

NEIGHBOURHOODS

top picks

- Prague Castle (p61)
- Strahov Library (p69)
- Franz Kafka Museum (p79)
- Charles Bridge (p75)
- Old Town Square (p87)
- Municipal House (p99)
- Vyšehrad (p115)
- Vinohrady Walking Tour (p120)
- National Monument (p125)
- Veletržní Palác (p134)

NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Vltava River sidles through the centre of Prague like a giant question mark, with the city centre straddling its lower half. There is little method in Prague's haphazard sprawl – it's a city that has grown organically from its medieval roots, snagging villages and swallowing suburbs as it spread out into the wooded hills of central Bohemia.

The oldest parts of Prague cluster tightly just south of the river bend – Charles Bridge, the original crossing point on the Vltava, is the seed from which the city spread. At its western end is Malá Strana (Little Quarter), Prague's Left Bank: a banquet of beautiful baroque buildings interlaced with hidden gardens, its cobbled streets and squares lined with appealing bars, restaurants and cafés. The main sights here are the historic delights of St Nicholas Church and the Wallenstein Gardens, and more modern spots like the Franz Kafka Museum and John Lennon Wall.

Nerudova street leads uphill from Malá Strana's main square to Hradčany, the medieval castle district, dominated by the spires of St Vitus Cathedral, a landmark visible from most parts of the city. Visitors crowd the castle precincts and jostle for position at the midday changing of the guard, but elsewhere this is rather a peaceful part of town, with many quiet lanes to explore.

From the eastern end of Charles Bridge, tourist-thronged Karlova street leads to Old Town Square, the heart of medieval Staré Město (Old Town). Bounded by the river on one side and the line of the old city walls (along Revoluční, Na Příkopě and Národní třída) on the other, Staré Město is where you'll find many of Prague's most popular attractions, including the Old Town Hall, Astronomical Clock, Municipal House and Jewish Museum, as well as major concert and opera venues like the Rudolfinum and Estates Theatre.

Wrapped around Staré Město to the south and east, and bounded by the busy traffic artery of Wilsonova, is Nové Město (New Town) – this being Prague, 'new' means 14th-century. Its focal point is the kilometre-long boulevard of Wenceslas Square, and it's where you'll find the Mucha Museum, the National Museum, the National Theatre and many of Prague's more modern hotels and restaurants. At its southern end is the ancient citadel of Vyšehrad, perched on a crag high above the eastern bank of the river.

Beyond the centre lie mostly 19th- and 20th-century suburbs, just a five- or 10-minute tram or metro ride away. To the east lies elegant Vinohrady, with its leafy avenues and cool cafés, which are beginning to spill further east into Vršovice. To their north are grungy Žižkov, famed for its prominent TV Tower and down-to-earth pubs and clubs, and rapidly redeveloping Karlín. The latter two are separated by Vitkov Hill, another prominent landmark, topped by the boxy National Monument and the giant equestrian statue of Jan Žižka.

Back on the west side of the river, to the north of Hradčany, lie the up-and-coming suburbs of Holešovice, Bubeneč and Dejvice. Apart from the Veletržní Palace art gallery and the open green spaces of Letná and Stromovka there are not too many sights here, but there are plenty of worthwhile restaurants, bars and clubs. The same can be said of the formerly industrial district Smíchov, to the south of Malá Strana.

Finally, we have gathered together a grab-bag of outlying attractions under the heading Outer Neighbourhoods, taking in districts such as Troja, home to Prague Zoo; Střešovice, with its Public Transport Museum; and Zbraslav, where a centuries-old chateau now houses an outpost of the National Gallery.

'Prague is a city that has grown organically from its medieval roots, spreading out into the wooded hills of central Bohemia.'



0 1 km
0 0.6 miles

HOLEŠOVICE, BUBENEC
& DEJVICE
(pp132-3)

PRAGUE CASTLE
(p62)

HRADČANY
(pp70-1)

MALÁ STRANA
(pp76-7)

STARÉ MĚSTO
(pp88-9)

ŽIŽKOV
& KARLÍN
(pp126-7)

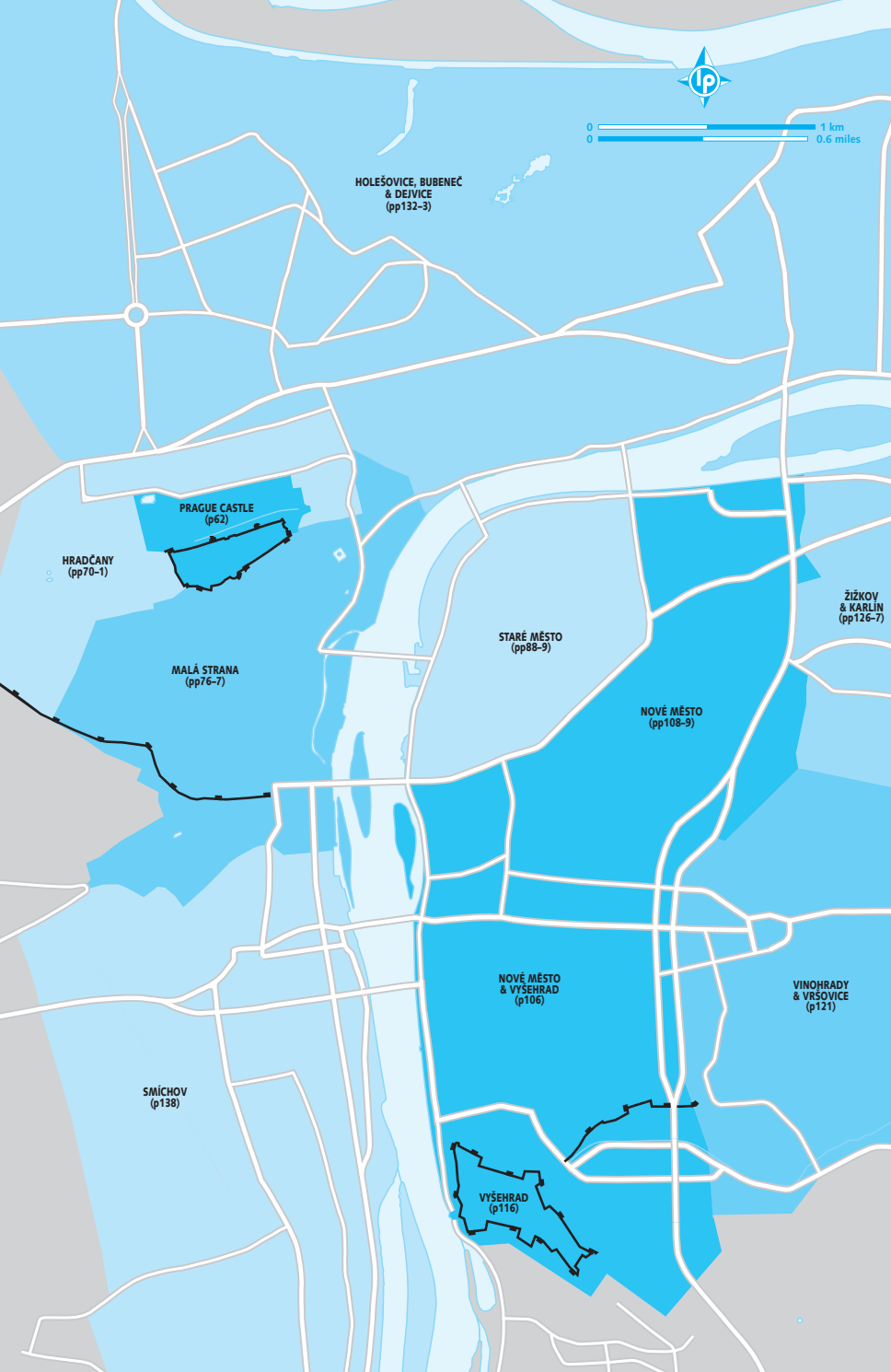
NOVÉ MĚSTO
(pp108-9)

NOVÉ MĚSTO
& VYŠEHRA
(p106)

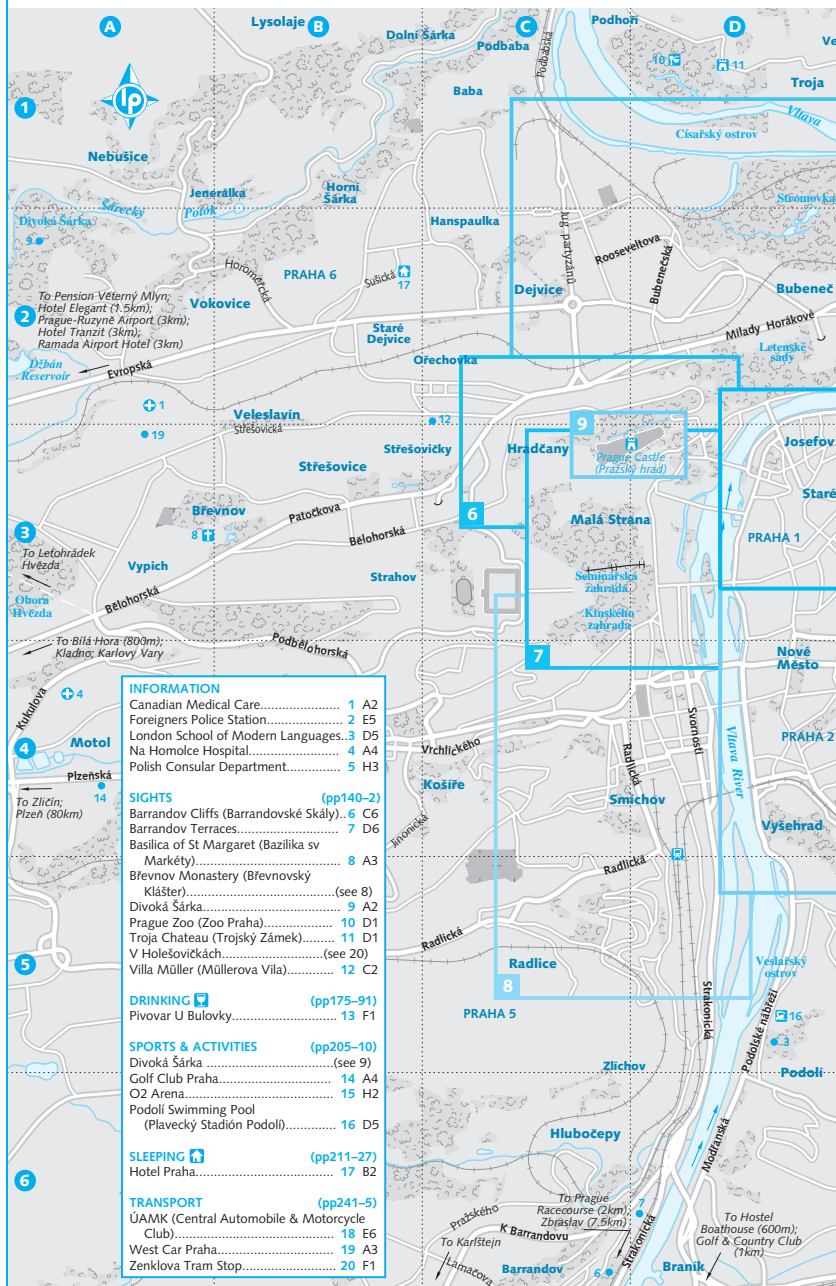
VINOHRADY
& VRŠOVICE
(p121)

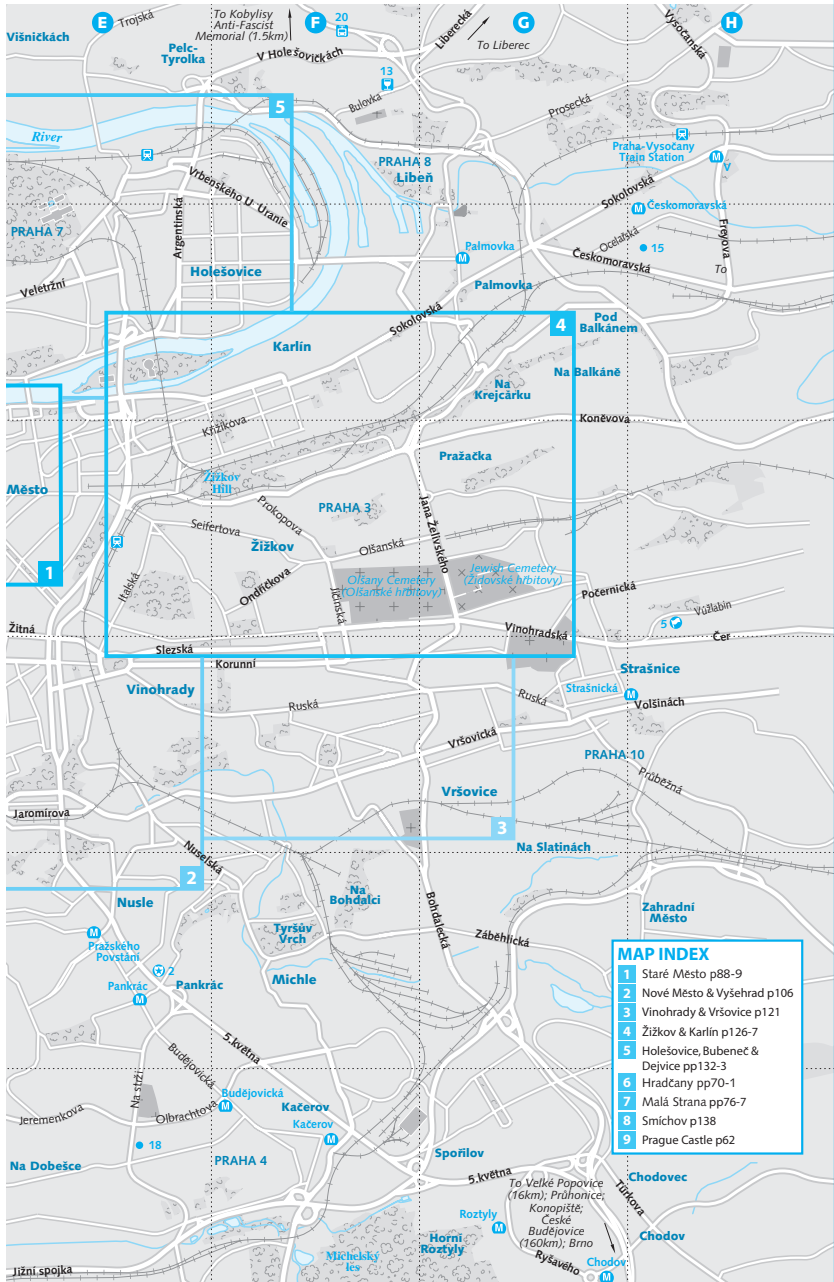
SMÍCHOV
(p138)

VYŠEHRA
(p116)



GREATER PRAGUE





MAP INDEX

- 1 Staré Město p88-9
- 2 Nové Město & Vyšehrad p106
- 3 Vinohrady & Vršovice p121
- 4 Žižkov & Karlín p126-7
- 5 Holešovice, Bubeneč & Dejvice pp132-3
- 6 Hradčany pp70-1
- 7 Malá Strana pp76-7
- 8 Smíchov p138
- 9 Prague Castle p62

ITINERARY BUILDER

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Eating	Drinking & Nightlife
Prague Castle & Hradčany		St Vitus Cathedral (p64)	Vikarka (p157)	Lobkowicz Palace Café (p180)
		Story of Prague Castle (p66)	Malý Buddha (p158)	Pivnice U černého vola (p180)
		Strahov Library (p69)	U zlaté hrušky (p157)	U zavěšeného kafe (p179)
Malá Strana		Charles Bridge (p75)	Hergetová cihelná (p159)	U malého Glena (p197)
		Wallenstein Garden (p79)	La Cantina (p159)	Klub Újezd (p180)
		Franz Kafka Museum (p79)	U malé velryby (p159)	St Nicholas Café (p180)
Staré Město		Old Town Square (p87)	Kolkovna (p162)	U zlatého tygra (p183)
		Municipal House (p99)	Angel (p161)	Kozička (p182)
		Prague Jewish Museum (p96)	Lehká hlava (p163)	Čili Bar (p183)
Nové Město & Vyšehrad		Wenceslas Square (p105)	Kogo (p164)	Bokovka (p184)
		Mucha Museum (p104)	Karavanseráj (p165)	Pivovarský dům (p179)
		Vyšehrad (p115)	Oliva (p164)	Lucerna Music Bar (p198)
Eastern Suburbs		TV Tower (p128)	Ambiente (p167)	Caffé Kaaba (p185)
		National Monument (p125)	Mozaika (p167)	Corner Bar & Bistro (p186)
		Vinohrady Walking Tour (p120)	Café FX (p168)	Palác Akropolis (p198)
Northern Suburbs		Veletřní Palace (p134)	Da Emanuel (p170)	Cross Club (p194)
		National Technical Museum (p133)	La Crêperie (p172)	Fraktal (p187)
		Stromovka (p133)	Capua (p171)	Andaluský pes (p189)

PRAGUE CASTLE

Eating [p157](#); Drinking [p179](#)

Prague Castle – Pražský hrad, or just *hrad* to Czechs – is Prague's most popular attraction. According to *Guinness World Records*, it's the largest ancient castle in the world: 570m long, an average of 128m wide and covering a total area bigger than seven football fields.

Its history begins in the 9th century when Prince Bořivoj founded a fortified settlement here. It grew haphazardly as rulers made their own additions, creating an eclectic mixture of architectural styles. The castle has always been the seat of Czech rulers as well as the official residence of the head of state, although the Czech Republic's first president, Václav Havel, chose to live in his own house on the outskirts of the city.

Prague Castle has seen four major reconstructions, from that of Prince Soběslav in the 12th century to a classical face-lift under Empress Maria Theresa (r 1740–80). In the 1920s President Masaryk hired a Slovene architect, Jože Plečnik, to renovate the castle; his changes created some of its most memorable features and made the complex more tourist-friendly.

