ place to visit. From children to old age pensioners, the city is a huge hit with all ages. Prague offers tourists so much more than people expect.

bargain

undoubtedly

cobblestone

stroll

dozens

trip

ado

popularity

The (1)_____ city of 1.2 million is full of stories and legends to discover and hear. Mind you, it is also (2)_____ full of stag parties and sometimes suffers from 'too many tourists in your face' (3)_____ - such is its popularity. Number one attraction must be either Prague Castle, which dates from the 9th century and (4)_____ the old city, or Charles Bridge that is packed with tourists buying (5)_____ from (6)_____ or listening to musicians play. It is said people have been crossing this bridge since 1357! There are more than 80 museums, including the famous Transport Museum, and 70 theatres to visit including the National Marionette Theatre. The International Institute of Marionette Art is also worth visiting as are some great historic cinemas - from 30s art deco to communist designed (7)_____. There are also one or two pubs, to say the least, that serve some magnificent Czech (8)_____ like Pilsner and Budweiser.

facades

syndrome

historical

overlooks

artisans

knickknacks

unfortunately

beer

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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Hands up (1)___ of you that have been to Prague. I can't think of anyone who hasn't - such is its popularity with visiting tourists. So why do people go (2)___? There are undoubtedly a 101 reasons why you should visit Prague - such is its charm. For those who haven't, it (3)___ (4)___ be worth booking a trip there. For those not exactly sure where Prague is - let me inform you that it is in the Czech Republic, which is in 'Central Europe - The Heart of Europe!' It is the capital city. Without further ado let me take you on a leisurely stroll around Prague... Known as 'the Paris of the East' and as 'the city of 100 steeples', its crowded old cobblestone streets serve tourists 365 days a year. It constantly tops (5)___ top European cities to visit - like London, Paris, Budapest and Vienna. Dozens of airlines fly to Prague, often with cheap airfares, making it a bargain place to visit. (6)___ children to old age pensioners, the city is a huge hit with all ages. Prague offers tourists so (7)___ more (8)___ people expect.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	syndrome	11	cuisine
2	underground	12	astronomical
3	popularity	13	definitely
4	cobblestone	14	ado
5	infrastructure	15	fabulous
6	occasionally	16	knickknacks
7	traditional	17	unfortunately
8	musicians	18	magnificent
9	artisans	19	leisurely
10	undoubtedly	20	historical

LINKS

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague>

<http://www.prague.cz/>

<http://www.prague.com/>

<http://www.pragueexperience.com/>

<http://www.prague.net/>

<http://www.prague-hotels.org.uk/>

<http://www.a-prague.com/>

<http://www.experienceprague.com/>

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