



Explore CZECHIA BY TRAM

The former Czech Republic has plenty to offer, both within and beyond its famous capital

Nestled in the heart of Europe, Czechia boasts historic sights, amazing art and remarkable food and drink. Prague, its capital and one of the world's most beautiful cities, is a must-see, but why stop there? Other fascinating cities like Brno and Olomouc are an easy day trip from the centre, thanks to its excellent train service. Here are just some of the highlights.

Get arty in Brno

This vibrant city, full of eateries and bars, is also home to a stand-out example of modern architecture. Villa Tugendhat was constructed in the 1920s as a family home, and the design of the modernist glass and concrete house with its open-plan spaces is so influential that it's now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The treaty separating the Czech Republic from Slovakia

was signed in its garden. A 90-minute tour is available for just £14 (tugendhat.eu).

You can see other works of contemporary art in Brno, such as the city's iconic bullet-shaped astronomical clock, or simply enjoy its thriving culture of artisan cafés and bars.

Feeling peckish?

To eat like a local, why not start your day with a kolache – a sweet pastry filled with fruit or cheese. Kolacherie near the Old Town Square in Prague is a great place to pick one up

(kolacherie.cz). Old-style cellar restaurants such as U Mecenáše, which is one of the oldest in Prague, serve traditional Czech dishes like pork knuckle in striking gothic surroundings (restauraceumecenase.com).

For a more up-to-date vibe, Lokal offers authentic dishes including minced pork

schnitzel, fried cheese, and beef tartar (lokal-dlouha.ambi.cz). If it's all looking a bit meaty, Forky's is a 100% vegan bistro with branches in Brno and Prague (forkys.eu).

Hop to it

Czechs are something of an authority on lager. Not only did they invent it, they also consume the highest quantity per person in the world. At the recently opened Pilsner Urquell: The Original Beer Experience in Prague you can get the low-down on the country's most iconic beer and enrol in its Tapster Academy to gain a certificate in perfect pouring. This attraction is great fun whether you're a beer lover or not (pilsnerexperience.com).

An easy and informative way to see the sights is on a city tour (praguecityadventures.com). There's a wide choice including food excursions, and a city highlights tour that covers lunch and tram tickets (from £76).

Brno's cathedral dominates the city's skyline



Sample a kolache, a tasty filled pastry



WORDS: SARAH NEAL. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, CESKE DRAHY. DETAILS CORRECT AT TIME OF WRITING



Day trips by rail are so easy – and affordable

Folk dancers take to the streets in Brno

Savour beautiful Olomouc

Only two hours from Prague by train, this fascinating city is packed with elegant buildings and magnificent monuments. It's sometimes called 'a pearl on a green cushion' because of the many parks surrounding the historic centre. A stroll through its streets and squares is like a step back in time, with famous sights including the Column of the Holy Trinity – the tallest Baroque sculpture in Central Europe. There's also the Astronomical Clock, with

communist labourers hammering out the midday chimes. Don't forget to sample Olomouc's most celebrated delicacy – a fiercely smelly cheese called Olomoucké tvarůžky (tourism.olomouc.eu).

Make tracks

Trains in the Czech Republic are comfortable, efficient and cheap, with a first-class ticket from Prague to Olomouc costing around £21. Expect a buffet service, complimentary water and even a free glass of prosecco on some routes! Book online at cd.cz/en.

Luxury lodgings

For a stylish stay in Prague, the Almanac X Alcron is a smart choice, not least because of its heritage. This art deco icon was Prague's most fashionable hotel in its 1930s heyday, playing host to the likes of Charlie Chaplin and Winston Churchill. It was recently refurbished to luxurious standards but retains some historic features. King-size rooms start at £214 per night (almanachotels.com).

* Always check the latest travel advice before booking a trip

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