We've organised this section starting with the castle's main entrance at the western end, then moving through the various courtyards and sights before exiting at the eastern end. You'll need at least two hours to see the main sights, and all day if you want to visit everything.

The following areas are wheelchair-accessible: the main entrance to St Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, Vladislav Hall, the Basilica of St George, Ball-Game House, Prague Castle Gallery and the castle gardens. There's a wheelchair-accessible toilet to the right of the cathedral entrance.

Tickets & Opening Hours

You can wander freely through the [castle grounds](#) (🕒 5am-midnight Apr-Oct, 6am-11pm Nov-Mar), the [castle gardens](#) (🕒 10am-6pm Apr & Oct, to 7pm May & Sep, to 9pm Jul & Aug, closed Nov-Mar) and St Vitus Cathedral without a ticket, but you'll need one for all the main [historic buildings](#) (🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar).

There are six different tickets (each valid for two days), which allow entry to various combinations of sights (see the boxed text, [p66](#)); you can buy tickets at either of two [information centres](#) ([Map p62](#); ☎ 224 373 368, 224 372 423; www.hrad.cz; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar) in the Second and Third Courtyards, or from ticket offices at the entrances to Golden Lane, the Old Royal Palace and the Story of Prague Castle exhibition.

Concession prices are for those aged seven to 16, students and disabled visitors; children aged six or under get in free. The family ticket is valid for two adults and any children aged 16 or under. Taking photographs indoors will cost you an extra 50Kč, and the use of a flash or tripod is not allowed.

Tickets listed here do not include admission to other art galleries and museums within the castle grounds; those admission costs are listed in the individual reviews.

One-hour [guided tours](#) are available in Czech (200Kč for up to four people, plus 50Kč per additional person), and in English, French,

German, Italian, Russian and Spanish (400Kč, plus 100Kč per additional person) Tuesday to Sunday. Alternatively you can rent an audio guide (150Kč for two hours) from the information centres.

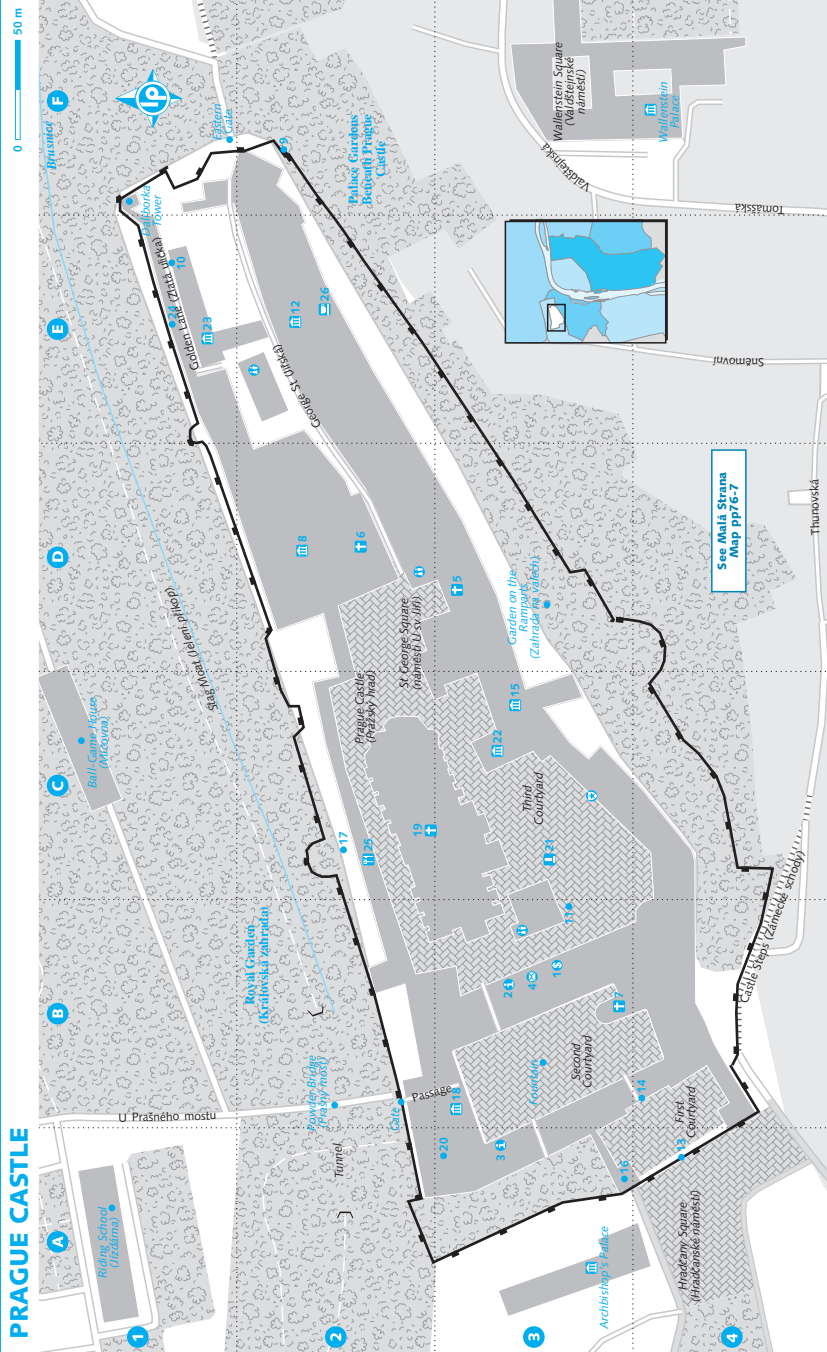
There's a [post office](#) (🕒 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat), [currency exchange](#) (🕒 8.10am-6.10pm) and ATM next to the information centre in the Third Courtyard, and another ATM and currency exchange inside the information centre in the Second Courtyard. You can buy tickets for concerts and other special events at the [ticket office](#) (☎ 224 373 483; 🕒 9am-5pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar) in the Chapel of the Holy Cross in the Second Courtyard.

FIRST COURTYARD

The First Courtyard lies beyond the castle's [main gate](#) on Hradčany Square (Hradčanské náměstí), flanked by huge, baroque statues of battling Titans (1767–70) that dwarf the castle guards standing beneath them. After the fall of communism in 1989 then-president Václav Havel hired his old pal Theodor Pistek, the costume designer on the film *Amadeus* (1984), to replace their communist-era khaki uniforms with the stylish pale-blue kit they now wear, which harks back to the army of the first Czechoslovak Republic of 1918–38.

The [changing of the guard](#) takes place every hour on the hour, but the longest and most

PRAGUE CASTLE



PRAGUE CASTLE

INFORMATION

Currency Exchange & ATM.....	1 B3
Information Centre.....	2 B3
Information Centre & ATM.....	3 A3
Post Office.....	4 B3
Ticket Office.....	(see 7)

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

(pp61-7)

All Saints' Chapel (Kapele Všech Svätých).....	5 D3
Basilica of St George (Bazilika Sv Jiří).....	6 D2
Chapel of the Holy Cross (Kapele Sv Kříže).....	7 B3
Convent of St George (Kláster Sv Jiří).....	8 D2

Entrance to Palace Gardens Below Prague Castle.....	9 F2
Golden Lane (Zlatá Ulička).....	10 E1
Granite Monolith.....	11 B3
Lobkowitz Palace.....	12 E2
Main Gate.....	13 A4
Matthias Gate (Matyášova Brána).....	14 B4
Old Royal Palace (Starý Královský Palác).....	15 C3
Plečnik Hall (Plečnikova Síň).....	16 A3
Powder Tower (Prašná Věž).....	17 C2
Prague Castle Picture Gallery (Obrazárna Pražského Hradu).....	18 B3
Rudolph Gallery (Rudolfova Galerie).....	(see 20)

St Vitus Cathedral (Katedrál Sv Víta).....	19 C2
Spanish Hall (Španešský Sál).....	20 A3
Statue of St George & the Dragon.....	21 C3
Story of Prague Castle.....	22 C3
Toy Museum.....	23 E1
Zlatá Ulička 22 (Kafka's Sister's Cottage).....	24 E1

EATING 🍴	(pp153-73)
Vikárka.....	25 C2

DRINKING ☕ 🍷	(pp175-91)
Lobkowitz Palace Café.....	26 E2

impressive display is at noon, when banners are exchanged while a brass band plays a fanfare from the windows of the **Plečnik Hall** (Plečnikova síň), which overlooks the First Courtyard.

This impressive hall, which opens off the left side of the baroque **Matthias Gate** (Matyášova brána; 1614), was created by Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik as part of the 1920s restoration of the castle; the pointy flagpoles in the First Courtyard are also Plečnik's. As you pass through the gate, note the contrast between the gilded baroque staircase to your right and the Doric simplicity of Plečnik's stair to the left.

SECOND COURTYARD

You pass through the Matthias Gate into the Second Courtyard, centred on a baroque fountain and a 17th-century well with beautiful Renaissance latticework. On the right, the **Chapel of the Holy Cross** (kapele sv Kříže; 1763) was once the treasury of St Vitus Cathedral; today it houses the castle's box office and souvenir shop.

The magnificent **Spanish Hall** (Španešský sál) and **Rudolph Gallery** (Rudolfova galerie) in the northern wing of the courtyard are reserved for state receptions and special concerts; they are open to the public just two days a year, usually on the first Saturdays after Liberation Day (8 May) and Republic Day (28 October).

PRAGUE CASTLE GALLERY **Map p62**

Obrazárna pražského hradu; ☎ 224 373 531; www.obrazarna-hradu.cz; Pražský hrad, II. nádvoří; adult/concession 150/80Kč, 4-6pm Mon admission free; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar; 📍 22, 23
The same Swedish army that looted the famous bronzes in the Wallenstein Garden

(p79) in 1648 also nicked Rudolf II's art treasures. This exhibition of 16th- to 18th-century European art, housed in the beautiful Renaissance stables at the northern end of the Second Courtyard, is based on the Habsburg collection that was begun in 1650 to replace the lost paintings; it includes works by Cranach, Holbein, Rubens, Tintoretto and Titian.

ROYAL GARDEN **Map p62**

The gate on the northern side of the Second Courtyard leads to the **Powder Bridge** (Prašný most; 1540), which spans the **Stag Moat** (Jelení příkop) and leads to the Royal Garden (Královská zahrada), which started life as a Renaissance garden built by Ferdinand I in 1534. The most beautiful of the garden's buildings is the **Ball-Game House** (Míčovna; 1569; **Map pp70-1**), a masterpiece of Renaissance *sggraffito* where the Habsburgs once played a primitive version of badminton. To the east is the **Summer Palace** Letohrádek; 1538-60; **Map pp70-1**), or Belvedere, the most authentic Italian Renaissance building outside Italy, and to the west the former **Riding School** (Jizdárna; 1695; **Map pp70-1**). All three are used as venues for temporary exhibitions of modern art.

A footpath to the west of the Powder Bridge (on the castle side) leads down into the Stag Moat, and doubles back through a modern (and rather Freudian) red-brick **tunnel** beneath the bridge. If you then follow the path east along the moat you'll eventually end up at a busy road that leads down to Malostranská metro station. A gate on the outer wall of the castle, overlooking the moat, leads to a nuclear shelter started by the communists in the 1950s but never

TRANSPORT: PRAGUE CASTLE

Metro The nearest metro station is Malostranská, but from here it's a stiff climb up the Old Castle Steps to the eastern end of the castle. Hradčanská station is about 10 minutes' walk north of the castle, but it's an easy, level walk.

Tram Take lines 22 or 23 from Národní třída on the southern edge of Staré Město, Malostranská náměstí in Malá Strana, or Malostranská metro station to the Pražský hrad stop. If you want to explore Hradčany first, stay on the tram until Pohořelec, the second stop after.

completed; its tunnels run beneath most of the castle.

THIRD COURTYARD

As you pass through the passage on the eastern side of the Second Courtyard, the huge western façade of St Vitus Cathedral soars directly above you; to its south (to the right as you enter) lies the Third Courtyard. At its entrance you'll see a 16m-tall **granite monolith** dedicated to the victims of WWI, designed by Jožef Plečnik in 1928, and a copy of a 14th-century bronze figure of **St George slaying the dragon**; the original is on display in the Story of Prague Castle exhibition.

The courtyard is dominated by the southern façade of St Vitus Cathedral, with its grand centrepiece the **Golden Gate** (Zlatá brána), an elegant, triple-arched Gothic porch designed by Peter Parler. Above it is a **mosaic of the Last Judgment** (1370–71) – on the left, the godly rise from their tombs and are raised into Heaven by angels; on the right, sinners are cast down into Hell by demons; and in the centre, Christ reigns in glory with six Czech saints – Procopius, Sigismund, Vitus, Wenceslas, Ludmila and Adalbert – below. Beneath them, on either side of the central arch, Charles IV and his wife kneel in prayer.

To the left of the gate is the **Great Tower**, which was left unfinished by Parler's sons in the 15th century; its soaring Gothic lines are capped by a Renaissance gallery added in the late 16th century and a bulging spire that dates from the 1770s.

OLD ROYAL PALACE Map p62

Starý královský palác; admission Prague Castle tour tickets only; ☎ 9am–6pm Apr–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Mar The Old Royal Palace at the courtyard's eastern end is one of the oldest parts of the

castle, dating from 1135. It was originally used only by Czech princesses, but from the 13th to the 16th centuries it was the king's own palace.

At its heart is the **Vladislav Hall** (Vladislavský sál), famous for its beautiful, late-Gothic vaulted ceiling (1493–1502) designed by Benedikt Rejt. Though around 500 years old, the flowing, interwoven lines of the vaults have an almost Art Nouveau feel, in contrast to the rectilinear form of the Renaissance windows. The vast hall was used for banquets, councils and coronations, and for indoor jousting tournaments – hence the **Riders' Staircase** (Jezdecké schody) on the northern side, designed to admit a knight on horseback. All the presidents of the republic have been sworn in here.

A door in the hall's southwestern corner leads to the former offices of the **Bohemian Chancellery** (České kanceláře). On 23 May 1618, in the second room, Protestant nobles rebelling against the Bohemian estates and the Habsburg emperor threw two of his councillors and their secretary out of the window. They survived, as their fall was broken by the dung-filled moat, but this Second Defenestration of Prague sparked off the Thirty Years' War (see p23).

At the eastern end of the Vladislav Hall you'll come to a balcony that overlooks **All Saints' Chapel** (kaple Věch svatých); a door to the right leads you to a terrace with great views across the city. To the right of the Riders' Staircase you'll spot an unusual Renaissance doorway framed by twisted columns that leads to the **Diet** (Sněmovna), or Assembly Hall, which displays another beautifully vaulted ceiling. To the left, a spiral staircase leads you up to the **New Land Rolls Room** (Říšská dvorská kancelář), the old repository for land titles, where the walls are covered with the clerks' coats of arms.

ST VITUS CATHEDRAL Map p62

Katedrála sv Víta; ☎ 257 531 622; www.katedrala.praha.cz; Pražský hrad, III. nádvoří; admission free; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat & noon–5pm Sun Mar–Oct, 9am–4pm Mon–Sat & noon–4pm Nov–Feb

At first glance the western façade of St Vitus Cathedral, which looms above the entrance to the Third Courtyard, appears impressively Gothic, but in fact the triple doorway dates only from 1953, one of the last parts of the church to be completed. The cathedral's foundation stone was laid in 1344 by Emperor Charles IV, on the site

of a 10th-century Romanesque rotunda built by Duke Wenceslas.

Charles' original architect, Matthias of Arras (Matyáš z Arrasu), began work in 1344 on the choir in the French Gothic style, but died eight years later. His German successor, Peter Parler – a veteran of Cologne's cathedral – completed most of the eastern part of the cathedral in a freer, late-Gothic style before he died in 1399. Renaissance and baroque details were added over the following centuries, but it was only in 1861 during the Czech National Revival that a concerted effort was made to finish the cathedral – everything between the western door and the crossing was built during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was finally consecrated in 1929.

Inside, the nave is flooded with colour from beautiful [stained-glass windows](#) created by eminent Czech artists of the early 20th century – note the one by Art Nouveau artist Alfons Mucha (see the boxed text, p40) in the third chapel on the northern side, to the left as you enter, which depicts the lives of Sts Cyril and Methodius (1909). Nearby is a [wooden sculpture of the crucifixion](#) (1899) by František Bílek.

Walk up to the crossing, where the nave and transept meet, which is dominated by the huge and colourful [south window](#) (1938) by Max Švabinský, depicting the Last Judgment – note the fires of Hell burning brightly in the lower right-hand corner. In the north transept, beneath the baroque organ, are three carved wooden doors decorated with [reliefs of Bohemian saints](#), including St Vitus being tortured in a cauldron of boiling oil. Look on the left-hand door for the martyrdom of St Wenceslas. He is down on one knee, clinging to a lion's-head door handle, while his treacherous brother Boleslav drives a spear into his back. You can see that very door handle on the other side of the church – it's now the door to the [Chapel of St Wenceslas](#).

Just to the right of the south transept is the entrance to the 96m-tall [Great Tower](#) (📍 last entry 4.15pm Apr-Oct, closed during bad weather). You can climb the 297 slightly claustrophobic steps to the top for excellent views, and you also get a close look at the clockworks (1597). The tower's Sigismund Bell, made by Tomáš Jaroš in 1549, is the largest bell in the Czech Republic.

The eastern end of the cathedral is capped with graceful late-Gothic vaulting

dating from the 14th century. In the centre lies the ornate [Royal Mausoleum](#) (1571–89) with its cold marble effigies of Ferdinand I, his wife Anna Jagellonská and their son Maximilián II. On the ambulatory's northern side, just beyond the old sacristy and the confessional booths, a [wooden relief](#) (1630) by Caspar Bechterle shows Protestant Frederick of the Palatinate (in his horse-drawn coach) legging it out of Prague after the Catholic victory at the battle of Bilá Hora.

