

## EATING

# top picks

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# EATING

Traditional Czech cuisine is a cardiologist's nightmare, a cholesterol-laden menu of meat, fat, salt and more meat, accompanied by high-calorie dumplings and washed down with copious quantities of beer. When it comes to food, the ultimate Czech put-down is to describe it as *nesláný* or *neomaslý* ('not salty' or 'not fatty').

But if you put aside your notions of healthy eating for a few days (you're on holiday, after all – live a little!), you'll find traditional Czech food to be very tasty. The country can boast some top-notch produce, from game to fish to smoked meats to wild mushrooms, and Prague's top chefs are beginning to reinvent Czech cuisine with a lighter, more inventive touch.

Since the Czech Republic joined the EU in 2004, the steady increase in the number, quality and variety of Prague's restaurants has, if anything, accelerated. You can now enjoy a wide range of international cuisine, from Afghan to Argentinean, Korean to Cantonese, and even – miracle of miracles – expect service with a smile in many eating places.

However, don't let this kaleidoscope of cuisines blind you to the pleasures of good old-fashioned Czech grub. The city's many pubs dish up tasty pork and dumplings, often at very low prices, and a lot of the more upmarket restaurants offer gourmet versions of classic Bohemian dishes such as pork knuckle or roast duck.

## CELEBRATING WITH FOOD

Christmas is the most important celebration on the Czech domestic calendar, and food and drink, as you might expect, play an important part. Christmas Eve (*Štědrý den*, or 'generous day') is a day of abstinence from meat, with people saving their appetite for the evening meal, which is traditionally *smažený kapr* (crispy, fried carp) served with *bramborový salát* (potato salad). The carp are farmed in medieval *rybníky* (fishponds) in the countryside, mostly in South Bohemia, and in December they are brought to city markets where they are sold, live, from water-filled barrels. In many homes, the Christmas carp then gets to swim around in the bathtub until it's time for the frying pan.

There is no national tradition as to what is served on Christmas Day (*vánoce*), but meat is definitely back on the menu; *pečená kachna* (roast duck), served with gravy and dumplings, is a widespread favourite. There are also Christmas cookies (*vánoční cukrovi*), baked according to traditional family recipes, and *vánočka*, Bohemia's answer to Christmas cake, though it's actually made with bread dough, sweetened with sugar, flavoured with lemon, nutmeg, raisins and almonds, and plaited; it is usually served after the Christmas Eve dinner.

New Year's Eve (*Silvestr*) is also a big celebration. These days few people still prepare the traditional New Year's Eve dinner of *vepřový ovar* (boiled pig's head) served with grated horseradish and apple, but the day is still a big party day, with plates of *chlebičky*

(small, open sandwiches), *brambůrky* (potato pancakes) and other snacks, and bottles of *šampaňské* or other sparkling wine on hand to toast the bells at midnight.

## ETIQUETTE

Although the vast majority of Prague's tourist-oriented restaurants have long since adopted international manners, a dinner in a Czech home or a traditional eatery still demands traditional Czech etiquette.

To the Czech way of thinking, only barbarians would begin a meal without first saying *dobrou chut'* (the Czech equivalent of *bon appetit* – the correct response is to repeat the phrase); even the waiters in tourist restaurants will murmur *dobrou chut'* as they place the plates on your table. And the first drink of the evening is always accompanied by a toast – usually *na zdraví* (*nahz-drah-vee*; literally, 'to health') – as you clink first the tops and then the bottoms of your glasses, and finally touch the glass to the table before drinking.

It's considered bad manners to talk while eating, and especially to distract a guest while they are enjoying their food, so conversation is usually kept to a minimum while food is being consumed; the time for talk is between courses and after the meal.

## SPECIALITIES

The first course of a meal is usually a hearty *polévka* (soup) – often *bramboračka* (potato

## SPANISH BIRDS & MORAVIAN SPARROWS

Many Czech dishes have names that don't offer a clue as to what's in them, but certain words will give you a hint: *šavle* (sabre; something on a skewer); *tajemství* (secret; cheese inside rolled meat); *překvapení* (surprise; meat, capsicum and tomato paste rolled into a potato pancake); *kapsa* (pocket; a filling inside rolled meat); and *bašta* (bastion; meat in spicy sauce with a potato pancake).

Two strangely named dishes that are familiar to all Czechs are *Španělský ptáček* (Spanish birds; sausage and gherkin wrapped in a slice of veal, served with rice and sauce) and *Moravský vrabec* (Moravian sparrow; a fist-sized piece of roast pork). But even Czechs may have to ask about *Meč krále Jiřího* (the sword of King George; beef and pork roasted on a skewer), *Tajemství Petra Voka* (Peter Voka's mystery; carp with sauce), *Šíp Malínských lovců* (the Malin hunter's arrow; beef, sausage, fish and vegetables on a skewer) and *Dech kopáče Ondřeje* (the breath of grave-digger Andrew; fillet of pork filled with extremely smelly Olomouc cheese).

soup), *houbová polévka* (mushroom soup) or *hovří z vývar* (beef broth). Ones worth looking out for are *cibulačka* (onion soup), a delicious, creamy concoction of caramelised onions and herbs, and *česnečka* (garlic soup), a powerfully pungent broth that is curiously addictive.

Other common appetisers include *Pražská šunka* (Prague ham), for which the capital is famous. It is cured in brine and smoked; the best stuff is *šunka od kosti* (ham off the bone).

What roast beef and Yorkshire pudding is to the English, so *vepřová pečeně s knedlíky a kyselým zelím* (roast pork with dumplings and sauerkraut) is to the Czechs; it's a dish so ubiquitous that it is often abbreviated to *vepřo-knedlo-zelo*. The pork is rubbed with salt and caraway seeds, and roasted long and slow – good roast pork should fall apart, meltingly tender, at the first touch of fork or finger.

The dumplings should be light and fluffy – *houskové knedlíky* (bread dumplings) are made from flour, yeast, egg yolk and milk, and are left to rise like bread before being cooked in boiling water and then sliced. The best *knedlíky* are homemade, but the ones you'll find in most pubs and restaurants will be factory-produced. Alternatively, you may be served *bramborové knedlíky* (potato dumplings); if you thought bread dumplings were filling, just wait until you try these stodge-bombs.

Other staples of Czech restaurant menus include *svíčková na smetaně* (slices of marinated roast beef served with a sour-cream sauce garnished with lemon and cranberries); *guláš* (a casserole of beef or pork in a tomato, onion and paprika gravy); and *vepřový řízek* (Wiener schnitzel, a thin fillet of pork coated in breadcrumbs and fried, served with potato salad or *hranolky* – French fries).

Poultry is another popular main course, either roasted or served as *kuře na paprice* (chicken in spicy paprika-cream sauce). *Kachna* (duck), *husa* (goose) and *krůta*

(turkey) usually come roasted, with gravy, dumplings and sauerkraut. A few restaurants specialise in game; the most common are *jeleň* (venison), *bažant* (pheasant), *zajíc* (hare) and *kanec* (boar) – fried or roasted and served in a mushroom sauce or as *guláš*.

Seafood is found only in a handful of expensive restaurants, but freshwater fish – usually *kapr* (carp) or *pstruh* (trout) – are plentiful. *Štika* (pike) and *úhoř* (eel) are found on more specialised menus. Note that the price of fish on the menu is sometimes not for the whole fish but per 100g. Ask how much the trout weighs before you order it!

The classic Czech dessert is *ovocné knedlíky* (fruit dumplings), but once again the best are to be found at domestic dinner tables rather than in restaurants. Large, round dumplings made with sweetened, flour-based dough are stuffed with berries, plums or apricots, and served drizzled with melted butter and a sprinkle of sugar.

Desserts on offer in traditional restaurants and pubs consist of *kompot* (canned/preserved fruit), either on its own or *pohár* – in a cup with *zmrzlina* (ice cream) and whipped cream. *Paláčky* or *lívance* (pancakes) are also very common. Other desserts include *jablkový závin* (apple strudel), *makový koláč* (poppy-seed cake) and *ovocné koláče* (fruit slices). For cakes and pastries it is better to go to a *kavárna* (café) or *cukrárna* (cake shop).

A typical Czech breakfast (*snídaně*) is a light affair consisting of *chléb* (bread) or *rohlík* (bread roll) with butter, cheese, jam or yogurt, washed down with tea or coffee. A hotel breakfast buffet will normally also include cereals, eggs, ham or sausage. Some Czechs eat breakfast at self-service *bufety*, which are open between 6am and 8am – these serve up soup or hot dogs, which are washed down with coffee or even beer. Some eateries serving Western-style breakfasts are noted in the boxed text (p164).

## VEGETARIAN MEALS

*Bezmasá jídla* ('meatless dishes') are advertised on many traditional Czech menus, but some of these may be cooked in animal fat or even contain pieces of ham or bacon! If you ask, most chefs can whip up something genuinely vegetarian. Fortunately there are several good vegetarian restaurants in Prague – see the Top Picks boxed text on p169.

Useful phrases include the following:

I'm a vegetarian.	<i>Jsem vegetarián/ka.</i> (m/f)	ysem ve-ge-ta-ri-aan/-ka
I don't eat meat.	<i>Nejím maso.</i>	ne-yeem ma-so
I don't eat fish/chicken/ham.	<i>Nejím rybu/kuře/sunku.</i>	ne-yeem ri-bu/ku-rzhe/shun-ku

Some common meatless dishes:

<i>knedlíky s vejci</i>	<i>kned-lee-ki s-vey-tse</i>	fried dumplings with egg
<i>omeleta se sýrem a bramborem</i>	<i>o-me-le-ta se seer-em a bram-bo-rem</i>	cheese and potato omelette
<i>smažené žampiony</i>	<i>sma-zhe-ne zham-pi-o-nee</i>	fried mushrooms
<i>smažený květák</i>	<i>sma-zhe-nee kvye-taak</i>	fried cauliflower with egg and onion
<i>smažený sýr</i>	<i>sma-zhe-nee seer</i>	fried cheese with potatoes and tartare sauce

You can also go to a *pekárna* or *pekařství* (bakery), or to one of the French or Viennese bakeries, for *loupáčky* (like croissants but smaller and heavier). Czech bread, especially rye, is excellent and varied.

*Oběd* (lunch) is traditionally the main meal of the day and, except for on Sundays, it's often a hurried affair. Czechs are usually early risers, and so they may sit down to lunch as early as 11.30am, though latecomers can still find leftovers for lunch in many restaurants as late as 3pm.

