

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

From camp sites with big fields and bungalows to family-run *penzióny/penzióny* (guesthouses), from rustic mountain huts to five-star hotels with white-gloved bellmen: lodging in the two republics runs the gamut. It may be a communist hold over, but most towns have at least one hotel, and even in villages there's someone willing to rent a room. You can usually get a list of all accommodation (private rooms, student dorms, *penzions* and hotels) in the area from the local tourist office, and it may be at least partially posted on the town/tourist office website.

The listings in the sleeping sections of this book fall under three broad categories: budget (under 600Kč/1000Sk), midrange (600Kč/1000Sk to 2000Kč/2700Sk) and top

end (more than 2000Kč/2700Sk). As you would expect, accommodation in the capitals is more expensive, particularly in Prague: budget (under 2000Kč), midrange (2000-4000Kč), top end (greater than 4000Kč). Accommodation in West Bohemian spa towns, such as Karlovy Vary, and in Slovak's second city, Košice, tends to cost more as well.

Unless otherwise noted, we quote rates for the high season (usually April or May through September or October). Major ski areas like the Krkonoše and Tatras mountains have a winter price peak from January through March or April that exceeds the summer peak, with prices over the Easter and Christmas/New Year holidays being the highest. Lodging establishments in resort areas drop their rates dramatically during spring and autumn. Some hotels quote their rates in euros and, when this occurs, we've done the same.

Breakfast may be included in the rate; if not, it can usually be added for 80Kč/Sk to 200Kč/Sk. Guarded parking can cost anything from 100Kč/100Sk to 450Kč/300Sk per day. In Slovakia an accommodation tax of 30Sk per person is always tacked on to the bill. High-speed internet access, where available (big cities), is usually complimentary, but a few places charge around 300Kč/Sk a day.

Nonsmoking rooms are not always an option nation-wide; the further east you go, the less likely you'll find dedicated, smoke-free rooms.

Prices in this book are quoted in the currency the establishment uses. Most base their rates on the crown, but a few are tied to the euro, especially top-end hotels.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

The following websites might be of help:

Bookings.sk (www.bookings.sk) Slovakia-wide accommodation reservations.

Czech Hotels (www.czechhotels.cz) Hotels in the Czech Republic.

Limba (www.limba.sk) Private *chaty* you can rent across Slovakia.

Travel.cz (www.travel.cz) Prague and Czech Republic accommodation booking service.

Travel Guide (www.travelguide.cz, www.travelguide.sk) Comprehensive online accommodation listings, with booking facilities.

Ubytujsa (www.ubytujsa.sk) Good number of private accommodation, guesthouses and huts in Slovakia.

Apartments

If you're planning to stay a while, it might be worth considering renting an apartment. *Prague Post's* and *Slovak Spectator's* classified sections are good sources of information for long-term rentals, as is www.praguehome.com. Apartments with kitchens in Prague start at around 14,000Kč per month. For shorter term rentals you'll pay prices comparable to hotel rooms (€60 to €150 a night in Bratislava).

Short-term internet resources:

Interhome (www.interhome.us) Lists apartments and homes by week/weekend in Czech and Slovak Republics (there is a booking fee).

Apartments.cz (www.apartments.cz) Studios to three-bedrooms in Prague's centre.

Bratislava Hotels (www.bratislavahotels.com) Apartments in Bratislava's old town and beyond.

Camping

Camping grounds vary greatly across both countries; generally there are spaces for caravans and most have basic bungalows, huts or cabins for rent. Often tents are pitched randomly in a big open field in the centre and the cabins are arranged around the edge, near the tree line.

Facilities may be basic and run down, or you might find bars, discos, minigolf and boat rentals in a lakeside location. Most have some food service. Unless otherwise noted in this book, all camping grounds are open from May to October only.

Typical prices include a per-person rate, which is generally from around 50Kč/80Sk to 120Kč/100Sk plus charges per tent (50Kč/60Sk to 100Kč/100Sk). A car will cost about 70Kč/90Sk extra. Huts or bungalows are usually 120Kč/150Sk to 260Kč/250Sk per bed, more if they have bathrooms.

HOW MANY NUMBERS DOES A SLOVAK ADDRESS NEED?

You're walking down the street in Slovakia, looking for your hotel, and lo and behold, every house you come across has two numbers, one in black and one in red. Which is correct? Well, both actually, but the one you're looking for is in black (usually a lower number), which is the actual street address. Red indicates the house registration number.

Camp CZ (www.camp.cz) is an excellent online source for Czech camping. In conjunction with the **Slovak Camping and Caravanning Club** (www.caravanning.sk), VKÚ maps puts out the *Mapa Autokempingov*, listing camping grounds throughout Slovakia.

Hostels

A hostel can be anything from a bunk bed in room of 12 to a double with shower, the common factor being that you pay by the bed (if you want a double to yourself, you have to pay for two beds). Outside the capitals there aren't a lot of backpacker-style hostels (*hostel*) with nifty internet connections, game rooms and kitchens. Mostly what you'll find are basic tourist or worker hostels (*ubytovna/ubytovná*) where sleeping may be dorm style, or you may get a tiny room with shared facilities.

In July and August, student dormitories open to all travellers and provide the cheapest lodging (about 300Kč/Sk to 500Kč/Sk per person). Only a few of these have places to eat or kitchens on the premises. Most do not have curfews.

Hotels

Prague has some truly stylish top-end sleeps that are comparable to Western Europe standards and prices. Bratislava lags behind a bit; no five-star ratings there, though Hotel Marrol's (p348) comes awfully close. The main difference between midrange hotels and *penzions* are the facilities. A hotel will almost always have a restaurant and a bar, and may have business services, a fitness centre and pool.

Single-bed rooms are regularly available, and single occupancy of a double room is normally two-thirds the cost of full occupancy. If sleeping near your partner is important

to you, check if the place has a room with a *manželská postel* (literally 'marriage bed', a bed with one continuous queen mattress) as doubles are often designed with two twin beds for conventioners. Even when the twin beds are pushed together, you have a gap. *Apartmenty* are more expensive and they are usually suites, not apartments, as few have kitchens.

Mountain Huts

In hilly or mountainous natural areas you have yet another lodging option. *Chata/chaty* (singular/plural) are mountain huts (also called *bouda* or *chalupa* in Czech), which can be anything from shack to chalet. In national parks these huts sit along high-altitude trails, creating sleeping network for hikers. They may be rustic log or communist concrete, dorm- or hotel-style, but some sort of food is usually available at all of them. Off trail, near villages (usually at lower elevations), a *chata* is as likely to be a log cottage for rent to holiday travellers as it is a rustic mountain guest-house. Prices are quite reasonable, no matter the type (200Kč/250Sk to 300Kč/500Sk per person); the clean air and nature are thrown in for free.

Pensions

Pension or *penzión* equates to the similar word in English, and most of these are family-run guesthouses that have breakfast rooms, if not a small restaurant. Some larger hotels have co-opted the word to sound homey, but, in general, *pensions* have more character and are smaller than hotels. Depending on the quality of the appointments and the proximity to a town centre, you may pay just as much at one of these as at a hotel. With midrange prices, *pensions* are more often than not the best choice, especially if you want to avoid institutional high-rise lodging.

Private Rooms

Keep your eye out for signs on homes advertising *Zimmer frei* (German for 'room available') or *privat* (private room). Renting rooms in private homes is common near the more popular tourist destinations. Touts swarm around the capitals' main train stations, some of them honest amateurs with good deals to offer – but check the map and the transport, as some places are way out in the 'burbs. You may have to share the bathroom with the

family, but, more and more, these places are being run like tiny *pensions*.

The local tourist office will usually have a list of private accommodation and you can find some on town and tourist websites. Where there's a particular street or neighbourhood with a lot of good options, we've listed them in the destination sections. Rooms generally go for around 300Kč/250Sk to 450Kč/500Sk per person; add another 30% to 50% when you're staying in Prague and Bratislava. Most private accommodation offers discounts for longer stays but put their prices up for Easter, Christmas and some European holidays.

BUSINESS HOURS

Most shops open from 9am to 5pm or 6pm Monday to Friday, and until noon or 1pm on Saturday. The small, local *potraviny* (supermarket) opens earlier (at 6:30am or 7am) but otherwise has normal shop hours. Big chain department and grocery stores (like Billa and Tesco) stay open until 9pm weekdays and 7pm weekends if they are in an old town centre; a *hypermarket* on the outskirts of big cities may be open 24 hours.

Restaurant and café hours are from around 10:30am to 10:30pm daily; where they deviate from these times by more than an hour, we've noted this throughout the book. Bars and nightclubs are a bit trickier. As a general rule, bars and pubs are open from around noon until midnight or 1am, but stay open later on Friday and Saturday. Clubs may not open until 4pm, and on weekends may stay open until 4am. Those in smaller cities sometimes only open on weekends.

Banks and post offices are generally open from 8.30am to 4.30pm weekdays. Exchange offices in Prague are open later. Note that many places, including some tourist and left luggage offices in small towns, close for a lunch break between noon and 1pm.

CHILDREN

Czechs and Slovaks are generally family oriented, but most restaurants do not specifically cater to children and you'll rarely find one with a kids' playground and high chairs. Some list a children's menu (*dětský jídelniček/dětský jídelny listok*), but when they don't they may be able to provide smaller portions for a lower price. While the attitude towards children is welcoming, breast feed-

ing and nappy changing in public is pushing the limit.

Everything you would find in Western countries, such as disposable nappies and baby food, is widely available throughout the larger towns. Day-care centres are practically nonexistent, but some of the top-end hotels have baby-sitting services. Generally speaking, only the top-end hotels can provide cots and other child-oriented equipment. International and more reliable car-rental agencies hire out child safety seats.

At present, there are no organisations specifically catering to children's travel needs in either republic. A useful source of information when travelling with children is Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*, by Cathy Lanigan.

Sights & Activities

Especially in the big cities there are plenty of activities for children – museums, zoos and the ever-popular puppet theatres (*loutkové divadla/bábkové divadlo*).

Among the possibilities for children in Prague (p120), check out the Toy Museum and the large playground on Petřín Hill. In Brno there's a planetarium (p302); Bratislava has a cool zoo (p346) and Košice a steam train ride (p410). All four cities also have puppet theatres with matinees.

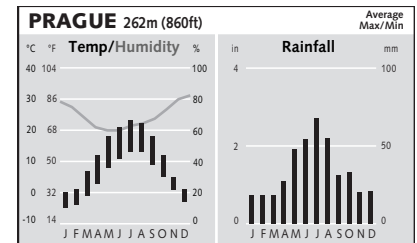
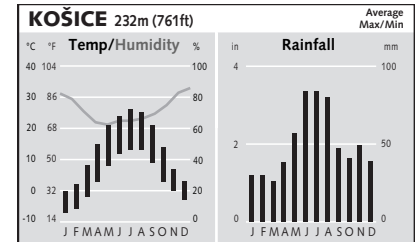
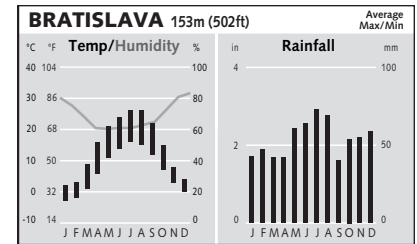
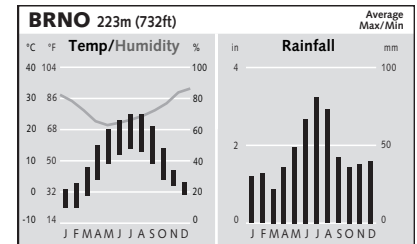
Little ones under six gain free entry into sights and travel free on public transport; children between six and 14, as well as students with an ISIC card, will receive a discount.

CLIMATE CHARTS

The damp continental climate of most of the Czech Republic and Slovakia is characterised by warm, showery summers and cold, snowy winters. Spring and autumn feature generally changeable conditions with rain always possible. Although the Czech Republic enjoys marginally milder weather than Slovakia, variations between them are small compared with those between the low elevations and the mountains.

The following climate charts show average temperatures and rainfall in the larger cities, but these can vary wildly from year to year. For instance, in spring 2006, both countries experienced minor flooding (minor compared with the flood in 2002 anyway).

See When to Go (p14) for more information on seasons.



COURSES

If you're interested in learning a few tongue twisters in Czech or Slovak, a language course is the way to go. The larger cities have language schools; some of the better establishments are listed here.

Prague
Institute for Language & Preparatory Studies
 (ÚJOP; Map p112; ☎ 224 990 411; www.ujop.cuni.cz;

Vratislavova 10, Vyšehrad; metro Vyšehrad) Six-week Czech language courses for foreigners (€585, not including accommodation).

London School of Modern Languages (Map p116; ☎ 222 515 018; www.londonschool.cz; Budečká 6, Vinohrady; tram 4, 22, 23) Individual courses (610Kč an hour).

Bratislava

Institute for Language and Academic Preparation for Foreign Students (Map p338; ☎ 6353 3147; www.ujop.com; Tematínska 10, Petržalka) Eighteen-day summer courses cost €450 (without accommodation).

International House Bratislava (Map p340; ☎ 5296 2675; www.ihbratislava.sk; Nám SNP 14) Three-day to semester-long Slovak language courses (3600Sk).

CUSTOMS

Travellers coming from outside the EU can import/export a duty-free maximum of: 200 cigarettes (or equivalent other tobacco products), 2L still wine, 1L liquor or 2L fortified wine, 60mL perfume, 250mL eau de toilette, and €175 worth of all other goods (including gifts and souvenirs).

Travelling within the EU, allowances are much greater: 800 cigarettes (or equivalent), 20L wine, 10L spirits, 110L beer. Note that until 2008, you can only take 200 cigarettes into Austria, Belgium, Germany, the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, France and Ireland from the Czech and Slovak Republics; from then the allowance is 800.

Pets can be brought into the republics with a rabies vaccination certificate and an examination certificate made out within three days of departure.

Antiques technically need a certificate declaring that they are not an 'article of national cultural heritage', which are prohibited from export. The dealer you buy them from should be able to help.

In the Czech Republic you can import or export unlimited amounts of Czech and foreign currency, but amounts exceeding 500,000Kč must be declared. Slovakia allows the import or export of up to 150,000Sk of local or foreign currency.

With accession to the EU, customs checking at EU border points has become rather lax. The only place you are likely to encounter delays is entering Slovakia from the Ukraine – thorough searches for contraband cigarettes take ages.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Prague has some typical big-city problems (for more information, see p86), but outside these, serious crime directed at travellers is fairly remote. One the other hand, pickpocketing and the theft of valuables from car seats (even in locked cars) does happen. Be aware of your surroundings in crowds and don't leave anything in view. Also, secure your belongings on overnight trains; the thieves that roam the cars while you sleep may be an urban myth, but why chance it?

PRACTICALITIES

- Newspapers – Check English-language weeklies **Prague Post** (www.thepraguepost.com) and **Slovak Spectator** (www.slovakspectator.sk) for current affairs and event listings.
- Online news – **Prague Daily Monitor** (www.praguemonitor.com), **News Agency of Slovakia** (www.task.sk).
- TV – The state-run channels are ČT 1 and ČT 2 (analogue), ČT24 and ČT4 sports (digital) in the Czech Republic, and STV 1 and STV 2 in Slovakia. Foreign programs are dubbed rather than subtitled.
- Electricity – Outlets in both republics use the two small round holes common throughout central Europe (220V AC, 50Hz).
- Toilets – Carry small change (anything from 2Kč/5k to 5Kč/5k) for public toilets. Men's are marked *muži* or *páni*, women's *ženy* or *dámy*.
- Laundry – Brno and Prague have self-service laundrettes (there are none in Bratislava). Outside these, even laundry service outlets (*prádelna/čistiareň*) are rare.
- Weights and measures – The metric system is used throughout the republics; a comma is used in place of a decimal point, and full stops are used in place of a comma in numbers in the thousands, millions etc.

Local police investigators aren't known for being the world's most helpful, and you might find it useful to contact your embassy for assistance navigating the police report if you have something stolen.

Scams

There are a number of troublesome scams or annoyances, not all specific to this region, to watch out for. Naturally enough, the prime trouble spots for pickpocketing are where people gather in crowds. Classic pickpocket set ups involve someone creating a distraction (kids surrounding and hassling you, a man pushing the wrong way on a door from the outside so you can't exit a shop) while accomplices delve into your bags and pockets. Another favourite situation for a pickpocket is boarding a crowded tram or metro train, then stepping off with your goods right as the door closes.

Another scam involves a 'lost tourist' asking for directions (usually in halting English). Once you're talking, two people claiming to be plain-clothes policemen (who are actually the 'tourist's' friends) come up and accuse you of changing money illegally. They will demand to see your wallet and passport, but if you hand them over they will just run off. If in doubt, insist on accompanying them to a police station. (Note: ticket inspectors on public transport are notoriously low-key, and occasionally look a little thug-like. If you have the wrong ticket, or have travelled longer than the allotted time, they have the right to demand the fine on the spot. This is not a scam.)

Finally, in this plastic world, it pays to let your credit cards and banks know where to reach you. We've heard of the occasional credit card number stolen without the card being missing (it was either bought from a vendor who swiped it or from a fake reader placed in an ATM machine). Most cards have fraud protection, but if it happens to you, filing a police report can help prove you're in the Czech Republic, not in Bangladesh or wherever the money was charged.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

The reality is that facilities for disabled people are only slowly coming to the Czech and Slovak Republics, with Prague being by far the most well equipped. The handy *Wheeling the Czech Republic* booklet, available from **Czech**

Tourism (Map p116; ☎ 221 580 111; www.czechtourism.com; Vinohradská 46, Vinohrady; ☎ 8:30am-noon & 1-4pm) is worth getting hold of. It has information on arriving in the Czech Republic and lists wheelchair-friendly hotels and tourist attractions across the country. They will send a copy to you if you email them. The **Prague Wheelchair Users Organisation** (Map p98; Pražská organizace vozíčkářů; ☎ 224 827 210; www.pov.cz, in Czech; Benediktská 6, Staré Město) is a good source of information and publishes a handy guide and CD-ROM called *Accessible Prague*. In Prague, even the monthly what's-on booklet *Přehled* (in Czech) indicates venues with wheelchair access. The www.czecot.com website has a page 'for disabled' where you can search for accessible restaurants and hotels. **Czech Blind United** (Sjednocená organizace nevidomých a slabozrakých v ČR; ☎ 221 462 146; www.braillinet.cz; Krakovská 21, Nové Město) represents the vision-impaired.