As you round the far end of the ambulatory you pass the [tomb of St Vitus](#) – as well as being a patron saint of Bohemia, Vitus is a patron of actors, entertainers and dancers, and is said to protect against lightning, dog bites and oversleeping. The brass crosiers set in the floor nearby mark the tombs of bishops. Further round you reach the spectacular, baroque silver [tomb of St John of Nepomuk](#), its draped canopy supported by a squadron of chubby silver angels (the tomb contains two tonnes of silver in all).

The nearby [Chapel of St Mary Magdalene](#) contains the grave slabs of Matthias of Arras and Peter Parler. Beyond is the ornate, late-Gothic [Royal Oratory](#), a fancy balcony with ribbed vaulting carved to look like tree branches.

In the corner of the neighbouring [Chapel of the Holy Rood](#), stairs lead down to the [crypt](#), where you can see the remains of earlier churches that stood on the site of the cathedral, including an 11th-century Romanesque basilica. Beyond, you can crowd around the entrance to the [Royal Crypt](#) to see the marble sarcophagi (dating only from the 1930s), which contain the remains of Czech rulers including Charles IV, Wenceslas IV, George of Poděbrady (Jiří z Poděbrad) and Rudolf II.

The biggest and most beautiful of the cathedral's numerous side chapels is Parler's [Chapel of St Wenceslas](#). Its walls are adorned with gilded panels containing polished slabs of semiprecious stones. Wall paintings from the early 16th century depict scenes from the life of the Czechs' patron saint, while even older frescoes show scenes from the life of Christ. On the southern side of the chapel a small door – locked with seven locks – hides a staircase leading to the [Coronation Chamber](#) above the Golden Gate, where the Bohemian crown jewels are kept (you can see replicas in the Story of Prague Castle exhibition; see p66).

PRAGUE CASTLE TICKETS

Prague Castle – long tour (adult/concession/family 350/175/500Kč) Includes Old Royal Palace, Story of Prague Castle, Basilica of St George, Convent of St George, Powder Tower, Golden Lane and Daliborka, Prague Castle Gallery.

Prague Castle – short tour (adult/concession/family 250/120/300Kč) Includes Old Royal Palace, Story of Prague Castle, Basilica of St George, Golden Lane and Daliborka.

Story of Prague Castle (adult/concession/family 140/70/200Kč) Admission to Story of Prague Castle exhibition only.

Prague Castle Gallery (adult/concession/family 150/80/200Kč) Admission to Prague Castle Gallery only.

Convent of St George (adult/concession/family 150/80/200Kč) Admission to Convent of St George only.

Powder Tower (adult/concession/family 50/25/70Kč) Admission to Powder Tower only.

STORY OF PRAGUE CASTLE Map p62

☎ 224 373 102; www.pribeh-hradu.cz; admission included in Prague Castle tour ticket, or adult/child 140/70Kč; 🕒 9am–6pm Apr–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Mar Housed in the Gothic vaults beneath the Old Royal Palace, this huge and impressive collection of artefacts is the most interesting exhibit in the entire castle. It traces 1000 years of the castle's history, from the building of the first wooden palisade to the present day – illustrated by large models of the castle at various stages in its development – and exhibits precious items such as the helmet and chain mail worn by St Wenceslas, illuminated manuscripts, and replicas of the Bohemian crown jewels, including the gold **crown of St Wenceslas**, which was made for Charles IV in 1346 from the gold of the original Přemysl crown (for more on the Přemysl dynasty see p21).

Anyone with a serious interest in Prague Castle should visit here first, as orientation. If you don't have a Prague Castle tour ticket, you can buy individual tickets at the entrance to the exhibit (cash only).

ST GEORGE SQUARE

St George Square (Jiřské náměstí), the plaza to the east of the cathedral, lies at the heart of the castle complex.

BASILICA OF ST GEORGE Map p62

Bazilika sv Jiří; Jiřské náměstí; admission with Prague Castle tour ticket; 🕒 9am–6pm Apr–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Mar

The striking, brick-red, early-baroque façade that dominates the square conceals the Czech Republic's best-preserved Romanesque church, established in the 10th century by Vratislav I (the father of St Wenceslas). What you see today is mostly

the result of restorations made between 1887 and 1908.

The austerity of the Romanesque nave is relieved by a baroque double staircase leading to the apse, where fragments of 12th-century frescoes survive. In front of the stairs lie the tombs of Prince Boleslav II (d 997; on the left) and Prince Vratislav I (d 921), the church's founder. The arch beneath the stairs allows a glimpse of the 12th-century crypt; Přemysl kings (see p21) are buried here and in the nave.

The tiny baroque chapel beside the entrance is dedicated to St John of Nepomuk (his tomb lies in St Vitus Cathedral; see p65).

CONVENT OF ST GEORGE Map p62

Kláster sv Jiří; ☎ 257 531 644; www.ngprague.cz; Jiřské náměstí 33; admission with Prague Castle long tour ticket, or adult/concession 150/80Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun

The very ordinary-looking building to the left of the basilica was Bohemia's first convent, established in 973 by Boleslav II. Closed and converted to an army barracks in 1782, it now houses a branch of the National Gallery, featuring a collection of 19th-century Bohemian art. Highlights include the Art Nouveau sculpture of Josef Myslbek, Stanislav Sucharda and Bohumil Kafka; the glowing portraits by Josef Mánes; and the forest landscapes by Július Mařák.

POWDER TOWER Map p62

Prášná věž; admission with Prague Castle long tour ticket; 🕒 9am–6pm Apr–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Mar

A passage to the north of St Vitus Cathedral leads to the Powder Tower (also called Mihulka), which was built at the end of the 15th century as part of the castle's defences. Later it became the workshop of the cannon- and bell-maker Tomáš Jaroš, who cast

the bells for St Vitus Cathedral. Alchemists employed by Rudolf II also worked here. Today the 1st floor houses a rather dull exhibition about the castle's military history.

GEORGE STREET

George St (Jiřská) runs from the Basilica of St George to the castle's eastern gate.

GOLDEN LANE Map p62

Zlatá ulička; admission with Prague Castle tour ticket; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar
Golden Lane is a picturesque, cobbled alley running along the northern wall of the castle. Its tiny, colourful cottages were built in the 16th century for the sharpshooters of the castle guard, but were later used by goldsmiths. In the 18th and 19th centuries they were occupied by squatters, and then by artists, including the writer Franz Kafka (who stayed at his sister's house at No 22 from 1916 to 1917) and the Nobel-laureate poet Jaroslav Seifert. Today, the lane is an overcrowded tourist trap lined with craft and souvenir shops.

At its eastern end is the **Daliborka**, a round tower named after the knight Dalibor of Kozojedy, imprisoned here in 1498 for supporting a peasant rebellion, and later executed. During his imprisonment, according to an old tale, he played a violin that could be heard throughout the castle. Composer Bedřich Smetana (see p31) based his 1868 opera *Dalibor* on the tale. More interesting than the small display of torture instruments in the tower is the modern bronze sculpture *Parable with a Skull*, by Jaroslav Róna (who also created the Franz Kafka Monument in Josefov; Map pp88-9). Supposedly inspired by one of Kafka's characters, it shows a prostrate human figure bearing a giant skull on its back (you can still see homeless people in Prague begging in this traditional but submissive and rather despairing posture).

LOBKOWICZ PALACE Map p62

Lobkovický palác; ☎ 233 312 925; www.lobkowicz events.cz/palace; Jiřská 3; adult/concession/family 275/175/690Kč; ☎ 10.30am-6pm

Built in the 16th century, this palace has been home to the aristocratic Lobkowicz family for around 400 years. Confiscated by the Nazis in WWII, and again by the communists in 1948, it was finally returned in

2002 to William Lobkowicz, an American property developer and grandson of Maximilian, the 10th Prince Lobkowicz, who fled to the USA in 1939. It was opened to the public as a private museum in 2007.

You tour the main exhibition, known as the **Princely Collections**, with an audio guide dictated by William and his family – this personal connection really brings the displays to life, and makes the palace one of the castle's most interesting attractions. Highlights include paintings by Cranach, Breughel the Elder, Canaletto and Piranesi, original musical scores annotated by Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn (the 7th prince was a great patron of music – Beethoven dedicated three symphonies to him), and an impressive collection of musical instruments. But it's the personal touches that make an impression, like the 16th-century portrait of a Lobkowicz ancestor wearing a ring that William's mother still wears today, and an old photo album with a picture of a favourite family dog smoking a pipe.

The palace has an excellent café (p180), and stages **concerts** of classical music at 1pm each day (390Kč; www.praguecastleconcert.cz).

TOY MUSEUM Map p62

Muzeum hraček; ☎ 224 372 294; Jiřská 6; adult/concession/family 60/30/120Kč; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm
In the tower of the Burggrave's Palace (Nejvyšší Purkrabství), across the street from the Lobkowicz Palace, is the second-largest toy museum in the world. It's an amazing collection – with some artefacts dating back to ancient Greece – but a bit frustrating for the kids as most displays are hands-off. Toys range from model trains and teddy bears to Victorian dolls, Action Men and the definitive Barbie collection.

GARDEN ON THE RAMPARTS

At the castle's eastern gate, you can either descend the Old Castle Steps to Malostranská metro station (Map pp70-1) or turn sharp right and wander back to Hradčanské náměstí through the **Garden on the Ramparts** (Zahrada na valech; ☎ Apr-Oct only). The terrace garden offers superb views across the roof-tops of Malá Strana and permits a peek into the back garden of the British embassy.

Alternatively, you can descend to Malá Strana through the terraced **Palace Gardens beneath Prague Castle** (Palácové zahrady pod Pražským hradem; p79).

HRADČANY

Eating [p157](#); Drinking [p179](#); Shopping [p144](#); Sleeping [p213](#)

Hradčany is the attractive and peaceful residential area stretching west from Prague Castle to Strahov Monastery. It became a town in its own right in 1320, and twice suffered heavy damage – once in the Hussite wars and again in the Great Fire of 1541 – before becoming a borough of Prague in 1598. After this, the Habsburg nobility built many palaces here in the hope of cementing their influence with the rulers in Prague Castle.

HRADČANY SQUARE

Hradčany Square (Hradčanské náměstí), facing the castle entrance, has retained its shape since the Middle Ages, with a central plague column by Ferdinand Brokoff (1726) and several former canons' residences (Nos 6 to 12) with richly decorated façades. At No 16 is the rococo **Archbishop's Palace** (Arcibiskupský palác), bought by Archbishop Antonín Brus of Mohelnice in 1562, and the seat of archbishops ever since; the exterior was given a rococo makeover between 1763 and 1765 (it's open to the public only on the day before Good Friday).

A statue of Tomáš Masaryk, first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, watches over the entrance to the castle.

SCHWARZENBERG PALACE [Map pp70–1](#)

Schwarzenberský palác; ☎ 224 810 758; [www.ngprague.cz](#); Hradčanské náměstí 2; adult/child 150/80Kč; 📧 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🕒 22, 23
Sporting a beautifully preserved façade of black-and-white Renaissance *sgraffito*, the newly renovated Schwarzenberg Palace houses the National Gallery's collection of baroque art. Sadly, a lot of the paintings are poorly lit and suffer from reflections from nearby windows – a shame, as the inside of the palace itself is far less impressive than the outside, and the collection is really only of interest to art aficionados.

The ground floor is given over to two masters of baroque sculpture, Matthias Braun and Maximilian Brokof, whose overwrought figures appear to have been caught in a hurricane, such is the liveliness of their billowing robes. The highlights of the 1st floor are the moody 16th-century portraits by Petr Brandl and Jan Kupecký,

while the top floor boasts a display of engravings by Albrecht Dürer.

STERNBERG PALACE [Map pp70–1](#)

Šternberský palác; ☎ 233 090 570; [www.ngprague.cz](#); Hradčanské náměstí 15; adult/child 150/80Kč; 📧 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🕒 22, 23

Tucked behind the Archbishop's Palace is the baroque Sternberg Palace, home to the National Gallery's collection of 14th- to 18th-century European art, including works by Goya and Rembrandt. Fans of medieval altarpieces will be in heaven; there are also several Rubens, some Rembrandt and Breughel, and a large collection of Bohemian miniatures. Pride of the gallery is the glowing *Feast of the Rosary* by Albrecht Dürer, an artist better known for his engravings. Painted in Venice in 1505 as an altarpiece for the church of San Bartolomeo, it was brought to Prague by Rudolf II; in the background, beneath the tree on the right, is the figure of the artist himself. For a bit of grotesque realism, it's worth a trip to the back of the 1st floor to see the 16th-century Dutch painting *The Tearful Bride*.

LORETA SQUARE

From Hradčany Square it's a short walk west to Loreta Square (Loretánské náměstí), created early in the 18th century when the imposing Černín Palace was built. At the northern end of the square is the **Capuchin Monastery** (1600–02), which is Bohemia's oldest working monastery.

ČERNÍN PALACE [Map pp70–1](#)

Černínský palác; Loretánské náměstí; 📧 closed to the public

The late-17th-century early-baroque palace facing the Loreta boasts Prague's largest monumental façade. This imposing building has housed the foreign ministry since the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, except during WWII when it served as the headquarters of the Nazi Reichsprotektor,

TRANSPORT: HRADČANY

Tram Lines 22 and 23 stop at Pohořelec, at the western end of Hradčany.

top picks

IT'S FREE

- **Charles Bridge** (p75)
- **National Museum** (p110) on the first Monday of the month
- **Prague Castle** (p61) grounds and gardens
- **Nave of St Vitus Cathedral** (p64)
- **Letná** (p131) and **Stromovka** (p133)

and is where the documents that dissolved the Warsaw Pact were signed in 1991.

In 1948, Jan Masaryk – son of the Czechoslovak Republic's founding father, Tomáš Masaryk, and the only noncommunist in the new Soviet-backed government – fell to his death from one of the upper windows. Did he fall, or was he pushed? (See p22 and p22.)

LORETA Map pp70–1

☎ 220 516 740; **Loretánské náměstí 7**; **adult/concession 110/90Kč**; ☎ 9am–12.15pm & 1–4.30pm; 🕒 22, 23

The square's main attraction is the Loreta, a baroque place of pilgrimage founded by Benigna Kateřina Lobkowitz in 1626, and designed as a replica of the supposed Santa Casa (Sacred House; the home of the Virgin Mary). Above the entrance 27 bells, made in Amsterdam in the 17th century, play 'We Greet Thee a Thousand Times' on the hour. Legend says that the original Santa Casa was carried by angels to the Italian town of Loreto as the Turks were advancing on Nazareth. The duplicate **Santa Casa**, with fragments of its original frescoes, is in the centre of the courtyard.

Behind the Santa Casa is the **Church of the Nativity of Our Lord** (kostel Narození Páně), built in 1737 to a design by Kristof Dientzenhofer (see p48). The claustrophobic interior includes two skeletons – of the Spanish saints Felicissima and Marcia – dressed in aristocratic clothing with wax masks concealing their skulls.

At the corner of the courtyard is the unusual **Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows** (kaple Panny Marie Bolestné), featuring a crucified bearded lady. She was St Starosta, pious daughter of a Portuguese king who promised her to the king of Sicily against her wishes. After a night of tearful prayers she awoke with a beard, the wedding was

called off, and her father had her crucified. She was later made patron saint of the needy and the godforsaken.

The church's **treasury** (1st floor) has been ransacked several times over the centuries, but it remains a bastion of over-the-top religious bling centred on the 90cm-tall **Prague Sun** (Pražské slunce), made of solid silver and gold and studded with 6222 diamonds.

Photography is not allowed, and the rule is enforced with a 1000Kč fine.

STRAHOV MONASTERY

In 1140 Vladislav II founded **Strahov Monastery** (Strahovský klášter; Map pp70–1) for the Premonstratensian order. The present monastery buildings, completed in the 17th and 18th centuries, functioned until the communist government closed them down and imprisoned most of the monks; they returned in 1990.

Inside the main gate is the 1612 **Church of St Roch** (kostel sv Rocha), which is now an art gallery, and the **Church of the Assumption of Our Lady** (kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie), built in 1143 and heavily decorated in the 18th century in the baroque style; Mozart is said to have played the organ here.