Having stuffed themselves at lunchtime, for many Czechs *večeře* (dinner) is a light meal, perhaps only a platter of cold meats, cheese and pickles with bread.

## PRACTICALITIES

### Opening Hours

In general, lunch is served from noon to 3pm, and dinner from 6pm to 9pm. Most Prague restaurants, however, are open all day, from 10am or noon to 10pm or 11pm, allowing a laid-back approach to meal times. Cafés are usually open from 8am; see the boxed text (p164) for breakfast recommendations.

### How Much?

On average, you can expect to pay around 300Kč to 600Kč per person for a meal in a midrange restaurant, not including drinks. In the more upmarket places you can double that, and in the very best restaurants the

bill will be in the area of 1500Kč per person before drinks.

On the other hand, it's possible to eat well for very little. You can fill up in a pub or café for less than 200Kč per person – and that includes a glass of beer.

Unless otherwise indicated, price ranges quoted in this chapter's restaurant reviews are for main courses at dinner; prices for main courses at lunch are often cheaper.

## Booking Tables

It's always a good idea to reserve a table at upmarket restaurants, especially during the high season; almost without fail the phone will be answered by someone who speaks English. That said, we have spent months researching in Prague and mostly did just fine without making any reservations at all.

## Tipping

It's pretty much unheard of for Prague restaurants to include a service charge on your

## PRICE GUIDE

The price guide indicates the average cost of a dinner main dish:

€€€	more than 600Kč
€€	250Kč to 600Kč
€	less than 250Kč

bill (check, though; a few do). In most tourist-area places the helpful message 'Tips Not Included', in English (hint, hint), is printed (or even hand-written, as an extra reminder) on the bill. The normal rate for tipping is 10% of the total.

Normal practice in pubs, cafés and mid-range restaurants is to round up the bill to the next 10Kč (or the next 20Kč if it's over 200Kč). The usual protocol is for the staff to hand you the bill and for you, as you hand over the money, to tell them the total amount you want to pay with the tip included.

Change is usually counted out starting with the big notes, on down to the smallest coins. If you say *děkuji* (thank you) during this process the staff will stop and assume the rest is a tip.

## Self-catering

There is a wide variety of self-catering options available with *potraviný* (grocery or food shops) and supermarkets everywhere, the best-stocked and priciest being in flashy department stores near the centre. Note that some perishable supermarket food items bear a date of manufacture (*datum výroby*) plus a 'consume-within...' (*spotřebujte do...*) period, whereas others (such as long-life milk) have a stated minimum shelf-life (*minimální trvanlivost*) date, after which the freshness of the product is not guaranteed.

For supermarket supplies, head to the basement of **Kotva** (Map pp88–9; náměstí Republiky; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–6pm Sat, 10am–6pm Sun; 📍 Náměstí Republiky) or **Tesco** (Map pp108–9; Národní třída 26; ☎ 8am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm Sat, 10am–8pm Sun; 📍 Národní Třída). In Malá Strana you'll find the handy **Vacek Bio-Market** (Map pp76–7; Mostecká 3; ☎ 7am–10pm Mon–Sat, 10am–10pm Sun), a well-stocked minisupermarket.

The city has several open-air produce markets. The biggest one in the city centre is the tourist-oriented **open-air market** (Map pp88–9; Havelská; ☎ 8am–6pm) south of the Old Town Square. More authentic neighbourhood markets – mainly open in the mornings only and closed on Sundays – include the **open-air market** (Map pp132–3) on Dejvická, near Hradčanská metro station in Dejvice.

In Staré Město, **Bakeshop Praha** (Map pp88–9; Kozí 1; ☎ 7am–7pm) is a fantastic bakery that sells some of the best bread in the city, along with pastries, cakes and takeaway sandwiches, salads and quiche. Another good bakery near Old Town Square is **Michelské pekářství** (Map pp88–9; Dlouhá 1; ☎ 6.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 11am–6pm Sun), which

sells a wide range of freshly baked breads and freshly prepared sandwiches.

Delicatessens that are good for stocking up on picnic supplies include **Fruits de France** (Map pp108–9; Jindřišská 7, Nové Město; ☎ 7am–6.30pm Mon–Fri; 📍 Mústek), which sells French wine, cheese, pastries and more. There's also **Culinaria** (Map pp88–9; Skořepka 9, Staré Město; ☎ 8.30am–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–7pm Sat, noon–5pm Sun; 📍 Národní třída), which sells handmade bread, pastries, French and Italian specialities and freshly made sandwiches.

**Cellarius** (Map pp108–9; Lucerna pasáž, Václavské náměstí 36, Nové Město; ☎ 9.30am–9pm Mon–Sat, 3–9pm Sun; 📍 Mústek) is the place to head if you're looking for Czech and imported wines.

## PRAGUE CASTLE & HRADČANY

Most of the restaurants in the castle district are aimed squarely at the tourist crowds, and the whole area becomes pretty quiet in the evenings after the castle closes. The following places, which are a cut above the usual tourist eateries regarding character and cuisine, are worth seeking out – **Vikárka** and **U zlaté hrušky** for Czech food with some atmosphere, **Saté** and **Malý Buddha** for authentic Asian cooking.

### U ZLATÉ HRUŠKY Map pp70–1 Czech €€€

☎ 220 514 778; Nový Svět 3, Hradčany; mains 600–800Kč; ☎ 11.30am–3pm & 6.30pm–midnight; 📍 22, 23

'At the Golden Pear' is a cosy, wood-panelled gourmets' corner, serving beautifully prepared Bohemian fish, fowl and game dishes and frequented as much by locals and visiting dignitaries as by tourists (the Czech foreign ministry is just up the road, and Margaret Thatcher once dined here). In summer get a table in its leafy *zahradní restaurace* (garden restaurant) across the street.

### VIKÁRKA Map p62 International €€

☎ 233 311 962; Vikárská 39, Prague Castle; mains 200–450Kč; ☎ 11am–9pm; 📍 22, 23

It's been a long time coming, but at last there's a decent restaurant within the castle grounds. Opened in 2006, the **Vikárka** inhabits a warren of beautifully restored medieval rooms, the simple Romanesque and Gothic shapes tastefully set off with splashes of bold colour and period decoration. The

## FUNNY, I DON'T REMEMBER ORDERING THAT!

Keep in mind that nothing comes for free in Prague restaurants – if the waiter offers you fries with that, and you accept, you'll be charged for them. Bread, mayonnaise, mustard, vegetables... everything has a price tag. Many restaurants also have a cover charge or *couvert*, which every diner must pay regardless of what they eat and even if they eat nothing. It's not a scam; it's just the way things are done. If the menu has no prices, ask for them. Don't be intimidated by the language barrier; know exactly what you're ordering. If something's not available and the waiter suggests an alternative, ask for the price. Immediately return anything you didn't order and don't want, such as bread, butter or side dishes; don't just leave it to one side or chances are they'll appear on your bill. Most importantly, though, don't let paranoia ruin your meal. The majority of overcharging happens at tourist-oriented restaurants in the city centre. If you're not eating in Old Town Square or Wenceslas Square, or if you're at a new place run by young Czechs, you're unlikely to have any problems.

menu runs from Czech classics to steak and salmon – the goulash, *svíčková* and roast pork knuckle are all recommended – and there's a separate kids' menu offering fish fingers, spaghetti or chicken and chips.

### MALÝ BUDDHA Map pp70–1 Asian €

☎ 220 513 894; Úvoz 46, Hradčany; mains 100-250Kč; ☎ noon-10.30pm Tue-Sun; ☎ 22, 23  
Candlelight, incense and a Buddhist shrine characterise this intimate, vaulted restaurant that tries to capture the atmosphere of an oriental tearoom. The menu is a mix of Asian influences, with authentic Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese dishes, many of them vegetarian, and a drinks list that includes ginseng wine, Chinese rose liqueur and all kinds of tea. Credit cards are not accepted.

### SATÉ Map pp70–1 Indonesian/Malaysian €

☎ 220 514 552; Pohořelec 3, Hradčany; mains 100-150Kč; ☎ 11am-10pm; ☎ 22, 23  
Saté is one of Prague's longest-serving Asian restaurants, a no-frills place just five minutes' walk west of the castle serving inexpensive Indonesian and Malaysian dishes such as *nasi goreng* (fried rice with veggies, prawns and egg), beef *rendang* (coconut-based curry), Javanese beefsteak and a string of tasty vegetarian dishes.

## MALÁ STRANA

You'll be spoilt for choice looking for somewhere to eat in Malá Strana. The tourist crowds are swelled by hungry office workers from the district's many embassies and government offices, and this well-heeled clientele ensures that there are lots of quality restaurants offering a wide range of cuisines. Many of the best restaurants take advantage of a

riverside location, or are perched on a hillside with a view over the city.

### U ZLATÉ STUDNĚ Map pp76–7 International €€€

☎ 257 533 322; www.goldenwell.cz; U Zlaté Studně 4; mains 650-950Kč; ☎ noon-11pm; ☎ Malostranská

Perched atop a Renaissance mansion within a champagne cork's pop of the castle, 'At the Golden Well' enjoys one of the finest settings in Prague. Weather will dictate whether you sit in the plush red-and-gold dining room, or head upstairs to the outdoor terrace – both command a stunning panorama across the red-tiled rooftops of Malá Strana. The kitchen, which has French, Mediterranean and Asian influences, conjures up dishes such as nettle soup with quail egg and garlic croutons, grilled sea bass with braised fennel and rocket, and veal tournedos with plum and almond sauce.

### KAMPA PARK Map pp76–7 International €€€

☎ 257 532 685; www.kampagroup.com; Na Kampě 8b; mains 600-900Kč; ☎ 11.30am-1am; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

Opened way back in 1994, Kampa Park was a pioneer of Prague's fine-dining scene and has attracted countless celebrity visitors including Mick Jagger, Johnny Depp, Lauren Bacall, Robbie Williams, and Bill and Hillary Clinton. The cuisine is as famous as the clientele, from the seared scallops with raisins and capers *beurre blanc*, to the saddle of lamb with truffle-scented potato gnocchi. There's a stylish dining room and roof terrace, but for a really romantic dinner reserve a candlelit table on the cobblestoned terrace, draped in fairy lights, right beside the river, with the lights of Charles Bridge glittering on the water.