In Prague several bus routes and metro stations are wheelchair accessible; a list is available online from **Prague Public Transport** (DDP; www.dp-praha.cz). **Czech Railways** (ČD; www.cd.cz) claims that all of the larger stations in the Czech Republic have ramps and lifts for assisting wheelchairs onto the train, but the harsh reality is that the service is poor.

Unfortunately Slovakia's capital is quite a bit behind its neighbour. The main organisation fighting to improve the situation is the **Slovak Union for the Disabled** (Slovenský zväz telesne postihnutých; Map p338; ☎ 02-6381 4478; www.sstp.sk; Ševčenkova 19, Bratislava), where English is spoken. Most top-end hotels in Bratislava have wheelchair ramps. Slovakia's trains often have a wheelchair access carriage; it's just a pity that the train stations aren't as user-friendly. To get to most platforms you have to go down stairs, under the track, and back up a set of stairs.

DISCOUNT CARDS Hostel Card

Hostels in the Czech and Slovak Republics do not require you to have a **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com) or affiliate card. That said, the HI card entitles you to 20% to 30% discounts at some hostels and junior hotels. Apply for your HI card at home.

Seniors Cards

While seniors over 65 visiting the Czech Republic receive discounts at museums, transport ticket reductions are for residents only.

In Slovakia, it never hurts to ask if a museum offers a discount, but it's mainly applicable for resident retirees. To get discounts of 40% on the Slovak railways, buy a Senior Card (199Sk), which is good for a year, at any train station.

Student & Youth Cards

ISIC (www.isiccard.com) and **Euro26** (www.euro26.org) cards will get you discounts at most museums, galleries, theatres and at some hotels. You may even get a discount on air tickets. It's possible to buy a Euro26 card in both countries.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

It's important to understand what your home country's embassy can and can't do to help if you get into trouble. Generally speaking, they won't be much help in emergencies if the trouble you're in is even remotely your own fault and they will expect you to travel with insurance. If your money and documents are stolen, your embassy can assist you to get a new passport, however, a loan for onward travel is out of the question. Consular service hours (usually weekdays 9am to noon) at embassies in the Czech and Slovak Republics are limited.

Czech Republic

CZECH EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

The **Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (www.mfa.cz) website contains a full list of embassies and consulates around the world.

Australia (☎ 02-6290 1386; www.mfa.cz/canberra; 8 Culgoa Circuit, O'Malley, Canberra, ACT 2606)

Austria (☎ 01-8995 81 11; www.mfa.cz/vienna; Penzingerstrasse 11-13, 1140 Vienna)

Canada (☎ 613-562 3875; www.mfa.cz/ottawa; 251 Cooper Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0G2)

France (☎ 01-727 6130; www.mfa.cz/paris; 15 Ave Charles Floquet, Paris 75007)

Germany (☎ 030-226 380; www.mfa.cz/berlin; Wilhelmstrasse 44, 10117 Berlin)

Hungary (☎ 01-4625 011; www.mfa.cz/budapest; Rózsá utca 61, 1064 Budapest VI)

Ireland (☎ 01-668 1135; www.mfa.cz/dublin; 57 Northumberland Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

Netherlands (☎ 070-313 00 31; www.mfa.cz/hague; Paleisstraat 4, 2514 JA Den Haag)

New Zealand (☎ 09-353 9766; Auckland@honorary.mzv.cz; BMW Mini Centre, 11-15 Great South Rd, PO Box 7748, Auckland)

Poland (☎ 022-525 1850; www.mfa.cz/warsaw; Koszykowa 18, 00-555 Warsaw)

Slovakia (☎ 02-5920 3305; www.mfa.cz/bratislava; Hviezdoslavovo nám 8, 810 00 Bratislava 1)

UK (☎ 020-7243 1115; www.mfa.cz/london; 26 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QY)

USA (☎ 202-274 9100; www.mfa.cz/washington; 3900 Spring of Freedom St NW, Washington, D.C. 20008)

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The following are in Prague unless otherwise noted.

Australia (☎ 296 578 350; www.embassy.gov.au/cz.html; 6th fl, Klimentská 10, Nové Město) Honorary consulate for emergency assistance only (eg a stolen passport). The nearest Australian embassy is in Vienna.

Austria (Map p115; ☎ 257 090 511; www.austria.cz, in German & Czech; Viktora Huga 10, Smíchov)

Canada (☎ 272 101 800; www.canada.cz; Muchova 6, Bubeneč)

France (☎ 251 171 711; www.france.cz, in French & Czech; Velkopřevorské náměstí 2, Malá Strana)

Germany (Map p92; ☎ 257 113 111; www.deutschland.cz, in German & Czech; Vlašská 19, Malá Strana)

Ireland (Map p92; ☎ 257 530 061; pragueembassy@dfa.ie; Tržiště 13, Malá Strana)

Netherlands (☎ 233 015 200; www.netherlandsembassy.cz; Gotthardská 6/27, Bubeneč)

New Zealand (☎ 222 514 672; egermayer@nzconsul.cz; Dykova 19, Vinohrady) Honorary consulate providing emergency assistance only (eg stolen passport). The nearest New Zealand embassy is in Berlin.

Poland (Map p92; ☎ 257 099 500; www.prague.polemb.net; Valdštejnská 8, Malá Strana); Ostrava (☎ 596 118 074; Blahoslavova 4; ☎ 8.30am-noon Mon-Fri) Issues same-day visas.

Slovakia (☎ 233 113 051; www.slovakemb.cz, in Slovak; Pod Hradbami 1, Dejvice)

UK (Map p92; ☎ 257 402 111; www.britain.cz; Thunovská 14, Malá Strana)

USA (Map p92; ☎ 257 022 000; www.usembassy.cz; Tržiště 15, Malá Strana)

Slovakia

SLOVAK EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

For a comprehensive embassy list, check out the **Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (www.mfa.sk) website.

Australia (☎ 02 6290 1516; www.slovakemb-aust.org; 47 Culgoa Circuit, O'Malley, Canberra, ACT 2606)

Austria (☎ 01-318 905 5200; www.vienna.mfa.sk; Armbrustergasse 24, 1-1190 Wien)

Canada (☎ 613-749 4442; www.ottawa.mfa.sk 50 Rideau Terrace, Ottawa, Ontario K1M 2A1)

Czech Republic (☎ 233 113 051; www.praha.mfa.sk; Pod Hradbami 1, 16000 Praha 6)

France (☎ 01-44 14 56 00; www.amb-slovaquie.fr; 125 Rue de Ranelagh, 75016 Paris)

Germany (☎ 030-8892 6 200; www.botschaft-slowakei.de; Fredrichstrasse 60, Berlin 10707)

Hungary (☎ 01-460 9010; www.budapest.mfa.sk; Stefánia út 22-24, H-1143 Budapest XIV)

Ireland (☎ 01-660 0012; www.dublin.mfa.sk; 20 Clyde Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

Netherlands (☎ 070-416 7777; www.hague.mfa.sk; Parkweg 1; 2585 JG Den Haag)

UK (☎ 020-7313 6470; www.slovakembassy.co.uk; 25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QY)

USA (☎ 202-237 1054; www.slovakembassy-us.org; 3523 International Court NW, Washington, D.C. 20008)

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES IN SLOVAKIA

Australia and New Zealand do not have embassies in Slovakia; the nearest are in Vienna and Berlin respectively. The following are all in Bratislava:

Austria (Map p340; ☎ 02-5443 1443; www.embasyaustria.sk; Ventúrska 10)

Canada (Map p340; ☎ 02-5920 4031; brtsv@international.gc.ca; Mostová 2)

Czech Republic (Map p340; ☎ 02-5920 3303; www.mzv.cz/bratislava; Hviezdoslavovo nám 8)

France (Map p340; ☎ 02-5934 7111; www.france.sk; Hlavné nám 7)

Germany (Map p340; ☎ 02-5920 4400; www.pressburg.diplo.de; Hviezdoslavovo nám 10)

Hungary (Map p340; ☎ 02-5920 5200; www.hungemb.sk; Sedlárska 3)

Ireland (Map p340; ☎ 02-5443 5715; bratislava@iveagh.irlgov.ie; Carlton Savoy Building, Mostová 2)

Netherlands (Map p338; ☎ 02-5262 5081; www.hollandskoweb.com; Fraňa Kráľa 5)

Poland (Map p338; ☎ 02-5441 3174; www.polskevelyslanectvo.sk; Hummelova 4)

UK (Map p340; ☎ 02-5998 2000; www.britishembassy.sk; Panská 16)

Ukraine (Map p338; ☎ 02-5920 2810; www.ukrembassy.sk; Radvanská 35)

USA (Map p340; ☎ 02-54 43 33 38; www.usembassy.sk; Hviezdoslavovo nám 5)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The vast array of festivals and celebrations in the Czech and Slovak Republics is quite impressive and ranges from international music festivals to village folk fairs. On the Czech side, the Moravské Slovácko region (p326), in South Moravia, is a hot spot for local folk festivals. **Czech Tourism** (www.czechtourism.com) has a top events list on its website and the **Folklore**

Association of the Czech Republic (www.fos.cz) is another good source of information.

Slovakia is even more folk-oriented than its larger neighbour and just about every little village and *skanzen* (open-air village museum) seems to have a folk music and dance festival during the summer months (June through August). Look online at the **Slovak Tourist Board** (www.slovakiatourism.sk) for a comprehensive list of cultural and sporting events held throughout the year.

Larger cities in both countries sponsor seasonal music and cultural festivals that bring out special operas and concerts over the course of a month or two.

April

Burning of the Witches (Pálení čarodějnic; 30 April)

Essentially the Czech version of German *Walpurgisnacht*, a pre-Christian festival for warding off evil influence, especially witches. Bonfires are lit all over the country (including on Petřín hill in Prague), old brooms are put to the torch and people party on through the night.

Easter Monday (Velikonoce/Velkánoc) Not the most pleasant of events for women. If you're in a village, you may see young girls being swatted with braided willow switches (more so in the Czech Republic) or being doused with buckets of water (more Slovak) in a perpetuation of an old pagan springtime rejuvenation ritual. Women are supposed to reciprocate by giving the guys decorated eggs, go figure.

May

Prague Spring (Pražské Jaro; www.festival.cz) Prague's biggest festival begins on 12 May and the classical music continues until 2 June. Operas and concerts sell out, so book ahead.

Ride of the Kings (Jízda Králů; <http://jizdakralu.vlcnov.cz>) One of the Czech nation's more colourful local festivals, during which a young 'king' and helpers dress in women's clothes and ride through the streets on ribbon-bedecked horses in a re-enactment of a medieval escape. Vlcňov, in South Moravia, thus celebrates the last weekend in May.

June

Rusyn-Ukrainian Cultural Festival (Slavnosti kultúry Rusínov-Ukrajincov Slovenska; www.muk.sk) Rusyn (an east Slavic minority) music and dance troupes from Slovakia, the Ukraine, Germany, Scandinavia and elsewhere perform one weekend in late June. Upwards of 30,000 visitors come to see the show in Svidník, in east Slovakia.

July

Východná Folk Festival (Folklorný Festival Východná; www.obec-vychodna.sk, in Slovak; Východná) In late June

or early July folk dancers and musicians from across the nation and Europe gather at the biggest international folk festival in Slovakia, in the Low Tatras.

European Folk Craft Market (Európske ľudové remeslo; www.kezmarok.net) On the second weekend of July, national and international artisans gather in Kežmarok, Slovakia, to demonstrate and sell their wares.

August

Moto Grand Prix (www.automotodrombrno.cz) Brno's Auto Motodrom buzzes with excitement as international motorcycle racing stars line up in late August.

September

Bratislava Jazz Days (Bratislavských jazzových dní; www.bjd.sk) One long weekend each September really swings in Bratislava. International jazz musicians sit in on a session or two.

December

Christmas market (November 26) A few weeks before Christmas, booths selling handmade crafts and other gifts pop up on the main pedestrian square in towns across the republics. Hot spiced wine and occasional concerts are also on tap.

Mikuláš (St Nicholas; 5 December) On Nicholas's saint day, he comes to leave treats for children. In the Czech Republic he comes in person and has to contend with the Devil (both dressed-up parents, uncles or neighbours) who may leave coal or potatoes instead of chocolate and fruit. In Slovakia, St Nick is a bit more stealthy – he just leaves chocolate (or sticks) in children's shoes overnight. That explains all the chocolate Santas being sold on the streets.

FOOD

A full rundown on local cuisine, drinks and where to eat can be found in the Food & Drink chapter (p66). Restaurants in the larger centres have been broken down under various district headings into three budget categories: budget (mains less than 150Kč/Sk), midrange (mains averaging 150Kč/Sk to 300Kč/Sk) and top end (anything greater than 300Kč/Sk). Though smaller sections are undivided, they are still listed by price.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Czech Republic

Homosexuality has long been legal in the Czech Republic (the age of consent is 16), and in July 2006 same sex partnerships became lawful as well. For a while it looked as if it wouldn't happen: President Klaus vetoed the authorising bill, but parliament overturned that decision. Same-sex partnerships are now

granted many legal rights regarding financial and health matters, but they are still not allowed to adopt children. **Gay Iniciativa** (Gay Initiative; ☎ 224 223 811; www.gay.iniciativa.cz, in Czech; Senovážné náměstí 2, Nové Město) is a national gay and lesbian advocacy organisation that has information on area resources

Bimonthly gay magazine **Amigo** (www.amigo.cz) is a combination of personal ads, and a guide to gay and lesbian bars and accommodation in the Czech Republic (with a few listings for Slovakia thrown in). Other useful websites include www.gay.cz and prague.gayguide.net.

Prague, of course, has the biggest scene in either republic, for more information see Gay & Lesbian Prague (see p123).

Slovakia

In Slovakia, too, homosexuality has been legal since the 1960s (the age of consent is 16). But the Catholic Church has a much larger influence in conservative Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. Partnership bills have consistently been shot down in parliament, but in June 2006 right-of-centre parties lost the parliamentary elections. Though there are members in the prime minister's cabinet who are pushing for a law legalising same-sex unions, conservative coalition partners are unlikely to go along with it.

The gay and lesbian public presence in Slovakia is noticeably small. Though there's no gay bashing to speak of, neither is there much support. The largest gay rights organisation is **Ganymedes** (☎ 5022 8704; www.ganymedes.info in Slovak; PO Box 4, 830 00 Bratislava) and lesbian-specific, **Museion** (☎ 0905804456; www.lesba.sk; PO Box 47, 840 02 Bratislava). Helpful websites listing gay bars, hotels and cruising areas countrywide include www.gay.sk and www.gayinfo.sk.

HOLIDAYS

The following are public holidays in the Czech and Slovak Republics, when banks, offices, and many shops and grocery stores close. Some restaurants, museums and tourist attractions stay open, but public transport is greatly reduced. Getting around the countries by bus on these days is especially difficult.

School holidays fall in the months of July and August, over the Christmas period and during Easter. Like elsewhere, families take advantage of these times so expect accommodation and transport facilities to be full.

Czech Republic

New Year's Day (Nový rok) 1 January; also anniversary of the founding of the Czech Republic.

Easter Monday (Pondělí velikonoční) March or April

Labour Day (Svátek práce) 1 May

Den osvobození (Liberation Day) 8 May

Den Cyrila a Metoděje (SS Cyril & Methodius Day) 5 July

Jan Hus Day (Den Jana Husa) 6 July

Czech Statehood Day (Den české státnosti)

28 September

Independence Day (Den vzniku Československa)

28 October

Freedom & Democracy Day (Den boje za svobodu a demokracii) 17 November

Christmas (Vánoce) 24-26 December

Slovakia

New Year's Day (Nový rok) 1 January; also the anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Republic.

Three Kings Day (Tři králové) 6 January

Easter Friday & Monday (Velké Nocy) March or April

Labour Day (Sviatok práce) 1 May

Victory Over Fascism Day (Deň víťazstva nad fašizmom) 8 May

SS Cyril & Methodius Day (Sv Cyril a Metod) 5 July

Slovak National Uprising Day (Slovenské národné povstanie) 29 August

Constitution Day (Deň Ústavy Slovenskej republiky)

1 September

St Mary's Day (Sedembolestná Panna Maria)

15 September

All Saints Day (Sviatok Všetkých svätých) 1 November

Christmas (Vianoce) 24-26 December

THE CZECH CALENDAR

While most Western European languages name the months of the year according to their old Latin names, Czech uses far more poetic names taken from nature. Even natives are often uncertain of the derivations. Here's the best we could do:

leden (January) From *led* (ice); the month of frost and ice.

únor (February) From *nořit* (to sink); possibly to do with the breaking and sinking of ice on the rivers.

březen (March) From *bříza* (birch tree); the month of birches.

duben (April) From *dub* (oak tree); the month of budding oaks.

květen (May) From *květ* (flower); the month of blooming flowers.

červen (June) From *červ* (worm); the month when worms (which were once used to make a red dye) were collected. The word *červen* also means 'red'.

červenec (July) As for June.

srpen (August) From *srp* (sickle); the month of harvest.

září (September) Either from *za říje* (before the rutting season) or from *zářit* (to shine, glow), a reference to sunny autumn evenings.

říjen (October) From *říje* (the rut); the month when rutting deer are heard roaring in the woods and hills.

listopad (November) From *list* (leaf) and *pád* (fall); the month of falling leaves.

prosinec (December) From an old Czech word meaning 'grey'.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance policies covering travel changes, theft, loss and medical problems are many, and each has its own caveat, so check the small print. For example, some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities' (eg motorcycling, rock climbing, canoeing and even hiking), or require you to return to your home country every 31 days.

