



# Go to Prague

## And Czech Republic (Part 1)

By Allan Kissam

Most vacationers to Europe nibble around the edges. At the center of Europe is the Czech Republic, with its historic Prague and a countryside perfect for vacationing. Starting this series of articles with some recent history provides a reason for going to the Czech Republic. Prague, the capital city, and Brno, a major interior city, suffered only limited fighting during World War II. Missing out on the bombing and destruction

means this city is not a Disneyland-like reconstruction of what once was. The architecture and sites really do date before the 10th century.

So, follow General Patton's path to Prague... plunge into the heart of Europe! If interested, follow this link to more information about recent history.

Travel by jet into the modern Prague international airport. Recovery from travel usually begins with a Prague hotel that

offers a central location. Hotel Grand Majestic is truly majestic and in the center of old, historic Prague. Also, near popular shopping and historic sites is the Radisson Blu Alcron Hotel. Dating back to 1932, the Blu Alcron Hotel is impeccably restored to showcase its original Art Deco design.

While in Prague, spend at least three days to discover what it has to offer. Take time for a stroll across the Charles bridge

Pilsen beer is drawn in a traditional manner alongside genuine Czech cuisine. Try the traditional dumplings and wild boar.

Day trips in and around Prague include the city of Melnik and its Lobkowitz Castle full of antique decorations, an excellent restaurant, and wine tasting from centuries old cellars. Nearby Prague, the Terezin



















“Go Bohemian on your next travel adventure!”

Concentration Camp was where a Nazi-run Potemkin village fooled Red Cross inspectors. Art, history, and technical museums around the capital will fill a day (Kbely aviation, national technical, and even one for Communism artifacts).

In the next article on Czech Republic travel, enjoy a day trip from Prague to Kutna Hora and its world famous St. Barbara's church. This is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the filming location of numerous motion pictures. Here is where to meet new friends; the gargoyles haunting the roof edge. The church arranged a walk around the gothic-spired roof and dizzying view from a gargoyles perch.

Finally, the last article in this series is a trip to the inland area of the Czech Republic, including the winery area lodging. At the heart of Europe and a transportation hub, the Czech Republic roads lead to Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Austria. A trip to a nearby Czech wine region, Moravia, can be at vineyards only a stone's throw from Austria. Winery tasting rooms in villages become a mecca for tourists from Vienna and Germany throughout the summer. Hiking or bicycling between villages is a recommended experience. This article on a trip to historic Brno, wineries, and vineyards includes information on how to arrange wild boar hunting while in the area.

Go Bohemian on your next travel adventure!

In 1945, General Patton and his Army troopers liberated the western regions of then Czechoslovakia and met the last hardcore Nazis nose-to-nose in these towns. US soldier memoirs describe greetings by Czech people dressed in traditional garb, while across town the Nazis were fighting off Czech partisans. Only the most dedicated Nazi soldiers fought the Americans at this point in the war, preferring to surrender before the advancing Soviets got them.

Czechoslovakia did suffer socialism under a Soviet-backed Communist Party and, briefly, in a so-called Prague Spring of 1968 attempted democracy. Soviet tanks on the streets of Prague put down any immediate hope of freedom.

A "velvet revolution" took place from 1989-1992, corresponding with the Soviet Union breaking apart. In 1993, the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia took place with the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic.

Today, the Czech Republic thrives under a freely-elected NATO member government. Czech troops serve in the multi-national forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Personal politics aside about these conflicts, the Czech people are friendly to everyone.

Extensive history is available about Bohemia and Czech history. The above is only intended to refresh the memories that are germane to current events. ■



*Photography by Allan Kissam.*