## HERGETOVA CIHELNA

Map pp76–7

International €€

☎ 800 152 672; [www.cihelna.com](http://www.cihelna.com); Cihelná 2b; mains 250-650Kč; 🕒 11.30am-1am; 🍴 Malostranská

Housed in a converted 18th-century *cihelna* (brickworks), this place enjoys one of Prague's hottest locations with a riverside terrace offering sweeping views of Charles Bridge and the Old Town waterfront. The menu is as sweeping as the view, ranging from Czech dishes to burgers and stir-fries, plus a new organic menu that includes crab salad with avocado and chilli, and baked sea bass with cauliflower puree and courgette fritters. Note that there are two wine lists, one reasonably priced, the other eye-poppingly expensive – we can recommend the Sonberg Rýnský Ryzlink, an excellent Moravian white.

## U MALTÉZSKÝCH RYTÍŘŮ

Map pp76–7

Czech/International €€

☎ 257 530 075; [www.umaltetzskychrytiru.cz](http://www.umaltetzskychrytiru.cz); Prokopská 10; mains 200-500Kč; 🕒 1-11pm; 🍴 12, 20, 22, 23

'At the Maltese Knights' is a cosy and romantic olde-worlde restaurant, with candlelit tables tucked into niches in the stone-and-brick Gothic vaults downstairs (the ground-floor tables are much less atmospheric). Classic Bohemian offerings include roast wild boar with rosehip sauce, and organic carp stuffed with tomato and mushroom, but there are also international dishes such as steak Chateaubriand, and a couple of vegetarian dishes; it's a popular spot, so book well ahead.

## GITANES

Map pp76–7

Mediterranean €€

☎ 257 530 163; [www.gitanes.cz](http://www.gitanes.cz); Tržiště 7; mains 150-350Kč; 🕒 noon-midnight; 🍴 12, 20, 22, 23

Two meets twisted at this idiosyncratic restaurant, where a technicolour storm of floral print wallpaper and upholstery meets a gallery of weird art – check out the upside-down table on the ceiling – to create an atmosphere akin to an English tearoom designed by Salvador Dali. On acid. The food is hearty and full-on, especially the Balkan specialities – dishes such as *čevapčiči* (chargrilled spicy meatballs) and *sač* (veal and lamb roasted over an open fire) are flung out like macho, meat-eating challenges, while the paella for two could probably feed four. Lighter dishes

include *smažené ančovičky* (fried white-bait), chicken risotto and a range of salads.

## U MALÉ VELRYBY

Map pp76–7

International €€

☎ 257 214 703; [www.umalevelryby.cz](http://www.umalevelryby.cz); Valdštejská 14; mains 250-320Kč; 🕒 noon-3pm & 6-11pm; 🍴 Malostranská

Restaurants come and go quickly in Prague's rapidly evolving dining scene, so fingers crossed that this one's still around by the time you read this. It's a tiny place – only eight tables – run by a chef-proprietor from Cork, Ireland, who gets fresh seafood flown in daily from French markets. The seared calamari with chilli, lime and ginger is meltingly tender, the seafood pie (fish and mussels topped with crispy potatoes) is tasty and filling, and the crab pasta is deliciously delicate. Other dishes include chargrilled steak with onion *tarte tatin*, and roast duck with apricot sauce.

## CAFÉ DE PARIS

Map pp76–7

French €€

☎ 603 160 718; [www.cafedeparis.cz](http://www.cafedeparis.cz); Maltézské náměstí 4; mains 200-300Kč; 🕒 noon-midnight; 🍴 6, 9, 12, 20, 22, 23

A little corner of France tucked away on a quiet square, the Café de Paris is small, straightforward and unpretentious. So is the menu – just a couple of choices, onion soup or foie gras terrine to start, followed by entrecote steak with chips, salad and a choice of sauces (they're very proud of the Café de Paris sauce, made to a 75-year-old recipe with 35 ingredients, and very nice it is too). There are also one or two daily specials, including a vegetarian alternative. The wine list offers a decent range of French wines, including a Muscadet that's good value at 390Kč a bottle.

## CANTINA

Map pp76–7

Mexican €€

☎ 257 317 173; [www.restauracecantina.cz](http://www.restauracecantina.cz); Újezd 38; mains 150-300Kč; 🕒 11.30am-midnight; 🍴 6, 9, 12, 20, 22, 23

This homely hacienda, decked out in bleached pine and Brazilian coffee sacks, serves up the most authentic margaritas in Prague – perhaps a little light on the tequila, but nicely iced and with a good zing of fresh lime. The menu is as good as Tex-Mex gets in this town, with big portions of burrito, *chimichanga*, quesadilla and fajitas with both meat and vegetarian fillings; if the salsa isn't hot enough for you, there are bottles of chilli sauce on the table to add a bit of bite.

This place is popular, so get there early, book a table, or be prepared to wait.

### EL CENTRO Map pp76–7 Spanish €€

☎ 257 533 343; Maltézské náměstí 9; mains 200–500Kč, tapas 100–300Kč; ☎ noon-midnight; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

Bright colours, chunky wooden furniture and Spanish-speaking staff lend an authentic air to this classic tapas bar. Here you can nibble on snackettes of chorizo, calamari and *gambas pil-pil* (prawns in garlic) over a bottle of Rioja, or splash out on a full meal of steak, grilled chicken or paella (1100Kč for two) washed down with a jug of sangria. (We can recommend the vegetarian paella, too.)

### CUKRKÁVALIMONÁDA

Map pp76–7 International €

☎ 257 530 628; Lázeňská 7; mains 120–180Kč; ☎ 9am–11pm; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

A cute little café-cum-restaurant that combines minimalist modern styling with Renaissance-era painted timber roof-beams, CKL offers fresh, home-made pastas, frittatas, ciabattas, salads and pancakes (sweet and savoury) by day and a slightly more sophisticated bistro menu in the evening. The coffee is excellent, the hot chocolate is to die for, and the house special elderflower drink (flavoured with mint and lemon) is crisp and refreshing. Since you ask, the name means ‘sugar, coffee, lemonade’ – the phrase is the Czech equivalent of ‘eeny-meeny-miny-moe’.

## STARÉ MĚSTO

The Old Town is littered with tourist traps, especially around Old Town Square, but there are also plenty of excellent restaurants to discover. The maze of streets leading away from Old Town Square contains many hidden gems, while the swanky strip of Pařížská boasts a more obvious string of stylish, upmarket eateries. The classic Staré Město dining room is in a brick-lined cellar – you’ll soon become a connoisseur of subterranean décor.

### ALLEGRO Map pp88–9 Italian €€€

☎ 221 427 000; www.fourseasons.com/prague; Veleslavínova 2a; mains 980–1300Kč; ☎ 7am–11pm; ☎ Staroměstská

It’s been a long time coming, but Prague finally has its first Michelin-starred restaurant. The dining room at the Four Seasons

Hotel oozes understated elegance with lots of polished wood panelling and Art Deco-style glass, and boasts a terrace with stunning night-time views of the floodlit castle. A superb setting for superb food – the Italian chef turns out inspired dishes that range from steamed tiger prawns scented with jasmine tea to fillet of turbot served on fennel compote with a squid and lime broth.

### CASA ARGENTINA

Map pp88–9 South American €€€

☎ 222 311 512; www.lacasaargentina.cz; Dlouhá 35; mains 350–1000Kč; ☎ 10am–2am; ☎ Náměstí Republiky

Prague now boasts around half a dozen South American steakhouses specialising in charcoal-grilled Argentine or Brazilian beef, but the consensus among expat diners is that the kitchen at Casa Argentina serves up the best rare steak in town. Service can be laid-back, verging on lackadaisical, and the atmosphere is idiosyncratic, to say the least, with kitschy Latin American trappings, a caged lizard, a live toucan on a perch, and a couple of professional dancers who tango among the tables. Whatever; you’re only here for the beef.

### V ZÁTIŠÍ

Map pp88–9 International/Modern Czech €€€

☎ 222 221 155; www.vzatisi.cz; Liliová 1; mains 500–800Kč; ☎ noon–3pm & 5.30–11pm; ☎ 17, 18 ‘Still Life’ is one of Prague’s top restaurants, famed for the quality of its cuisine (which was rewarded with a Michelin recommendation in 2007). The décor is bold and modern, with dark wood, quirky lamps and candleholders, and bold stripes of red and orange – there’s even a wall fashioned from stacked books. Of the dozen or so main courses on offer, four are seafood and two or three are vegetarian. There are also gourmet versions of traditional Czech dishes – the crispy roast duckling with red cabbage and herb dumplings is superb. There’s a two-course lunch menu, including one drink (695Kč), or you can lash out on the five-course degustation menu (1595Kč; plus 895Kč extra for wines to match the dishes).

### LA PROVENCE Map pp88–9 French €€€

☎ 296 826 155; www.kampagroup.com; Štupartská 9; mains 400–800Kč; ☎ noon-midnight; ☎ Náměstí Republiky



With its dark-wood beams, cushion-strewn benches, dim yellow lighting and shelves crammed with cooking implements, the basement restaurant at La Provence makes a good fist of passing itself off as a French country kitchen. The menu matches the décor, ranging from terrine of foie gras to rabbit Provençal in a creamy tarragon sauce. In the evening, when candlelight and soft piano music add to the atmosphere, it's an ideal spot for a romantic *tête-à-tête*.

### KHAJURAHU Map pp88–9 Indian €€

☎ 224 242 860; [www.khajuraho.cz](http://www.khajuraho.cz); **Richtřův dům, Michalská 23; mains 450-650Kč; ☎ noon-11pm; M Mústek**

The latest addition to Prague's growing range of Indian restaurants moves straight to the top of the chart as our favourite – a series of vaulted medieval rooms given an oriental atmosphere with Persian rugs scattered on the floor, Indian statues tucked into niches, and sequined textiles glowing colourfully beneath glass table-tops. Service is friendly and attentive, and the food is bursting with authentic flavours – cumin, coriander, ginger, garlic and chilli – ranging from Kashmiri dishes to *handi* and South Indian specialities, with plenty of choices that will appeal to vegetarians.

### LES MOULES Map pp88–9 Belgian €€

☎ 222 315 022; [www.lesmoules.cz](http://www.lesmoules.cz); **Pařížská 19; mains 375-600Kč; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Mon-Fri, 9am-midnight Sat & Sun; ☎ 17**

This impressive, wood-panelled, Belgian-style brasserie serves up steaming pans of mussels (449Kč for a kilo) in a range of sauces, from traditional *marinière* (white wine, cream and garlic) to Thai style (lemon-grass, lime and coconut milk), as well as steaks, pork ribs, *boeuf bourguignon* and lobster fresh from the *vivier* (live tank; be prepared to shell out 995Kč). The bar offers a selection of Belgian beers, including Stella Artois, Leffe and Hoegaarden on tap, and Chimay, Achel and La Trappe in bottles.