You can get quotes on international travel insurance at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

For more information on health insurance, see Health (p465); for information on insurance for rental vehicles, see Transport (p459).

INTERNET ACCESS

Like almost every country in Europe, the republics are quite internet savvy. You'll find plenty of internet cafés in the major cities and at least one in most towns. Villages can sometimes prove to be a problem. Places with internet access are listed throughout this book. Connection speeds and the number of terminals vary from one café to the next, but most are on high-speed lines and some have web cams for video calling. In bigger cities, prices can be as low as 50Kč/60Sk per hour and as high as 75Kč/120Sk. In smaller centres expect to pay from around 30Kč/Sk to 60Kč/Sk. In some cafés you can use your own laptop on their wi-fi system for the cost of a beverage.

If you've brought your notebook or palm-top computer with you, remember that the power supply voltage in the Czech and Slovak Republics may be different from that at home. You'll also need a European plug adaptor; often it's easiest to buy these before you leave home.

Many hotel rooms (almost all those at top-end prices) in the capitals and second cities have either wi-fi or broadband access through Ethernet ports. It can be handy to bring your own Ethernet cable, as not all places provide them in-room (or they're too short). Telephone jacks are usually USA standard (RJ-11). If you're dialling up, you may want to invest in a line tester to bring with you. That way you can tell if a dangerous electrical current that could potentially damage your modem is travelling over a hotel's digital telephone line.

International ISPs (internet service providers) such as **AOL** (www.aol.com), **CompuServe** (www.compuserve.com) and **AT&T** (www.attbusiness.net) have dial-in nodes throughout the Czech and Slovak Republics; download a list of the dial-in numbers before you leave home. Major ISPs in the Czech Republic include **Czech On Line** (www.col.cz) and **T-Com** (www.telecom.sk). Free web-based email services include **Google Mail** (Gmail; www.gmail.com) and **Yahoo** (www.yahoo.com).

Prague (p84) and Bratislava (p341) have numerous free wi-fi zones in cafés, bars and on public squares, and the number of venues increases daily.

For websites about the Czech and Slovak Republics see Getting Started (p16).

LEGAL MATTERS

Penalties for possession of drugs are harsh and it's unlikely that your embassy can do much to help you if you are caught. In the Czech Republic in 1999 it became illegal to possess 'more than a small amount' of drugs. Unfortunately the law does not define 'a small amount' or specify which drugs, giving the police a free hand to nick anyone in possession of any amount of any drug. Slovakia's situation is quite similar; you can be sentenced for up to five years for possession of a small amount of marijuana. It's simply not worth the risk to import, export or possess any illegal substances.

If you find yourself under arrest in either republic for any reason whatsoever, you are entitled to call your embassy. Note that it is

LEGAL AGE

- Drinking alcohol – 18
- Driving – 18
- Heterosexual/homosexual sex – 16
- Marriage – 18
- Smoking – 16
- Voting – 18

technically illegal not to carry some form of identification (normally your passport). If you can't prove your identity, police have the right to detain you for up to 48 hours.

Drink-driving is strictly illegal; both republics have a zero blood-alcohol limit for drivers – zero, nulla, none. Random police breathalyser stops are common. You could be sentenced to two years in jail if convicted in Slovakia and one in the Czech Republic. The fine for littering (paid on the spot) can be as much as 1000Kč/Sk. In Prague, there's a 1000Kč fine for smoking at bus and tram stops, even if they're in the open air.

MAPS

MAPS of the Czech and Slovak Republics are available in any good bookshop throughout the republics; outside the region it's best to try international publisher **Freytag & Berndt** (www.freytagberndt.com), which has good maps of both countries.

Some of the best Czech country and city maps are those by **Kartografie Praha** (www.kartografie.cz). Particularly good are the *Česká republika automapa* (1:500,000 to 1:750,000) and *Česká republika atlas* (1:150,000 to 1:700,000) series. Freytag & Berndt's multilingual *Czech Republic Road Map* (1:500,000) has route distances, sights of interest, mountain-shading and other geographical info.

VKÚ (www.vku.sk), a Slovak publisher, produces the best maps of Slovakia and her cities by far, as well as some for the Czech Republic. There is the *Automapa Slovenská republika* (1:250,000 to 1:1,000,000) or the more detailed *Autoatlas Slovenská* (1:150,000 to 1:500,000). It also produces *Vreckový Autoatlas Česká & Slovenská republika* (1:1,000,000), a pocket atlas of both republics. They also create excellent hiking (green) and skiing (blue) trail maps, as well as castle-oriented maps with descriptive booklets.

Good online maps for the Czech Republic can be found at www.supernavigator.cz and for Slovakia at www.kompas.sk. For more information on city maps, see the destination chapters.

MONEY

The Czech and Slovak Republics have separate currencies, the Koruna česká (Czech crown; Kč) and the Slovenská koruna (Slovak crown; Sk). US dollars and euros are the most sensible foreign currencies to pack. This book's inside cover has a handy exchange rate table, and the Getting Started chapter has a general rundown on costs (p16). The euro will not be introduced until 2009 at the earliest.

The Koruna česká is divided into 100 haléřů, or heller (h). Notes come in 20Kč, 50Kč, 100Kč, 200Kč, 500Kč, 1000Kč and 5000Kč denominations. Coins are 1Kč, 2Kč, 5Kč, 10Kč, 20Kč and 50Kč, and 50h. Always have a few 2Kč and 5Kč coins for use in public toilets and transport ticket machines.

The Slovenská koruna equals 100 halierů, or heller (h). Notes come in 20Sk, 50Sk, 100Sk, 200Sk, 500Sk, 1000Sk and 5000Sk denominations. Coins are 1Sk, 2Sk, 5Sk, 10Sk and 50h.

ATMs

By far the best way to carry money around is not to. ATMs (*bankomat*), which accept debit and credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Plus, Cirrus, Eurocard and EC), can be found almost everywhere in the Czech and Slovak Republics, even in smaller towns, and you generally get the market rate of exchange. Look for ATMs at transport depots, and banks on a town's pedestrian square.

Banks

In both nations banks are plentiful. Almost all branches have both an ATM and an exchange desk. **Komerční banka** (KB; www.kb.cz), **Česká spořitelna** (www.csas.cz) and **Živnostenská banka** (www1.zivnbanka.cz) are the main players in the Czech Republic. **Všeobecná úverová banka** (VÚB; www.vub.sk), **Slovenská sporiteľňa** (www.sisp.sk) and **Tatra Banka** (www.tatrabanka.sk) are in Slovakia, and **Československá obchodní banka** (ČSOB; www.csob.cz, www.csob.sk) operates in both. Branch locations and phone numbers are listed on their websites. Currency exchange commissions vary by location, but around 2% for cash and travellers cheques is standard.

Credit Cards

American Express, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted at top-end and midrange hotels, restaurants and shops in big cities; Discover and Diners Club less so. In smaller establishments and towns, American Express may not be accepted. The farther east and the smaller the town you go to in Slovakia, the less likely proprietors are to accept credit cards of any kind.

Credit cards can often be used for cash advances at ATMs if you have set up a pin ahead of time, but will likely incur a higher transaction fee than a debit card.

International Transfers

Wire money from home through **Western Union** (www.westernunion.com); you will be paid in crowns on the receiving end and there will be a hefty fee for the sender (around €30). Numerous pick-up locations in both countries include local banks and Tesco Department Stores.

Moneychangers

Private exchange offices (*směnárna/zmenareň*) are quite often conveniently located and have long hours, but that's about as far as the advantage goes. Some have great rates of exchange but charge high commissions (up to 10% in Prague) or an 'undisclosed' handling fee, while others charge zero commission but have a dismal rate of exchange. Better to use banks, if time allows, or ATMs, otherwise be sure to check all rates and fees twice. Hotels typically charge 5% commission.

You'll have no problem exchanging US dollars, British pounds and euros, but it's harder to change Polish zlotys and Hungarian forints, and you can only buy or sell Ukrainian hryvnias in Hungary.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are accepted at most banks and are relatively easy to replace if lost. Eurocheques are also widely accepted with a cheque guarantee card.

American Express (www.americanexpress.com) cashes its travellers cheques without charging commission. There's an office in Prague (p85) but not the Slovak Republic (the closest is 60km away in Vienna).

Travellex (www.travellex.com) also has an office in Prague.

POST Postal Rates

The two republics' postal services, **Česká pošta** (www.cpost.cz) and **Slovenská pošta** (www.slposta.sk), are fairly efficient and not too expensive. In both republics it's safest to mail international parcels from main post offices in large cities. However, anything you can't afford to lose should go by registered Express Mail Service (EMS).

Mail to Europe (automatically airmail) is 10Kč/12Sk for postcards and letters up to 20g; to anywhere else it costs 12Kč/16Sk. EMS is fast and secure and is available in both countries; prices start at 600Kč/600Sk. A 2kg parcel by airmail costs around 400Kč/650Sk to Europe and 560Kč/570Sk to elsewhere. Only larger post offices will let you send parcels of books or printed matter up to 15kg.

Remember to always ask for a receipt (*potvrzení/potvrdenie*) when mailing anything larger than a letter by airmail or a more expensive mail service to ensure that it is actually sent via the correct service.

If you are sending anything that looks like an antique you will probably be directed to the nearest customs clearance post office (*Pošta celnice/Poštovní colnica*).

Sending & Receiving Mail

You can buy stamps in post offices and from street vendors and newsagents. Letters go in the orange boxes outside post offices and around town.

Most larger post offices have a separate window for poste restante mail (*uložené zásilky/poste restante*), though the most reliable services are at the main post offices in Prague and Bratislava. You must present your passport to claim mail. Check under your given name too.

SHOPPING

Prague, like any cosmopolitan megacapital, abounds in shopping opportunities from high-end fashion to low-end souvenirs, but there are a few items the two republics are known for. Bohemian crystal has been attracting attention for centuries: back in the 1700s, it was already being sold in 12 European capitals. The traditional staff is weighty (24% lead) and intricately cut – the more engraved lines and stars, the more expensive. But Czech glassmakers have also embraced the medium as modern art. Vibrant and funky colours and

shapes enliven art glass. The quintessential Czech crystal company, Moser, bridges the gap with heavy, but simply elegant designs, sometimes in translucent colours. Prague clearly has the highest concentration of stores, and Moser is made in Karlovy Vary (p211), but most towns in the Czech Republic have at least one crystal shop.

Also indigenous is the *česky granát* (Czech garnet), a semi-precious stone that is usually deep red. It's mined near the East Bohemian town of Turnov, and **Granát Turnov** (www.granat-cz.com) is the only company authorised to mine and set Czech garnets. Either buy from one of the official factory stores (there's one in Prague; see p140), or make sure you get a certificate of authenticity when buying from another shop. Designs are usually characterised by numerous smaller stones arranged in clusters in necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings and pins. Again, there are jewellery stores in most old town centres in the Czech Republic.

Though Slovakia does have its own crystal-making tradition and items found in stores across the country can be much less expensive than the Czech equivalents, it's the folk crafts and ceramics here that are especially unique. Modra (p356), outside Bratislava, is the ceramic centre, turning out bright patterns in yellows and blues. Dishes, plaques and figurines often have village themes. Folk arts – woodcarving, ceramics, embroidery, painted eggs – are available at **Ulúv** (www.uluv.sk) co-operative stores across the country, and at crafts fairs during holidays.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

There's no stigma attached to travelling solo in either country. Many hostels, *pensions* and hotels have a couple of single rooms available; they generally cost a little more than half the price of a double room.

A growing number of young people speak a smattering of English and are happy to give it a whirl, though outside the larger cities it can prove hard to meet locals. That's not to say that it won't happen, but you'll probably have to make the first move, so to speak.

Prague is easily the best city to meet other travellers and expats; they're everywhere. Jáma (p136) is a well-known meeting point, as are the more popular Irish bars around town. Some hostels have their own bars so you may not even have to leave the building to start up

a conversation. In Bratislava, the Dubliner (p351) and the Slovak Pub (p351) are the English speaker hang-outs.

TELEPHONE

If you have your computer and microphone or webcam with you, **Skype** (www.skype.com) telephony service is an excellent alternative to phoning. With this service you set up a call from computer to computer for free. Skype Out allows you to call from your computer to land lines back home for as low as US\$0.02 per minute. Some internet cafés are Skype equipped.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic's country code is ☎ 420. All numbers consist of nine digits; you have to dial all nine for any call, local or long distance. There are no area codes. For directory inquiries dial ☎ 1180; international directory inquiries call ☎ 1181. To make direct-dial international calls from within the Czech Republic, dial ☎ 00, the country code and the phone number.

MOBILE PHONES

The Czech Republic is no different to the rest of Europe – everyone seems to have a mobile phone. The country uses GSM 900, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australasia, but not with the North American GSM 1900 (though some North Americans have GSM 1900/900 phones that do work). Before you leave home check rates and procedures with your provider. Some companies require that international roaming be activated before use: prices can be exorbitant and special dialling instructions may be needed.

If you plan to spend some time here, and your phone is unlocked, consider purchasing a pay-as-you-go SIM card, which will get you a local number. (Note: you won't be able to use your existing number.) The main players in the market are **T-Mobile** (www.t-mobile.cz), **Vodafone** (www.vodafone.cz) and **EuroTel** (www.eurotel.cz). Cards sell for anywhere between 300Kč and 2000Kč and credit can be added as you go. Check with your home provider to make sure your phone will work before leaving. It can be quite confusing to figure it out in-country.

PUBLIC PHONES & PHONECARDS

Blue coin telephones accept only 2Kč, 5Kč, 10Kč and 20Kč coins, but they are being

replaced by telephones that take *telecard* (phonecards). Prepaid phone cards are sold at post offices, newsagents, newsstands, petrol stations and supermarkets, and come in 150Kč to 1000Kč denominations. Czech Telecom cards are for calling within the country while companies such as **Smartcall** (www.smartcall.cz) are for international calls. Prices can be as low as 2Kč per minute off-peak to the US, UK and Australia.

Slovakia

Slovakia's country code is ☎ 421. When dialling a long-distance number from another city in Slovakia, you must dial both digits of the area code (for instance ☎ 02 for Bratislava). If you are calling long distance from outside Slovakia, you drop the zero. Local calls do not require any area code: you need only dial the local seven-digit (eight for Bratislava) number. Many businesses use mobile phones, which have numbers that generally begin with 09. In the country you need to dial all 10 numbers. If you are calling a Slovak cell phone from outside the country, again, drop the zero.

For domestic directory inquiries dial ☎ 1181; for international directory inquiries call ☎ 12149. To make direct-dial international calls dial ☎ 00, the country code and the number.

MOBILE PHONES

Like the Czech Republic, Slovakia uses GSM 900, and the same rules apply when using your phone. It's also possible to buy pay-as-you-go SIM cards here. Slovakia's main service providers, **Orange** (www.orange.sk) and **T-Mobile** (www.t-mobile.sk), have rechargeable SIM cards for sale, ranging from 400Sk to 1000Sk. You cannot use your home number with either service.

PUBLIC PHONES & PHONECARDS

Most pay phones these days require a *telefónna karta* for domestic calls, available in denominations of 175/350Sk. Purchase them at newsstands, tobacco shops, some post and tourist offices, and at petrol stations. International phone cards, like **EZ Phone** (www.ezcard.sk) are also sold there. They are the best way to call home from any phone. Rates start at just 2Sk per minute to the UK and US (3Sk to Australia). Cards are often posted in kiosk windows next to cell phone credit cards, which they look an awful lot like. Be careful what you're pointing at.

TIME

Like the rest of Continental Europe, the Czech and Slovak Republics are both on Central European Time (ie GMT/UTC plus one hour). Clocks are moved one hour forward to daylight-saving time (DST) on the last weekend in March, then back again on the last weekend in October.

Czechs quote time on a 24-hour clock. So do most Slovaks, but occasionally when speaking they may use the 12-hour clock and add *ráno* (morning) or *večer* (evening) after the number if the time of day isn't clear.

TOURIST INFORMATION Local Tourist Offices

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Tourism (Map p116; ☎ 221 580 111; www.czech-tourism.com; Vinohradská 46, Vinohrady; ☹ 8:30am-noon & 1-4pm) handles tourist information regarding sights, museums, festivals etc for the entire Czech Republic. Its network of municipal information centres (*městské informační centrum* or *středisko*) covers all the major tourist areas throughout the Czech Republic and is easily the best source of information.

SLOVAKIA

Getting information on Slovakia as a whole can be challenging in person. The **Slovak Tourist Board** (Slovenská agentúra pre cestovný ruch; ☎ 048-413 614 648; www.slovakiatourism.sk; PO Box 35, 974 05 Banská Bystrica) does not have an office open to the public but it does host an excellent website and produce slick booklets and brochures that you can write away to obtain. A few of the brochures are available at town info centres.

Most city information centres in Slovakia are independently run members of the **Association of Information Centres of Slovakia** (Asociácia Informačných Centier Slovenska, AICES; www.aices.sk). You'll find a complete list of offices on their website.

Tourist Offices Abroad

CZECH TOURISM

Twenty Czech Tourism offices exist across the globe: we've provided a sampling below. A full list can be found online at www.czech-tourism.com.

