

# 2<sup>nd</sup> SPRING MEETING

Prague, Czech Republic – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010



## Introducing Prague

"Prague is one of those rare cities that truly lives up to its hype. It continues to surprise you at every corner."

Rama, India

Prague is situated on the Vltava River in central Bohemia, Prague has been the political, cultural and economic centre of the Czech state for more than 1100 years. For many decades during the Gothic and Renaissance years, Prague was the permanent seat of two Holy Roman Emperors and thus was also the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. Today, the city proper is home to more than 1.2 million people, while its metropolitan area is estimated to have a population of over 1.9 millions. Since 1992, the extensive historic centre of Prague has been included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, making the city one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe, receiving more than 4.1 million international visitors annually, as in 2009. Prague is a fairy-tale town of magical beauty sitting at the very hearth of Europe. Frequently it is said to be difficult or even impossible to admire it fully in the course of several days only.



## Culture

Prague is a true cultural treasure trove, bursting with fascinating museums, galleries, theatres, and music venues. The city regularly plays host to numerous prestigious exhibitions, events, and more international festivals than you can shake a very large stick at.

In a historical sense, Prague has always been a cultural city of influence: Mozart wrote "Don Giovanni" here, the great Czech composer Antonín Dvorak spent most of his life here, and Franz Kafka is one of the city's most famous sons.

Much of this cultural dominance is due to the early establishment of a University in Prague. In 1348, the Charles University became the first such institution in central Europe, and it immediately began attracting great minds to the city. Culture's role was of course somewhat depleted during the dark days of communist rule, but the Velvet Revolution - initiated by several peaceful Charles University student demonstrations - allowed creativity to take on forms other than that allowed by the authorities (or those which were aimed at sneaking under their radar!).

Today, Prague once again shines brightly and proudly as a cultural beacon. As a city to create, exhibit, or perform in, it knows no equal, and this is reflected in the vast range of events that take place here.

Should I attempt to preface the city of a hundred spires, its lovely architecture cannot be forgotten. Search in your memory for a name of any style you can think of. Prague will almost certainly have some landmark to offer.

On the one hand, there are countless captivating churches including the Loreto or the Church of St Nicholas. On the other hand, you can try to hunt down the treasures hidden in the Jewish Quarter or visit some of the monasteries such as Strahov Monastery or its Breznov colleague.

The renowned Charles Bridge requires no introducing and indisputably also deserves to receive a big tick on the what-to-do-and-see list. Not only is this historical jewel simply beautiful but its statues can make your wishes come true. Do not have any doubts, once you experience the mystical atmosphere of narrow streets and feel the cobble stones underneath your feet, you will believe that Prague is truly magical.

The Prague Castle, an ancient symbol of the Czech lands, is the most significant Czech monument and one of the most important cultural institutions in the Czech Republic. The Prague Castle was most likely founded in around 880 by Prince Borivoj of the Premyslid Dynasty (Přemyslovci). According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the Prague Castle is the largest coherent castle complex in the world, with an area of almost 70,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The Astronomical Clock on the Old Town Hall is one of the major sights of the city and many visitors mention it as one of the most outstanding things to see in Prague. It reveals the respectful regard that people of the past felt for the heavenly order.

The Prague Astronomical Clock or (Prague Orloj) is a medieval astronomical clock. The Orloj is mounted on the southern wall of Old Town City Hall in the Old Town Square and is a popular tourist attraction.

It is composed of three main components: the astronomical dial, representing the position of the Sun and Moon in the sky and displaying various astronomical details; "The Walk of the Apostles", a clockwork hourly show of figures of the Apostles and other moving sculptures; and a calendar dial with medallions representing the months.

If you have more time available, you can explore Prague in more detail. There are always things to do and places to go and it is always a pleasure to just stroll the streets of the Lesser Town, Old Town and Hradčany. You can also visit some museums or galleries, get outside of the historical center, or take a trip out of Prague.



## FACTS

Area of Prague 496 square km

Population of Prague 1,21 million inhabitants (2008)

Capital Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic

Executive language Czech language

Currency Czech crown - czech symbol "Kc", international symbol "CZK"

1 USD = 18.60 CZK

1 GBP = 29.69 CZK

1 EUR = 25.92 CZK

Time zone Central European time zone - GMT+1, in summer - GMT+2

Elevation of Prague 180 - 400 m above sea level

Telephone country prefix 00420

Internet country code .cz

Prices in general

Domestic Beer (0.5 liter draught) 1.32 €

Imported Beer (0.33 liter bottle) 2.12 €

Taxi 30 Minute Ticket 0.69 €

## CLIMATE

The Czech Republic has a mild climate with warm, sometimes damp, summers and cold winters. The average temperature in summer is 24 °C (74 °F) [can be also 30 °C (92 °F)]. At night, temperature falls to 15 °C (46 °F).

In winter, the daily temperature averages around the freezing point and falls at night into -4 °C (26 °F). January and February are the coldest months when the daily temperature hovers around -5 °C (23 °F).

Spring and summer tend to be the sunniest months, the period between May and August is the rainiest. Snow is rare in Prague during winter.

## LIST OF LINKS TO WEBSITES WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PRAGUE

General Information about Prague:

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

Prague tourist information:

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

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

Prague city map:

<http://www.dpp.cz/en/>



## THE HOTEL:

### **Novotel Praha Wenceslas square**

<http://www.novotel.com/gb/hotel-3194-novotel-praha-wenceslas-square/index.shtml>



## Contact information

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