### ANGEL Map pp88–9 Asian €€

☎ 773 222 422; [www.angelrestaurant.cz](http://www.angelrestaurant.cz); **V Kolkovně 7; mains 325-525Kč; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun; M Staroměstská**

Sparkling but subtle décor in shades of champagne and chocolate, crowned with a lacy disc of fairy lights, creates a sophisti-

cated, romantic atmosphere in this highly acclaimed new restaurant. The Asian-fusion food, with flavours and influences from Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan and an emphasis on fresh, high-quality produce, features delectable dishes such as hot-and-sour beef (dressed with tamarind, chilli and lime with fresh coriander and mint), and seared tuna with chilli sauce, sweet potato mash and crispy seaweed.

### U ZAVOJE Map pp88–9 French €€

☎ 226 006 120; [www.uzavoje.cz](http://www.uzavoje.cz); **Havelská 25; mains 400-500Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight; M Mústek** This wood-panelled gourmet complex, set in a beautiful old passageway between Havelská and Kožná streets, includes a wine bar, restaurant, coffee house and delicatessen, all dedicated to fine food and French and Czech wines. The restaurant menu concentrates on fresh seasonal produce, with dishes such as artichokes stuffed with tartare of wild salmon and scallops, organic Bresse chicken with courgette lasagne, and confit of quail with asparagus purée.

### DAHAB

Map pp88–9 North African/Middle Eastern €€

☎ 224 827 375; [www.dahab.cz](http://www.dahab.cz); **Dlouhá 33; mains 225-500Kč; ☎ noon-1am; ☎ 5, 8, 14**

Dahab is a dimly lit North African *souq* scattered with oriental rugs and cushions where you can lounge on a divan and sip Moroccan mint tea to an oriental-jazz-ragga soundtrack. The menu ranges from baklava and other sweet snacks to more substantial couscous, *tajine* (meat and vegetable stew), lamb and chicken dishes; there are also teas from India, China and Turkey. Or just kick back with a hookah (hubble-bubble pipe); 175Kč gets you a chunk of perfumed baccy that'll last around 45 minutes.

### RASOI Map pp88–9 Indian €€

☎ 222 328 400; [www.rasoi.cz](http://www.rasoi.cz); **Dlouhá 13; mains 200-500Kč; ☎ 4-11pm; ☎ 5, 8, 14**

Relax with a Singapore Sling in the Bombay cocktail bar, then head downstairs to this posh Indian restaurant with a refined, semi-formal atmosphere, in a cellar that's been tarted up to look like a maharajah's mansion. The cuisine is certainly good enough for royalty, though you're more likely to be sharing with an appreciative crowd of expat Brits hankering after authentic tandoori chicken, *rogan josh* and chicken *jalfrezi*.

**AMBIENTE PASTA FRESCA**

Map pp88–9

Italian €€

☎ 224 230 244; [www.ambi.cz](http://www.ambi.cz); Celetná 11; mains 180-480Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight; 📍 Náměstí Republiky

Slick styling and service with a smile complement an extensive menu at this busy Italian restaurant. Choose from dishes such as melt-in-the-mouth *carpaccio* of beef, piquant spaghetti *aglio-olio* with chilli and crisp pancetta, and rich creamy risotto with *porcini*, along with a wide range of Italian and Czech wines. There's a long, narrow café at street level, but you'll find a more formal, intimate cellar restaurant located down below.

**KOLKOVNA** Map pp88–9

Czech €€

☎ 224 819 701; [www.kolkovna.cz](http://www.kolkovna.cz); V Kolkovně 8; mains 160-430Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight; 📍 Staroměstská

Owned and operated by the Pilsner Urquell brewery, Kolkovna is a stylish, modern take on the traditional Prague beer hall, with décor by top Czech designers, and posh (but hearty) versions of classic Czech dishes such as goulash, roast duck and Moravian Sparrow (see the boxed text, p155), including the Czech favourite, pork and dumplings (the dish of the day is only 95Kč). All washed down with exquisite Urquell beer, of course.

**DANICO** Map pp88–9

Italian €€

☎ 222 311 807; Dlouhá 21; mains 220-420Kč; ☎ 11am-1am; 📍 5, 8, 14

DaNico has earned a reputation as one of the best Italian restaurants in Prague, and it's easy to see why – Italian staff, fresh produce and ingredients imported from Italy, classic Mediterranean dishes such as *carpaccio* of smoked swordfish, *linguine con vongole* (pasta with clams), *penne all'arrabiata* (pasta with tomato, basil and chilli sauce), and homemade tiramisu, a range of regional Italian wines (expensive!), and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Bookings recommended for Friday and Saturday evenings.

**SIAM-I-SAN** Map pp88–9

Thai €€

☎ 224 814 099; [www.arzenal.cz](http://www.arzenal.cz); Valentínská 11; mains 270-390Kč; ☎ 10am-midnight; 📍 Staroměstská

This unusual little restaurant is tucked away at the back of the glassware boutique *Arzenal* (p147), in a colourful room created by local architect and designer Boris Šípek – it has a

dramatically uplit bar, grey, orange and yellow décor, colourful print tablecloths, and arty glass objects from the neighbouring shop. Even the coffee cups have a designer touch, with an asymmetric sway reminiscent of the Dancing Building. The cuisine is authentic Thai – some of the best Thai food in Prague – with a wide range of dishes, including many vegetarian ones.

**ORANGE MOON** Map pp88–9

Asian €€

☎ 222 325 119; [www.orangemoon.cz](http://www.orangemoon.cz); Rámová 5; mains 165-365Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11.30pm; 📍 5, 8, 14

Buddhist statues, oriental carved-wood panels, paper lanterns and warm, sunny colours make a welcoming combination at this ever-popular Asian restaurant. The menu is mostly Thai, with authentically spicy *tom yum kai* (hot and sour chicken broth) laden with smouldering chillis, crispy *pow pyet* (spring rolls) and fragrant *kaeng phed kai* (chicken in red curry). There are also some Indonesian, Burmese and Indian dishes, and bottles of Singha beer to take the edge off that chilli burn.

**CHEZ MARCEL** Map pp88–9

French €€

☎ 222 315 676; Haštalská 12; mains 150-350Kč; ☎ 8am-1am Mon-Fri, 9am-1am Sat & Sun; 📍 5, 8, 14

There's an authentic French bistro atmosphere at this peaceful backstreet café-bar, from the blue haze of cigarette smoke hanging over the dark wood tables (though you can escape to a smoke-free room at the back) to the copies of *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* and the *escargots* on the menu. Stick to the simple dishes – steak *au poivre*, grilled chicken, quiche lorraine, the daily specials – and you won't be disappointed. The two-course lunch for 150Kč is great value.

**AMBIENTE PIZZA NUOVA**

Map pp88–9

Italian €€

☎ 221 803 308; [www.ambi.cz](http://www.ambi.cz); Revoluční 1; mains 295-330Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11.30pm; 📍 Náměstí Republiky

The latest idea from the Ambiente team is this cool 1st-floor space next door to the Kotva shopping centre, filled with big tables and banquettes with picture windows overlooking náměstí Republiky. For a fixed price (295Kč per person before 6pm, 328Kč after) you get an all-you-can-eat deal – either help yourself from the salad and

antipasti buffet, or choose from the hot pasta dishes and pizzas offered by a band of wandering waiters (buffet and pizza-pasta combined costs 475/515Kč). Wine by the glass is around 75Kč.

### ARIANA Map pp88–9 Afghan €

☎ 222 323 438; <http://sweb.cz/kabulrest>; Rámová 6; mains 180-250Kč; ☎ 11am-11pm; ☎ 5, 8, 14 Ariana is a welcoming little place decked out with Persian rugs and photos of Kabul, with Asian music wailing in the background. It serves a range of unusual Afghani dishes, including *ashak* (a sort of ravioli containing chopped leeks, with a rich sauce of minced lamb and yogurt), various lamb and chicken kebabs and tasty vegetarian specialities, served with light, fluffy *nan-i-dashi* (hot bread) on the side.

### LEHKÁ HLAVA Map pp88–9 Vegetarian €

☎ 222 220 665; [www.lehkahlava.cz](http://www.lehkahlava.cz); Boršov 2; mains 120-210Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11.30pm Mon-Fri, noon-11.30pm Sat & Sun; ☎ 17, 18 Tucked away down a narrow cul-de-sac, Lehká Hlava (the name means 'clear head') exists in a little world of its own. A peaceful atrium leads to two unusually decorated dining rooms, both with a vaguely psychedelic vibe – one with a rocket-shaped light fitting that projects coloured images onto the walls, the other topped by a dark blue vault pierced by twinkling stars. Both have tables lit from within, either studded with glowing glass spheres or with a radiant wood-grain effect. In the kitchen the emphasis is on healthy, freshly prepared vegetarian and vegan dishes, ranging from hummus and roast veggies to spinach burritos to a spicy oriental stir-fry that could easily feed two at lunch.

### COUNTRY LIFE Map pp88–9 Vegetarian €

☎ 224 213 366; [www.countrylife.cz](http://www.countrylife.cz); Melantrichova 15; mains 80-170Kč; ☎ 9am-8.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, 11am-8.30pm Sun, closed Sat; ☎ Můstek Prague's first-ever health-food shop opened in 1991, and is an all-vegan cafeteria and sandwich bar offering inexpensive salads, sandwiches, pizzas, vegetarian goulash, sunflower-seed burgers and soy drinks. There is plenty of seating in the rear courtyard but it can still get crowded at lunchtime, so go early or buy sandwiches to go.

### BEAS VEGETARIAN DHABA

Map pp88–9 Vegetarian/Indian €

☎ 608 035 727; Týnská 19; mains 90-130Kč;

☎ 11am-7pm; ☎ M Náměstí Republiky

Tucked away in a courtyard off Týnská, this friendly, informal little restaurant offers vegetarian curries (cooked by chefs from North India), served with rice, salad, chutneys and raita; the samosas are excellent, especially with a dab of fig chutney on the side. Unusually for Prague, there's some genuine chilli heat in the food, which is tasty and good value. This is also a great place to meet Czechs of an alternative bent.

## NOVÉ MĚSTO & VYŠEHRAĐ

The New Town has an eclectic collection of eating places, with cafés and traditional Czech pubs as well as a range of international restaurants. The main eating streets are Wenceslas Square and Na Příkopě, lined with restaurants offering cuisines that cross the world from Italy to India and Argentina to Japan; there are also lots of less obvious and more appealing eateries hidden in the back streets between Wenceslas Square and the river.