Austria (☎ 01-533 21 93; info-at@czechtourism.com; Herrengasse 17, 1010 Vienna)

Canada (☎ 416-363 9928; info-ca@czechtourism.com; Czech Airlines Office, Suite 1510, Simpson Tower, 401 Bay St, Toronto, Ontario M5H2Y4)

France (☎ 01 53 73 00 32; info-fr@czechtourism.com; Rue Bonaparte 18, Paris)

Germany (☎ 030-204 47 70; info1-de@czechtourism.com; Friedrich Strasse 206, 10 178 Berlin)

Netherlands (☎ 020-575 30 14; info-nl@czechtourism.com; Strawinskylaan 517, 1077 XX Amsterdam)

UK (☎ 020-7631 0427; info-uk@czechtourism.com; 13 Harley St, London W1G 9QG)

USA (☎ 212-288 0830; info-usa@czechtourism.com; 1109 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10028)

SLOVAK TOURIST BOARD

Austria (☎ 01-513 95 69; sacr-wien@aon.at; Prinz Eugen Strasse 70, 1040 Vienna)

Czech Republic (☎ 224 946 082; sacrpaha@seznam.cz; Jiřská 16, 110 00 Prague 1)

Germany (☎ 030-25 94 26 41; sacr-berlin@botschaft-slowakei.de; Zimmerstrasse 27, 10969 Berlin)

Netherlands (☎ 020-575 2181; info@slowaaks-veerkeersbureau.nl; WTC Amsterdam, Strawinskylaan 623, 1077 XX Amsterdam)

Poland (☎ 022-827 00 09; sacr@poczta.onet.pl; ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 13 pok.17, 00-071 Warszawa)

VISAS

Both the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the EU in 2004 and are working to get their visa regulations in line so they can join the Schengen group (possibly in 2007). Until this happens, Czech and Slovak visas are not good for entering other EU countries and visa versa. EU citizens do not need a visa for either republic and can enter with a national ID card.

Without a visa, nationals of the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (as well as many others) can visit both the Czech Republic and Slovakia for up to 90 days each. Citizens of South Africa and the Ukraine are among those that require a visa (free to €50). A full list of countries with visa waivers for the Czech Republic is available in the travel and living abroad section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website (www.mfa.cz); for Slovakia check out www.mzv.sk, under the Ministry and the Travel tabs. Visas are not issued at airports or border crossings.

If you want to extend your visa, the easiest way to do so is to day trip to a neighbouring country that has an embassy for the country you want an extension for. The nightmare bureaucratic method is to contact the **Foreigners' Police & Passport Office** Prague (Úřadovna cizinecká policie a pasové služby; Olšanská 2, Žižkov; Map p118; ☎ 974 820 238; ☹ 7.30-11.30am, noon-4.30pm & 5-7pm Mon-Thu);

Bratislava (Úřadovna cudzineckej policie a pasovej služby; Map p338; ☎ 0961-036 855; Hrobáková 44, Petržalka).

EU visitors who want to stay longer than 90 days need to check in with a different **Foreigners Police Station** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 974 820 925; Sdružení 1, Pankrac; ☹ 7.30-11.30am & 12.15pm-3pm Mon, Tue & Thu, 8am-12.15pm & 1-5pm Wed) in Prague, and the same one previously noted in Bratislava.

Technically, visitors must have the equivalent of US\$50 for each day they plan to spend in country and be able to prove they have medical insurance.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Prague is a major metropolitan area and, as such, has some areas to be avoided as well as a burgeoning sex industry; see Dangers & Annoyances (p86) for specifics. In general solo women travellers are as safe as they are in other cities elsewhere in Europe.

However, even Slovak women walking into a *hostinec* or *krčma* (local pub) would get a strange look, especially if they are alone. These hard-drinking workers' temples tend to be male territory, but there are plenty of touristy pubs (usually called *pub*), cafés and wine bars (*vinárny/vináreň*).

There are few services for women such as help lines, and refuge- or rape-crisis centres; one good contact throughout the Czech Republic is **White Circle of Safety** (Bílý kruh bezpečí; ☎ 257 317 110; www.bkkb.cz; Dušková 20, Smíchov), which provides help and counselling to victims of crime and violence. In Slovakia you can contact **Victim Support Services** (☎ 0805-011 1321; ☹ 10am-2pm & 4-8pm Mon-Fri, 6pm-10pm Sat).

Attitude-wise the republics are still a bit behind the times. Even mainstream advertising has no qualms about using the occasional naked breast to sell products. Women often work full time and take care of all the domestic duties, however, state financial support for maternity leave is good (six months on 90% of salary).

WORK

If you are looking to do a little volunteer work while you travel, **Volunteer Abroad** (www.volunteerabroad.com) is a good clearing house organisation that lists opportunities in both the Czech and Slovak Republics. **EURES** (http://europa/eures/) helps EU citizens link up with jobs in other EU nations and has Czech and Slovak advisors.

Czech Republic

Competition for job opportunities for foreigners in Prague is tough. By far the biggest demand is for teaching English, but you need a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate. Contact **TEFL Worldwide** (☎ 603 486 830; www.teflworldwideprague.com) about certification for teaching English; they help with job placement across the nation after completion of the certificate.

You might also try for hospitality jobs in expat-run bars and restaurants. There are a few foreign-firm computing, real estate and management or financial jobs, but these jobs are usually easier to get from home. The classified ads in the **Prague Post** (www.praguepost.com) are a good starting point; you can also check out the following websites: www.expat.cz, www.sigmar.cz, www.jobmaster.cz and www.jobs.cz.

Citizen of EU nations do not need a work permit. For others, normally your employer will organise a work visa for you; after you have one, you will need to obtain a residency permit from the Foreigner's Police. If you need to arrange it yourself, you must apply for one at a Czech embassy or consulate outside the Czech Republic. For more information go to the Travel and Living Abroad section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website (www.mfa.cz).

Slovakia

As in the Czech Republic, the largest numbers of jobs available are in teaching English (TEFL certificate required), but pay rates are lower and you may have to cobble together a couple of gigs to receive a full salary. Other opportunities for non-Slovak speakers exist in working for a foreign company – in which case it is much easier to find the job from home.

The **Slovak Spectator** (www.slovaksspectator.sk) classified section is the first place to look. They publish an annual *Career and Employment Guide* that has a lot of useful information on subjects such as visas, work conditions, firms and studying in Slovakia. You can order it online.

EU citizens do not need a work permit but they do have to report in with the Foreigner's Police (see Visas, left). All other nationals should technically have a work and residency permit before coming to Slovakia to settle, however, applying for one over the border at the Slovak Embassy in Vienna is not a long trip.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

In the past few years low-cost carrier flights to the Czech and Slovak Republics have multiplied like *králiky* (rabbits). But it's also easy to get to the republics by land from Continental Europe via the extensive train, bus and road networks.

You can enter the Czech Republic across the borders with Germany, Austria and Poland; and Slovakia from Austria, Hungary, Poland and the Ukraine. That's not to mention the many crossing points between the two nations.

Additionally, you can arrive in Bratislava by boat from Vienna (a viable alternative airport hub) and Budapest.

This section deals only with travel to/from the republics; travel between the two countries is dealt with in Getting Around (p457).

Look for domestic travel information in the individual city sections.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Your passport must be valid for at least six months after your intended departure date when you enter the Czech and Slovak Republics.

AIR

Most international flights arrive in Prague and Bratislava. You can get to Bratislava from destinations throughout Europe and to Prague, well, where can't you get to Prague from? A few international flights go directly to Brno, Karlovy Vary, Košice and Tatry-Poprad airports.

The high season for air travel to the Czech and Slovak Republics is roughly from May to September, and during the Easter and Christmas/New Year holidays.

Airports & Airlines

CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague-Ruzyně Airport (PRG; ☎ 220 113 314; www.csl.cz) receives flights from around the world on all the carriers listed in this section and then some. **ČSA** (OK; ☎ in Prague 239 007 007, in Bratislava 02-5296 1042, in Košice 052-6782 490; www.czechairlines.com), the national carrier of the Czech Republic, flies to destinations such as New York, Montreal, Mexico City, Seoul and Sri Lanka, in addition to European cities such as London, Paris and Madrid.

From **Brno Tuřany Airport** (BRQ; ☎ 545 521 302; www.airport-brno.cz) you can fly to London on Ryanair, and to Munich and London on Cirrus Airlines. ČSA runs four flights a week to Moscow from **Karlovy Vary International Airport** (KLV; ☎ 353 360 611; www.airport-k-vary.cz).

Main airlines flying to/from the Czech Republic:

Aer Lingus (EI; ☎ 224 815 373; www.aerlingus.ie)
Aeroflot (SU; ☎ 227 020 020; www.aeroflot.ru)

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Air France (AF; ☎ 221 662 662; www.airfrance.com/cz)

Alitalia (AZ; ☎ 224 194 150; www.alitalia.com)

Austrian Airlines (OS; ☎ 227 231 231; www.aua.com)

British Airways (BA; ☎ 239 000 299; www.britishairways.com)

Cirrus Airlines (C9; ☎ 542 213 525; www.cirrus-world.de)

Croatia Airlines (OU; ☎ 222 222 235; www.croatiaairlines.hr)

Czech Airlines (OK; ☎ 239 007 007; www.csa.cz)
easyJet (EZY; www.easyjet.com)

El Al (LY; ☎ 224 226 624; www.elal.co.il)

FlyGlobespan (B4; ☎ 220 113 171; www.flyglobespan.com)

Germanwings (4U; www.germanwings.com)

JAT Airways (JU; ☎ 224 942 654; www.jat.com)

KLM (KL; ☎ 233 090 933; www.klm.com)

LOT (LO; ☎ 222 317 524; www.lot.com)

Lufthansa (LH; ☎ 224 422 911; www.lufthansa.com)

Malev (MA; ☎ 220 113 090; www.malev.com)

Ryanair (FR; www.ryanair.com)

SAS (SK; ☎ 220 116 031; www.scandinavian.net)

SkyEurope (NE; ☎ 900 141 516; www.skyeurope.com)

Smart Wings (QS; ☎ 900 166 565; www.smartwings.net)

SN Brussels Airlines (SN; ☎ 220 116 352; www.flysn.com)

Turkish Airlines (TK; ☎ 234 708 708; www.turkishairlines.com)

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Twenty-two European destinations are served from Bratislava's **MR Štefánika Airport** (BTS; ☎ 02-

3303 3353; www.airportbratislava.sk) on the carriers listed below. SkyEurope is the major airline based in Slovakia. For long-haul direct flights to/from Australia and the Americas, you'll need to fly into **Vienna International Airport** (Wien Schwechat airport; VIE; ☎ 1-7007-22233; www.viennaairport.com), 60km west in Austria. A regular one-hour bus ride connects the two airports.

Austrian Airlines flies direct from Vienna to **Košice International Airport** (KSC; ☎ 052-6221 093; www.airportkosice.sk). Once a week SkyEurope flies between London Stansted and **Poprad-Tatry International Airport** (TAT; ☎ 052-7763 875; www.airport-poprad.sk; Na Letisko 100) beneath the High Tatras mountains.

Airlines flying to and from the Slovak Republic:

Aeroflot (SU; ☎ 02-4342 6896; www.aeroflot.com)

Air Slovakia (GM; ☎ 02-4342 2744; www.airlovakia.sk)

Austrian Airlines (OS; ☎ 02-4940 2100; www.aua.com)

ČSA (OK; ☎ 02-5296 1042; www.czechairlines.com)

easyJet (EZ; www.easyjet.com)

Ryanair (FR; www.ryanair.com)

SkyEurope (NE; ☎ 02-4850 485; www.skyeurope.com)

Slovak Airlines (6Q; ☎ 02-4870 4870; www.slovakairlines.sk)

Tickets

No-frills airlines like easyJet, Germanwings, Ryanair, Smart Wings and SkyEurope often

have supercheap specials, but if you leave booking flights until the last minute, you'll pay much more. Not all low-cost carriers have local Czech or Slovak contact numbers and some, like Smart Wings, add a surcharge for booking over the phone instead of on the internet.

You can compare several regular carrier prices by searching through www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

From Australia & New Zealand

From Australia or New Zealand you'll have to transit through London, Paris, Frankfurt or another major European capital to get to Prague, Bratislava or Vienna. For Australian branches of **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au), call or visit their website. **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) has offices throughout Australia. For online bookings, try www.travel.com.au.

In New Zealand, both **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz) have branches throughout the country. The site www.travel.co.nz is also recommended for online bookings.

From Continental Europe

Prague is incredibly well-connected with other European cities by air. ČSA, flies to all the biggies – Paris, Budapest, Madrid, Frankfurt etc – but also connects with smaller cities such as Marseille, Bologna and Cologne. That's not to mention its many Eastern European destinations such as Kiev, Riga and Belgrade. Furthermore, the choice is no longer just between ČSA and competing national destination airlines; SkyEurope, Germanwings, Smart Wings and the like connect Prague with many secondary airports at a lower cost.

Many of the airlines serving Bratislava are no-frills, and competition is fierce – it seems like new connections are added every month. Between SkyEurope, Ryanair and Slovak Airlines, most major European cities are covered (Amsterdam, Paris, Barcelona, Rome, Brussels, Moscow, Stuttgart...). SkyEurope's Eastern European destinations include beachside Split and Zadar in Croatia, and Bourgas in Bulgaria.

Recommended travel agencies include the following:

France

Anyway (☎ 0892 893 892; www.anyway.fr)

Lastminute (☎ 0892 705 000; www.lastminute.fr)

Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 0825 000 747; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)

OTU Voyages (www.otu.fr; ☎ 0155 823 232) Specialises in student and youth travel.

Germany

Expedia (www.expedia.de)

Just Travel (☎ 089 747 3330; www.justtravel.de)

Lastminute (☎ 01805 284 366; www.lastminute.de)

STA Travel (☎ 01805 456 422; www.statravel.de) For travellers under the age of 26.

Italy

CTS Viaggi (☎ 06 462 0431; www.cts.it) Specialising in student and youth travel.

The Netherlands

Airfair (☎ 020 620 5121; www.airfair.nl)

From the UK

National and no-frills carriers connect London's various airports, as well as cities like Manchester and Edinburgh, with Prague and Bratislava daily. EasyJet serves the Midlands and Slovak Airlines occasionally flies from Birmingham to Bratislava (then on to Amritsar, India).

Discount air travel is big business in London. Advertisements for many travel agencies appear in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheet newspapers, in *Time Out*, *The Evening Standard* and in the free online magazine **TNT** (www.tntmagazine.com).

Recommended travel agencies include the following:

Bridge the World (☎ 0870 444 7474; www.b-t-w.co.uk)

Flightbookers (☎ 0870 814 4001; www.ebookers.com)

Flight Centre (☎ 0870 890 8099; flightcentre.co.uk)

North-South Travel (☎ 01245 608 291; www.northsouthtravel.co.uk) Donates part of their profit to projects in the developing world.

Quest Travel (☎ 0870 442 3542; www.questtravel.com)

STA Travel (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk) For travellers under age 26.

Trailfinders (www.trailfinders.co.uk)

Travel Bag (☎ 0870 890 1456; www.travelbag.co.uk)

From the USA & Canada

ČSA has direct flights from New York, Montreal and Toronto to Prague. No direct flights depart North America for Bratislava, but Austrian Airlines flies from Toronto, New York and Washington DC direct to Vienna.

AIR FARES

The following are low-price samples for round-trip flights (including tax), booked three weeks in advance:

From	To	Cost
Prague	Bratislava	4264Kč/5003\$K
Prague	Košice	4264Kč/4000\$K
Prague	Brno	2320Kč
Prague	Ostrava	2320Kč
Bratislava	Košice	1484\$K
Žilina	Prague	4945\$K
Poprad	Prague	5042\$K (via Košice)

Discount travel agents in the US are known as consolidators (although you won't see a sign on the door saying 'Consolidator'). Some good deals can be found in the Sunday travel sections of big city newspapers and there are numerous online agencies.

Recommended agents include:

Cheap Tickets (www.cheaptickets.com)

Expedia (www.expedia.com)

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com)

STA Travel (☎ 800 781 4040; www.statravel.com) Has offices throughout the US for travellers under age 26.

Travel CUTS (☎ 866 246 9762; www.travelcuts.com)

Canada's national student travel agency.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com for USA, www.travelocity.ca for Canada)

LAND

Border Crossings

As long as all your paperwork and insurance card is in order, you should have no problems crossing into the Czech or Slovak Republics. You may encounter delays travelling to or from the Ukraine, but that's about it. See also customs (p440) and visa (p450) requirements.

Both of the country maps (p78 and p336) show major, 24-hour international border crossings for cars, buses and motorcycles. Note that these may change in 2007; at the time of writing both the republics were working to get their laws in line with the EU Schengen agreement (in which internal borders between EU states can be removed).

BICYCLE & WALKING

There are a few border crossings between Germany and the Czech Republic, and Slovakia and Poland, that are limited to pedestrians

and cyclists in both countries. Some are only open during the summer months. For more information, see the relevant destination chapters.

Crossing from eastern Slovakia to the Ukraine by foot is a definite no-no and by bicycle it's frowned upon, but you can easily walk over the bridge from Komárno in southern Slovakia to Komárom in Hungary, or cycle from Bratislava into Austria.

Bus

Travelling by bus may not be the most comfortable way to cross Europe, but it is the cheapest. Youth and senior discounts are available on almost all fares and passes.

It's easiest to book ahead with **Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com), a consortium of 32 coach companies with offices all over Europe. Fifteen and 30-day passes (€279/359 respectively) are cheaper outside of the summer season.

There are direct connections to Prague and Bratislava from dozens of major European cities.

A sampling of services to Prague include from London (£43, 22 hours, daily), Berlin (€34, six hours, three daily) and Budapest (€41, seven hours, daily); and to Bratislava, from London (€100, 23 hours, five weekly), Frankfurt (€58, 12 hours, three weekly) and Vienna (€6, one hour, hourly).

Capital Express (☎ in Prague 220 870 368; www.capitalexpress.cz) has daily bus services between London and Prague via Plzeň.

Tourbus (☎ 543 163 493; www.tourbus.cz) travels between Brno and continental European destinations in addition to London.

Both companies sometimes have more competitive prices than those listed here.

Car & Motorcycle

The Czech Republic recognises British and EU driving licenses; all other nationalities require an International Driving Permit.

All foreign national driving licenses with photo ID are valid in Slovakia.

In both countries drivers must also have their passport, vehicle registration papers and the 'green card' that shows they carry at least third-party liability insurance (see your domestic insurer about this).

If the car isn't yours, avoid potential headaches by carrying a notarised letter from the owner saying they give their permission for you to drive it.

In your car you will need to carry a first-aid kit and a red-and-white warning triangle. You must display a nationality sticker on the rear.