MINIATURE MUSEUM Map pp70–1

Muzeum miniatur; ☎ 233 352 371; www.muzeumminiatur.com; **Strahovské II.nádvoří**; **adult/child 50/20Kč**; ☎ 9am–5pm; 🕒 22, 23

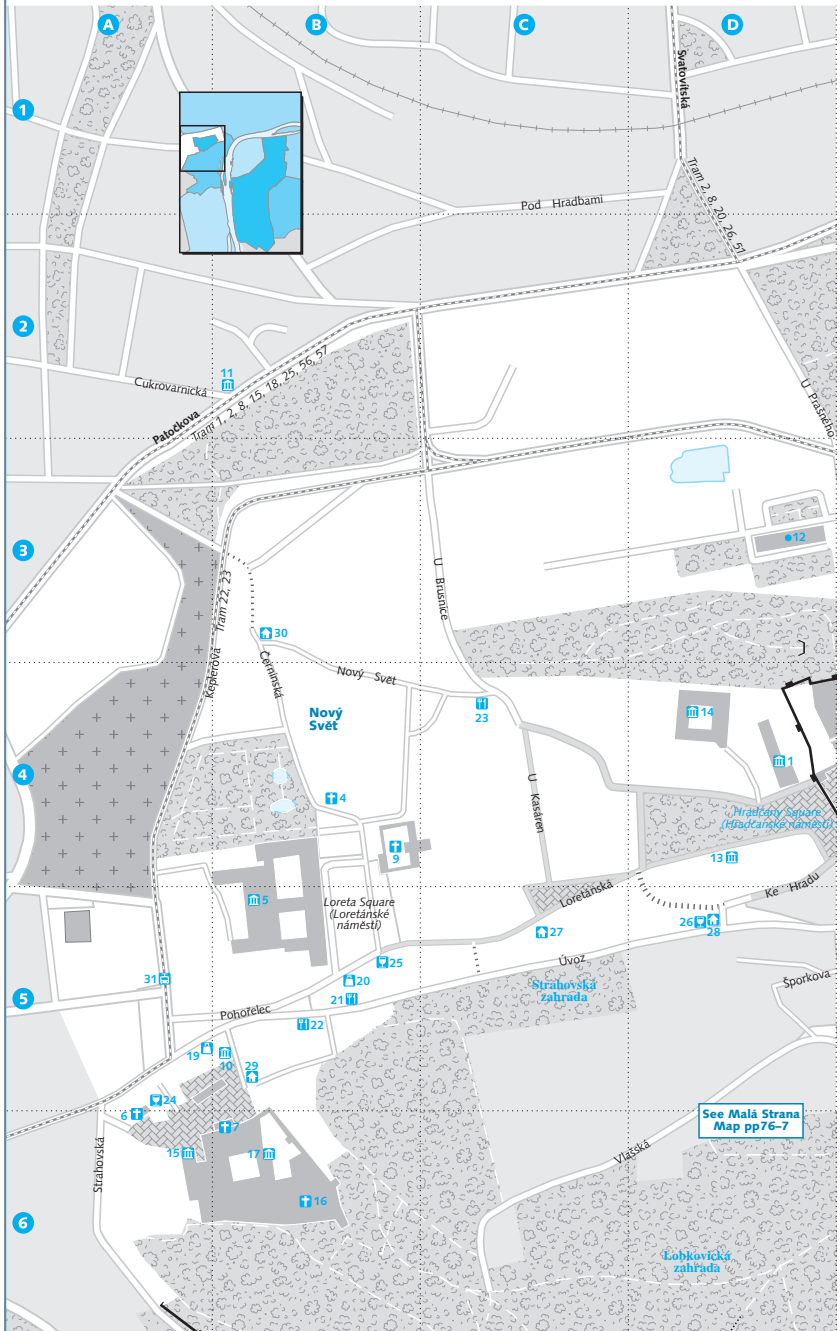
The 'write your name on a grain of rice' movement may have undermined the respectability of miniature artists, but Siberian technician Anatoly Konyenko will restore your faith with his microscopic creations. Konyenko once used to manufacture tools for eye microsurgery, but these days he'd rather spend 7½ years crafting a pair of golden horseshoes for a flea. See those, as well as the world's smallest book and strangely beautiful silhouettes of cars on the leg of a mosquito. Weird but fascinating.

STRAHOV LIBRARY Map pp70–1

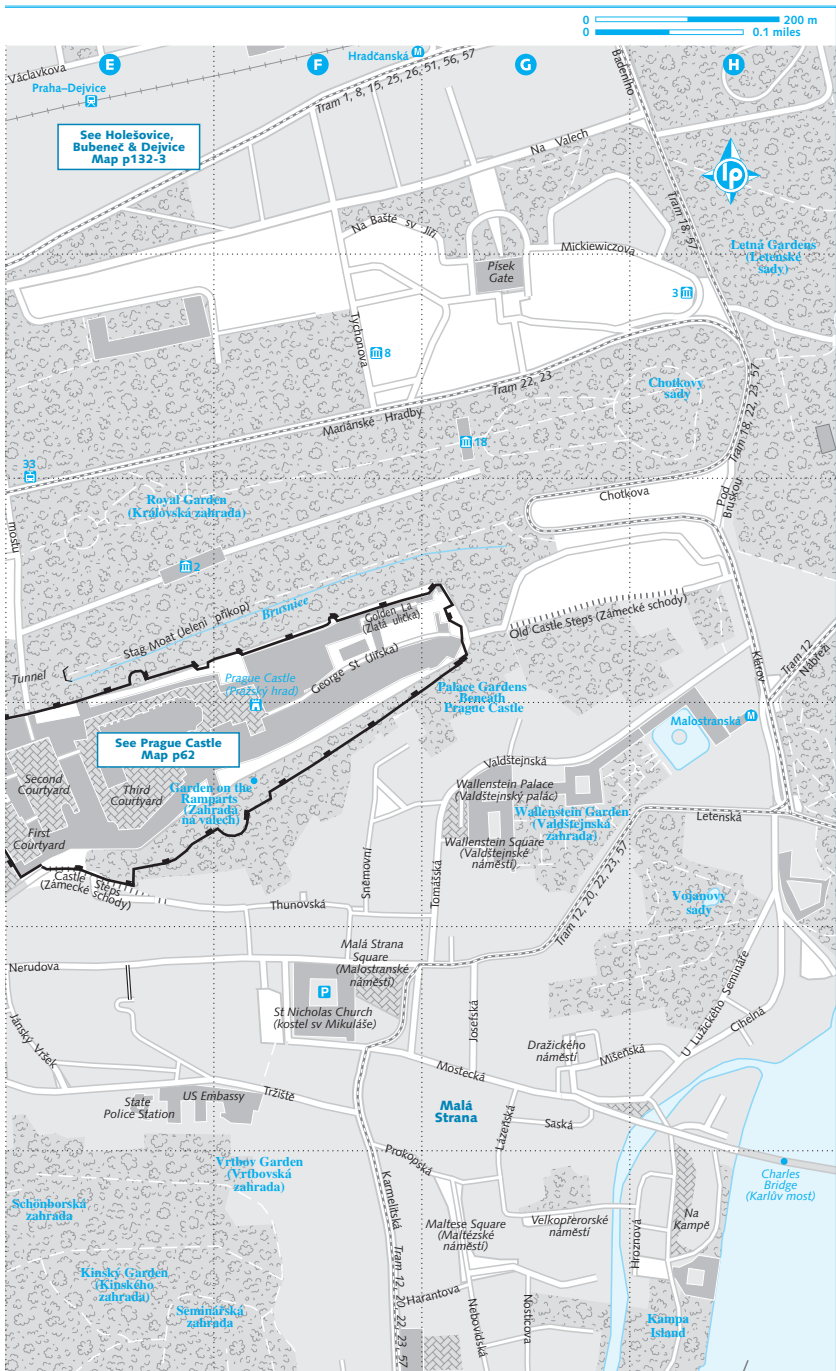
Strahovská knihovna; ☎ 233 107 718; www.strahovskyclaster.cz; **Strahovské I.nádvoří**; **adult/concession 80/50Kč**; ☎ 9am–noon & 1–5pm; 🕒 22, 23

The biggest attraction of Strahov Monastery is the Strahov Library, the largest monastic library in the country, with two magnificent baroque halls. You can peek through the doors but, sadly, you can't go

HRADČANY



NEIGHBOURHOODS HRADČANY





HRADČANY

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Archbishop's Palace (Arcibiskupský Palác).....	1	D4
Ball-Game House (Mičovna).....	2	E3
Bílek Villa (Bílkova Vila).....	3	H2
Capuchin Monastery.....	4	B4
Černin Palace (Černínský Palác).....	5	B5
Church of St Roch (Kostel sv Rocha).....	6	A6
Church of the Assumption of Our Lady (Kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie).....	7	B6
Cubist Houses.....	8	F2
Loreta.....	9	B4
Miniature Museum (Muzeum Miniatur).....	10	B5

Public Transport Museum.....	11	B2
Riding School (Jízdárna).....	12	D3
Schwarzenberg Palace (Schwarzenberský Palác).....	13	D4
Sternberg Palace.....	14	D4
Strahov Library (Strahovská knihovna).....	15	A6
Strahov Monastery (Strahovský Klášter).....	16	B6
Strahov Picture Gallery (Strahovská Obrazárna).....	17	B6
Summer Palace (Letohrádek)....	18	G2
SHOPPING  (pp143–51)		
Antique Music Instruments.....	19	A5
Houpací Kůň.....	20	B5
Icon Gallery.....	(see 19)	

EATING  (pp153–73)		
Malý Buddha.....	21	B5
Satě.....	22	B5
U Zlaté Hrušky.....	23	C4

DRINKING  (pp175–91)		
Klášteří pivovar Strahov.....	24	A5
Pivnice U Černého Vola.....	25	B5
U Zvěšeného Kafe.....	26	D5

SLEEPING  (pp211–27)		
Domus Henrici.....	27	C5
Hotel U Krále Karla.....	28	D5
Residence Monastery.....	29	B5
Romantik Hotel U Raka.....	30	B3

TRANSPORT (pp241–5)		
Pohovlec Tram Stop.....	31	A5
Pražský Hrad Tram Stop.....	32	E2

into the halls themselves – it was found that fluctuations in humidity caused by visitors' breath was endangering the frescoes.

The stunning interior of the two-storey-high **Philosophy Hall** (Filozofický sál; 1780–97) was built to fit around the carved and gilded, floor-to-ceiling walnut shelving that was rescued from another monastery in South Bohemia (access to the upper gallery is via spiral staircases concealed in the corners). The feeling of height here is accentuated by a grandiose ceiling fresco, *Mankind's Quest for True Wisdom* – the figure of Divine Providence is enthroned in the centre amid a burst of golden light, while around the edges are figures ranging from Adam and Eve to the Greek philosophers.

The lobby outside the hall contains an 18th-century **Cabinet of Curiosities**, displaying the grotesquely shrivelled remains of sharks, skates, turtles and other sea creatures; these flayed and splayed corpses were prepared by sailors, who passed them off to credulous landlubbers as 'sea monsters'. Another case (beside the door to the corridor) contains historical items, including a miniature coffee service made for the Habsburg empress Marie Louise in 1813, which fits into four false books.

The corridor leads to the older but even more beautiful **Theology Hall** (Teologický sál; 1679). The low, curved ceiling is thickly encrusted in ornate baroque stuccowork, and decorated with painted cartouches depicting the theme of 'True Wisdom', which was acquired, of course, through piety; one of the mottoes that adorns the ceiling is *initio sapientiae timor domini*: 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God'.

On a stand outside the hall door is a facsimile of the library's most prized possession, the **Strahov Evangelium**, a 9th-century codex in a gem-studded 12th-century binding. A nearby bookcase houses the **Xyloteka** (1825), a set of booklike boxes, each one bound in the wood and bark of the tree it describes, with samples of leaves, roots, flowers and fruits inside.

In the connecting corridor, look out for the two long, brown, leathery things beside the model ship and narwhal tusk – if you ask, the prudish attendant will tell you they're preserved elephants' trunks, but they're actually whales' penises.

STRAHOV PICTURE GALLERY Map pp70–1

Strahovská obrazárna; ☎ 220 517 278; www.strahovskyclaustor.cz; Strahovské II.nádvoří; adult/child 60/30Kč; 🕒 9am–noon & 12.30–5pm; 🚶 22, 23 In Strahov Monastery's second courtyard is the Strahov Picture Gallery, with a valuable collection of Gothic, baroque, rococo and romantic art on the 1st floor and temporary exhibits on the ground floor. Some of the medieval works are extraordinary – don't miss the very modern-looking 14th-century Jihlava Crucifix. You can also wander around the monastery's cloister, refectory and chapter house.

PÍSEK GATE

The area northeast of Prague Castle around the Písek Gate (see **opposite**) is a quiet, leafy neighbourhood of expensive villas and foreign consulates. It's a bit of a tourist no-man's-land, and few visitors find their way to its one and only sight of note.

BÍLEK VILLA Map pp70–1

Bílková vila; ☎ 224 322 021; Mickiewiczova 1; adult/child 50/30Kč; 📧 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🕒 18, 22, 23

This striking red-brick villa, designed by sculptor František Bílek in 1912 as his own home, houses a museum of his unconventional stone and wood reliefs, furniture and graphics. It was closed for renovation at the time of research, but should reopen in summer 2009.

HRADČANY**Walking Tour**

1 Písek Gate As you leave the top of the escalators in Hradčanská metro station, turn right and head for the stairway in the right-hand corner marked ‘Pražský hrad’. At street level turn right, and then go right again through the gap in the building. This leads to the street called K Brusce – head for the stone portal of the **Písek Gate** (Písecká brána) that you’ll see straight ahead. The baroque gateway, decorated with carved military emblems, was built by Giovanni Battisti for Charles VI in 1721 as part of Prague’s new fortifications; the streets on either side still follow the outlines of the bastions of sv Jiří (St George) to the right and sv Ludmila to the left. A century later, in 1821, the gate became the terminus of Prague’s first horse-drawn railway.

2 Cubist houses Bear right past the gate, then turn right on U Písecké Brány, and then left at the end onto Tychonova. Here you will pass two attractive **Cubist houses** designed by Josef Gočár.

3 Summer Palace When you reach Mariánské Hradby (the street with the tram lines), cross it and enter the **Royal Garden** (Královská zahrada; p63) beside the beautiful, Renaissance **Summer Palace** (Letohrádek; p63). (The gardens are open from April to October only; at other times of the year you’ll have to go right along Mariánské Hradby and enter Prague Castle via U Pražného mostu.)

4 Ball-Game House Turn right beyond the Letohrádek, continuing past the equally stunning **Ball-Game House** (Míčovna; p63), and follow the upper rim of the Stag Moat (Jelení příkop) to the western end of the gardens.

5 Powder Bridge Go through the gate and turn left to enter the Second Courtyard of

Prague Castle (p61) via the **Powder Bridge** (Pražná most); that’s powder as in gunpowder, not a reference to poor-quality construction. Visit the castle if you wish, but for the moment we’ll leave the courtyard via the first gate on the right, which leads past a window giving a glimpse into the ruins of a Romanesque chapel, and into Hradčany Square.

6 Hradčany Square Now watched over by a **statue of Tomáš Masaryk**, the first president of Czechoslovakia, **Hradčany Square** (Hradčanské náměstí; p68) was once the social heart of the aristocratic quarter of Hradčany. On the southern side of the square is the extravagant Renaissance status symbol of the **Schwarzenberg Palace** (Schwarzenberský palác; p68). On the northern side you can see the rococo **Archbishop’s Palace** (Arcibiskupský palác) and the *sgrafitto*-covered **Martinic Palace** (Martinický palác), which served as Hradčany’s town hall. More recently the palace was used as Mozart’s house in the film *Amadeus*.

7 Church of St John Nepomuk At the far end of the square, bear right on the narrow cobbled street of Kanovnická, and pass the pretty little **Church of St John Nepomuk** (kostel sv Jan Nepomucký), built in 1729 by the king of Prague baroque, Kilian Dientzenhofer. Take the first lane on the left downhill from the church.

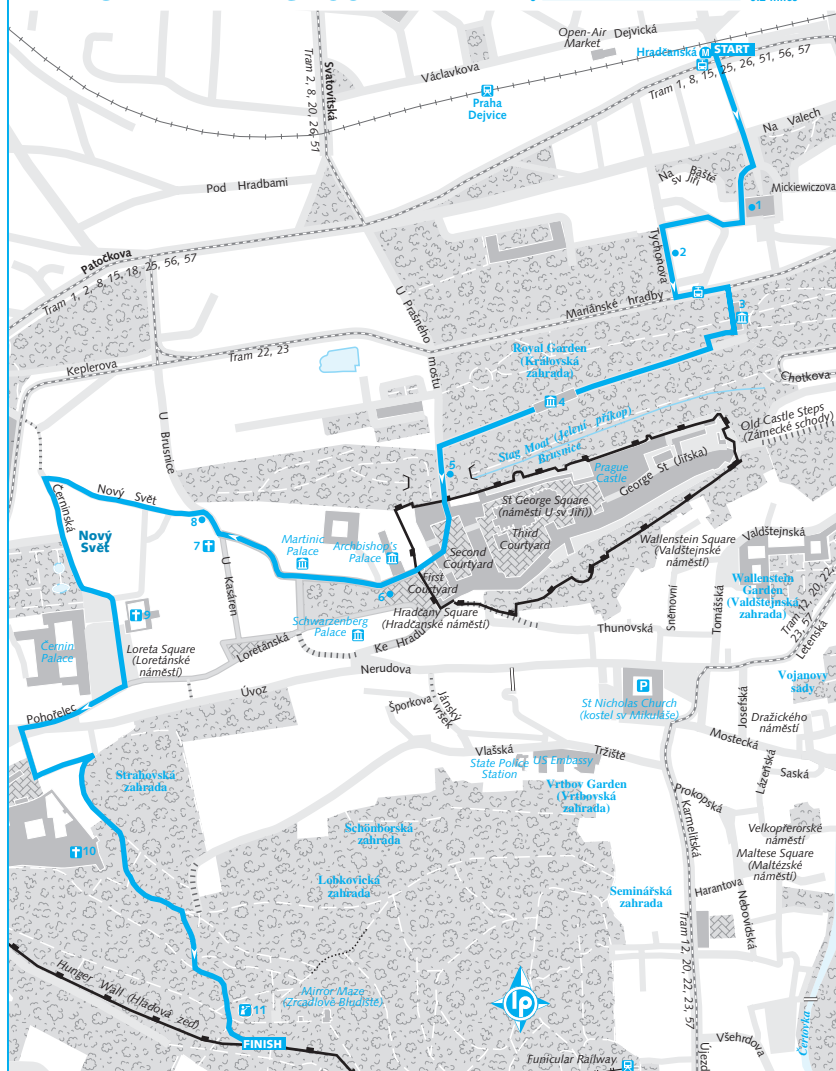
8 Nový Svět The lane is called Nový Svět (New World) and is a picturesque cluster of little cottages once inhabited by court artisans and tradesmen, a far cry from the fancy palaces at the top of the hill. **No 1 Nový Svět** was the humble home of court astronomer Tycho Brahe and, after 1600, his successor Johannes Kepler; the atmospheric restaurant **U zlaté hrušky** (p157) is just next door. Continue downhill to where Nový Svět ends in a leafy hollow occupied by the **Romantik Hotel U Raka** (p213).

9 Loreta Turn left and climb slowly up Černínská to the pretty square in front of the extravagantly baroque **Loreta** (p69), a shrine to the Virgin Mary and a hugely popular place of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics. Opposite is the imposing 150m-long façade of the **Černín Palace** (Černínský palác; p68), dating from 1692.

10 Strahov Monastery At the southern end of the square turn right into Pohofelec and continue to the far western side. A little alley at No 9 leads into the courtyard of **Strahov Monastery** (Strahovský klášter; p69), where you

HRADČANY WALKING TOUR

0 400 m
0 0.2 miles



WALK FACTS

Start Hradčanská metro station

End Petřín Hill (tram 12, 20, 22, 23 or funicular)

Distance 2.5km

Time One hour

Exertion Easy

Fuel stop U zlaté hrušky

can visit the library before going through the gate at the eastern end of the courtyard into the gardens above Malá Strana.