### RIO'S VYŠEHRAĐ

Map p116 Mediterranean €€€

☎ 224 922 156; [www.riorestaurant.cz](http://www.riorestaurant.cz); Štůlcova 2; mains 300-800Kč; ☎ 10am-midnight; ☎ Vyšehrad

Located opposite the Church of Sts Peter & Paul in the Vyšehrad fortress, this is an attractive modern restaurant set in an ancient building. There's elegant indoor dining room and an informal terrace, but the main attraction is the garden, a lovely spot for an outdoor meal in summer. The international gourmet menu includes dishes such as salad of seared tuna with Japanese pickled ginger, fillet of salmon with Pommery champagne sauce, and chargrilled Brazilian beef, plus Czech classics such as roast duck.

### MIYABI Map pp108–9 Japanese €€

☎ 296 233 102; [www.miyabi.cz](http://www.miyabi.cz); Navrátilova 10;

mains 180-700Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; ☎ 3, 9, 14

Miyabi is a relaxed, café-style Japanese restaurant with minimalist décor and modern art on the walls – a refreshing change from more formal Japanese places. There's a small sushi menu (*nigiri* sushi is 60 Kč to 120Kč a piece) and main courses that

include fish and vegetable tempura (pieces of fish or vegetables dipped in batter and deep-fried), *sake no amiyaki* (salmon marinated in saki then grilled) and *karaage* (pieces of chicken marinated with ginger and soy sauce then deep-fried).

### KOGO Map pp108–9 Italian €€

☎ 221 451 259; [www.kogo.cz](http://www.kogo.cz); Slovanský dům, Na Příkopě 22; pizzas 200–300Kč, mains 250–600Kč; ☎ 11am–11pm; (M) Náměstí Republiky Chic and businesslike, but also relaxed and child-friendly (highchairs provided), Kogo is a stylish restaurant serving top-notch pizza, pasta, steak and seafood – the rich, tomatoey *zuppa di pesce* (fish soup) is delicious, as is the *risotto alla pescatora* (made with squid, mussels, shrimp and octopus). There's also a good range of wines available by the glass. On summer evenings, tables filled with conversation and candle-light spill over into the leafy courtyard.

### SUTERÉN Map pp108–9 International €€

☎ 224 933 657; [www.suteren.cz](http://www.suteren.cz); Masarykovo nábřeží 26; mains 345–445Kč; ☎ 11.30am–midnight Mon–Sat; ☎ 17, 21

'The Basement' is a beautiful cellar space, where modern detailing complements the old red-brick and wooden beams perfectly. Cream linen chairs, set at gleaming black tables with a single, deep-pink rose in the middle of each one, surround a circular glass bar with a colourful aquarium along one wall. The menu leans towards seafood, beef and game, with intriguing dishes such as salmon *mojito*, with the fish marinated in rum and lime juice, served with tart lime jam and sweet rum-and-mint sauce; and more traditional fare such as roast saddle of rabbit marinated in wine, vinaigrette and thyme.

### OLIVA Map p116 Mediterranean €€

☎ 222 520 288; [www.olivarestaurant.cz](http://www.olivarestaurant.cz); Plavecká 4; mains 220–420Kč; ☎ 11.30am–3pm & 6pm–midnight Mon–Sat; ☎ 3, 7, 16, 17, 21

A small, friendly, family-run restaurant focusing on fresh Mediterranean cuisine, Oliva has become a victim of its own popularity. A menu of carefully prepared dishes that include rocket salad with caramelised red onion, olives, pine nuts and parmesan, roast octopus with okra and grilled peppers, and pan-fried sea bass with olive, anchovy and tomato has pulled in so many customers that on weekend evenings the

# top picks

## BEST BREAKFASTS

- **Red Hot & Blues** (Map pp88–9; ☎ 222 314 639; Jakubská 12; mains 200–500Kč; ☎ 9am–11pm; (M) Náměstí Republiky) Serves a range of Western breakfasts, including pancakes and maple syrup, and a full British fry-up; the 'Home Run Special' (bacon, eggs, hash browns, pancakes and toast) will soak up the heaviest hangover, and lay a firm foundation for further debauchery. Breakfast is served to 11.30am weekdays and to 4pm on weekends.
- **Kavárna Pavilón** (Map p121; ☎ 222 097 201; Vinohrady Pavilón, Vinohradská 50; mains 120–260Kč; ☎ 8am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–9pm Sat & Sun; (M) Náměstí Míru) Bright, airy café in upmarket shopping centre; offers excellent coffee and the best almond croissants in town.
- **Globe Bookstore & Café** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 224 934 203; Pštrossova 6; mains 120–200Kč; ☎ 10am–midnight; (M) Karlovo Náměstí) Excellent brunch served 9.30am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday, including pancakes with bacon and maple syrup, freshly squeezed juices and Bloody Marys. Smaller breakfasts served till 4pm weekdays.
- **Káva Káva Káva** (Map pp88–9; ☎ 224 228 862; Platýž pasáž, Národní třída 37; mains 60–200Kč; ☎ 7am–10pm Mon–Fri, 9am–10pm Sat & Sun; (M) Národní Třída) Has some of the best coffee in town, accompanied by bagels, croissants, cakes and pastries. Breakfast served all day.
- **Café Savoy** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 257 311 562; Vítězná 5, Malá Strana; mains 120–25Kč; ☎ 8am–10.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–10.30pm Sat & Sun; ☎ 6, 9, 22, 23) Full English (including baked beans), full American (with peanut butter), or healthy breakfast with yogurt, fruit and cereal.

waitstaff can be overwhelmed. But the food is so good that it's well worth enduring the occasional spell of slow service.

### LEMON LEAF Map pp108–9 International €€

☎ 224 919 056; [www.lemon.cz](http://www.lemon.cz); Myslíkova 14; mains 130–300Kč; ☎ 11am–11pm Mon–Thu, 11am–12.30am Fri, 12.30pm–12.30am Sat, 12.30pm–11pm Sun; ☎ 17, 21

It's a bit off the beaten tourist path, but with its bright, high-ceiling rooms decked out with crushed-silk lampshades and Thai-style art, menus translated into English and German, and friendly smiling service, the

Lemon Leaf is certainly making an effort to pull in the visitors. And it's certainly worth a visit – the menu is mostly European, ranging from fillet of wild Scottish salmon to tournedos Rossini, but there is also a selection of excellent, authentic Thai dishes including a rich and fragrant green curry with a decent kick of chilli heat.

**BRANICKÝ SKLÍPEK** Map pp108–9 Czech €€  
U Purkmistra; ☎ 224 237 103; Vodičkova 2; mains 100–300Kč; ☎ 9am–11pm Mon–Fri, 11am–11pm Sat & Sun; ☎ Müstek

This is one of the few rough-and-ready, old-fashioned beer halls left in central Prague, serving meaty, good-value Czech dishes washed down with cheap beer. Menus and staff are Czech only and service can be grumpy, which puts off most tourists, but persevere – this is the real deal, serving up some of the finest pork, dumplings and sauerkraut in town (look for *purkmistrová mísa* on the menu). Nonsmokers, beware – the atmosphere is smoky enough to kipper a truckload of herring.

**NA RYBÁRNĚ** Map pp108–9 Fish & Seafood €€  
☎ 224 918 885; Gorazdova 17; mains 100–300Kč; ☎ 9.30am–11pm; ☎ 17, 21

This unassuming little fish restaurant has been around for almost a century and has seen more than a few celebrity diners, ranging from writer Karel Čapek to ex-president Václav Havel, Rolling Stone Mick Jagger and former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright. The menu here offers everything from salmon and tuna to cuttlefish and tiger prawns, but the best dishes are the simplest and most traditional – trout with herb butter, and daily specials such as baked carp or grilled eel with lemon butter.

**SIAM ORCHID** Map p106 Thai €€  
☎ 222 319 410; www.siamorchid.cz; Na Poříčí 21; mains 160–280Kč; ☎ 10am–10pm; ☎ 3, 8, 24, 26

The setting – a scatter of plastic tables and chairs on a 1st-floor balcony hidden up a passage beside a department store – looks none too promising, but this tiny restaurant, tucked away beside a Thai massage studio, offers some of the city's most authentic Thai cuisine. From the crisp, grease-free *po-pia thot* (spring rolls with pork and black mushrooms) and succulent *kai sa-te* (chicken satay) to the fiery *kaeng khiao wan kai* (chicken in green curry with

basil), pretty much everything on the menu is a delight.

**ALBIO** Map p106 Vegetarian/Organic €€  
☎ 222 325 414; www.albiostyl.cz; Truhlářská 20; mains 130–280Kč; ☎ 11am–10pm Mon–Sat; ☎ Náměstí Republiky

This family-friendly, nonsmoking, whole-foods restaurant is as bright and fresh as an Alpine morning, decked out in blonde wood and rustic timber set off with salmon-pink tablecloths and seat-cushions. It sources all its food from local organic farms and operates its own bakery, shop and advice counter offering tips on organic food and healthy eating. The menu includes fish, vegetarian and vegan dishes, such as baked whole rice with oyster mushrooms, leeks and cashew nuts, and buckwheat pancakes filled with onion mash and grilled zucchini. There are also organic wines and unpasteurised beer so you can work up a healthy hangover.

**U MATĚJE KOTRBY** Map pp108–9 Czech €€  
☎ 224 930 768; www.umatejekotrby.cz; Křemencova 17; mains 130–280Kč; ☎ noon–11pm; ☎ 6, 9, 18, 21, 22, 23

It's only 50m away from the tourist trap that is U Fleků, but this place is the real deal – an atmospheric Czech pub strewn with more bric-a-brac, musical instruments and old photos than the average antique shop and, more importantly, sporting a menu of classic Czech grub from goulash made with Pilsner Urquell to pork knuckle braised in dark beer, mustard and horseradish. There's also a range of traditional 'beer snacks' including *utopenci* (sausage pickled in vinegar), Czech cheeses with walnuts and olives, and *libová tlačěnka* (pork brawn, or potted head), amusingly translated on the menu as 'home-made headcheese'.

**KARAVANSERÁJ** Map pp108–9 Lebanese €€

☎ 224 930 390; Masarykovo nábřeží 22; mains 100–250Kč; ☎ 9am–11pm Mon–Thu, 9am–midnight Fri, noon–midnight Sat, noon–10pm Sun; ☎ 17, 21  
Serving as the home base of a travellers' club, this restaurant and tearoom cultivates a ramshackle, relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, with its batik tablecloths, wicker chairs, oriental knick-knacks and library of travel guidebooks. The menu is mostly Lebanese – baba ganoush, falafel, hummus and lamb kebabs – with a couple of Indian dishes thrown in, and there's a huge range

of speciality teas to choose from. It's child-friendly too, with highchairs, kids' portions and a collection of toys to play with.