For information about road rules and fuel, see Getting Around (p459).

The E65 is the major motorway connecting the two republics, from Prague through Brno to Bratislava; to the south it joins to the E60, which heads to Budapest. The E50 connects Germany to Prague through West Bohemia. Driving in from Vienna to Slovakia, you'd be on the E58. The E75 goes east from Bratislava and on to Košice and will eventually be a motorway all the way to the Ukraine (they're working on it, they're working on it...).

Hitching

Hitching is never entirely safe anywhere in the world and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. Those who choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go.

If you are set on hitching across Europe, a worthwhile website to check is www.hitchhikers.org. It provides information on drivers looking for passengers for trips across the

continent. Most drivers ask a minimal fee from those catching a lift.

Train

The Czech Republic is pretty well connected to the rest of the European train network; Slovakia is only slightly less so. Most long distance trains have both 1st- and 2nd-class carriages, and sometimes a sleeper wagon (which requires a supplement). It's advisable to reserve a sleeper ahead of time year-round and, during summer, booking your international train ticket in advance wouldn't hurt. Place reservations are usually required for Intercity (IC) and Eurocity (EC) trains.

The **Thomas Cook European Timetable** (www.thomascookpublishing.com) is the trainophile's bible, giving a complete listing of train schedules. Fares quoted here are based on average second-class rates at the time of research.

Most international trains arrive at Prague's main station, **Praha hlavní nádraží** (☎ 972 241 152; Wilsonova 8); a few go to **Praha-Holešovice** (☎ 972 224 633; Partyzánská 24) or **Praha-Smíchov** (☎ 972 226 150; Nádražní 1, Smíchov).

Direct connections from Prague include Budapest (1243Kč, seven hours), Vienna (841Kč, 4½ hours, five daily), Warsaw (1143Kč, 8½ to 10 hours, two daily) and Berlin (1347Kč, five hours, eight daily). One nightly train goes

YOU'RE GOING WHERE?

Although staff at the train station international ticket counters (*mezinárodní jízdenky* or *mezinárodní lístok*) may speak at least some English, those selling domestic tickets may not. Writing down what you want and handing it to the clerk helps avoid confusion (this works for bus tickets, too).

Write it down like this in Czech/Slovak:

- *od*: (from) departure station, eg PRAHA
- *do*: (to) destination station
- *čas*: (time) departure time using 24-hour clock
- *datum*: (date) day/month in Roman numerals
- *třída/trieda*: (class) 1 or 2
- *osoby*: (people) number of passengers
- *jednosměrný/jednosměrna* (one way) or *zpáteční/spiatiočný* (return)
- *místenka/miestenka*: (reservation) write this word to get an assigned seat number

One-way domestic train tickets for distances of more than 50km are valid for 24 hours from time of purchase, but for distances under 50km only until 6am the next day. Note that unscheduled domestic return tickets are only valid for 48 hours from time of purchase – if you plan to be away for more than two days, buy two singles.

RAIL PASSES

If you plan to travel widely in Europe, the following special tickets and rail passes may be better value for travelling in and out of the Czech and Slovak Republics, but not within them. You can purchase rail passes from travel agents at home or from sites like www.raileurope.com.

InterRail Pass

Available to anyone who has lived in Europe for at least six months, the **InterRail Pass** (www.interrail.com) gives travellers unlimited, second-class travel for up to one month on most of the state railways of Western and Central Europe (except in their own country). The one-zone pass (Zone D) for travel in the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia costs about £215 for 16 days (£145 for those under 26). An all-zone pass, valid for a month, is £405 (£285 for those under 26).

European East Pass

The European East Pass is only available in the USA and provides unlimited travel in the Czech and Slovak Republics, Austria, Hungary and Poland for any five days within a month. Tickets for 1st-/2nd-class travel cost US\$244/172. Each extra day costs an additional US\$29/23.

from Prague to Kraków (1164Kč, 8½ hours) and one to Frankfurt (2380Kč, 8½ hours).

From Brno you can go straight to Vienna (537Kč, two hours, four daily), Budapest (939Kč, four hours, three daily) and Berlin (1748č, 7½ hours, eight daily). Four times a day there are trains to Linz, Austria from České Budějovice (431Kč, 2½ hours).

International trains generally arrive at or depart from Bratislava's main station, **Hlavná stanica** (www.zst.sk). Direct day trains run between Bratislava and Vienna (297Sk, one hour, up to 30 daily) and Budapest (486Sk, three hours, seven daily). Night departures link Bratislava with Moscow (2738Sk, 32½ hours, one daily) and Warsaw (1410Sk, 10½ hours, one daily).

One train a day passes through Košice on its way from Budapest (967Sk, 4½ hours) to Kiev (1913Sk, 21 hours).

WARNING

The overnight international trains to/from the Czech Republic have become notorious for bold thefts from sleeping passengers – keep a grip on your bags.

RIVER

Floating down the Danube River is a cruise to get between Bratislava and Vienna (€21 one way, 1½ hours) or Budapest (€69 one way, four hours). From mid-April to September, **Slovak Shipping and Ports** (Slovenská plavba a prístavy; ☎ 5293 2226; www.lod.sk) runs at least one hydro-

foil to Vienna and one to Budapest daily from the **hydrofoil terminal** (Fajnorovo nábrežie 2). From June to October the **Twin City Liner** (☎ 0903 610 716; www.twincityliner.com) operates three boats a day between the Bratislava **propeller terminal** (Rázusovo nábrežie), in front of Hotel Devin, and Vienna.

GETTING AROUND

The Czech Republic has one of the most dense rail networks in Europe. Slovakia's is less extensive due to its mountainous landscape. The bus network in the republics is excellent, but only slightly cheaper than trains. The general rule of thumb is if you're travelling between larger cities take a train; to villages, take a bus.

The roads are in good condition, and there are over 1000km of European-style motorways within the two countries so far, with more being added. Main thoroughfares that pass through small villages make the going slow but scenic.

An excellent online source of bus and train information are the national databases, with links to city bus networks: for the Czech Republic try www.idos.cz; for Slovakia, <http://cp.zoznam.sk/ConnForm.asp?tt=c&cl=E5>.

Bus and train connections noted in this section are direct services only. Prices are for one-way journeys and for 2nd-class seats on trains.

Border Crossings between the Republics

At this writing, the Czech–Slovak borders function like any other border in Europe. This may change if they both comply with the Schengen agreement in 2007. There are currently 15 official border crossings. The most often-used border is on the D2 motorway between Kúty and Břclav, however, this is the only crossing which cannot be used by pedestrians.

AIR

Air travel possibilities have expanded in the past few years. In addition to the airports that receive flights from abroad (see p452), **Ostrava Mošnov Airport** (OSR; ☎ 597 471 136; www.airport-ostava.cz), in the Czech Republic, and **Airport Žilina** (ILZ; ☎ 5523 288; www.letisko.sk), in Slovakia, operate within the two republics.

CSA (OK; ☎ in Prague 239 007 007, in Bratislava 02-5296 1042, in Košice 052-6782 490; www.czechairlines.com) is the major inter-republic airline. **SkyEurope** (NE; ☎ in Prague 900 141 516, in Bratislava 02-4850 485; www.skyeurope.com) flies to Košice from Bratislava.

BICYCLE

For general information on cycling in the Czech and Slovak Republics, see the relevant section in Outdoor Activities (p61).

Hire

The Czech and Slovak Republics are only slowly cottoning on to the fact that a buck can be made from renting bikes. Prices range from 100Sk to 800Sk per day.

Many of the bigger cities have a bike-rental place or two (Bratislava has one), but they are more common in the popular tourist spots and mountainous regions (Krkonoše in the Czech Republic, High and Low Tatras in the Czech Republic, and the Mála Fatra in Slovakia) – check with the upmarket hotels there.

Czech Railway rents bikes in several natural areas; log on to www.cd.cz/static/eng/bike/hireservice.htm for locations.

Individual rental places are noted throughout the destination chapters.

Purchase

If you're planning to spend some time cycling around the republics and you can't be bothered dragging your bike with you, buying one when you arrive is an option. A new mountain bike costs from 11,000Kč/13,000Sk

to 16,000Kč/19,000Sk and almost every town has a sports shop selling bikes.

BOAT

On the whole, most Czech and Slovak rivers are too shallow for passenger transport. In the summer there are a few near-town options.

In the Czech Republic boats ply the Vltava between Prague and Troja (p121), and in Slovakia there are trips along the Danube between Bratislava and Devín (p353).

BUS

Buses are popular and there are comprehensive networks in both republics. Stations are normally within walking distance of town centres, and often adjacent to the train station. During the week there are generally frequent services but this peters out to only a handful on weekends (or none at all). Mountainous locations may only be accessible by bus.

ČSAD (Česká automobilová doprava) is the state bus company in the Czech Republic, and SAD (Slovenská autobusová doprava) in Slovakia. To find schedules online the national timetables are best; try www.idos.cz for the Czech Republic and <http://cp.zoznam.sk/ConnForm.asp?tt=c&cl=E5> for Slovakia. From Prague, two private bus companies, **Tourbus** (☎ 543 163 493; www.tourbus.cz) and **Student Agency** (☎ 542 424 242; www.studentagency.cz), battle it out on the competitive route between Prague and Brno.

BUS TIMETABLES

The timetables will drive you cross-eyed, peppered with symbols showing the days buses go and don't go. Remembering that *ne* indicates negative, as in *nejede/nejde* or *nepremáva* (doesn't go, doesn't operate) helps. A circled number one to seven indicates the day of the week (Monday to Sunday). Below are some of the most common symbols, but be ready for local variations.

- R reservation available
- ✕ workdays (Monday to Friday)
- † holidays
- b workdays and Saturdays
- a Saturdays and holidays only
- r not on 24 & 31 December
- l bus doesn't stop here

Sample prices and average times:

From	To	Cost	Duration
Prague	Bratislava	288Kč	4¾hr
Prague	Košice	550Kč	10½hr
Prague	Brno	130Kč	2½hr
Brno	Bratislava	110Kč	2hr
Brno	Košice	410Kč	8hr
Bratislava	Košice	441Sk	7hr

Reservations

Travel agencies don't book internal coaches, though some may have timetable information. Short-haul tickets are sold on the bus, long-distance tickets are usually bought at the station. If you're travelling on a weekend on one of the more popular routes, it's not a bad idea to book ahead.

At stations with offices, handing the clerk a scrap of paper with your destination (see You're Going Where When?, p456) is a lot more fun than wrestling with the timetables. Big stations like Florenc in Prague have charts with all the route numbers for each major destination and all the departure times for each route number, plus timetables for every route. To figure out when the next bus leaves at smaller stations without an office, you'll probably have to look at timetables posted at several different numbered platforms.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The Czech and Slovak Republics are covered by a network of generally good roads. The main motorways are the D1 (or E50/E65) between Prague, Brno and Olomouc, the D2 (or E65) between Brno and Bratislava, and the D5 (or E50) linking Prague and Plzeň. The D1 (or E75), between Bratislava and Žilina, will eventually connect to Uzhhorod, Ukraine via Košice.

The major motorways require a toll sticker (for two weeks/one year 200/900Kč in the Czech Republic, 150/800Sk in Slovakia), which can be purchased at most border crossings, some petrol stations and from the automobile organisations in both countries. (Rental cars come with them.) Fines of up to 5000Kč/Sk are payable if you're caught without a sticker.

Motorways and city centres have heavy traffic. Country highways tend to have light traffic, but follow old routes through villages and small towns, with sudden sharp bends

and reduced speed limits. Excessive speeding and drivers passing on blind corners are problems in both countries, so it's best to drive defensively.

Automobile Associations

The Czech Republic has two automobile associations: the **Ústřední AutoMotoKlub** (ÚAMK; ☎ 1230; www.uamk.cz) and **Autoklub Bohemia Assistance** (ABA; ☎ 1240; www.aba.cz). Slovakia's automobile association is the **Autoklub Slovakia Assistance** (ASA; ☎ 18124; www.autoklub.sk).

Bringing Your Own Vehicle

You'll experience no major hassles bringing your own vehicle into either republic. Cars with foreign license plates can be a target for thieves (as in any country) and no one should leave valuables in view. That said, the number of car thefts in the republics is no higher than in Western Europe. For information on the documents required to take your car into the republics see Getting There & Away (p455).

Fuel

Petrol or gasoline (*benzín*) is not hard to find (natural is 95 octane, super is 98 octane). Diesel (*nafta*) is also available at many stations. Unleaded petrol costs about 40Kč/44Sk per litre. LPG (*autoplyn*) is available in every major town, but at very few outlets and rarely at petrol stations. You're not allowed to take more than 10L of fuel in or out of the country in a spare container.

Hire

Normally you have to be 21 years of age to hire a vehicle and sometimes 25. Apart from that, renting a car is relatively easy. It's possible to arrange a pick-up in one republic and drop off in another, but there is usually a hefty fee involved.

Prague and Bratislava have numerous local and international rental agencies at the airport and in town. Major international companies, such as **Europcar** (www.europcar.com), **Sixt** (www.sixt.com), **Hertz** (www.hertz.com) and **Avis** (www.avis.com), are well represented at airports around the two countries. For specific contact details, see the relevant sections in the destination chapters.

Insurance

Third-party insurance is required in both countries. If you arrive at the border in an uninsured car, you will have to pay for

DRIVING DISTANCES

From	To	Distance
Prague	Bratislava	350km
Prague	Košice	670km
Prague	Brno	200km
Prague	Ostrava	380km
Bratislava	Brno	130km
Bratislava	Košice	400km
Bratislava	Poprad	350km

insurance (about 4300Kč/5400Sk) on the spot. If you are hiring a car, be sure to check your liability in case of an accident. Rather than risk paying out thousands of dollars if you do have an accident, you can take out your own comprehensive insurance on the car, or (the usual option) pay an additional daily amount to the rental company for an 'insurance excess reduction' policy.

The police should be contacted immediately in the case of an accident when repairs are required or if there is an injury. It's essential to get a police report if you plan to make an insurance claim.

Parking

Most city centres have restricted parking within marked zones at parking meters, and parking rules are similar to those in the rest of Europe. They are controlled either by parking meters or parking cards, which can be bought in kiosks, shops, hotels or, in small towns, from the man wandering around the cars with a satchel on his stomach. Carry plenty of small change as most parking meters don't take bank notes. In larger cities, street parking is at a premium and finding a space can prove impossible (parking on footpaths is not uncommon). It's often best to head for the nearest car park (or your hotel) and then use the extensive public transport.

Road Rules

Road rules in both republics are basically the same as throughout the rest of continental Europe: drive on the right-hand side of the road; always wear a seatbelt; children under 12 must ride in the back; mobile telephones can only be used with a hands-free set; and pedestrians have the right of way at zebra crossings (although this is hardly ever observed). In the Czech Republic vehicles must have their

headlights turned on 24 hours a day. Don't drink even a sip of alcohol and drive: regulations stipulate only a zero blood-alcohol level is allowed, random breathalyser stops are common and penalties are severe (up to a year in jail in the Czech Republic and two in Slovakia). The legal driving age is 18.

The speed limit within built-up areas is 50km/h in the Czech Republic and 60km/h in Slovakia. On major roads the limit is 90km/h and on motorways it is 130km/h for both countries. The official speed limit at the countries' many railway crossings is 30km/h, but you are better off stopping and looking, since many well-used crossings have no barriers and some don't even have flashing lights.

Riders of motorcycles greater than 50cc must wear helmets and goggles, and their passengers must also wear helmets. The motorcycle's headlight must be on at all times (on low beam). The maximum speed for motorcycles, even on major highways, is 90km/h.

Fines for speeding and minor offences are between 500Kč/Sk and 5000Kč/Sk, levied on the spot. If you don't get a docket or receipt (*paragon* or *doklad*), you may be getting overcharged – so politely insist on a receipt. If that does not work try to bargain the fine down.

Pay particular attention to trams: it's best to give them the right-of-way in every situation as you'll come off second best if one happens to bump into you.

Road Signs

Standard European signs are in common use throughout both republics. Some that may be unfamiliar to Britons and non-European visitors are:

- Blue disk with red border and crossed red slashes – no stopping
- Blue disk with red border and red slash – no parking
- Red disk with horizontal white line – no entry
- White disk with red border – no vehicles allowed
- White triangle (point down) with red border – give way to crossing or merging traffic.

In cities and towns, keep a sharp eye out for *pěší zóna* signs, indicating pedestrian-only areas, many of which look just like normal streets.

HITCHING

As stated earlier, hitching is never entirely safe anywhere in the world, and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk.

That said, many Czechs and Slovaks, women included, do hitch and do pick up hitchhikers, especially from one small village to the next.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Public transport in towns and cities normally consists of a comprehensive bus network, which is sometimes complemented by trams and trolley-buses (electric buses). They are well used by locals, so you'll often find more services in the morning and early evening.

Bus, Tram & Trolley-Bus

On the whole, services are frequent and reliable. Typical hours of operation are from 5am to 11pm or midnight. Prague, Brno and Bratislava also have limited night bus services.

Depending on the town, a ride is 20Kč/18Sk or less, with discounts available for kids aged from 10 to 16 years and the elderly. In Prague, Brno and Bratislava you can also buy multi-day and monthly passes for unlimited travel. Tickets are sold at public transport offices, newsstands, tobacco kiosks and from machines at major stops. In most places a single ticket is valid for all forms of transport.

You validate your ticket by punching it in a little machine on board (or in Prague's metro station lobbies). It's an honour system, but inspectors pop up fairly often and are keen to levy instant fines on anyone without a valid ticket.

Metro

Prague is the only city with a metro, and that consists of three lines. For more information, see p144.

Taxi

Most towns have at least a few taxis for hire. Prague and Bratislava have cracked down on crooked taxi drivers, though it is still possible that you will be charged a slightly higher rate than the locals – call it an English-speaking surcharge. Thankfully more courteous and fair drivers are becoming the norm. It's cheaper to call a taxi (or have someone call for you) than to hail one on the street.