11 Petřín Lookout Tower Turn right on the footpath here (signposted 'Rozhledna & Bludiště') and finish the walk with a stroll along to the **Petřín Lookout Tower** (Petřínská rozhledna; p84).

Eating [p158](#); Drinking [p180](#); Shopping [p145](#); Sleeping [p214](#)

Almost too picturesque for its own good, the baroque district of Malá Strana (Little Quarter) tumbles down the hillside between Prague Castle and the river. The focal point of the neighbourhood is Malostranské náměstí, a square dominated by the soaring green dome of St Nicholas Church. To its north is a maze of palaces and gardens, home to government offices and foreign embassies; to the south are parks and gardens straggling along the banks of the Vltava before merging into the more commercialised streets of Smíchov ([p137](#)).

Once you get away from the crowded pavements of Mostecká and Nerudova – the main tourist route between Charles Bridge and the castle – there are cobbled backstreets to explore, with historic hidden gardens hidden (see the Walking Tour, [p85](#)), quaint and colourful house signs perched above doorways, and countless little bars and cafés where you can while away an afternoon.

Having started life as a market settlement in the 8th or 9th century, Přemysl Otakar II granted Malá Strana town status in 1257. The district was almost destroyed on two separate occasions: during battles between the Hussites and the Prague Castle garrison in 1419, and then in the Great Fire of 1541. Following this massive devastation Renaissance buildings and palaces sprang up, followed by the many baroque churches and palaces that lend Malá Strana much of its charm.

PRAGUE CASTLE TO CHARLES BRIDGE

Following the tourist crowds downhill from the castle via Ke Hradu, you soon arrive at Nerudova, architecturally the most important street in Malá Strana; most of its old Renaissance façades were 'baroquefied' in the 18th century. It's named after the Czech poet Jan Neruda (famous for his short stories, *Tales of Malá Strana*), who lived at the [House of the Two Suns](#) (dům U dvou slunců; Nerudova 47) from 1845 to 1857.

The [House of the Golden Horseshoe](#) (dům U zlaté podkovy; Nerudova 34) is named after the relief of St Wenceslas above the doorway – his horse was said to be shod with gold. From 1765 Josef of Bretfeld made his [Bretfeld Palace](#) (Nerudova 33) a social hotspot, entertaining Mozart and Casanova. The baroque [Church of Our Lady of Unceasing Succour](#) (kostel Panny Marie ustavičné pomoci; Nerudova 24) was a theatre from 1834 to 1837, and staged Czech plays during the Czech National Revival.

Most of the buildings bear house signs. Built in 1566, [St John of Nepomuk](#) (Nerudova 18) is adorned with the image of one of Bohemia's patron saints, while the [House at the Three Fiddles](#) (dům U tří houslíček; Nerudova 12), a Gothic building rebuilt in Renaissance style during the 17th century, once belonged to a family of violin makers.

Malostranské náměstí ([Map pp76–7](#)), Malá Strana's main square, is divided into an upper and lower part by St Nicholas Church ([p79](#)), the district's most distinctive landmark. The square has been the hub of Malá Strana since the 10th century, though it lost some of its character when Karmelitská street was widened early in the 20th century, and a little

more when Prague's first Starbucks opened here in 2008. Today, it's a mixture of official buildings and touristy restaurants, with a tram line through the middle of the lower square.

The nightclub and bar at No 21, Malostranská beseda (see [p198](#)), was once the old town hall. Here in 1575 non-Catholic nobles wrote the so-called *České Konfese* (Czech Confession), a pioneering demand for religious tolerance addressed to the Habsburg emperor and eventually passed into Czech law by Rudolf II in 1609. On 22 May 1618 Czech nobles gathered at the [Smiřický Palace](#) (Malostranské náměstí 18) to plot a rebellion against the Habsburg rulers – the next day they flung two Habsburg councillors out of a window in Prague Castle.

CHARLES BRIDGE [Map pp76–7 & pp88–9](#)

Karlův most

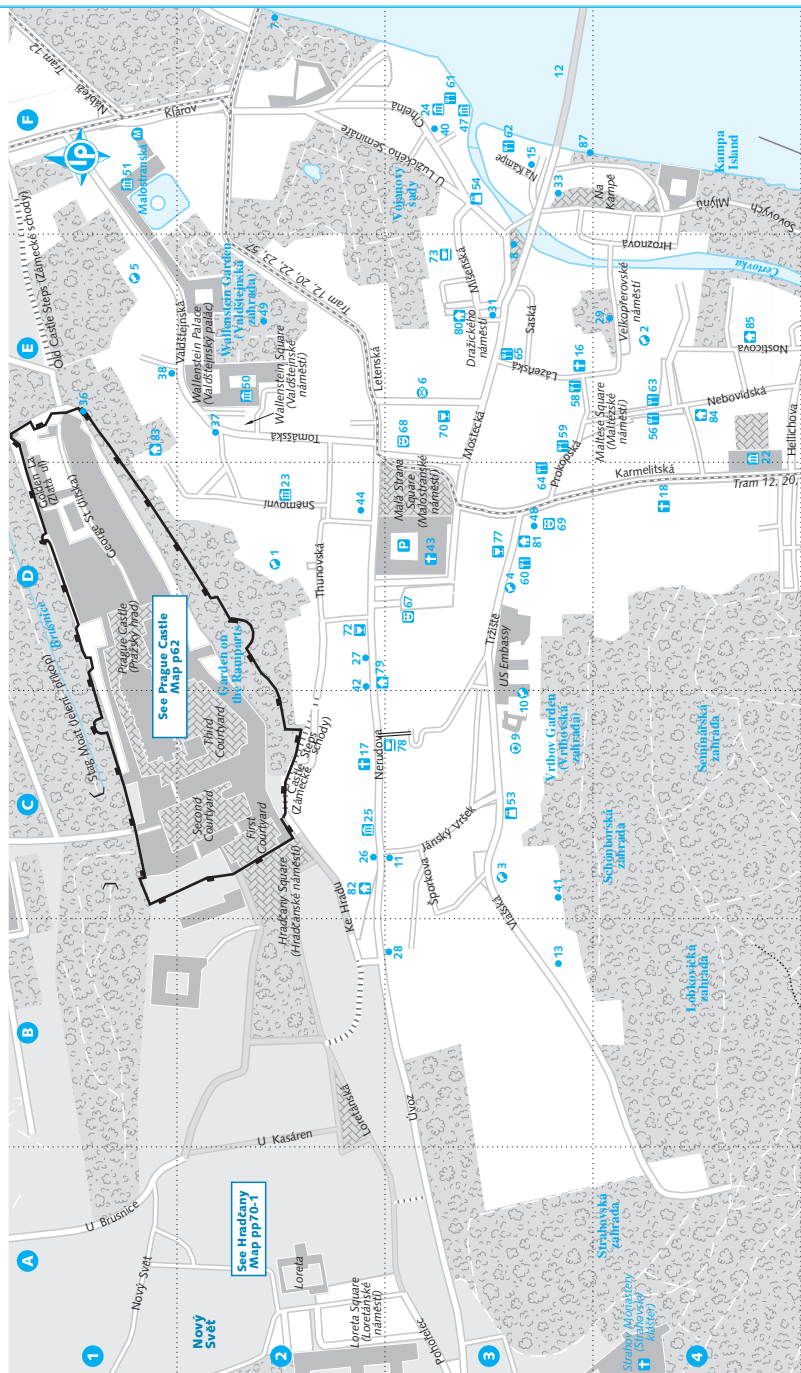
Strolling across Charles Bridge is everybody's favourite Prague activity. However, by 9am it's a 500m-long fairground, with an army of tourists squeezing through a gauntlet of hawkers and buskers beneath the impassive gaze of the baroque statues that line the parapets (see the boxed text, [p80](#)). If you want to experience the bridge at its most atmospheric try to visit it at dawn.

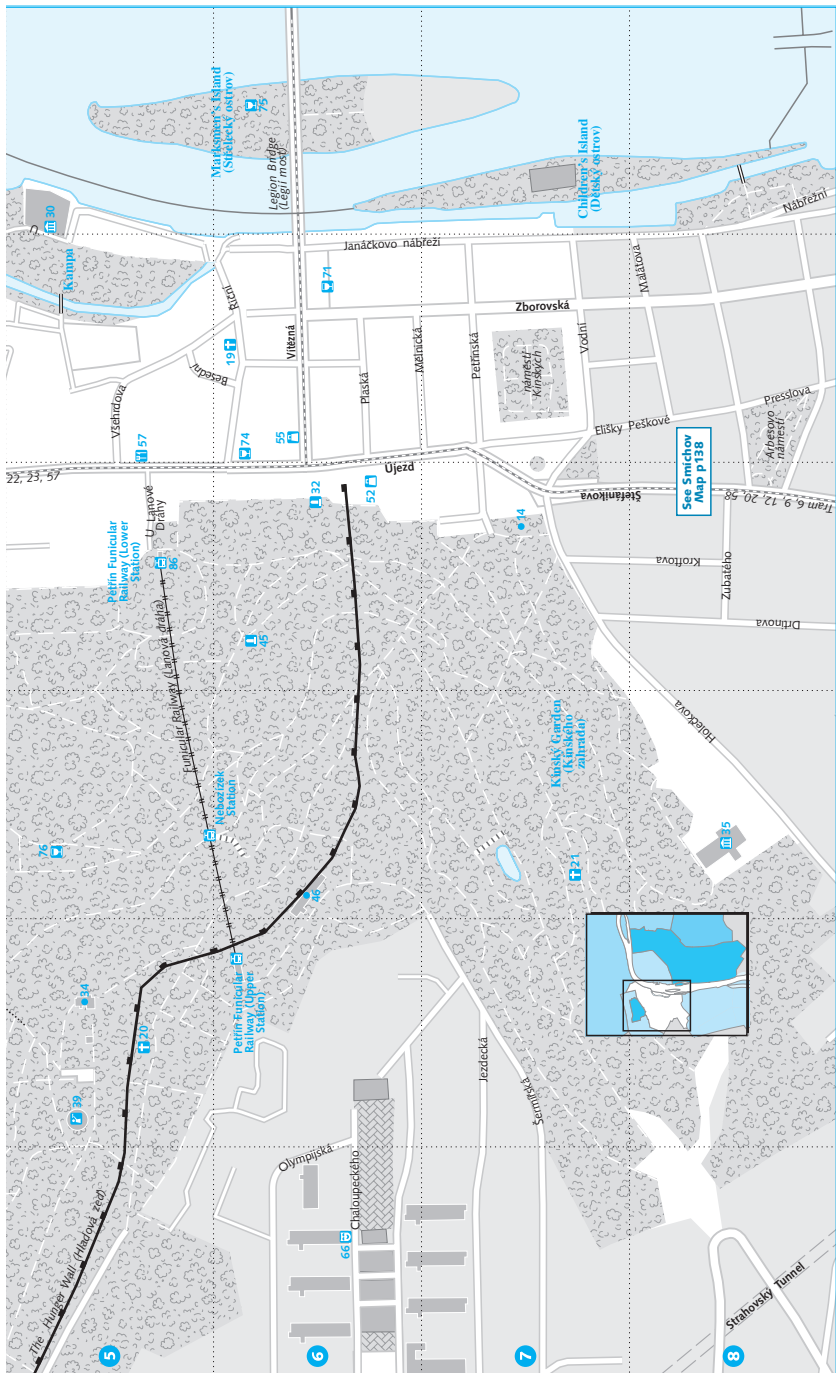
In 1357 Charles IV commissioned Peter Parler (the architect of St Vitus Cathedral) to replace the 12th-century Judith Bridge, which had been washed away by floods in 1342. (You can see the only surviving arch of the Judith Bridge by taking a boat trip with Prague Venice; see [p251](#).)

The new bridge was completed around 1400, and took Charles' name only in the

MALÁ STRANA

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles





MALÁ STRANA

INFORMATION

British Embassy.....	1	D2
French Embassy.....	2	E4
German Embassy.....	3	C3
Irish Embassy.....	4	D3
Polish Embassy.....	5	E1
Post Office.....	6	E3
Prague Information Service..... (see 31)		
Prague Venice.....	7	F2
Prague Venice.....	8	E3
State Police Station.....	9	C3
US Embassy.....	10	C3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp75–86)

Bretfeld Palace.....	11	C3
Charles Bridge (Karlův most).....	12	F3
Children's Playground.....	13	B3
Children's Playground.....	14	D7
Children's Playground.....	15	F3
Church of Our Lady Below the Chain (Kostel Panny Marie pod Řetězem).....	16	E3
Church of Our Lady of Unceasing Succour (Kostel Panny Marie Ustavivné Pomoci).....	17	C2
Church of Our Lady Victorious (Kostel Panny Marie Vítězné).....	18	D4
Church of St John at the Laundry (Kostel sv Jana na Prádle).....	19	E6
Church of St Lawrence (Kostel sv Vavřince).....	20	B5
Church of St Michael (Kostel sv Michala).....	21	C7
Czech Museum of Music (Ceské Muzeum Hudby).....	22	E4
Czech Parliament House (Sněmovna).....	23	D2
Franz Kafka Museum (Muzeum Franyzky Kafky).....	24	F3
Historical Pharmacy Exhibition.....	25	C2
House of the Golden Horseshoe.....	26	C2
House of the Three Fiddles.....	27	D2
House of the Two Suns.....	28	B3

John Lennon Wall.....	29	E4
Kampa Museum (Muzeum Kampa).....	30	F5
Malá Strana Bridge Tower.....	31	E3
Memorial to the Victims of Communism.....	32	D6
Metal Plaque.....	33	F3
Mirror Maze (Zrcadlové Bludiště).....	34	B5
Musaion.....	35	C8
Museum of the Infant Jesus of Prague (Muzeum Pražského Jezulátka)..... (see 18)		
Palace Gardens Beneath Prague Castle Entrance.....	36	E1
Palace Gardens Beneath Prague Castle Entrance.....	37	E2
Palace Gardens Beneath Prague Castle Entrance.....	38	E1
Petřín Funicular Railway (Lower Station)..... (see 86)		
Petřín Lookout Tower.....	39	B5
Proudý (Streams) - David Černý Sculpture.....	40	F3
Quo Vadis - David Černý Sculpture.....	41	C3
St John of Nepomuk House.....	42	D2
St Nicholas Church (Kostel sv Mikuláše).....	43	D3
Smiřický Palace.....	44	D2
Statue of Karel Hynek Mácha.....	45	D6
Štefánik Observatory.....	46	C6
Tržiště 15 (Kafka's Home 1917)..... (see 10)		
Václav Havel Library.....	47	F3
Vrtbov Garden Entrance.....	48	D3
Wallenstein Garden (Valdštejnská Zahrada).....	49	E2
Wallenstein Palace (Valdštejnský Palác).....	50	E2
Wallenstein Riding School (Valdštejnská Jízdárna).....	51	F1

SHOPPING (pp143–51)		
Capriccio.....	52	D6
Pavla & Olga.....	53	C3

Shakespeare & Sons.....	54	F3
Vetešnictví.....	55	E6

EATING (pp153–73)

Café de Paris.....	56	E4
Café Savoy..... (see 71)		
Cantina.....	57	E5
Cukrářkavalimonáda.....	58	E3
El Centro.....	59	E3
Gitanes.....	60	D3
Hergetova Cihelna.....	61	F3
Kampa Park.....	62	F3
U Malé Velryby.....	63	E4
U Maltézských Rytířů.....	64	D3
U Zlaté Studně..... (see 83)		
Vacek Bio-Market.....	65	E3

ENTERTAINMENT (pp193–203)

Klub 007 Strahov.....	66	A6
Liechtenstein Palace.....	67	D3
Malostranská Beseda.....	68	E3
U Malého Glenu.....	69	D3

DRINKING (pp175–91)

Blue Light.....	70	E3
Café Savoy.....	71	E6
Hostinec U Kocoura.....	72	D2
Kačíčko.....	73	E3
Klub Újezd.....	74	E6
Letní Bar.....	75	F6
Petřínské Terasy.....	76	C5
St Nicholas Café.....	77	D3
U Zeleného Čaje.....	78	C3

SLEEPING (pp211–27)

Castle Steps.....	79	D2
Charles Bridge B&B.....	80	E3
Hotel Aria.....	81	D3
Hotel Neruda.....	82	C2
Hotel U Zlaté Studně.....	83	E1
Mandarin Oriental.....	84	E4
Pension Dientzenhofer.....	85	E4

TRANSPORT (pp241–5)

Petřín Funicular Railway (Lower Station).....	86	D5
PPS Boat Landing.....	87	F3

19th century – before that it was known simply as Kamenný most (Stone Bridge). Despite occasional flood damage, it withstood wheeled traffic for 600 years – thanks, legend says, to eggs mixed into the mortar – until it was made pedestrian-only after WWII.

At the Staré Město end of the bridge, look over the downstream parapet at the retaining wall on the right and you'll see a carved stone head known as **Bradáč** (Bearded Man). When the river level rose above this medieval marker, Praguers knew it was time to head for the hills. A blue line on the modern flood gauge nearby shows the level of the 2002 flood, no less than 2m above Bradáč!

In the crush, don't forget to look at the bridge itself (the bridge towers have great

views) and the grand vistas up and down the river. Pickpocket gangs work the bridge day and night, so keep your purse or wallet safe.

HISTORICAL PHARMACY EXHIBITION

Map pp76–7

Expozice historických lékáren; ☎ 257 531 502; Nerudova 32; adult/child 40/20Kč; 🕒 11am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Sep, 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Oct–Mar; 📅 12, 20, 22, 23

Hradčany's first pharmacy was opened here in 1749; the building, known as U zlatého lva (At the Golden Lion) retains original 19th-century fittings and houses a collection of pharmaceutical paraphernalia illustrating the history of pharmacy from Renaissance times up to the early 20th century.