### U NEKLANA Map p116 Czech €

☎ 224 916 051; Neklanova 30; mains 120-225Kč;  
🕒 11am-midnight; 🚶 7, 18, 24

U Neklana is a welcoming local pub nestled in the corner of one of Prague's coolest apartment buildings, a Cubist classic dating from 1915. Decked out in the cheerful red colours of the Budvar brewery, it dishes up hearty Czech fare such as potato and mushroom soup served in a scooped-out loaf of rye bread (the menu is in English and German as well as Czech), and there's a hits-of-the-'80s jukebox providing a suitably retro soundtrack.

### COUNTRY LIFE Map pp108-9 Vegetarian €

☎ 224 247 280; www.countrylife.cz; Jungmannova 1; mains 60-170Kč; 🕒 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri, closed Sat & Sun; 🚶 3, 9, 14, 24  
Country Life is a cafeteria-style health-food restaurant with all-vegan food and buffet service – load up your plate, and pay by weight (that's right! You weigh in at the till). There are only four tables at this branch, which caters mainly to the takeaway trade – if you want a better chance of a seat, head for the branch in **Staré Město** (p163).

### PIZZERIA KMOTRA Map pp108-9 Pizza €

☎ 224 934 100; www.kmotra.cz; V Jirchářích 12; pizza 95-145Kč; 🕒 11am-midnight; 🚶 Národní Třída

One of Prague's oldest and best pizzerias, 'the Godmother' can rustle up more than two dozen varieties of pizza, from margherita to marinara, cooked in a genuine wood-fired pizza oven. Sit beside the bar upstairs, or head down to the basement where you can watch the chef sling pizza dough in the open kitchen – both areas are non-smoking. It gets busy here after 8pm, so try to snag a table before then.

## VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE

Outside the centre, Vinohrady has Prague's largest concentration of good restaurants, and the choice is only getting better as the area moves increasingly upmarket. Most are clustered around Náměstí Míru and the long

residential street, Mánesova, that parallels Vinohradská to the Muzeum to the Jiřího z Poděbrad metro stops. Vršovice picks up on the southeast corner of Vinohrady. It's not as fruitful, but has a couple of pleasant surprises, including the city's only Azerbaijani eatery.

### AROMI Map p121 Italian €€

☎ 222 713 222; Mánesova 78, Vinohrady; mains 350-500Kč; 🕒 noon-10pm Sun-Thu, to 11pm Fri & Sat; 🚶 Jiřího z Poděbrad or 🚶 11

Red brick, polished wood, country-style furniture and sprigs of fresh rosemary and thyme on each table create a pleasantly rustic atmosphere in this gourmet Italian restaurant. Brisk and businesslike at lunchtime, romantic in the evenings, Aromi has a reputation for authentic Italian cuisine, from the *zuppa di cannellini* (cannellini bean soup) to the *branzino al guazzetto* (sea bass baked in a sea-salt crust; seafood is a speciality).

### ZAHRADA V OPEŘE

Map p121 International €€

☎ 224 239 685; Legerová 75, Vinohrady; mains 280-500Kč; 🕒 noon-11pm; 🚶 Muzeum or 🚶 11  
This may be the best food for the money in the city, with excellently prepared Czech dishes such as *svíčková*, plus international foods inspired by South Africa and Asia, and regular sushi nights. The sophisticated contemporary décor manages to be both unstuffy and elegant at the same time. For years, the restaurant was trapped in the security cordon of US-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty next door, making it a real effort to find the front door, but the radio station was slated to move from this location by 2009.

### PASTIČKA Map p121 Czech €€

☎ 222 253 228; Blanická 25 (cnr Mánesova), Vinohrady; mains 200-450Kč; 🕒 11am-10pm Mon-Fri, 5-11pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Jiřího z Poděbrad or 🚶 11

A warm, inviting ground floor pub with a little garden out the back, Pasticčka is great for a beer or a meal. The décor is part 1920s Prague and part Irish pub. In the evenings, the rows of tables stretching past the bar are normally filled with students. Most come for the beer, but the mix of international and traditional Czech dishes is very good. The garden is popular with a local office crowd at lunchtime.

**MOZAIKA** Map p121 International €€

☎ 224 253 011; Nitranská 13, Vinohrady; mains 220-400Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; 📄 Jiřího z Poděbrad  
 When this stylish restaurant opened a few years back, it set new standards for both design and cooking at this price range. The menu tilts towards fusion, with entrees such as seared salmon served with a side of wasabi-infused mashed potatoes. The wine list features excellent domestic whites and reds from Moravia, and – unusual for Prague – decent wine by the glass. The sleek interior is formal enough for a business lunch and warm enough for a romantic night for two. Reservations are a must.

**AMBIENTE** Map p121 International €€

☎ 222 727 851; Mánesova 59, Vinohrady; mains 200-400Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; 📄 Jiřího z Poděbrad or 📄 11  
 'Ambiente' means atmosphere, and the warm yellow walls, banquettes, bamboo-and-basketwork chairs and rich mahogany woodwork help create a relaxing one at this flagship of the well-run Ambiente chain. The American-themed menu offers a huge range of salads (including Caesar, goat's cheese, roast veggies, avocado), tasty pasta dishes, barbecue ribs, fajitas, steaks and chicken wings, and there are excellent house wines for around 90Kč a glass.

**AMIGOS** Map p121 Mexican €€

☎ 222 250 594; Anny Letenské 16 (nr Mánesova), Vinohrady; mains 200-400Kč; ☎ 11.30am-midnight; 📄 Muzeum or 📄 11  
 Amigos offers decent Mexican and South American cooking, just a short walk up Mánesova from the Muzeum metro station. There are tasty burritos, tacos, enchiladas and quesadillas, as well as steaks, hamburgers, stir-fries and big dinner salads. The atmosphere often feels more like a pub than a restaurant, and the mood can get rowdy on occasion. Fun.

**OSTERIA DA CLARA** Map p121 Italian €€

☎ 271 726 548; Mexická 7, Vršovice; mains 200-400Kč; ☎ 11am-11pm; 📄 Náměstí Míru or 📄 4, 22, 23  
 This relaxed Italian *trattoria* features both excellent home-made cooking and a funky, retro '70s ambience that's authentic down to the velveteen sofas by the door and the blaxploitation soundtrack wafting through

the speakers. The three-course set lunch menu priced below 200Kč is excellent value. Try a simple yet delicious *zuppa di pomodoro* (tomato soup), with fresh basil on top, followed by the calamari, sautéed with courgettes, celery and spinach.

**CHUDOBA** Map p121 Czech €

☎ 222 250 624; Vinohradská 67, Vinohrady; mains 130-260Kč; ☎ 11am-1am Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun; 📄 11

This upscale Czech tavern-restaurant occupies a choice corner on a leafy section of Vinohradská. The customers are mostly young professionals and couples out for an after-work drink and a very good and reasonably priced Czech meal. The décor plays with the 'Olde Vinohrady' theme, with sepia-tone photos on the wall and polished wooden floors. The food is a mix of Czech and Continental, with standards like roast duck and goulash sharing the menu with pork ribs and a very hearty meat fondue. There's a sidewalk terrace in nice weather.

**MASALA** Map p121 International €

☎ 222 251 601; Mánesova 13, Vinohrady; mains 150-250Kč; ☎ noon-11pm Mon-Fri, 5-11pm Sat & Sun; 📄 Muzeum or 📄 11

Just what Prague needed: an excellent, unpretentious Indian restaurant, with all of the good food and none of the stultifying atmosphere and stiff service you normally find at Indian places here. The Indian couple who run Masala aim for what they call home-style service, meaning a relaxed presentation and good home-cooking. One minor quibble is that the food could use more spice. On a recent visit the lamb *rogan josh* had a hint of ketchup, but the meat was tender and the accompanying naan bread was just right: crispy on the edges and soft in the centre.

**U DĚDKA** Map p121 International €

☎ 222 522 784; Na Kozačce 12, Vinohrady; mains 150-250Kč; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat; 📄 Náměstí Míru, 📄 4, 22, 23

This pleasantly upmarket pub-restaurant, situated near the top of Voroněžská on the border between Vinohrady and Vršovice, has a quiet, tree-covered terrace out the front. The modern décor pulls in a mix of Czech professionals, students and the occasional tourist from a nearby pension, while the menu is a blend of Czech specialties plus well-done bar food, such as chicken

quesadillas and cheeseburgers. The latter are easily the best in this part of town.

### Café FX Map p121 Vegetarian €

☎ 224 254 776; Bělehradská 120, Vinohrady; mains 120-240Kč; ☎ 11.30am-2am; **M** IP Pavlova

Café FX offers some of the best food in Prague in its price range – and it's all vegetarian. This hippy-chic restaurant at the entrance to the nightclub **Radost FX** (p196) – looking like a faded bordello with its draped chiffon, tasselled lampshades and distressed walls – comes up with imaginative dishes ranging from spinach ravioli stuffed with hazelnut pesto and cheese to sage and mushroom 'meatballs' with mashed potatoes and creamy mushroom sauce.

### Huang He Map p121 Chinese €

☎ 271 746 651; Vršovická 1, Vršovice; mains 150-200Kč; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat; **M** Náměstí Míru, ☐ 6, 7, 11, 18, 24

One of the first authentic Chinese restaurants to open in the city in the early 1990s and still one of the best, Huang He is in lower Vršovice, close to (if not actually in) Nusle. On crowded nights, the atmosphere is akin to a raucous Czech pub (a previous incarnation), and you'll be tempted, like everyone else, to wash down that spicy chicken *kung-pao* with a half-litre or two of beer. Phone ahead to reserve a table.

### SedM Krasavic Map p121 Azerbaijani €

☎ 267 710 777; Voroněžská 19, Vršovice; mains 150-200Kč; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat; **M** Náměstí Míru, ☐ 4, 22, 23

Bright and cheerful, this Azerbaijani restaurant is up the street from the Czech Inn and Arco hostels. The menu is strong on *pilaf* dishes, a scrumptious mixture of fruits and ground beef, as well as kebabs and Russian-style dumplings. The daily lunch special for 85Kč is arguably the best meal deal in the neighbourhood, and there are excellent wines from Georgia on offer.