TRAIN

ČD (české dráhy, Czech Railways; www.cd.cz) is the state rail company in the Czech Republic and its Slovakian equivalent is ŽSR (Železnica Slovenskej republiky, Railways of the Slovak Republic; www.zsr.sk). Trains go almost anywhere you want to in the Czech Republic, and you only have to resort to buses or private transport in far eastern Slovakia.

If you wish to transport your car, it is possible but only on the route between Prague and Poprad. Canoes can be transported in special carriages while bicycles are transported in the normal cargo carriages.

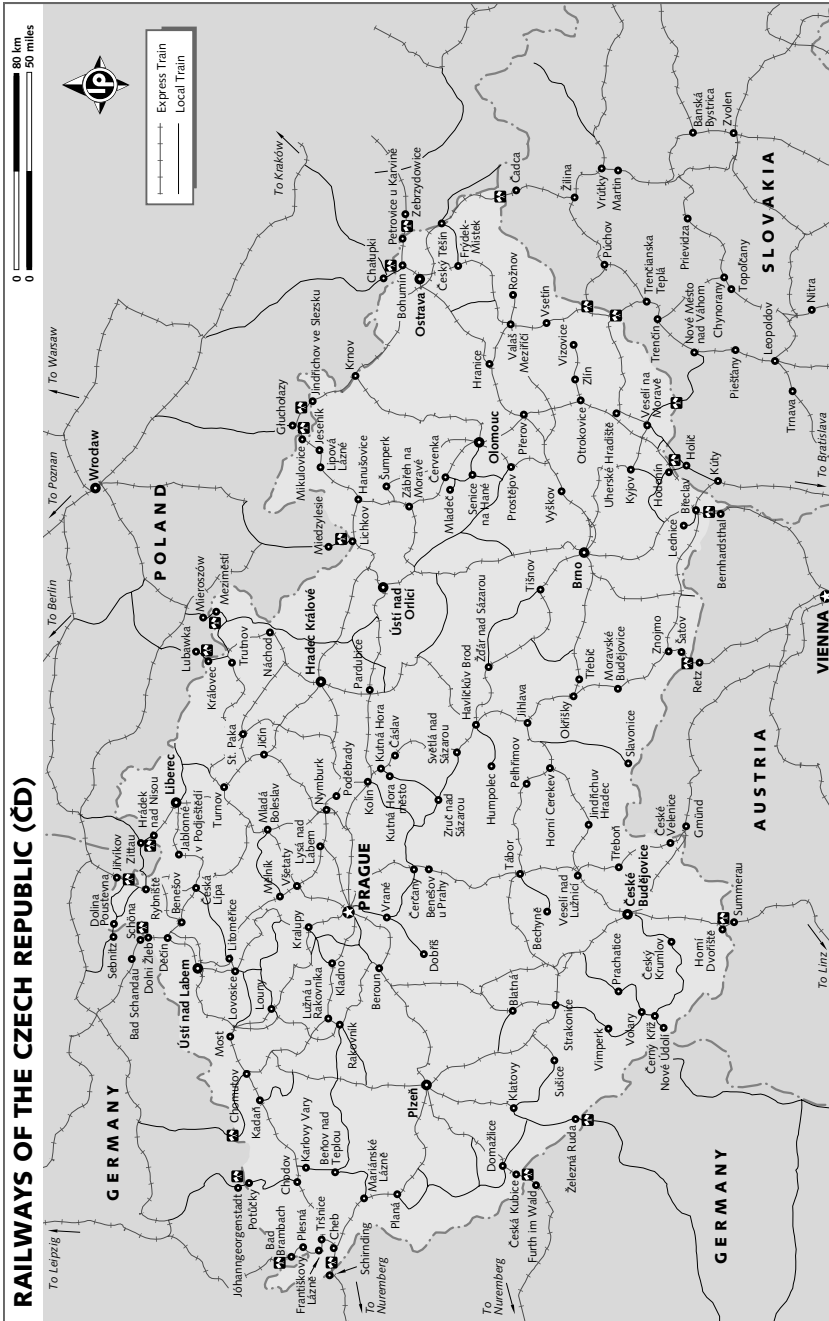
Classes

The fastest trains are international EC/IC (EuroCity/InterCity), Czech domestic SC (SuperCity) and slightly slower fast/express (*rychlík/rychlík*) services, which are shown in shaded columns and bold print in timetables. On the two railway maps (p462 and p463), all of these fall under Express Trains. Slowest of all is the local train (*osobní vlak/osobný vlak*).

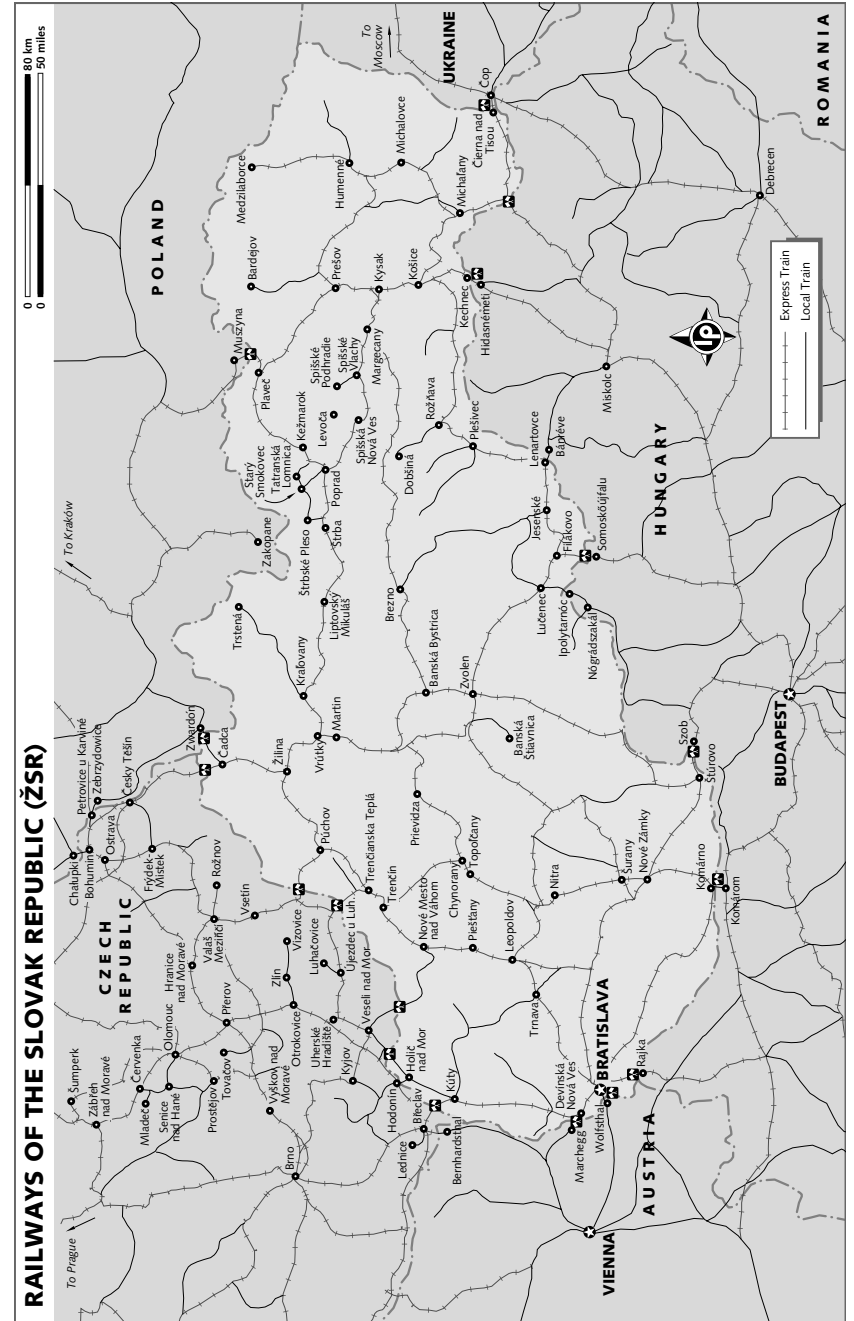
In October 2005, supermodern SC Pendolino trains went into service from Praha-Holešovice to Ostrava (600Sk, 3½ hours). These fancy cars are 1st class only; check 'em out at www.scpn.dolino.cz. (Prices are reduced in summer.)

TRAIN TIMETABLE SYMBOLS

- 📄 after the name of the station = tickets issued on train only
- 🍴 in the train column = dining car included
- 🛏 in the train column = train includes sleeping cars or couchettes
- R in the train column = for indicated cars, reservation is possible
- 📄 in the train column = train with obligatory seat reservation
- 🛏 in the train column = train carries only sleeping cars and couchettes
- ♿ in the train column = there is a coach for wheelchairs
- in front of time descriptions = request train to stop only
- 🚲 the notes have information on transport of bicycles
- ↗ train travels on another line
- ! train doesn't stop at this station
- ① Mon ② Tue ③ Wed ④ Thu ⑤ Fri ⑥ Sat ⑦ Sun workdays only (normally Mon-Fri)
- † holidays (except 24 Dec, 1 & 8 May, 5 Jul) and 2 Jan only



RAILWAYS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC (ŽSR)



Most trains have both 1st- and 2nd-class carriages, along with a smoking section, although some local trains may do away with 1st class. Only some EC, IC, SC and express trains have a dining car (*restaurační vůz/restauráčníj vozeň*).

Costs

Train travel is reasonable by Western standards. Foreign and local passengers pay the same fare: children under six ride free while those between six and 15 (or carrying an ISIC card) travel for half price. Senior travellers to Slovakia can buy a senior card (199Sk for one year) to get the same 40% discount as residents (Czech senior discounts are for residents only).

First class costs about 50% more than 2nd class. Express trains are generally a little more expensive than the bus (on some runs not by much), but they are usually much faster. The fastest, EC/IC/SC trains, cost more and require a seat supplement. Prices vary by route. The following are average 2nd-class, one-way fares and durations for fast trains:

From	To	Cost	Duration
Prague	Bratislava	500Kč	4¼hr
Prague	Brno	294Kč	3½hr
Prague	Ostrava	484Kč	4½hr
Brno	Bratislava	196Kč	1½hr
Bratislava	Košice	518Sk	6½hr
Bratislava	Poprad	420Sk	5hr

Reservations

You can buy a general ticket (*jizdenka/listok*) right up until departure time (and, at stations where the office isn't open, onboard), or make a seat reservation (*místenka/miestenka*) up to one hour beforehand. On longer routes

you could get a sleeper (*lůžko/spací vozeň*), which is like a bed with sheets included, or couchette (*lehátkový vůz/ležadlo*), which is narrower than a sleeper and only a blanket is supplied. Sleepers and couchettes should be booked at least one day before departure; on the same day they can only be purchased from the conductor when available.

EC/IC/SC seats are often reservation only (marked with an R in a box); an un-boxed R means reservations are recommended. If ordinary (*jednoduchý*) places are sold out on fast trains, 1st-class (*prvotřídní/prvotriedny*) ones will probably be available. Most travel agencies won't make domestic train reservations, however, Czech Railways has its own travel agency, the ČD (p461), that has offices around the country.

If you are buying your own ticket, it's easiest to write down your information for the clerk; see You're Going Where When? (p456).

Train Passes

Before purchasing any of the following Czech passes, calculate to see whether they are going to save you money; it may be cheaper to buy local tickets for travelling around. Passes can be purchased at ČD offices.

Network time tickets These passes allow a week (810Kč) or a month (2700Kč) of unrestricted 2nd-class train travel in the Czech Republic.

Kilometricka Banka Pass For 1400 Kč, you get 2000km of 2nd-class travel within the Czech Republic over a period of six months. It's only valid for use on trains after 10am.

Sone+ Travel slow, but far. For 160Kč you get unlimited travel all day Saturday and Sunday on any local train (*osobní vlak, or Os*).

Slovakia has no network-wide rail passes at this time.

Health

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Travel health depends on your predeparture preparations, your daily health care while travelling and how you handle any medical problem that does develop. Healthwise, the Czech and Slovak Republics are not going to worry you, and the worst you'll get is a stomach upset or dehydration from too much beer the night before.

BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses will save trouble later: see your dentist before a long trip; carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original containers and make sure they're clearly labelled. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles EU citizens to the same health-care benefits as local citizens receive from their national health care; therefore, most medical

care in the Czech and Slovak Republics will be free, but transporting you to your home country, should you fall ill, will not be covered. Citizens from other countries should find out if their personal insurance policy covers them abroad. Doctors expect cash if you do not have a national or European health-insurance card; make sure your insurance plan will reimburse your expenses. Everyone entering the Czech and Slovak Republics is required to have medical coverage, and technically police could ask for proof. We hate to say never, but this rarely happens. For more on temporary, travel-related insurance, see p445.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician at least six weeks before departure.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The WHO's publication *International Travel and Health* is revised annually and is available online at www.who.int/ith/. Other useful websites:

www.ageconcern.org.uk Travel advice for the elderly.

www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk General travel advice for the layperson.

www.maristopes.org.uk Information on women's health and contraception.

www.mdtravelhealth.com Travel-health recommendations for every country; updated daily.

FURTHER READING

'Health Advice for Travellers' (currently called the 'T6' leaflet) is a leaflet that is updated annually by the Department of Health in the UK and is available free in UK post offices. As well as some general information, it outlines legally required and recommended vaccines for different countries, reciprocal health agreements and includes an EHIC application form.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* includes advice on travel health for young children. Other recommended references include

Traveller's Health by Dr Richard Dawood and *The Traveller's Good Health Guide* by Ted Lankester.

IN TRANSIT

Deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that may form in the legs during flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights, you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

IN THE CZECH & SLOVAK REPUBLICS

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Medical care in Prague, Brno and Bratislava is generally quite good and the chances of finding an English-speaking doctor are high. Embassies, consulates and four- and five-star hotels can usually recommend doctors or clinics. (Note: few doctors outside major cities speak English.) Every sizable town has a *polyklinika* (medical centre), though few have seen many foreigners. Medical training, equipment and standards of hygiene (and funds for training doctors) are adequate for routine, walk-in problems.

Services for EU citizens with an EHIC are free, but for everybody else contract prices apply (a doctor's visit costs about €45).

Almost every town has a state-run pharmacy (*lékárna/lekárň*). It's a good place to buy aspirin, vitamin C and over-the-counter ointments, but you need a Slovak or Czech doctor's prescription (in the respective countries) to get anything more serious.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Bird Flu

Bird flu landed in the Czech and Slovak Republics in February and March 2006, respectively. In all four diagnosed cases, the dead

birds carrying the virus were swans. They were found north of Bratislava and in South Bohemia. A ban on transport of poultry and free-range poultry farming has been put into effect.

To date, 100 people internationally have died from a mutation of the bird flu, the nearest being in Turkey. Doctors say that in order for the virus to be transmitted to humans, it's likely the victim would already have to have the human flu virus. Both the Czech and Slovak Republics have vaccines and emergency plans in case the danger spreads. There is no need to panic, but do use common sense – avoid poultry farms, wash your hands if you are around wild birds, and for heaven's sake, don't go near any dead swans.

Rabies

Spread through bites or licks on broken skin from an infected animal, rabies is always fatal if left untreated. Animal handlers should be vaccinated, as should those travelling to remote areas where a reliable source of postbite vaccine is not available within 24 hours. Three injections are needed over a month. If you have not been vaccinated, you will need a course of five injections starting 24 hours, or as soon as possible, after the injury. If you have been vaccinated, you will need fewer injections and have more time to seek medical help.

Tick-Borne Encephalitis

If you are going to spend any time camping or walking through the wonderful woodlands of the Czech and Slovak Republics, you should be aware of tick-borne encephalitis (TBE). This serious brain-affecting virus is mainly contracted from the bite of minute ticks that you probably won't even notice (50% of patients don't, according to the US Centers for Disease Control).

Preventative measures include covering up, tucking your pants into your socks, wearing light-coloured clothing (so you can see the ticks more clearly) and inspecting yourself for the little beggars after a walk in the forest. Vaccination is advised for anyone travelling for extended periods or camping in high-risk wooded areas. Two doses of vaccine will give a year's protection, three doses (spread out over four to 12 weeks) give up to three years' protection.

If you do find a tick, remove it with tweezers by squeezing as close to your skin as possible. Try to get it all in one swift motion, and pull

straight out instead of twisting. Remove any remaining parts with a sterilised pin. Symptoms usually occur one to four weeks after a bite; those infected develop flulike symptoms that progress to meningitis or encephalitis.

Typhoid & Hepatitis A

Both typhoid and hepatitis A are spread through contaminated food (particularly shellfish) and water. Typhoid can cause septicæmia; hepatitis A causes liver inflammation and jaundice. Neither is usually fatal but recovery can be prolonged. Typhoid vaccine (Typhim Vi, Typherix) will give protection for three years. In some countries, the oral vaccine Vivotif is also available. Hepatitis A vaccine (Avaxim, VAQTA, Havrix) is given as an injection. A single dose will give protection for up to a year; a booster after a year gives 10 years' protection. Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccines can also be given together as a single-dose vaccine (Hepatyrix, Viatim).

TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

To prevent diarrhoea, avoid drinking tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (with iodine tablets), and steer clear of ice. Eat fresh fruits or vegetables only if they have been cooked or peeled; be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Eat food that is hot right through and avoid buffet-style meals. If a restaurant is full of locals, the food is probably safe.

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution, eg Dioralyte. A few loose stools don't require treatment, but if you have more than four or five stools a day you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinoline drug) and an anti-diarrhoeal agent (such as loperamide). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS Heat Exhaustion & Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heat exhaustion, replace fluids

with water and/or fruit juice and cool the body with cold water and fans. Treat salt loss with salty fluids such as soup or Bovril, or add a little table salt to foods.

Heatstroke is much more serious, resulting in irrational and hyperactive behaviour and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is ideal. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement by intravenous drip is recommended.

Hypothermia

Proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting hypothermia. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the weather can change rapidly. Carry waterproof garments, warm layers and inform others of your route.