MALÁ STRANA BRIDGE TOWER

Map pp76–7

Malostranská mostecká věž; ☎ 257 530 487; **Charles Bridge;** adult/child 70/50Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Apr–Oct; 🗺 12, 20, 22, 23

There are actually two towers at the Malá Strana end of Charles Bridge. The lower one was originally part of the long-gone 12th-century **Judith Bridge** (p75), while the taller one was built in the mid-15th century in imitation of the Staré Město tower (see p98). The taller tower is open to the public and houses an exhibit on the history of Charles Bridge, though like its Staré Město counterpart the main attraction is the view from the top.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH Map pp76–7

Kostel sv Mikuláše; ☎ 257 534 215; **www.psalterium.cz;** Malostranská náměstí 38; adult/child under 10yr 70Kč/free; 🕒 9am–5pm Mar–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Feb; 🗺 12, 20, 22, 23

Malá Strana is dominated by the huge green cupola of St Nicholas Church, one of Central Europe's finest baroque buildings. (Don't confuse it with the other Church of St Nicholas on Old Town Square, p91.) It was begun by famed German baroque architect Kristof Dientzenhofer (see p48); his son Kilian continued the work and Anselmo Lurago finished the job in 1755.

On the ceiling, Johann Kracker's 1770 *Apotheosis of St Nicholas* is Europe's largest fresco (clever trompe l'oeil technique has made the painting merge almost seamlessly with the architecture). In the first chapel on the left is a mural by Karel Škréta, which includes the church official who kept track of the artist as he worked; he is looking out through a window in the upper corner.

Mozart himself tickled the ivories on the 2500-pipe organ in 1787, and was honoured with a requiem Mass here (14 December 1791). Take the stairs up to the gallery to see Škréta's gloomy 17th-century Passion Cycle paintings and the scratchings of bored 1820s tourists and wannabe Franz Kafkas on the balustrade.

TRANSPORT: MALÁ STRANA

Metro Malostranská metro station is in northern Malá Strana, about five minutes' walk from Malostranské náměstí.

Tram Lines 12, 20, 22 and 23 run along Újezd and through Malostranské náměstí.

NORTHERN MALÁ STRANA

From the northern side of Malostranské náměstí, Thunovská and the Castle Steps (Zámecké schody) lead up to the castle. At the eastern end of Thunovská, on Sněmovní, is the **Czech Parliament House** (Sněmovna), seat of the lower house of parliament, once home to the national assembly that deposed the Habsburgs from the Czech throne on 14 November 1918.

FRANZ KAFKA MUSEUM Map pp76–7

Muzeum Franzy Kafky; ☎ 257 535 507; **www.kafka.museum.cz;** Hergetova číhelná, Číhelná 2b; adult/child 120/60Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm; 🗺 12, 20, 22, 23

This much-hyped exhibition on the life and work of Prague's most famous literary son opened here in 2005, after six years in Barcelona and New York. Entitled 'City of K', it explores the intimate relationship between the writer and the city that shaped him through the use of original letters, photographs, quotations, period newspapers and publications, and video and sound installations. Does it vividly portray the claustrophobic bureaucracy and atmosphere of brooding menace that characterised Kafka's world? Or is it a load of pretentious bollocks? You decide.

Outside the museum stands one of David Černý's amusing and controversial sculptures, **Proudly** (Streams; see p137).

PALACE GARDENS BENEATH PRAGUE CASTLE Map pp76–7

Palácové zahrady pod Pražským hradem; ☎ 257 010 401; **Valdštejnské náměstí 3, Valdštejnská 12–14;** adult/child 95/65Kč; 🕒 10am–9pm Jun & Jul, to 8pm Aug, to 7pm May & Sep, to 6pm Apr & Oct; 🗺 12, 20, 22, 23

These beautiful, terraced gardens on the steep southern slopes of the castle hill date from the 17th and 18th centuries, when they were created for the owners of the adjoining palaces. They were restored in the 1990s and contain a Renaissance loggia with frescoes of Pompeii and a baroque portal with sundial that cleverly catches the sunlight reflected off the water in a triton fountain.

There are two entrances on Valdštejnská street: one opposite the Wallenstein Palace, and one next to the Palffy Palace Restaurant. There's also one at the top of the hill in the Garden on the Ramparts at Prague Castle.

CHARLES BRIDGE STATUES

The first monument erected on the bridge was the crucifix near the eastern end, in 1657. The first statue – the Jesuits' 1683 tribute to St John of Nepomuk – inspired other Catholic orders, and over the next 30 years a score more went up, like ecclesiastical billboards. New ones were added in the mid-19th century, and one (plus replacements for some lost to floods) in the 20th. As most of the statues were carved from soft sandstone, several weathered originals have been replaced with copies. Some originals are housed in the Casemates (p115) at Vyšehrad; others are in the Lapidarium (p131) in Holešovice.

Starting from the western (Malá Strana) end, with odd numbers on your left and even ones on your right, the statues that line the bridge are as follows:

1 Sts Cosmas & Damian (1709) Charitable 3rd-century physician brothers.

2 St Wenceslas (sv Václav; 1858) Patron saint of Bohemia.

3 St Vitus (sv Vít; 1714) Patron saint of Prague (and of dogs, dancers, actors and comedians).

4 Sts John of Matha & Félix de Valois (1714) 12th-century French founders of the Trinitarian order, whose mission was the ransom of enslaved Christians (represented by a Tatar standing guard over a group of them), with **St Ivo** (No 30).

5 St Philip Benizi (sv Benicius; 1714) Miracle worker and healer.

6 St Adalbert (sv Vojtěch; 1709) Prague's first Czech bishop, canonised in the 10th century. Replica.

7 St Cajetan (1709) Italian founder of the Theatine order in the 15th century.

8 The Vision of St Luitgard (1710) Agreed by many to be the finest piece on the bridge, in which Christ appears to the blind saint and allows her to kiss his wounds.

9 St Augustine (1708) Reformed hedonist, famous for his *Confessions*, theological fountainhead of the Reformation. Also, patron saint of brewers. Replica.

10 St Nicholas of Tolentino (1706) Patron of Holy Souls. Replica.

11 St Jude Thaddaeus (1708) Apostle and patron saint of hopeless causes. Further on the right, beyond the railing, is a column with a statue of the eponymous hero of the 11th-century epic poem *Song of Roland* (Brunčvik).

12 St Vincent Ferrer (1712) A 14th-century Spanish priest, shown with **St Procopius**, Hussite warrior-priest.

13 St Anthony of Padua (1707) The 13th-century Portuguese disciple of St Francis of Assisi.

14 St Francis Seraphinus (1855) Patron of the poor and abandoned.

WALLENSTEIN GARDEN [Map pp76–7](#)

Valdštejnská zahrada; Letenská 10; admission free;

🕒 10am–6pm Apr–Oct; 📍 Malostranská

This huge, walled garden lurks behind the Wallenstein Palace, an oasis of peace amid the bustle of Malá Strana streets. Its finest feature is the huge [loggia](#) decorated with scenes from the Trojan Wars, flanked to one side by an aviary with a pair of Eagle Owls, and an enormous fake stalactite [grotto](#) – see how many hidden animals and grotesque faces you can spot. The [bronze statues](#) of Greek gods lining the avenue opposite the loggia are copies – the originals were carted away by marauding Swedes in 1648 and now stand outside the royal palace of Drottningholm near Stockholm.

At the eastern end of the garden is an ornamental [pond](#), home to some seriously large carp, and the [Wallenstein Riding School](#) (Valdštejnská jízda; ☎ 257 073 136; Valdštejnská 3; adult/child 150/80Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun), which hosts changing exhibitions of modern art.

Enter the garden on Letenská (beside Malostranská metro station) or via the Wallenstein Palace (see the walking tour on p85).

WALLENSTEIN PALACE [Map pp76–7](#)

Valdštejnský palác; ☎ 257 071 111; Valdštejnské náměstí 4; admission free; 🕒 10am–5pm Sat & Sun Apr–Oct, to 4pm Sat & Sun Nov–Mar; 📍 12, 20, 22, 23 The small [Wallenstein Square](#) (Valdštejnské náměstí), northeast of Malá Strana Square, is dominated by the monumental 1630 palace of Albrecht of Wallenstein, general of the Habsburg armies, who financed the construction with the confiscated properties of Protestant nobles he defeated at the Battle of (White Mountain) in 1620. It now houses the Senate of the Czech Republic, but you can visit some rooms on weekends. The ceiling fresco in the [Baroque Hall](#) shows Wallenstein as a warrior at the reins of a chariot, while the unusual oval [Audience Hall](#) has a fresco of Vulcan at work in his forge.

15 St John of Nepomuk (1683) Bronze. Patron saint of Czechs. According to the legend on base of the statue, Wenceslas IV had him trussed up in armour and thrown off the bridge in 1393 for refusing to divulge the queen's confessions (he was her priest), though the real reason had to do with the bitter conflict between church and state; the stars in his halo allegedly followed his corpse down the river. Tradition says that if you rub the bronze plaque, you will one day return to Prague. A bronze cross set in the parapet between statues 17 and 19 marks where he was thrown off.

16 St Wenceslas as a boy (c 1730) With his grandmother and guardian St Ludmilla, patroness of Bohemia.

17 St Wenceslas (1853) With **St Sigismund**, son of Charles IV, and **St Norbert**, 12th-century German founder of the Premonstratensian order.

18 St Francis Borgia (1710) A 16th-century Spanish priest.

19 St John the Baptist (1857) By Josef Max.

20 St Christopher (1857) Patron saint of travellers.

21 Sts Cyril & Methodius (1938) The newest statue. These two introduced Christianity and a written script (Cyrillic) to the Slavs in the 9th century.

22 St Francis Xavier (1711) A 16th-century Spanish missionary celebrated for his work in the Orient. Replica.

23 St Anne with Madonna & Child (1707) St Anne is the mother of the Virgin Mary.

24 St Joseph (1854) Husband of the Virgin Mary.

25 Crucifix (1657) Gilded bronze. With an invocation in Hebrew saying 'holy, holy, holy Lord' (funded by the fine of a Jew who had mocked it in 1696); the stone figures date from 1861.

26 Pietá (1859) Mary holding the body of Christ following the crucifixion.

27 Madonna with St Dominic (1709) Spanish founder of the Dominicans, with **St Thomas Aquinas**. Replica.

28 Sts Barbara, Margaret & Elizabeth (1707) St Barbara, 2nd-century patron saint of miners; St Margaret, 3rd- or 4th-century patron saint of expectant mothers; and St Elizabeth, a 13th-century Slovak princess who renounced the good life to serve the poor.

29 Madonna with St Bernard (1709) Founder of the Cistercian order in the 12th century. Replica.

30 St Ivo of Kermartin (1711) A 13th-century Breton, patron saint of lawyers and orphans. Replica.

VÁCLAV HAVEL LIBRARY Map pp76–7

Knihovna Václava Havla; ☎ 222 220 112; Cihelná 2b; www.vaclavhavel-knihovna.org; adult/child 80/40Kč; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 📅 12, 20, 22, 23 This exhibition, next door to the Franz Kafka Museum, charts the life and work of the Czech Republic's first playwright-president: writer, dramatist and political dissident Václav Havel, who led the country from 1989 to 2003, through the aftermath of communism and the Velvet Divorce. Featured are displays of documents, photographs, original writings and a reconstruction of Havel's presidential office in Prague Castle.

SOUTHERN MALÁ STRANA

The southern part of Malá Strana centres on pretty Maltese Square (Maltézské náměstí; Map pp76–7), which takes its name from the Knights of Malta who, in 1169, established a monastery beside the austere, early-Gothic towers of

the **Church of Our Lady Below the Chain** (kostel Panny Marie pod řetězem). The knights were charged with protecting the bridge across the river – the chain refers to the barrier they used.

To the east of the square is Kampa (Map pp76–7), an 'island' created by the Čertovka (Devil's Stream) – the most peaceful and picturesque part of Malá Strana. In the 13th century Prague's first mill, the Sovovský mlýn (now Kampa Museum), was built here, and other mills followed. Kampa was once farmland (the name Kampa comes from campus, Latin for 'field'), but the island was settled in the 16th century after being raised above flood level. In 1939 the river was so low that it was again joined to the mainland, and coins and jewellery were found in the dry channel.

The area where the Čertovka passes under Charles Bridge is sometimes called Prague's Venice – the channel is often crowded with dinky tour boats. Cafés beckon from Na Kampě, the small square south of the bridge, though the

summer sun is fierce here. Kampa's southern end, beyond the square, is a pleasant wooded park with views across to Staré Město.

Near the southern end of Kampa on the mainland lies one of Malá Strana's oldest Gothic buildings, the **Church of St John at the Laundry** (kostel sv Jana na prádle; Map pp76–7), built in 1142 as a local parish church. Inside are the remains of 14th-century frescoes.

Marksmen's Island (Střelecký ostrov; Map pp76–7), just south of Kampa, is crossed by the Legion Bridge (Legii most). The island's name originates in its use in the 16th century as a cannon and rifle target for the Prague garrison. During summer it has an open-air bar and cinema (see the boxed text, p188), and there's a little beach at the northern end. Take the steps going down from Legion Bridge to get there.

CHILDREN'S ISLAND Map pp76–7

Dětský ostrov; access from Nábřeží; admission free; ☎ 24hr; M Anděl

Prague's smallest island offers a leafy respite from the hustle and bustle of the city, with a selection of swings, slides, climbing frames and sandpits to keep the kids busy, as well as a rope swing, skateboard ramp, mini football pitch, netball court, and lots of open space for older siblings to run wild. There are plenty of benches to take the strain off weary parental legs, and a decent bar and restaurant at the southern end.

JOHN LENNON WALL Map pp76–7

Velkopřevorské náměstí; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

After his murder on 8 December 1980 John Lennon became a pacifist hero for many young Czechs. An image of Lennon was painted on a wall in a secluded square opposite the French Embassy (there is a niche on the wall that looks like a tombstone), along with political graffiti and Beatle lyrics. Despite repeated coats of whitewash, the secret police never managed to keep it clean for long, and the Lennon Wall became a political focus for Prague youth (most Western pop music was banned by the communists, and some Czech musicians were even jailed for playing it).

Post-1989 weathering and lightweight graffiti ate away at the political messages and images, until little remained of Lennon but his eyes, but visiting tourists began making their own contributions. The wall is the property of the Knights of Malta, and they have repainted it several times, but it

soon gets covered with more Lennon images, peace messages and inconsequential tourist graffiti. In recent years the Knights have bowed to the inevitable and now don't bother to whitewash it any more.

KAMPA MUSEUM Map pp76–7

Muzeum Kampa; ☎ 257 286 147; www.museumkampa.cz; U Sovových Mlýnů 2; admission to permanent exhibition only adult/concession 120/60Kč, to permanent & temporary exhibitions 180/90Kč; ☎ 10am–6pm; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

Housed in a renovated mill building, this gallery is devoted to 20th-century and contemporary art from Central Europe. The highlights of the permanent exhibition are extensive collections of bronzes by Cubist sculptor Otto Gutfreund and paintings by František Kupka, a pioneer of abstract art. The most impressive canvas is Kupka's *Cathedral*, a pleated mass of blue and red diagonals suggesting a curtain with a glimpse of darkness beyond. Free admission on the first Wednesday of each month.

CZECH MUSEUM OF MUSIC Map pp76–7

České muzeum hudby; ☎ 257 257 777; www.nm.cz; Karmelitská 2/4; adult/concession 100/50Kč; ☎ 10am–6pm Wed–Mon; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

A 17th-century baroque monastery building with an impressive central atrium makes a beautiful setting for the new Museum of Music. The museum's permanent exhibition, entitled 'Man–Instrument–Music', explores the relationship between human beings and musical instruments through the ages, and showcases an incredible collection of violins, guitars, lutes, trumpets, flutes and harmonicas – all set to music, of course.

MUSEUM OF THE INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE Map pp76–7

Muzeum Pražského Jezulátka; ☎ 257 533 646; www.pragjesu.info; Karmelitská 9; admission free; ☎ church 8.30am–6pm Mon–Sat & 8.30am–8pm Sun, museum 9.30am–5.30pm Mon–Sat & 1–6pm Sun, closed 1 Jan, 25 & 26 Dec & Easter Mon; ☎ 12, 20, 22, 23

The **Church of Our Lady Victorious** (kostel Panny Marie Vítězné), built in 1613, has on its central altar a 47cm-tall waxwork figure of the baby Jesus, brought from Spain in 1628. Known as the **Infant Jesus of Prague** (Pražské Jezulátko), it is said to have protected Prague from the plague and from the destruction of the Thirty Years' War. An 18th-century

KAFKA'S PRAGUE

Although he wrote his works in German, Franz Kafka (1883–1924) was very much a son of the Czech capital. He lived in Prague all his life, haunting the city and being haunted by it, both hating it and needing it. His novel *The Trial* can be seen as a metaphysical geography of Staré Město, whose maze of alleys and passageways break down the usual boundaries between outer streets and inner courtyards, between public and private, new and old, real and imaginary.

For most of his life Kafka lived close to Old Town Square, growing up and going to school, working and meeting friends; his own words were: 'this narrow circle encompasses my entire life'. Many guidebooks and walking tours claim to show you 'Kafka's Prague', but any familiarity with his work soon shows that such a place existed only in Kafka's mind. So rather than describe some arbitrary walking trail, we have listed the various places associated with the writer's life in chronological order, so you can wander between them by whichever route you like, as Kafka would have done himself.