### Cheers Map p121 International €

☎ 222 513 108; cnr náměstí Míru & Belgická, Vinohrady; mains 100-200Kč; ☎ 11am-1am; **M** Náměstí Míru

Cheers is a modern take on the traditional Czech pub, with bright and breezy colours, lots of stainless steel and a splash or two of contemporary art. The theory behind the menu seems to be to include one favourite

dish from a dozen or so cuisines around the world, so you can choose nachos or *nigiri* sushi, *carpaccio* or cheeseburgers, fresh hummus or fish and chips. There's a great range of beers available too, including Budvar, Hoegaarden and Guinness on tap.

### Pizzeria Grosseto

Map p121 Italian/Pizza €

☎ 224 252 778; Francouzská 2, Vinohrady; mains 120-180Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; **M** Náměstí Míru  
This bustling Vinohrady pizzeria, just off Náměstí Míru, serves very good pizzas, with inventive toppings such as asparagus and ricotta cheese, as well as homemade pastas and original desserts. Too often in Prague, pizzas come only with standard toppings like ham or mushrooms – but not here. The garden terrace at the back is a secluded gem and something of a local secret. To find it, walk left past the front entrance in the direction of Francouzská and through a small passageway to the right.

### Veg Food Map p121 Vegetarian/Vegan €

☎ 721 255 253; Londýnská 35, Vinohrady; mains 100-200Kč; ☎ 11am-8pm; **M** Náměstí Míru or IP Pavlova  
There's not much in the way of atmosphere here at Veg Food, one of the few purely vegetarian and vegan restaurants in the area. It has a simple coffee shop feel, with a scattering of plastic tables and metal chairs. But the menu holds some pleasant surprises, including lots of 'meat' dishes using tofu, such as vegetarian schnitzel and vegetarian chicken, plus plenty of Asian-inspired entrees. Nonsmoking throughout, it also offers a daily two-course lunch menu for 98Kč.

## Žižkov & Karlín

Žižkov is more famous for its pubs than its restaurants, but there are new places springing up every year to add to the old stalwarts that have been around for ages. We haven't been able to recommend any restaurants in Karlín yet, but if you're in the area check out the Pivovarský Klub (p186), a drinking venue that serves good traditional pub grub.

### Hanil Map pp126-7 Japanese/Korean €€

☎ 222 715 867; Slavikova 24, Žižkov; mains 300-550Kč; ☎ 11am-2.30pm & 5.30-11pm Mon-Sat, 5.30-11pm Sun; **M** Jiří z Poděbrad  
White walls, blond-wood lattice screens, paper lanterns and polished granite tables



# top picks

## VEGETARIAN RESTAURANTS

- Albio (p165)
- Beas Vegetarian Dhaba (p163)
- Café FX (opposite)
- Country Life (p163)
- Lehká Hlava (p163)

create a relaxed and informal setting where a mixed crowd of businesspeople, locals and expats enjoys authentic Japanese and Korean cuisine without the fuss and formality of more expensive restaurants. Tuck into a hot bowl of tasty *bibimbap* (rice topped with meat and pickled vegetables and spiced with hot pepper paste), or order a sashimi platter – the sushi here is probably the best value in town.

### MAILSI Map pp126–7

Pakistani €€

☎ 222 717 783; Lipanská 1, Žižkov; mains 200–350Kč; 🕒 noon–3pm & 6–11pm; 🚶 5, 9, 26

Mailsi was Prague's first Pakistani restaurant, and is still one of the city's best for authentic, home-style curry cuisine. The outside is inconspicuous, and it's only the qawwali music that guides you into the attractively decorated green and burgundy dining room with its tropical fishtank. Service is courteous and the food delicious, though prices have edged up in recent years – prawn and fish dishes go up to 500Kč. The *bhaji* is rather plain – just onion and potato thinly sliced, dipped in spiced flour and fried, but very light and crisp – while the *murgh dal* consists of tender chicken in a cumin-spiced lentil sauce.

### KUŘE V HODINKÁCH

Map pp126–7

Czech/International €

☎ 222 734 212; [www.kurevhodinkach.cz](http://www.kurevhodinkach.cz); Seifertova 26, Žižkov; mains 120–260Kč; 🍴 food served 11am–2.30pm & 6–11.30pm; 🚶 5, 9, 26

This rock music-themed pub is named after a 1972 album by Czech jazz-rock band Flamengo, which was banned by the communist authorities (it means 'Chicken in the Watch' – hey, it was the '70s, psychedelic drugs and all that...). Decked out in rock memorabilia, and with a choice of buzzing street-level bar or

more intimate brick-vaulted basement, it's more upmarket than most Žižkov pubs and has a classy kitchen to match – the menu includes pasta with buttered sage and pecorino, tofu burgers, barbecued chicken wings in ginger and soy sauce, and a rich, dark and tasty goulash with bacon dumplings.

### RESTAURACE AKROPOLIS

Map pp126–7

International €

☎ 296 330 913; Kubelíkova 27, Žižkov; mains 90–230Kč; 🕒 11.30am–1am Mon–Sat; 🚶 5, 9, 26

The café in the famous **Palác Akropolis club** (p198) is a Žižkov institution, with its eccentric combination of marble panels, quirky metalwork light fittings and weird fishtank installations designed by local artist František Skála. The menu has a good selection of vegetarian dishes, from nachos to gnocchi, plus great garlic soup, searingly hot buffalo wings and steak tartare. Kids are welcome – you'll find toys and colouring books (though it can get a bit smoky) – and so are dogs, who can choose from their own menu of biscuits and chew toys.

## HOLEŠOVICE, BUBENEČ & DEJVICE

The outlying neighbourhoods north and west of the city centre are finally coming into their own in terms of quality restaurants. Most of the better places are clustered along the residential streets around and north of the Dejvická metro station. You'll find another grouping within walking distance of Strossmayerovo náměstí. The far eastern section of Holešovice has seen a boom in property development but is still lacking in decent eateries, yet even here are there are some new names.

### HANAVSKÝ PAVILÓN

Map pp132–3

Czech/International €€€

☎ 233 323 641; Letenské sady 173, Bubeneč; mains 600–900Kč; 🕒 11am–1am, terrace to 11pm; 🚶 18

Perched on a terrace high above the river, this ornate, neobaroque pavilion dating from 1891 houses a smart restaurant with a postcard-perfect view of the Vltava bridges – from April to September you can dine on the outdoor terrace. There's a three-course set menu (from 375Kč) of Czech classics.

**DA EMANUEL** Map pp132–3 Italian €€€

☎ 224 312 934; Charlese De Gaulla 4, Dejvice; mains 500-700Kč; ☎ noon-11pm; M Dejvická or ☎ 8

This small, elegant Italian-owned place, on a quiet residential street, is one of Dejvice's true destination restaurants. The main dining room, perched romantically below an arched brick ceiling, holds around a dozen tables, each with a vase of fresh flowers and covered in white linens. Try the *tagliata con rucola* (tender slices of filet mignon sprinkled with rocket) or the mussels, served in a salty tomato sauce. Since it's small, you'll have to book in advance.

**EL GAUCHO** Map pp132–3 Steakhouse €€€

☎ 224 911 579; Schwaigerova 59/3, Bubeneč; mains 400-700Kč; ☎ 11am-11pm; ☎ 1, 8, 15, 25, 26 (stop Sparta) plus a long walk

A romantic Argentinean-style steakhouse tucked away in a valley in Bubeneč, this restaurant is part of the Hotel Villa Schwaiger, and the setting is reminiscent of a country inn. There are plenty of pasta and chicken dishes on the menu, but the focus here is on the beef. Order by the cut at prices about 100 Kč cheaper than similar steakhouses in the centre. Dine in the garden in nice weather. It's hard to find, so bring a map or take a taxi, or combine a visit with a walk through nearby Stromovka park.

**RESTAURANT U CEDRU**

Map pp132–3 Lebanese €€

☎ 233 342 974; Národní Obrany 27, Dejvice; mains 200-400Kč; ☎ 11am-11pm; M Dejvická

'At the Cedar' is a welcoming Lebanese restaurant with tasty *mezze* (appetisers) such as baba ganoush (smoky aubergine/eggplant and garlic puree), tabbouleh and stuffed vine leaves. Rather than agonise over the menu, you can order a spread of 10 *mezze*, which the chef will select for you – a great start to dinner, or a lunch in itself.

**KAVALA** Map pp132–3 Greek €€

☎ 224 325 181; Charlese De Gaulla 5, Dejvice; mains 290-350Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11.30pm; M Dejvická

If you can't get in at **De Emanuel** (above), try this Greek *taverna* across the street. There are the usual classics such as souvlaki and mous-saka, plus a delicious seafood *mezze* (320Kč) that could easily be a meal in itself. The indoor dining room, with the sponged walls and light woods, is a little too cute – a better bet is the front garden. The Greek Society

runs a small grocery next door, which is great for stocking up on fresh olives, Greek wines, authentic Greek yogurt and fresh feta.

**HAVELI** Map pp132–3 Indian €€☎ 233 344 800; Dejvická 6, Dejvice; mains 250-350Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight; M Hradčanská  
Indian music and a waft of incense will guide you towards this popular, authentic curry restaurant with tables split between an informal street-level bar and a cosy red-brick and whitewash cellar. The onion *bhaji* is light and crisp, the naan bread soft and buttery, and the curry dishes nicely spiced; there's a good selection of vegetarian dishes, including a very tasty *channa pindi* (chick peas and white cheese in a tangy sauce rich in cumin and fresh coriander).**ČÍNSKÁ ZAHRAHA** Map pp132–3 Chinese €€☎ 233 379 656; Šmeralová 11, Bubeneč; mains 150-300Kč; ☎ 11am-11pm; ☎ 1, 8, 15, 25, 26  
Zahrada is similar to **Hong Kong** (below) in that it's a largely authentic Chinese restaurant that's good enough to draw people here from around the city. In fact, it's not uncommon to see lines of Asian tourists streaming down the sidewalks, all headed here, at mealtimes. The very hot 'dry fried chicken' (pieces of chicken cooked on the bone in red pepper flake) is one of the local favourites; ask the waiter to advise. Dine on the terrace in nice weather.**HONG KONG** Map pp132–3 Chinese €€

☎ 233 376 209; Letenské náměstí 5, Holešovice; mains 150-300Kč; ☎ 10.30am-11pm; ☎ 1, 8, 15, 25, 26

An impressively gaudy décor, with ornately carved wooden panels, an illuminated, painted-glass ceiling and red silk seat cushions, Cantonese pop music and a clientele that includes local Chinese families – it all smacks of authenticity. That extends to the mostly Cantonese menu, which, along with favourites such as dim sum, soy-sauce duck and salt-and-pepper shrimp, has such adventurous options as 'cold sliced pork tongue with soy sauce', 'chicken with strange tastes' and 'chicken with five smells'.