Acute hypothermia follows a sudden drop of body temperature over a short time. Chronic hypothermia is caused by a gradual loss of temperature over hours.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. If not rewarmed, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter and warm, dry clothing, drinking hot sweet drinks and sharing body warmth.

Frostbite is caused by freezing and results in subsequent damage to the body's extremities. Its effect varies according to wind chill, temperature and length of exposure. Frostbite starts as frost-nip (white numb areas of skin), from which complete recovery is expected with rewarming. As frostbite develops, the skin blisters and then becomes black. The loss of damaged tissue eventually occurs. Wearing adequate clothing, staying dry, keeping well hydrated and ensuring adequate calorie intake best prevent frostbite. Treatment involves rapid rewarming, avoiding refreezing, and rubbing the affected areas.

Insect Bites & Stings

Ticks, which are common in forests, scrublands and long grass, can carry encephalitis (see opposite).

Mosquitoes are found in most parts of Europe. They may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Bees and wasps cause real problems only to those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have a severe allergy to bee or wasp stings, carry an 'epipen' or similar adrenaline injection.

Bedbugs lead to very itchy, lumpy bites. Spraying the mattress with crawling-insect killer, after changing bedding, will get rid of them.

Scabies are tiny mites that live in the skin, particularly between the fingers. They cause an intensely itchy rash. Scabies are easily treated with lotion from a pharmacy; other members of the household also need treatment to avoid spreading scabies between asymptomatic carriers.

Snake Bites

The only poisonous snake in either republic is the *zmije* (viper), for which an antivenin is widely available. The *zmije* is unlikely to be deadly unless you are allergic to the venom. It's recognisable by a wavy black line that stretches the length of its grey back. Avoid getting bitten by wearing boots, socks and long trousers while hiking, and do not stick your hand into holes or cracks. Half of those travellers bitten by venomous snakes are not actually injected with poison (envenomed). If bitten, do not panic. Immobilise the bitten limb with a splint (eg a stick) and apply a bandage over the site with firm pressure, similar to a bandage over a sprain. Do not apply a tourniquet, or cut or suck the bite. Get the victim to medical help as soon as possible so that antivenin can be given if necessary.

Water

Tap water may not be safe to drink so it is best to use bottled water, boil water for 10 minutes, or use water purification tablets or a filter. Don't drink water from rivers or lakes as it may contain bacteria or viruses that can cause diarrhoea or vomiting.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure the children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines with a physician

well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year old.

Remember to avoid contaminated food and water. If your child is vomiting or has diarrhoea, make sure you replace lost fluid and salts. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders with you for reconstituting with boiled water.

Encourage children to avoid and mistrust any dogs or other mammals because of the risk of rabies and other diseases. Any bite, scratch or lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should be cleaned immediately and thoroughly. If there is any possibility that the animal is infected with rabies, seek immediate medical assistance.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern. If using oral contraceptives, some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working and lead to the risk of pregnancy – take condoms with you just in case. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but there are important things to consider. Always undergo a medical check-up before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

SEXUAL HEALTH

The **International Planned Parenthood Federation** (www.ippf.org) can advise about the availability of contraception in different countries. If emergency contraception is needed in the Czech and Slovak Republics, head to the nearest hospital or health-care centre.

Condoms are readily available throughout both republics. When buying condoms, look for the European CE mark, which means they have been rigorously tested, and then keep them in a cool dry place, otherwise they may crack and perish.

Language

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Outside the tourist areas of Prague, Brno and Bratislava, most Czechs and Slovaks speak no English, though many older people speak German. Russian was compulsory in school under communism, so most can speak it, but prefer not to.

The Czech and Slovak languages, along with Polish and Lusatian, belong to the West Slavonic group of Indo-European languages. Czech is the mother tongue of about 10 million people; Slovak of about five million. The two languages are very closely related, and mutually understandable.

English speakers need to learn some new linguistic tricks in order to speak Czech or Slovak. The Czech tongue-twister *strč prst zkrz krk* (stick your finger through your neck) will give you an idea of what you're up against; another one is the word *řetucha* (nasturtium).

Common Czech and Slovak terms used throughout this book are listed in the Glossary (p476). For useful Czech and Slovak words and phrases you'll need when eating out or buying food, see p72. For a more comprehensive guide to Czech, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Czech Phrasebook*. Alternatively, both Czech and Slovak are covered in Lonely Planet's *Eastern Europe Phrasebook*. If you're keen on the idea of studying either language in-country, see 'Courses' (p439).

CZECH & SLOVAK PRONUNCIATION

The following table shows the symbols we've used to represent the sounds of Czech and Slovak for the pronunciation guides included in this language guide and in the Food & Drink chapter.

Vowel Sounds

Letter	Symbol	English Equivalent
á	a	father
aj	ai	aisle
é	air	hair
ó	aw	law
e/ä	e	bet
í/ý	ee	see
ej	ey	hey
i/y	i	bit
o	o	pot
ou	oh	oh
ú	oo	zoo
au	ow	how
oj	oy	toy
u	u	put
a	uh	run
ô	wo	quote

Consonant Sounds

Czech	Symbol	English Equivalent
č	ch	cheat
ch	kh	loch
d/ďž	dy	during
dz	dz	adds
l'	ly	million
ň	ny	canyon
r	r	run (rolled in Czech)
ř	rzh	rolled r followed by zh
š	sh	shot
c	ts	hats
ť	ty	tutor
j	y	yes
ž	zh	pleasure
'	'	a slight y sound

Word Stress

In Czech and Slovak, stress always falls on the first syllable of a word, but it's quite light.

CZECH & SLOVAK WORDS & PHRASES

While you'll notice that many words in Czech and Slovak are pronounced and spelt the same way, in the following list of

words and phrases we've included both languages; the Czech is listed first, the Slovak second. Elsewhere in this book, words separated by a slash are Czech/Slovak translations respectively; where only one word is given, it's the same in both languages.

ACCOMMODATION

Where's a ...?

Kde je ...? gde/kdye ye ...

camping ground

tábořiště ta-bo-rzhish-tye
táborisko ta-bo-ris-ko

guesthouse

penzion pen-zi-on
penzión pen-zi-awn

hotel

hotel ho-tel

youth hostel

mládežnická ubytovna mla-dezh-nyits-ka u-bi-tov-nuh
nocleháreň pre mládež nots-lyuh-ha-ren' pre mla-dyez

Can you recommend somewhere ...?

Můžete mi doporučit něco ...?
moo-zhe-te mi do-po-ru-chit nye-tso ...
Môžete odporučiť niečo ...?
mwo-zhe-tye od-po-ru-chit' ni-ye-cho ...

cheap

levného lev-nair-ho
lacné luhts-nair

good

dobrého dob-rair-ho
dobré dob-rair

nearby

nejbližšího ney-blizh-shee-ho
nablízku nuh-bleez-ku

I have a reservation.

Mám rezervaci. mam re-zer-vuh-tsi
Mám rezerváciu. mam re-zer-va-tsi-yu

Do you have a double-bed room?

Máte pokoj s manželskou postelí? ma-te po-koy s muhn-zhels-koh
postelí? pos-te-lee
Máte izbu s manželskou postelou? ma-tye iz-bu s muhn-zhels-koh
postelou? pos-tye-lyoh

Can I see it?

Mohu se na něj podívat? mo-hu se na nyey po-dyee-vuht
Môžem to vidieť? mwo-zhem to vi-di-yet'

Do you have a ... room?

Máte ... pokoj? ma-te ... po-koy
Máte ... izbu? ma-tye ... iz-bu
single
jednolůžkový yed-no-loozh-ko-vee
jednopostelový yed-no-pos-tye-lyo-voo

two-bed

dvoulůžkový dvoh-loozh-ko-vee
dvojpostelový dvo-y-pos-tye-lyo-voo

How much is it per ...?

Kolik to stojí ...? ko-lik to sto-ye ...
Kolko to stojí ...? kol'-ko to sto-ye ...

night

na noc nuh nots

person

za/na osobu zuh/nuh o-so-bu

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello/Hi.

Ahoj/Čau. uh-hoy/chow
Dobry deň/Ahoj. do-bree dyen'/uh-hoy

Good night.

Dobrou noc. do-broh nots
Dobru noc. do-broo nots

Goodbye/Bye.

Na shledanou/Ahoj. nuh-skhle-duh-noh/uh-hoy
Do videnia/Ahoj. do vi-dye-ni-yuh/uh-hoy

Yes.

Ano. uh-no
Áno. a-no

No.

Ne. ne
Nie. ni-ye

Please.

Prosím. pro-seem

Thank you (very much).

(Mnohokrát) Děkuji. (mno-ho-krat) dye-ku-yi
Ďakujem (velmi pekne). dyuh-ku-yem (vel'-mi pek-nye)

You're welcome.

Prosím. pro-seem

Excuse me.

Promiňte. pro-min'-te
Prepáčte. pre-pach-tye

Sorry.

Promiňte. pro-min'-te
Prepáčte. pre-pach-tye

Mr/Mrs

pan/paní puhn/puh-nyee
pán/pani pan/puh-nyi

Miss

slečna slech-nuh

How are you?

Jak se máte? (pol) yuhk se ma-te
Jak se máš? (inf) yuhk se mash
Ako sa máte? (pol) uh-ko suh ma-tye
Ako sa máš? (inf) uh-ko suh mash

SIGNS

Vchod	Entrance
Východ	Exit
Otvěreno/Otvorené	Open
Zavřeno/Zatvorené	Closed
Informace/Informácie	Information
Zakázáno/Zakázané	Prohibited
Policejní Stanice/ Policajná Stanica	Police Station
Záchody/WC/Toalety	Toilets
Páni (also Muži in Czech)	Men
Dámy (also Ženy in Czech)	Women

What's your name?

Jak se jmenujete? (pol) yuhk se yme-nu-ye-te
Jak se jmenujete? (inf) yuhk se yme-nu-yesh
Ako sa voláte? (pol) uh-ko suh vo-la-tye
Ako sa voláš? (inf) uh-ko suh vo-lash

My name is ...

Jmenuji se ... yme-nu-yi se ...
Volám sa ... vo-lam suh ...

I'm pleased to meet you.

Teší mě. tye-shee mye
Teší ma. tye-shee muh

Where are you from?

Odkud jste? ot-kud yste
Odkiaľ ste? od-kyuh'l stye

I'm from ...

Jsem z ... ysem s ...
Som z ... som z ...

DIRECTIONS

Where is ...?

Kde je ...? gde ye .../kdye ye ...

Can you show me (on the map)?

Můžete mi to ukázat (na mapě)? moo-zhe-te mi to u-ka-zuht (nuh muh-pye)
Môžete mi ukázať (na mape)? mwo-zhe-tye mi u-ka-zuht' (nuh muh-pe)

What's the address?

Jaká je adresa? yuh-ka ye uh-dre-suh
Áká je adresa? uh-ka ye uh-dre-suh

How far is it?

Jak je to daleko? yuhk ye to duh-le-ko
Ako je to ďaleko? uh-ko ye to dyuh-le-ko

It's straight ahead.

Je to přímo. ye to przhee-mo.
Je to rovno. ye to rov-no

Turn ...

Odbočte ... od-boch-te ...
Zabočte ... zuh-boch-tye ...

at the corner

za roh/na rohu zuh rawh/nuh ro-hu

at the traffic lights

u semaforu u se-muh-fo-ru
na svetelnej križovatke nuh sve-tyel-ney kri-zho-vuht-ke
left/right
do leva/prava do le-vuh/pruh-vuh
dolava/doprava do-lyuh-vuh/do-pruh-vuh

north

sever se-ver

south

jih/juh yih/yoooh

east

východ vee-khod

west

západ za-puhd

castle

hrad/zámok hruhd/za-mok

cathedral

katedrála kuh-te-dra-luh

museum

múzeum/múzeum mu-ze-um

old city

staré město stuh-rair myes-to

palace

palác puh-lats

ruins

zříceniny/ zrzhee-tse-nyi-ni/
zrúcaniny zroo-tsuuh-nyi-ni

HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?

Kde je nejbližší ...?
gde ye ney-blizh-shee ...
Kde je najbližší/najbližšia ...? (m/f)
kde ye nai-blizh-shee/nai-blizh-shyuh ...

dentist

zubař (m) zu-buhrzh

doctor

lékař/doktor (m) lair-kuhrzh/dok-tor

hospital

nemocnice ne-mots-nyi-tse
nemocnica (f) ne-mots-nyi-tsuuh

(night) pharmacist

(non-stop) lékárník (non-stop) lair-ka-nyeek
(pohotovostná) lékáreň (f) (po-ho-to-vost-na) le-ka-ren'

I'm sick.

Jsem nemocný/nemocná. (m/f)
ysem ne-mots-nee/ne-mots-na
Som chorý/chorá. (m/f)
som kho-ree/kho-ra

I need a doctor (who speaks English).

Potřebuji (anglickomluvíčho) doktora.
pot-rzhe-bu-yi (uhn-glits-kom-lu-vee-tsee-ho) dok-to-ruh
Potrebujem lekára, (ktorý hovorí po anglicky).
po-tre-bu-yem le-ka-ruh (kto-ree ho-vo-ree po uhng-lits-ki)

I have (a) ...

Mám ... mam ...

asthma

astma/astmu uhst-muh/uhst-mu

diarrhoea

průjem/hnačka proo-yem/hnuhch-ku

fever

horečka/horúčka ho-rech-kuh

EMERGENCIES**Help!**

Pomoc!
po-mots

Go away!

Běžte pryč!/Chodte proč!
byezh-te prich/khod'-tye prech

Could you help me, please?

Můžete prosím pomoci?
moo-zhe-te pro-seem po-mo-tsi
Můžete mi prosím pomôct?
mwo-zhe-tye mi pro-seem po-mwotst'

I'm lost.

Zabloudil/Zabloudila jsem. (m/f)
zuh-bloh-dyil/zuh-bloh-dyi-luh ysem
Stratil/Stratila som sa. (m/f)
struh-tyil/struh-tyi-luh som suh

Call ... !

Zavolejte ...! zuh-vo-ley-te ...
Zavolajte ...! zuh-vo-lai-tye ...

a doctor

lékař/lekára lair-kuh-rzhe/le-ka-ruh

an ambulance

sanitku/záchranku suh-nit-ku/zakh-ruhn-ku

the police

policii/políciu po-li-tsi-yi/po-lee-tsi-yu

It hurts here.

Tady to bolí. tuh-di to bo-lee
Tu ma to bolí. tu muh to bo-lee

I have a headache.

Mám bolesti hlavy. mam bo-les-tyi hluh-vi
Bolí ma hlava. bo-lee muh hluh-vuh

I have nausea.

Mám nevoľnosť. mam ne-vol-nost
Je mi nazvracanie. ye mi nuh-zvruch-tshuh-ni-ye

I have a sore throat.

Mám bolesť v krku. mam bo-lest f kr-ku
Bolí ma hrdlo. bo-lee muh hrd-lo

I'm allergic to ...

Jsem alergický/alergická na ... (m/f)
ysem uh-ler-gits-kee/uh-ler-gits-ka nuh ...
Som alergický/alergická na ... (m/f)
som uh-ler-gits-kee/uh-ler-gits-ka nuh ...

antibiotics

antibiotika/antibiotiká uhn-ti-bi-o-ti-ka

penicillin

penicilin pe-ni-tsi-lin

condoms

prezervatívy pre-zer-vuh-ti-vi
kondómy kon-daw-mi

contraceptives

antikoncepcie uhn-ti-kon-tsep-tse
antikoncepcia uhn-ti-kon-tsep-tsi-yuh

painkillers

prášky proti bolesti prash-ki pro-tyi bo-les-tyi
analgetiká uhn-nuhl-ge-ti-ka

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak English?**

Mluvíte anglicky? mlu-vee-te uhn-glits-ki
Hovoríte po anglicky? ho-vo-ree-tye po uhng-lits-ki

Do you understand?

Rozumíte? ro-zu-mee-te
Rozumiete? ro-zu-mye-tye

I understand.

Rozumím. ro-zu-meem
Rozumiem. ro-zu-myem

I don't understand.

Nerozumím. ne-ro-zu-meem
Nerozumiem. nye-ro-zu-myem

How do you pronounce this?

Jak se toto vyslovuje? yuhk se toh-to vis-lo-vu-ye
Ako sa toto vyslovuje? uh-ko suh to-to vi-slo-vu-ye

What does ... mean?

Co znamená ...? tso znuh-me-na ...
Čo znamená ...? cho znuh-me-na ...

Could you please write it down?

Prosím, můžete to napsat?
pro-seem moo-zhe-te to nuhp-suht
Můžete prosím to napísať?
mwo-zhe-tye pro-seem to nuh-pee-suht'

NUMBERS

0	nula	nu-luh
1	jeden (m)	ye-den
	jedna (f)	yed-na
	jedno (n)	yed-no
2	dva (m)	dvuh
	dvě (Czech n/f)	dvye
	dve (Slovak n/f)	dve
3	tři/tri	trzhi/tri
4	čtyři/styri	chti-rzhi/shti-ri
5	pět/pät'	pyet/pe'
6	šest'/šest'	shest'/shest'
7	sedm/sedem	se-dm/se-dyem
8	osm/osem	o-sm/o-sem
9	devět/devät'	de-vyet/dye-vet'
10	deset/desat'	de-set/dye-suht'
11	jedenáct/jedenást'	ye-de-natst/ye-de-nast'
12	dvanáct/dvanást'	dvuh-natst/dvuh-nast'
13	třináct/trináct'	trzhi-natst/tri-nast'
14	čtrnáct/štrnáct'	chtr-natst/shtr-nast'

15	patnáct/pätnáct'	puht-natst/pet-nast'
16	šestnáct/šestnáct'	shest-natst/shes-nast'
17	sedmnáct/sedemnáct'	se-dm-natst/se-dyem-nast'
18	osmnáct/osemnáct'	o-sm-natst/o-sem-nast'
19	devatenáct/devätnáct'	de-vuh-te-natst/dye-vet-nast'
20	dvacet/dvadsat'	dvuh-tset/dvuh-tsuht'
21	dvacet jedna	dvuh-tset yed-nuh
	dvadsatjeden	dvuh-tset yeh-den
22	dvacet dva	dvuh-tset dvuh
	dvadsatdva	dvuh-tsuht'-dvuh
30	trřicet/tridsat'	trzhi-tset/tri-tsuht'
40	čtyřicet/styridsat'	chti-rzhi-tset/shti-ri-tsuht'
50	padesát/pätdesiat	puh-de-sat/pe-dye-syuh
60	šedesát/šestdesiat	she-de-sat/shes-dye-syuh
70	sedmdesát	se-dm-de-sat
	sedemdesiat	se-dyem-dye-syuh
80	osmdesát	o-sm-de-sat
	osemdesiat	o-sem-dye-syuh
90	devadesát	de-vuh-de-sat
	devätdesiat	dye-ve-dye-syuh
100	sto	sto
1000	tisíc	tyi-seets

SHOPPING & SERVICES**Where's a/an/the ...?**

Kde je ...? gde ye ...