- **U Radnice 5** (Map pp88–9; 1883–88) is where Kafka was born on 3 July 1883 in an apartment beside the St Nicholas Church; all that remains of the original building is the stone portal. It now houses a Kafka Exhibition, in reality a thinly disguised souvenir shop.
- **Celetná 2** (Map pp88–9; 1888–89), 'The Sixt House', was Kafka's childhood home for a brief period.
- **House at the Minute** (dům U minuty; Map pp88–9; 1889–96) is where Kafka lived as a schoolboy, in the Renaissance corner building that's now part of the Old Town Hall. In a letter he recalled attending primary school in Masná street, and being dragged reluctantly across the square each day by the family cook, whose duty it was to deposit him in class.
- **Goltz-Kinský Palace** (Map pp88–9) is where Kafka attended high school, at the Old Town State Gymnasium, on the 2nd floor of the palace, between 1893 and 1901. For a time his father ran a clothing shop on the ground floor there, in premises now occupied by the Kafka Bookshop.
- **Celetná 3** (Map pp88–9; 1896–1907), known as House at the Three Kings, is where Kafka first had a room to himself, and where he wrote his first story. His bedroom window looked out onto the Church of Our Lady Before Týn.
- **Assicurazioni Generali** (Map pp108–9; 1907–8) was the Italian insurance firm, located at No 19 Wenceslas Square, where Kafka took his first job, as an insurance clerk, after earning a law degree from Charles University in 1906. Long hours, poor pay and bureaucratic boredom took its toll, and he quit after only nine months.
- **Workers' Accident Insurance Co** (Map pp88–9), an office at Na Poříčí 7 in Nové Město, is where Kafka toiled on the 5th floor for 14 years, from 1908 until his retirement (due to ill health) in 1922.
- **U Jednorozce** (At the Unicorn; Map pp88–9), a house on the southern side of Old Town Square at No 17, was owned by Otto Fanta and his wife Berta, who hosted a regular literary salon popular with fashionable European thinkers of the time, including Kafka and fellow writers Max Brod (Kafka's friend and biographer), Franz Werfel and Egon Erwin Kisch.
- **Pařížská 36** (Map pp88–9; 1907–13), in an apartment overlooking the river beside the Čech Bridge (Čechův most), was where Kafka wrote *The Judgement* and began work on *Metamorphosis*. (The building no longer exists.)
- **Pařížská 1** (Map pp88–9; 1913–14), a luxurious top-floor apartment in the Oppelt House, across from the Church of St Nicholas, was the last place Kafka lived with his parents – and the setting for his horrific parable *Metamorphosis*.
- **Bílková 22** (Map pp88–9; 1914–15) was where, at the age of 31, Kafka lived in a flat after moving out of his parental home for the first time, and where he began work on *The Trial*.
- **Dlouhá 16** (Map pp88–9; 1915–17) was where Kafka rented a place of his own, at the narrow corner with Masná. He moved around a lot in the next few years, visiting Berlin and Vienna, and visiting with his parents at the Oppelt House when he returned to Prague.
- **Zlatá ulička 22** (Map p62) was Kafka's sister's rented cottage in the castle grounds. During the winter of 1916–17 Kafka stayed here to escape the noise and distraction of his Old Town flat, and produced more than a dozen stories.
- **Tržiště 15** (Map pp76–7; 1917), the Schönborn Palace in Malá Strana (now the US Embassy), was where Kafka took a flat for a few months. He was happy here for a while until he suffered a lung haemorrhage, a symptom of the tuberculosis that would eventually kill him. He spent the rest of his life either seeking medical treatments or staying with his parents, and died in Vienna on 3 June 1924. He was buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Žižkov (see p125).

German prior, ES Stephano, wrote about the miracles, kicking off what eventually became a worldwide cult; today the statue is visited by a steady stream of pilgrims, especially from Italy, Spain and Latin America. It was traditional to dress the figure in beautiful robes, and over the years various benefac-

tors donated richly embroidered dresses. Today the Infant's wardrobe consists of more than 70 costumes donated from all over the world; these are changed regularly in accordance with a religious calendar.

At the back of the church is the **museum**, displaying a selection of the frocks used to

dress the Infant; shops in the street nearby sell copies of the wax figure. Looking at all this, you can't help thinking about the Second Commandment ('Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...') and the objectives of the Reformation. Jan Hus must be spinning in his grave.

VRTBOV GARDEN Map pp76-7

Vrtbovská zahrada; ☎ 257 531 480; www.vrtbovska.cz; Karmelitská 25; adult/concession 45/30Kč; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Oct; 🕒 12, 20, 22, 23

This 'secret garden', hidden along an alley at the corner of Tržiště and Karmelitská, was built in 1720 for the Earl of Vrtba, the senior chancellor of Prague Castle. It's a formal baroque garden, climbing steeply up the hillside to a terrace graced with baroque statues of Roman mythological figures by Matthias Braun – see if you can spot Vulcan, Diana and Mars. Below the terrace (on the right, looking down) is a tiny studio once used by Czech painter Mikuláš Aleš, and above is a little lookout with good views of Prague Castle and Malá Strana.

PETŘÍN

This 318m-high hill is one of Prague's largest green spaces. It's great for quiet, tree-shaded walks and fine views over the 'City of a Hundred Spires'. There were once vineyards here, and a quarry that provided the stone for most of Prague's Romanesque and Gothic buildings.

Petřín is easily accessible on foot from Strahov Monastery (p69), or you can ride the **funicular railway** (lanová draha) from Újezd up to the top. You can also get off two-thirds of the way up at Nebozízek.

In the peaceful **Kinský Garden** (Kinského zahrada), on the southern side of Petřín, is the 18th-century wooden **Church of St Michael** (kostel sv Michala), transferred here, log by log, from the village of Medvedov in Ukraine. Such structures are rare in Bohemia, though still common in Ukraine and northeastern Slovakia.

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM Map pp76-7

Památník obětem komunismu; cnr Újezd & Vítězná; 🕒 6, 9, 12, 20, 22, 23

This striking sculptural group consists of several ragged human figures (controversially, all are male) in progressive stages of disintegration, descending a staggered slope. A bronze strip inlaid into the ground

in front of them records the terrible human toll of the communist era – 205,486 arrested; 170,938 driven into exile; 248 executed; 4500 who died in prison; and 327 shot while trying to escape across the border.

MIRROR MAZE Map pp76-7

Zrcadlové bludiště; adult/child 70/50Kč; 🕒 10am-10pm May-Aug, 10am-8pm Sep, 10am-7pm Apr, 10am-6pm Oct, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; 🚠 funicular railway

Below the **lookout tower** (below) is the Mirror Maze, also built for the 1891 Prague Exposition. As well as the maze, which is good for a laugh, there's a diorama of the 1648 battle between Praguers and Swedes on Charles Bridge. Opposite is the **Church of St Lawrence** (kostel sv Vavřince), which contains a ceiling fresco depicting the founding of the church in 991 at a pagan site with a sacred flame.

MUSAION Map pp76-7

☎ 257 325 766; Kinského zahrada 98; adult/child 80/40Kč; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr; 🕒 6, 9, 12, 20

This renovated summer palace houses the National Museum's ethnographic collection, with exhibits covering traditional Czech folk culture and art, including music, costume, farming methods and handicrafts. There are regular folk concerts and workshops demonstrating traditional crafts such as blacksmithing and woodcarving; in the summer months there's a garden café.

PETŘÍN FUNICULAR RAILWAY

Map pp76-7

Lanová draha na Petřín; ☎ 800 19 18 17; www.dpp.cz; adult/child 26/13Kč; 🕒 9am-11.30pm Apr-Oct, 9am-11.20pm Nov-Mar; 🕒 12, 20, 22, 23 First opened in 1891, Prague's little funicular railway now uses modern coaches that trundle back and forth on 510m of track, saving visitors a climb up Petřín hill. It runs every 10 minutes (every 15 minutes November to March) from Újezd to the Petřín Lookout Tower, with a stop at Nebozízek. Ordinary 26Kč transfer tickets, valid on tram and metro, are valid on the funicular, too.

PETŘÍN LOOKOUT TOWER Map pp76-7

Petřínská rozhledna; ☎ 257 320 112; adult/child 70/50Kč; 🕒 10am-10pm May-Aug, to 8pm Sep, to 7pm Apr, to 6pm Oct, to 5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; 🚠 funicular railway

The summit of Petřín is topped off with a 62m-tall Eiffel Tower lookalike built in 1891 for the Prague Exposition. You can climb its 299 steps for some of the best views in Prague – on clear days you can see the forests of Central Bohemia to the southwest. (There's also a lift.) On the way to the tower you cross the **Hunger Wall** (Hladová zed), running from Újezd to Strahov. These fortifications were built in 1362 under Charles IV, and are so named because they were built by the poor of the city in return for food – an early job-creation scheme.

ŠTEFÁNIK OBSERVATORY Map pp76–7

Štefánikova hvězdárna; ☎ 257 320 540; www.observatory.cz; adult/child 40/30Kč; 🕒 hours vary, see website; 🚠 funicular railway

Just south of the funicular's top station is this 'people's observatory', opened in 1928 to further public awareness of astronomy and other sciences. There are exhibitions on astronomy, but the main attraction is the double Zeiss astrograph telescope, which also dates from 1928 and allows observation of the sun and sunspots. On clear nights you can observe the moon, stars and planets.

MALÁ STRANA GARDENS

Walking Tour

1 Prague Castle Lookout Begin at the **lookout** just outside the eastern entrance to Prague Castle, which offers a fine view over the rooftops of Malá Strana. On the steep slope directly below are the gardens belonging to the 18th-century aristocratic palaces ranged along Valdštejnská street, now restored and open to the public.

2 Palace Gardens beneath Prague Castle

Go through the gate into the Garden on the Ramparts (Zahrada na valech; p67) and find the entrance to the **Palace Gardens beneath Prague Castle** (Palácové zahrady pod Pražským hradem; p79). Note that there is an admission fee, and the gardens are open only from April to October; in winter, begin this walking tour from Malostranská metro station and walk southwest along Valdštejnská to the Wallenstein Palace.

3 Wallenstein Garden After you have explored the palace gardens, exit via the main gate on Valdštejnská and turn right. When you reach Wallenstein Square (Valdštejnské náměstí), turn left into the main entrance to the **Wallenstein Palace** (Valdštejnský palác; p80)

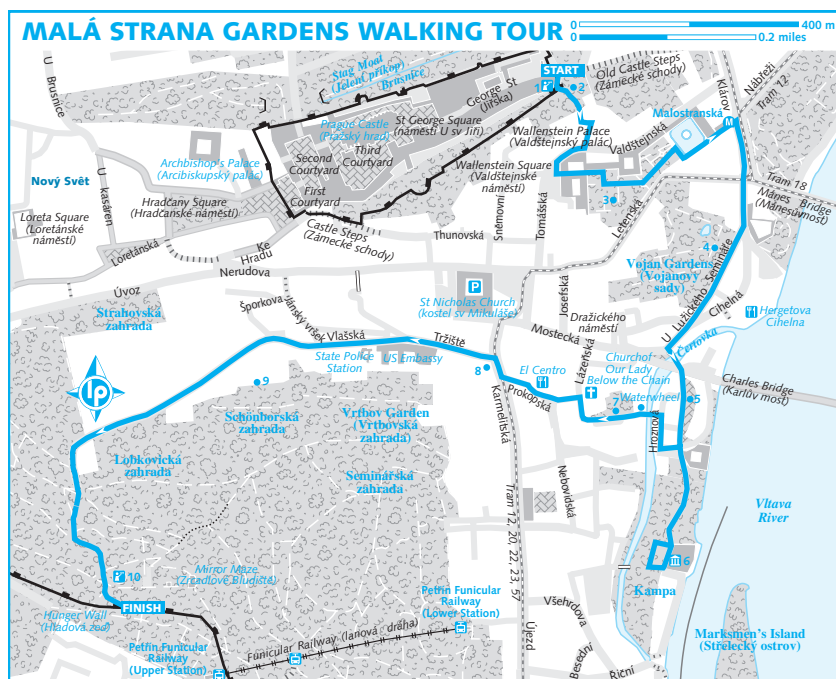
and go through the courtyard into the peace of the **Wallenstein Garden** (Valdštejnská zahrada; p79). Head for the northeastern corner, to the right of the big fishpond, and leave through the gate beside Malostranská metro station (if it's closed, go back along the southern wall and exit through the gate on Letenská).

4 Vojan Gardens Turn right on Klárov, go straight across the junction with the tram line, and continue along U Lužického Semináře. Just past the Černý Orel restaurant, a gate on the right gives access to the **Vojan Gardens** (Vojanovy sady), the poor relation of Malá Strana's many parks. Less manicured but more peaceful than the others, it's a public park where local folk take a breather with the kids or sit in the sun on the benches. If you're feeling hungry, the riverside terrace of **Hergetova Chelna** (p159) is a great place for lunch.

5 Na Kampě Continue along U Lužického Semináře, and when the street narrows bear left across the little bridge over the Čertovka (Devil's Stream) onto the island called **Kampa** (p81). Pass under Charles Bridge and emerge into the picturesque little square of **Na Kampě**. To your left, at about waist height on the wall to the left of the little gallery under the stairs, is a small **memorial plaque** that reads *Výška vody 4.žáří 1890* (height of waters, 4 September 1890), marking the level reached by the floodwaters of 1890. Directly above it – above head height – is another marking the height of the 2002 floods. (There are several similar plaques around Kampa.) By the way, fans of the Tom Cruise film *Mission: Impossible* might recognise this little square – many of the night scenes in the movie were shot here.

6 Kampa Museum Head on through the square and into the leafy riverside park known simply as **Kampa** (from the Latin campus, meaning 'field'); one of the city's favourite chill-out zones, it's usually littered with lounging bodies in summer. If the mood strikes, go for a wander through the modern art collections of the **Kampa Museum** (p82), housed in a restored mill complex on the edge of the river.

7 John Lennon Wall Double back north and, as soon as you reach the cobblestones before Na Kampě, bear left along Hroznová, a backstreet that leads to a little bridge over the Čertovka beside Prague's most photographed **water wheel**. The bridge leads onto a tiny cobbled square with the **John Lennon Wall** (p82) on one side and the



baroque palace that houses the French embassy on the other. The far end of the square curves right, past the severe Gothic towers of the **Church of Our Lady Below the Chain** (kostel Panny Marie pod řetězem; p81). Just beyond the church, on the right, is the embassy of the Knights of Malta, which featured in the movie *Amadeus* as the house of Salieri. Turn left opposite the church and bear right along Prokopská; if you fancy a drink – and you may well do by now – **El Centro** (p160) is on your right. At the end of Prokopská, cross busy Karmelitská and turn right.

8 Vrtbov Garden Just past the bar called U malého Glena is an alley on your left that leads to the **Vrtbov Garden** (Vrtbovská zahrada; p84), one of Malá Strana's least visited but most beautiful gardens. After visiting the garden, turn left along Tržiště and its continuation Vlašská, passing in turn the Irish, US and German embassies.

9 Quo Vadis A few hundred metres beyond the **German embassy** there's a little park and playground on the left; leave the street and turn left along the dirt track beyond the wall at the far end of the playground, and you'll be able to peek into the back garden of the German

WALK FACTS

- Start** Prague Castle (tram 22, 23 or metro Malostranská)
- End** Petřín Hill (tram 12, 20, 22, 23 or funicular)
- Distance** 4km
- Time** Two hours
- Exertion** Moderate
- Fuel stops** Hergetova Cihelna, El Centro

embassy to see David Černý's famous sculpture *Quo Vadis* – a Trabant car perched on four human legs. It's a memorial to the East German asylum seekers who sought refuge here in 1989 during the final death throes of the communist era (for more on David Černý, see the boxed texts, p39 and p137).

10 Petřín Lookout Tower Follow Vlašská to its end and climb the steps that lead up to the top of Petřín Hill and finish your walk at the **Petřín Lookout Tower** (Petřínská rozhledna; p84). From here you can take the **Petřín Funicular Railway** (p84) back down to Újezd or slowly wander down one of the many footpaths.

STARÉ MĚSTO

Eating [p160](#); Drinking [p181](#); Shopping [p145](#); Sleeping [p216](#)

Staré Město – meaning ‘Old Town’ – is the historic heart of medieval Prague, centred on one of Europe’s most spectacular town squares. Its origins date back to the 10th century, when a marketplace and settlement grew up on the east bank of the river. In the 12th century this was linked to the castle district by Judith Bridge, the forerunner of Charles Bridge, and in 1231 Wenceslas I honoured it with a town charter and the beginnings of a fortification.

The town walls are long gone, but their line can still be traced along the streets Národní třída, Na Příkopě (which means ‘on the moat’) and Revoluční, and the Old Town’s main gate – the Powder Gate – still survives.

Staré Město shared in the boom when Charles IV gave Prague a Gothic face befitting its new status as capital of the Holy Roman Empire. He founded Charles University in 1348 and commissioned Charles Bridge in 1357. When Emperor Joseph II united Prague’s towns into a single city in 1784 the Old Town Hall (Staroměstská radnice) became its seat of government.

In an attempt to escape the frequent floods caused by the Vltava River, the level of the town was gradually raised. Beginning in the 13th century, new houses were simply built on top of older ones (many of Staré Město’s Gothic buildings have Romanesque basements). A huge fire in 1689 created space for an orgy of rebuilding during the Catholic Counter-Reformation of the 17th and 18th centuries, giving this originally Gothic district a baroque makeover.

The only intrusions into Staré Město’s medieval maze of a street plan have been the appropriation of a huge block in the west for the Jesuits’ massive college, the Klementinum, in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the slum clearance of Josefov, the Jewish quarter, at the end of the 19th century.

At the centre of everything is Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí). If the labyrinth of narrow streets around the square can be said to have a ‘main drag’ it’s the so-called Royal Way, the ancient coronation route to Prague Castle, running from the Powder Gate along Celetná to Old Town Square and Little Square (Malé náměstí), then along Karlova and across Charles Bridge.

OLD TOWN SQUARE

One of Europe’s biggest and most beautiful urban spaces, the Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí, or Staromák for short) has been Prague’s principal public square since the 10th century, and was its main marketplace until the beginning of the 20th century.