**SAKURA** Map pp132–3 Japanese €€

☎ 774 785 077; Náměstí Svobody 1, Dejvice; mains 150-300Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; M Dejvická

Crown for crown, this is arguably the best sushi place in Prague. It occupies a smart

1930s functionalist building, and the open interior is a soothing blend of contemporary Japanese and Czech high modern. There's even a small play area for children. The sushi is excellent, but the rolls really stand out. The 'volcano' roll features spicy tuna; the 'crunch' roll comes lightly fried, with gently cooked salmon tucked inside.

### MOLO 22 Map pp132-3 International €

☎ 220 563 348; U Průhonu 22, Holešovice; mains 150-250Kč; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Fri, 9am-midnight Sat & Sun; ☎ Vltavská or ☎ 5, 12, 15  
This super-slick restaurant – done out in dark panelled walls and lime green accents, just across the street from the dance club Mecca (p195) – is a sure sign that this section of Holešovice is on the way up. The menu is ambitious and eclectic, with Italian risottos and Thai curries listed alongside traditional Czech favourites such as *Svíčková na smetaně* and roast duck. Good cheesecake desserts.

### STAROČESKÁ KRČMA

Map pp132-3 Czech/International €

☎ 224 321 505; VP Čkalova 15, Dejvice; mains 150-250Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight; ☎ Hradčanská or Dejvická

A very good traditional Czech tavern, Staročeská Krčma specialises in huge portions of grilled meats, such as steaks, pork and chicken. The setting is meant to evoke an old-fashioned *koliba* (inn or country cottage), with big wooden tables, an open fireplace and stacks of wood sitting around. The pork dishes excel, while the steaks are only good. Reserve in advance, especially on weekends.

### BOHEMIA BAGEL Map pp132-3 International €

☎ 220 806 541; Dukelských Hrdinů 48, Bubeneč; mains 100-200Kč; ☎ 9am-9pm; ☎ 5, 14, 15, 17  
When this outlet of the local Bohemia Bagel empire opened in 2007, it was widely heralded as a sign of Holešovice's imminent rebirth. It hasn't exactly worked out that way. This remains the best all-round sandwich and light meal joint in the neighbourhood, with the usual range of bagels, breakfasts and burgers, plus seared tuna and filet mignon entrees for bigger appetites. Bohemia Bagel is only two tram stops from Nádraží Holešovice (take tram 15), making this a feasible meal option if you're waiting for a train.

### NA URALE Map pp132-3 Czech €

☎ 224 326 820; Uralská 9, Dejvice; mains 100-200Kč; ☎ 11am-midnight; ☎ Dejvická or ☎ 8

A formerly grotty Czech pub that's greatly cleaned up its act in recent years, adding some beautiful crimson walls and solid stone-tile floors. The kitchen has also had an upgrade, but the prices for well-done Czech dishes such as *guláš* and roast pork are barely higher than at a typical workers' pub. Na Urale anchors an increasingly interesting set of shops on lovely Puškinovo náměstí (Pushkin Square), which now includes both an Italian and a Japanese grocery store.

### PIZZERIA GROSSETO Map pp132-3 Italian/Pizza €

☎ 233 342 694; Jugoslávských Partyzánů 8, Dejvice; mains 100-155Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; ☎ Dejvická or ☎ 8

This is a lively, friendly pizzeria with a genuine, wood-fired pizza oven that pulls in crowds of students from the nearby university campus. As well as a huge choice of tasty pizza varieties, the menu also offers salads, pastas, risotto, roast chicken, steak and grilled salmon. The main dining room, where you can watch the pizza chefs twirling their dough, is complemented by an attractive timber-decked conservatory out the back.

### CAPUA Map pp132-3 Pizza €

☎ 233 382 659; Milady Horákové 9, Bubeneč; mains 100-150Kč; ☎ 11am-1am, terrace to 11pm; ☎ 1, 8, 15, 25, 26

This corner restaurant just above Strossmayerovo náměstí is widely considered the best pizza place in the neighbourhood, and even the food editor of the *Prague Post* listed it in the city's 'top four' in a 2007 pizza run-off. But in truth, it's only good, not great. The inviting interior is divided into two rooms, with nonsmokers getting the larger and nicer one to the right. The pizzas are thin-crust and follow the usual formula of Italian combinations. 'Capriccioso' is a filling mix of ham and fresh mushrooms. There's a shaded terrace out the front in nice weather.

### LUCKY LUCIANO Map pp132-3 Pizza €

☎ 220 875 900; Dělnická 28, Holešovice; mains 100-150Kč; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; ☎ Vltavská or ☎ 1, 5, 12, 14, 15, 25

You're in luck if you're staying at Sir Toby's (p225) – this little pizzeria next door serves very good pizza, as well as traditional Italian appetisers such as beef *carpaccio* and

*insalata caprese*. The service is friendly, and the best part of all is the big tree-covered terrace in the front – a nice, cool spot to chill out on a hot summer day.

## LA CRÊPERIE Map pp132–3 French €

☎ 220 878 040; Janovského 4, Holešovice; mains 60–140Kč; 🕒 9am–11pm Mon–Sat, to 10pm Sun; 🚶 Vltavská or 🚶 1, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 25, 26  
Odd place to put an authentic French crêperie, in a forgotten corner of Holešovice next to the district's massive administrative office complex. Still, if you happen to be in the area, it's worth a stop for excellent sweet and savoury open-faced crêpes called *galettes*. Everything is made to order, so you may have to wait. That's fine, since the space – fitted out like a rustic inn in Bretagne – is warm and there's usually some rousing, vintage French music piping from the speakers. The *galette complete* (ham and cheese with an egg on top) makes an excellent and filling breakfast.

## SMÍCHOV

With the arrival in recent years of the Nový Smíchov shopping centre and surrounding office complexes, the area around the Anděl metro station has exploded with restaurants. Most of these, like TGI Friday's and Potrefená husa, are actually upmarket chains that cater to the lunchtime business crowd. Authentic and really decent places are harder to find. If you don't see something you like, the food court on the top floor of the shopping centre has at least a dozen more dining options.

## NAGOYA Map p138 Japanese €€

☎ 251 511 724; Stroupežnického 21; mains 200–450Kč; 🕒 11.30am–2pm & 6–11pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Anděl

Nagoya, hidden away down an escalator in a passage next to *Anděl's Hotel* (p226), is one of the few truly authentic Japanese restaurants in Prague. It has crisp, minimalist décor, with paper screens, globe lampshades and bamboo plants; most of the seating is at ordinary tables, but there are also some low tables with tatami mats if you want to take off your shoes and get the genuine Japanese dining experience. The menu ticks all the usual boxes – sushi, sashimi, teriyaki, yakitori, tempura and miso soup – but also includes *sakana*, small savoury snacks a bit like Japanese tapas,

which are great if you want to try a range of flavours.

## U MÍKULÁŠE DAČICKÉHO

Map p138 Czech €€

☎ 257 323 334; ul Victora Huga; mains 200–300Kč; 🕒 11am–midnight; 🚶 Anděl  
An honest-to-goodness, old-fashioned *vinárna* (wine restaurant). These slightly more upmarket wine-oriented equivalents of the beer-focused *hospody* (pubs) – complete with traditional atmosphere and excellent Czech cooking – have been dying out in recent years. The owners here have gone for the 'Ye Olde Middle Ages' look, with dark woods, red tablecloths, and pictures showing the lords enjoying their wine. Reserve in advance.

## NA VERANDÁCH

Map p138 International €€

☎ 257 191 200; Nádražní 84; mains 150–300Kč; 🕒 11am–midnight Mon–Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat, to 11pm Sun; 🚶 Anděl

Na Verandách, the combination pub–restaurant located in the Staropramen Brewery, is no longer privately run but now managed by the Staropramen-owned Potrefená husa restaurant chain. Nevertheless, it's still wildly popular with *Czuppies*, the local version of yuppies, at lunch and dinnertime. There's no shortage of quality beers (eight varieties on tap) to wash down the very good renditions of ribs, burgers, and chicken and pork dishes. In nice weather, try to snag a table on the veranda in the back.

## PIZZERIA CORLEONE Map p138 Pizza €€

☎ 251 511 244; Na Bělidle 42; mains 120–280Kč; 🕒 11am–11pm; 🚶 Anděl

This lively neighbourhood restaurant is arguably the best pizza option in Smíchov. The wood-fired pizza oven turns out all the classics, from margherita to *moscardina*, and also allows you to choose your own toppings. The dining room shows a taste for the art of Jack Vettriano, whose paintings are reproduced in large murals. There's a nonsmoking area in the basement.

## U TUČNÁKŮ BLAZINEC

Map p138 International €

☎ 257 316 655; Nádražní 112/59; mains 140–200Kč; 🕒 10am–3am; 🚶 Anděl

One of the better Czech chain restaurants offers decent pizzas, steaks, sandwiches

and salads, and has a nice sidewalk terrace just off the pedestrian zone near the Anděl metro station. It's not particularly authentic but an acceptable choice if you want something quick and relatively cheap. The 'penguin' (*tučňák*) part of the name refers to the NHL ice hockey team in Pittsburgh, once home to Czech star Jaromír Jágr and still a local favourite.

### ZLATÝ KLAS Map p138 Czech €

☎ 251 562 539; Plzeňská 9; mains 120-200Kč;

🕒 11am-11pm Sun-Thu, 11am-1am Fri & Sat;

📍 Anděl

Easily the best and most tourist-friendly of the traditional Czech pubs in the immediate Anděl area, Zlatý klas offers super-fresh 'tank beer' (*tankové pivo*), a local badge of honour, meaning the beer is served from large tanks and is free of the carbon dioxide

used to pump the beer through the taps. It also offers well-done Czech grub, such as roast pork, goulash and fried breast of chicken in a kitsch but comfortable space. The service is fast and friendly.

### CORTE DI ANGELO

Map p138

Pizza €

☎ 257 326 167; Nádražní 116/61; mains 120-180Kč;

🕒 11am-11pm; 📍 Anděl

Another decent pizza option in the Anděl area, this one goes for a kind of 'Wild West' motif. The main draws here are good thin-crust pizza from a wood-fired oven, decent starters like beef *carpaccio* and a pleasant terrace situated off the street in a small courtyard. It also operates the adjacent, street-side Caffè Gallerie, with excellent Illy espresso and a handy row of tables for people-watching.

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