ATM

bankomat buhn-ko-muht
nejaký bankomat nye-yuh-kee buhn-ko-muht

bank

banka buhn-kuh

city centre

centrum tsen-trum
městské centrum mes-kair tsen-trum

foreign exchange office

směnářna smye-nar-nuh
nejaká zmenáreň nye-yuh-ka zme-na-ren'

grocery store

smíšené zboží smee-she-nair zbo-zhee
potraviný market po-truh-vi-ni

market

trh/(also tržnice in Czech) trh/(tr-zhnyi-tse)

newsagency

tabák tuh-bak
predajňa novín pre-dai-nyuh no-veen

police station

policijní stanice po-li-tsey-nyee stuh-nyi-tse
policajná stanica po-li-tsai-na stuh-nyi-tsuht

post office

pošta posh-tuh

public toilet

veřejný záchod ve-rzhey-nee za-khod
verejný záchod ve-rey-nee za-khod

supermarket

samoobsluha suh-mo-op-slu-huh

tourist office

turistická informační kancelář tu-ris-tits-ka in-for-muhch-nyee
turistická kancelária tu-ris-tits-ka kuh-n-tse-larzh
turistická kancelária tu-ris-tits-ka kuh-n-tse-la-ri-yuh

I'd like to buy a phonecard.

Chtěl/Chtěla bych koupit telefonní kartu. (m/f)
ktyel/khtye-luh bikh koh-pit te-le-fo-nyee kuh-ru-tu
Chcel/Chcela by som si kúpiť telefónnu kartu. (m/f)
khtsel/khtse-luh bi som si koo-pit' te-le-faw-nu kuh-ru-tu

Where's the local Internet café?

Kde je místní internetová kavárna?
gde ye meest-nyee in-ter-ne-to-va kuh-var-nuh
Kde je miestne internetové káfé?
kdye ye myes-ne in-ter-net kuh-fair

I'd like ...

Chtěl/Chtěla bych ... (m/f)
khtyel/khtye-luh bikh ...
Chcel/Chcela by som ... (m/f)
khtsel/khtse-luh bi som ...

to change a travellers cheque

proměnit cestovní šek pro-mye-nyit tses-tov-nyee shek
zamenit cestovní šek zuh-me-nyit' tses-tov-nee shek

to change money

vyměnit peníze vi-mye-nyit pe-nyee-ze
zamenit peníze zuh-me-nyit' pe-ni-yuh-ze

to check my email

zkontrolovat můj email skon-tro-lo-vuht mooy ee-meyl
si skontrolovat email si skon-tro-lo-vuht' ee-meyl

to get internet access

přístup na internet przhes-trup nuh in-ter-net
sa pripojiť na internet suh pri-po-yit' nuh in-ter-net

a mobile/cell phone for hire

si půjčit mobil si pooy-chit mo-bil
si prenajať mobilný telefón si pre-nuh-yuht' mo-bil-nee te-le-fawn

a SIM card for your network

SIM kartu pro vaši síť sim kuh-ru-tu pro vuh-shee seet'
SIM kartu pre vašu sieť sim kuh-ru-tu pre vuh-shu syet'

Where can I buy ...?

Kde si mohu koupit ...? gde si mo-hu koh-pit ...
Kde si můžem kúpiť ...? kdye si mwo-zhem koo-pit' ...

I'm looking for ...

Hledám ... hle-dam ...
Hľadám ... hlyuh-dam ...

How much is it?

Kolik to stojí? ko-lik to sto-ye
Kolko to stojí? kol'-ko to sto-ye

Can you write down the price?

Můžete mi napsat cenu? moo-zhe-te mi nuhp-suht tse-nu
Můžete napísať cenu? moo-zhe-tye nuh-pee-suht' tse-nu

That's too expensive.

To je moc drahé. to ye mots druh-hair
To je príliš drahé. to ye pree-lish druh-hair

What time does it open/close?

V kolik hodin otevřívají/zavírají?
 f ko-lik ho-dyin o-te-vee-ruh-yee/zuh-vee-ruh-yee
O kolkej otvárajú/zatvárajú?
 o kol'-key ot-va-ruh-yoo/zuh't-va-ruh-yoo

Do you accept ...?

Mohu platit ...? mo-hu pluh-tyit ...
Prijmate ...? pree-muh-tye ...

credit cards

kreditními kartami kre-dit-nyee-mi kuh'r-tuh-mi
kreditné karty kre-dit-nair kuh'r-ti

travellers cheques

cestovními šeky tses-tov-nyee-mi she-ki
cestovné šeky tses-tov-nair she-ki

TIME & DATES**What time is it?**

Kolik/Kolko je hodin? ko-lik/kol'-ko ye ho-dyin

It's (one) o'clock.

Je (jedna) hodina. ye yed-nuh ho-dyi-nuh

It's (10) o'clock.

Je (deset) hodin. ye (de-set) ho-dyin
Sú (desať) hodiny. soo (dye-suht') ho-dyi-ni

At what time?

V kolik hodin? f ko-lik ho-dyin
O kolkej ...? o kol'-key ...

Monday	<i>pondělí/pondelok</i>	<i>pon-dye-lee/pon-dye-lok</i>
Tuesday	<i>úterý/utorok</i>	<i>oo-te-ree/u-to-rok</i>
Wednesday	<i>středa/streda</i>	<i>strzhe-duh/stre-duh</i>
Thursday	<i>čtvrtek/stvrtok</i>	<i>chtvr-tek/shtvr-tok</i>
Friday	<i>pátek/piatok</i>	<i>pa-tek/pyuh-tok</i>
Saturday	<i>sobota</i>	<i>so-bo-tuh</i>
Sunday	<i>neděle/nedela</i>	<i>ne-dye-le/nye-dye-lyuh</i>

January	<i>leden/január</i>	<i>le-den/yuh-nu-ar</i>
February	<i>únor/február</i>	<i>oo-nor/feb-ru-ar</i>
March	<i>březen/marec</i>	<i>brzhe-zen/muh-rets</i>
April	<i>duben/apríl</i>	<i>du-ben/uhp-reel</i>
May	<i>květen/máj</i>	<i>kvye-ten/mai</i>
June	<i>červen/jún</i>	<i>cher-ven/yoon</i>
July	<i>červenec/júl</i>	<i>cher-ve-nets/yool</i>
August	<i>srpen/august</i>	<i>sr-pen/ow-gust</i>
September	<i>září/september</i>	<i>za-rzhee/sep-tem-ber</i>
October	<i>říjen/október</i>	<i>rzhee-yen/ok-taw-ber</i>
November	<i>listopad/november</i>	<i>li-sto-puht/no-ven-ber</i>
December	<i>prosinec/december</i>	<i>pro-si-nets/de-tsem-ber</i>

TRANSPORT**One ... ticket to (...), please.**

... do (...), prosím. ... do (...) pro-seem
Jeden ... lístok do (...), prosím. ye-den ... lees-tok do (...) pro-seem

one-way

Jednosměrnou jízdenku yed-no-smyer-noh yeez-den-ku
jednosměrný yed-no-smer-nee

return

Zpáteční jízdenku zpa-tech-nyee yeez-den-ku
spiatočný spyuh-toch-nee

How much is it?

Kolik to stojí? ko-lik to sto-yee
Kolko to stojí? kol'-ko to sto-yee

How long does the trip take?

Jak dlouho trvá cesta? yuhk dloh-ho tr-va tses-tuh
Kolko trvá cesta? kol'-ko tr-va tses-tuh

Where can I find a luggage locker?

Kde mohu najít zavazadlová schránka?
gde mo-hu nuh-yeet zuh-vuh-zuhd-lo-va skhran-kuh
Chcel/Chcela by som skrínku na batožinu. (m/f)
khtsel/khtse-luh bi som skrin-ku nuh buh-to-zhi-nu

Is this the ... to (...)?

Jede tento/tato ... do (...)? (m/f)

ye-de ten-to/tuh-to ... do (...)

Je toto ... do (...)?

ye to-to ... do (...)

bus

autobus (m) ow-to-bus

train

vlak (m) vluhk

When's the ... bus?

V kolik jede ... autobus? f ko-lik ye-de ... ow-to-bus
Kedy pride ... autobus? ke-di pree-dye ... ow-to-bus

first

první/prvý prv-nyee/pr-vee

last

poslední/posledný po-sled-nyee/po-sled-nee

next

příští/následující przhee-shtyee/nuh-sle-du-yoo-tsi

What time does the bus/train leave?

V kolik hodin odjíždí autobus/vlak?
 f ko-lik ho-dyin od-yeezh-dyee ow-to-bus/vluhk
O kolkej odchádza autobus/vlak?
 o kol'-key od-kha-dzuh ow-to-bus/vluhk

What time does the bus/train arrive?

V kolik hodin přijíždí autobus/vlak?
 f ko-lik ho-dyin przhee-yeezh-dyee ow-to-bus/vluhk
O kolkej prichádza autobus/vlak?
 o kol'-key pri-kha-dzuh ow-to-bus/vluhk

Please tell me when we get to ...

Prosim vás řekněte mi kdy budeme v ...
pro-seem vas rzhek-nye-te mi kdi bu-de-me f ...
Můžete ma prosím upozornit' keď budeme na ...
mwo-zhe-tye muh pro-seem u-po-zor-nyit' ked'
bu-dye-me nuh ...

Is this taxi available?

Je tento taxík volný?
 ye ten-to tuh'k-seek val-nee
Je tento taxík volný?
 ye ten-to tuh'k-seek val'-nee

How much is it to ...?

Kolik stojí jízdenka do ...?
 ko-lik sto-yee yeez-den-kuh do ...
Kolko to bude stát' do ...?
 kol'-ko to bu-dye stat' do ...

Please put the meter on.

Prosim zapněte taxametr.
pro-seem zuhp-nye-te tuh'k-suh-me-tr
Zapnite taxameter, prosím.
zuhp-nyi-tye tuh'k-suh-me-ter pro-seem

Please take me to (this address).

Prosim odvezte mě na (tuto adresu).
pro-seem od-ves-te mye na (tu-to uh-dre-su)
Zavezte ma (na túto adresu), prosím.
zuh-vez-tye muh (nuh too-to uh-dre-su) pro-seem

Private Transport**I'd like to hire a ...**

Chtěl/Chtěla bych si půjčit ... (m/f)
khtyel/khtye-luh bikh si pooy-chit ...
Chcel/Chcela by som si prenajať ... (m/f)
khtsel/khtse-luh bi som si pre-nuh-yuh' ...

bicycle

kolo/bicykel ko-lo/bi-tsi-kel

car

auto ow-to

motorbike

motorku mo-tor-ku

oil

olej o-ley

petrol

benzin ben-zin

tyre

pneumatika pne-u-muh-ti-kuh

Is this the road to ...?

Vede tato silnice do ...? ve-de tuh-to sil-ni-tse do ...
Je toto cesta na ...? ye to-to tses-tuh nuh ...

I need a mechanic.

Potřebujím mechanika. pot-rzhe-bu-yi me-khuh-ni-kuh
Potrebujem auto-mechanika. po-tre-bu-yem ow-to-me-khuh-ni-kuh

I've run out of petrol.

Došel mi benzin. do-shel mi ben-zin
Minul sa mi benzín. mi-nul suh mi ben-zeen

I have a flat tyre.

Mám defekt. mam de-fekt
Dostal/Dostala som defekt. dos-tuhl/dos-tuh-luh som de-fekt

Glossary

You may encounter the following terms and abbreviations in your travels throughout the Czech and Slovak Republics. Where relevant, the Czech/Slovak terms are separated by a slash (/). See also the Language (p469) and Food & Drink (p72) chapters.

atd – etc

bankomat – ATM

Becherovka – potent herb liqueur

benzín – petrol/gasoline

bez poplatku – free of charge

bouda (s), **boudy** (pl) – mountain hut

boží muka/božie muky – wayside column or shrine

čajovna – tearoom

ČD – Czech Railways

Čedok – Czech travel agency

celnice/colnica – customs

čeština – the Czech language

chalupa/chata (s), **chaty** (pl) – mountain hut

CHKO (chráněná krajinná oblast/chráněná krajinná oblast) – Protected Landscape Region

chrám/dóm – cathedral

cintorin (Slovak) – cemetery

čistírna/čistiareň – dry-cleaner

cizinci/cudzinci – foreigners

ČSA – Czech Airlines

ČSAD – Czech Bus Lines

ČTK – Czech Press Agency

cukrárna/cukráreň – cake shop

dámy – sign on women's toilet

dolína – valley, dale

dům kultury/dom kultúry – house of culture, for concerts and music practice

dům umění/dom uměnía – house of art, for exhibitions and workshops

h. (hod) – hours

hlavní nádraží/hlavná stanica – main train station

hora – mountain

hospoda or **hostinec** – pub

hrad – castle

hřbitov (Czech) – cemetery

HZDS (Hnutie a demokratické

slovensko) – Movement for Democratic Slovakia

impuls (s), **impulsů** (pl) – ‘beep’ or time interval used for determining telephone charges

jeskyně/jaskyňa – cave

jezero/jazero – lake

jídelní lístek/jedálny lístok – menu

jízdenka – ticket

JZD – state farm (during communist rule)

kaple/kaplnka – chapel

kavárna/kavariěň – café

Kč (koruna/pešák) – Czech crown

KDH (Křesťansko demokratické hnutí) – Christian Democratic Movement

kino – cinema

knihkupectví/knižkupectvo – bookshop

koloniál – mixed-goods shop

kostel/kostol – church

koupaliště/kúpalsko – swimming pool

kreditní karta – credit card

KSČM (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy) – Czech & Moravian Communist Party

lekárna/lekáreň – pharmacy

les – forest

lístek/lístok – ticket

maso uzeniny/mäso – meat, smoked meat and sausages

město/mesto – town

místenka/miistenka – reservation

mlékárna/mliekáreň – dairy

most – bridge

muži – sign on men's toilet

n.I (př.n.I)/n.I (pr.n.I) – AD (BC)

nábřeží (nabř)/nábrežie (nábr) – embankment

nádraží/stanica – station

nafta – diesel fuel

náměstí/námestie (nám) – square

natural – unleaded petrol/gasoline

nemocnice/nemocnica – hospital

ODS (Občanská demokratická strana) – Civic Democratic Party

OF (Občanské fórum) – Civic Forum

OSN – UN

ostrov – island

otevřeno/otvorené – open

ovoce – fruit

páni – sign on men's toilet

paragon – receipt or docket

parkoviště/parkovisko – car park

pekárna/pekáreň – bakery

penzión – guesthouse

peší zóna/pešia zona – pedestrian zone

pivnice/piváreň – (small) beer hall

pivo – beer

pivovar – brewery

platební karta/platobná karta – ATM cash card

pleso (Slovak) – mountain lake or tarn

počítač – computer

po-pa/po-pi – Monday to Friday

potok – stream

potraviný – grocery or food shop

prádelna/práčovňa – laundry

prestup/prestup – transfer or connection

radnice/radnica – town hall

řeka/rieka – river

rezervovaný – reserved

rokle/roklina – gorge

Roma – a tribe of people who migrated from India to Europe in the 10th century

rybník – fish pond

SAD – Slovak Bus Lines

sady – park

samoobsluha – self-service (usually with reference to an eatery)

samoobslužná prádelna – self-service laundry

Satur – Slovak travel agency

SDĽ (Strana demokratické ľavice) – Democratic Left Party

sedlo – saddle (in mountains)

sem – pull (sign on door)

sgraffito – mural technique whereby the top layer of plaster is scraped away or incised to reveal the layer beneath

Sk (Slovenská koruna) – Slovak crown

skansen/skanzen – open-air museum of traditional architecture

slovenčina – the Slovak language

SNP (Slovenské národné povstanie) – Slovak National Uprising

so-ne – Saturday and Sunday

svatý/svätý (sv) – saint

tam – push (sign on door)

tel. č – telephone number

telecard or **telefonní karta/**

telefonna karta – telephone card

toalet – toilet

toaletní papír – toilet paper

tramvaj/electrička – tram

třída/trieda – avenue

ubytovna/ubytovňa – dormitory accommodation

účet volaného – collect or reverse-charges call

údolí/údolie – valley

ulice – street

uložené zásilky/poste restante – poste restante

úschovna/úschovňa – left-luggage office

V. Brit. – UK

vesnice/dedina – village

věž/veža – tower

vinárna/vináreň – wine bar

vlak – train

vrchy – hills

vstup – entrance

vstup zakázaný – no entry

výstup – exit

WC – toilet

záchod – toilet

zahrada – gardens, park

zakázan – prohibited

zámek/zámok – castle

zastávka – bus, tram or train stop

zavřeno/zatvorené – closed

zelenina – vegetables

železniční zastávka/železničná stanica – railway stop

ženy – sign on women's toilet

Zimmer frei – room free (for rent)

ŽSR (Železnica Slovenskej republiky) – Railways of the Slovak Republic

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