Despite the swarms of tourists, crowded pavement cafés and over-the-top commercialism, it’s impossible not to enjoy the spectacle: tour leaders thrusting through crowds, umbrellas borne aloft like battle standards, with clients straggling behind like a gaggle of ducklings; students dressed as frogs and chickens handing out flyers for a drama production; middle-aged couples in matching, too-short shorts and sensible shoes, frowning at pink-haired, leather-clad punks with too many piercings; gangs of red-faced lads in football shirts slopping beer and ice cream on the cobblestones; and a bored-looking guy with a placard advertising a museum of torture instruments.

There are busking jazz bands and alfresco concerts, political meetings and fashion shows, plus Christmas and Easter markets, all watched over by Ladislav Šaloun’s brooding

Art Nouveau [statue of Jan Hus](#) (see the boxed text, [p23](#)). It was unveiled on 6 July 1915, the 500th anniversary of Hus’ death at the stake.

The brass strip on the ground nearby is the so-called [Prague Meridian](#). Until 1915 the square’s main feature was a 17th-century plague column (see the boxed text, [p93](#)), whose shadow used to cross the meridian at high noon.

CHURCH OF OUR LADY BEFORE TÝN

Map [pp88–9](#)

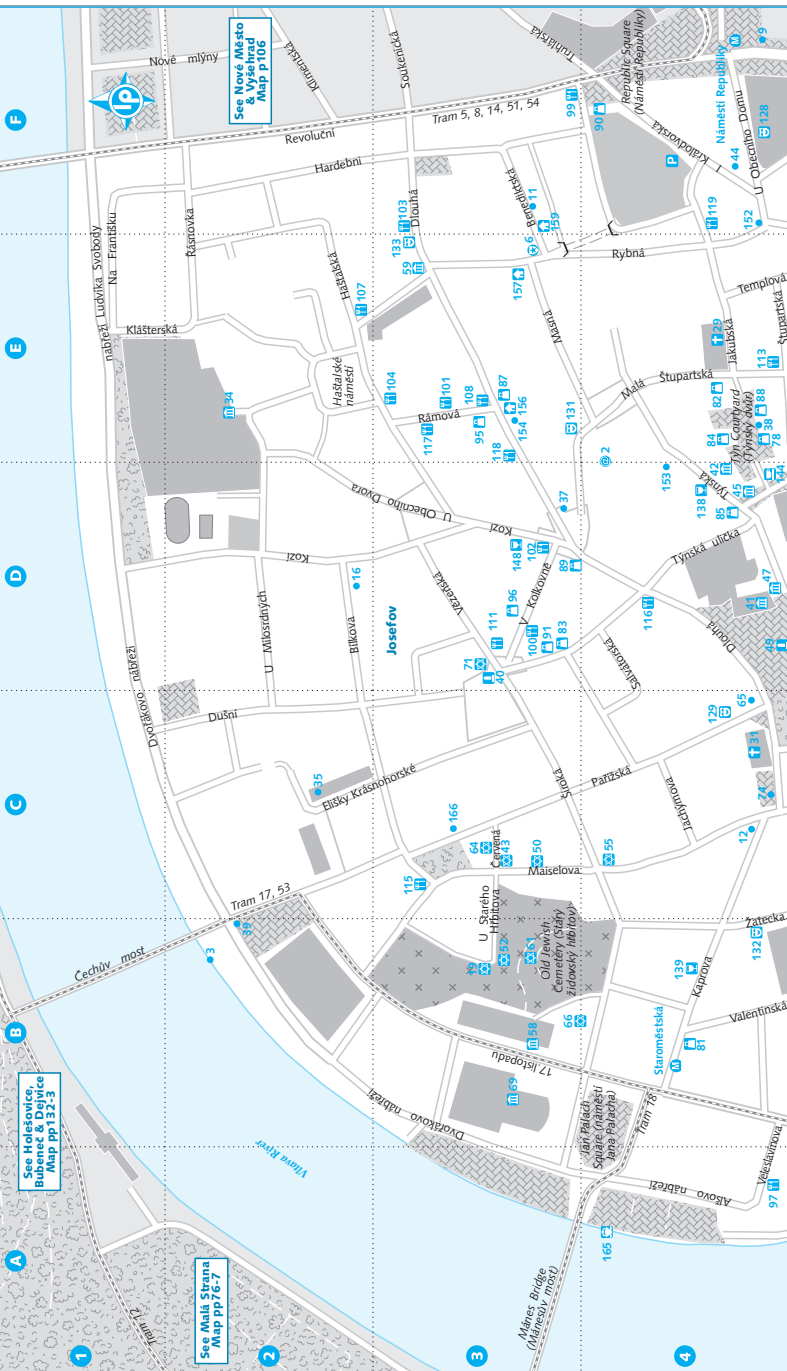
Kostel Panny Marie před Týnem; Staroměstské náměstí; admission free; ☎ 10am–1pm & 3–5pm Tue–Sat; 📍 Staroměstská

The distinctive, spiky-topped Týn Church is early Gothic, though it takes some imagination to visualise the original in its entirety because it’s partly hidden behind the four-storey [Týn School](#) (not a Habsburg plot to obscure this 15th-century Hussite stronghold, but almost contemporaneous with it). The church’s name originates from the [Týn Courtyard](#) ([p94](#)) behind the church.

Though Gothic on the outside, the church’s interior is smothered in heavy baroque. Two of the most interesting features

STARÉ MĚSTO

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles



See Holešovice,
& Map pp132-3

See Malá Strana
& Map pp76-7

See Nové Město
& Map P 106

STARÉ MĚSTO

INFORMATION

Apartments.cz.....	A1
Bohemia Bagel.....	E 4
Evropská Vodní Doprava (EVD).....	B2
Internet Centre.....	D6
Lost & Found Office.....	B8
Police Station.....	E3
Polyclinic at Národní.....	B8
Pragotur.....	(see 63)
Prague Information Service.....	(see 63)
Prague Information Service.....	D6
Prague Sightseeing Tours.....	F4
Prague Venice.....	A5
Prague Wheelchair Users Organisation.....	F3
Precious Legacy Tours.....	C4

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp87-103)

Astronomical Clock.....	D5
Astronomical Tower.....	(see 53)
At the Golden Snake (U Zlatého Hada).....	B4
Bethlehem Chapel (Betlémská Kaple).....	B7
Bilkova 22 (Kafka's Home 1914-15).....	D2
Celetná 2 (Kafka's Home 1888-89).....	D5
Celetná 3 (Kafka's Home 1896-1907).....	D5
Ceremonial Hall (Obradní Síň).....	B3
Chapel of Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Vlašská Kaple Nanebevzetí Panny Marie).....	B5
Chapel of Mirrors (Zrcadlová Kaple).....	B5
Charles Bridge Museum (Muzeum Karlova Mostu).....	A5
Church of Our Lady Before Týn (Kostel (Panny Marie Před Týnem).....	D5
Church of St Bartholomew (Kostel sv Bartoloměje).....	B7
Church of St Clement (Kostel sv Klimenta).....	B5

Church of St Francis Seraphinus (Kostel sv Františka Serafinského).....	A5
Church of St Gall (Kostel sv Havla).....	D6
Church of St Giles (Kostel sv Jiljí).....	C6
Church of St James (Kostel sv Jakuba).....	E4
Church of St Martin in the Wall (Kostel sv Martin ve Zdi).....	C7
Church of St Nicholas (Kostel sv Mikuláše).....	C4
Church of the Holy Saviour (Kostel Nejsvětějšího Spasitele).....	A5
Commercial Bank (Komerční Banka).....	F5
Convent of St Agnes (Kláster sv Anežky).....	E2
Cubist Apartment Block.....	C5
Czech Museum of Fine Arts (Ceské Muzeum Výtvarných Umění).....	C6
Dlouhá 16 (Kafka's Home 1915-17).....	D3
Dům U Černého Medvěda (House at the Black Bear).....	E4
Estates Theatre (Stavovské Divadlo).....	(see 127)
Former Site of Pařížská 36 (Kafka's Home 1907-13).....	B2
Franz Kafka Monument.....	D3
Galerie Rudolfinum.....	(see 69)
Goltz-Kinský Palace (Palác Kinských).....	D4
Granovský Palace.....	D4
High Synagogue (Vysoká Synagoga).....	C3
Hotel Paříž.....	F4
House at the Golden Ring (Dům U Zlatého Prstenu).....	D4
House at the Minute (Dům U Minuty, Kafka's Home 1889-96).....	C5
House at the Stone Bell (Dům U Kamenného Zvonu).....	D4
House of the Black Madonna (Dům U Černé Matky Boží).....	E5
Jan Hus Statue.....	D4
Jewish Town Hall (Židovská Radnice).....	C3
Karolinum (Univerzita Karlova).....	D5
Klaus Synagogue (Klauzová Synagoga).....	B3
Klementinum.....	B5
Kolowrat Theatre (Divadlo Kolowrat).....	E6
Maisel Synagogue (Maiselova Synagoga).....	C4
Marionette Museum (Muzeum Loutek).....	B6
Municipal House (Obecní Dům).....	F5
Museum of Czech Cubism (Muzeum Českého Kubismu).....	(see 48)
Museum of Decorative Arts (Umělecko-Průmyslové Muzeum).....	B3
NoD Gallery.....	E5
Náprstek Museum (Náprstkovo Muzeum).....	B7
Old Jewish Cemetery (Starý Židovský Hřbitov).....	B3
Old Town Bridge Tower (Staroměstská Mostecká Věž).....	A5
Old Town Hall (Staroměstská Radnice).....	D5
Old-New Synagogue (Staronová Synagoga).....	C3
Pařížská 1 (Former Kafka Family Home).....	C4
Pinkas Synagogue (Pinkasova Synagoga).....	B3
Powder Gate (Prašná Brána).....	F5
Rotunda of the Holy Cross (Kaple sv Kříže).....	A7
Rudolfinum.....	B3
Smetana Museum (Muzeum Bedřicha Smetany).....	A6

are the huge rococo **altar** on the northern wall and the **tomb of Tycho Brahe**, the Danish astronomer who was one of Rudolf II's most illustrious 'consultants' (he died in 1601 of a burst bladder following a royal piss-up – he was too polite to leave the table to relieve himself). On the inside of the southern wall of the church are two small windows – they are now blocked off, but once opened into the church from rooms in the neighbouring house at Celetná 3, where the teenage Franz Kafka once lived (from 1896 to 1907; see the boxed text, p83).

As for the exterior of the church, the north portal overlooking Týnská ulička is topped by a remarkable 14th-century **tympantum** showing the Crucifixion, carved by the workshop of Charles IV's favourite architect Peter Parler, though this is a copy; the original is in the **Lapidárium** (p131).

The entrance to the church is along a passage from the square, through the second (from the left) of the Týn School's four arches. The Týn Church is an occasional concert venue and has a very grand-sounding pipe organ.

CHURCH OF ST JAMES Map pp88-9

Kostel sv Jakuba; Malá Štupartská 6; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-4pm Mon-Sat; 📍 Staroměstská

The great Gothic mass of the Church of St James, located to the east of Týn Courtyard, began in the 14th century as a Minorite monastery church, and was later given a beautiful baroque face-lift in the early 18th century. Pride of place inside goes to the over-the-top tomb of Count Jan Vratislav of Mitrovice, an 18th-century

STARÉ MĚSTO

Spanish Synagogue (Španělská Synagoga).....	71	D3	Culinaria.....	106	C7	Ticketcentrum.....	136	D6
Týn School.....	72	D5	Dahab.....	107	E2	USP Jazz Lounge.....	137	C6
U Jednorozce (At the Unicorn). 73	D5	DaNico.....	108	E3	DRINKING ☑ ☑ (pp175–91)			
U Radnice 5 (Kafka's Birthplace).....	74	C4	Havelská Open-Air Market ..	109	D6	Bar & Books.....	138	D4
Viola Building.....	75	B8	Khajuraho.....	110	C6	Bodegaíta del Medio.....	139	B4
Viselec (Hanging Out) – David Černý Sculpture.....	76	C7	Kolkovna.....	111	D3	Café Café.....	140	D6
VJ Rott Building.....	77	C5	Káva Káva Káva.....	112	C7	Čili Bar.....	141	D6
			La Provence.....	113	E4	Duende.....	142	A7
			Lehká Hlava.....	114	A7	Les Coffee House.....	143	B6
			Les Moulés.....	115	C3	Ebel Coffee House.....	144	D4
			Michelské Pekářství.....	116	D4	Friends.....	145	B8
			Orange Moon.....	117	E3	Grand Café Orient.....	(see 48)	
SHOPPING ☑ (pp143–51)			Rasol.....	118	E3	Káva Káva Káva.....	(see 112)	
Anagram.....	78	E4	Red, Hot & Blues.....	119	F4	Kavárna Obecní Dům.....	146	F5
Art Deco Galerie.....	79	C6	Siam-I-San.....	(see 81)		Kavárna Slavia.....	147	A8
Art Décoratif.....	80	D6	U Zavoje.....	120	D6	Kozička.....	148	D3
Arsenal.....	81	B4	V Zátíší.....	121	B6	Literární Kavarna Retezova.....	149	B6
Big Ben.....	82	E4	ENTERTAINMENT ☑ (pp193–203)			Monarch Vinný Sklep.....	150	C7
Bohème.....	83	D3	Agharta Jazz Centrum.....	122	D5	Municipal House Café.....	(see 57)	
Botanicus.....	84	E4	Batalion.....	123	D7	U Medvídků.....	(see 158)	
Bric á Brac.....	85	D4	Blues Sklep.....	124	B6	U Zlatého Tygra.....	151	C6
Frey Wille.....	86	E6	Bohemia Ticket International (BTI).....	125	C5	SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp205–10)		
Granát Turnov.....	87	E3	Celetná Theatre (Divadlo v Celetné).....	126	E5	City Bike.....	152	F4
Keramika v Ungeltu.....	88	E4	Church of St Francis.....	(see 34)		Fitness Týn.....	153	D4
Klara Nademlýnská.....	89	D3	Dvořák Hall (Dvořákova Sin) (see 69)			Praha Bike.....	154	E3
Kotva.....	90	F4	Estates Theatre (Stavovské Divadlo).....	127	E6	SLEEPING ☑ (pp211–27)		
Kubista.....	(see 48)		Estates Theatre Box Office.....	(see 54)		Apostolic Residence.....	155	D5
Le Patio Lifestyle.....	91	D3	FOK Box Office.....	128	F4	Hotel Antik.....	156	E3
Maximum Underground.....	92	C6	Image Theatre.....	129	C4	Hotel Josef.....	157	E3
Modernista.....	93	D5	Karlovy Lázně.....	130	A6	Hotel U Medvídků.....	158	C7
Pavla & Olga.....	94	A7	M1 Secret Lounge.....	131	E3	Old Prague Hostel.....	159	F3
Qubus.....	95	E3	National Marionette Theatre (Narodní Divadlo Marionet).....	132	B4	Perla Hotel.....	160	D7
TEG.....	96	D3	Prague Spring Box Office.....	(see 69)		Residence Karolina.....	161	B8
			Roxy.....	133	E3	Savic Hotel.....	162	C6
EATING ☑ (pp153–73)			Smetana Hall.....	(see 57)		U Zeleného Věnce.....	163	B6
Allegro.....	97	A4	Ta Fantastika.....	134	B6	TRANSPORT (pp241–5)		
Ambiente Pasta Fresca.....	98	E5	Theatre on the Balustrade (Divadlo Na Zbradlí).....	135	A6	Boat Hire.....	164	A6
Ambiente Pizza Nuova.....	99	F3				Boat Hire.....	165	A4
Angel.....	100	D3				Europcar.....	166	C3
Ariana.....	101	E3						
Bakeshop Praha.....	102	D3						
Beas Vegetarian Dhaba.....	(see 153)							
Casa Argentina.....	103	F3						
Chez Marcel.....	104	E3						
Country Life.....	105	C6						

lord chancellor of Bohemia, found in the northern aisle.

In the midst of the gilt and stucco is a grisly memento: on the inside of the western wall (look up to the right as you enter) hangs a shrivelled human arm. Legend claims that when a thief tried to steal the jewels from the statue of the Virgin around the year 1400, the Virgin grabbed his wrist in such an iron grip that his arm had to be lopped off. (The truth may not be far behind: the church was a favourite of the guild of butchers, who may have administered their own justice.)

It's well worth a visit to enjoy St James' splendid pipe organ and famous acoustics. Recitals – free ones at 10.30am or 11am after Sunday Mass – and occasional concerts are not always advertised by ticket agencies, so check the noticeboard outside.

CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS Map pp88–9

Kostel sv Mikuláše; Staroměstské náměstí; admission free; ☒ noon–4pm Mon, 10am–4pm Tue–Sat, noon–3pm Sun; ☒ Staroměstská

The baroque wedding cake in the north-western corner of Old Town Square is the Church of St Nicholas, built in the 1730s by Kilian Dientzenhofer (not to be confused with at least two other St Nicholas churches in Prague, including the Dientzenhofers' masterwork in Malá Strana; see p79). Considerable grandeur has been worked into a very tight space; originally the church was wedged behind the Old Town Hall's northern wing (destroyed in 1945). Chamber concerts are often held beneath its stucco decorations, a visually splendid (though acoustically mediocre) setting.

TRANSPORT: STARÉ MĚSTO

Metro Staroměstská station is a few minutes' walk northwest of Old Town Square, and Můstek station is five minutes' walk to the south.

Tram No trams run close to Old Town Square. Trams 17 and 18 run along the western edge of Staré Město near the river, while lines 5, 8 and 14 stop at Republic Square (náměstí Republiky), across the street from the Municipal House (Obecní dům). Trams 6, 9, 18, 21, 22 and 23 run along Národní třída on the southern edge of Staré Město.

GOLTZ-KINSKÝ PALACE Map pp88–9

Palác Kinských; ☎ 224 810 758; Staroměstské náměstí 12; adult/child 100/50Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 Staroměstská

Fronting the late-baroque Goltz-Kinský Palace is probably Prague's finest rococo façade, finished in 1765 by the redoubtable Kilian Dientzenhofer (see p48). Alfred Nobel, the Swedish inventor of dynamite, once stayed here; his crush on pacifist Bertha Kinský may have influenced him to establish the Nobel Peace Prize. Many living Praguers have a darker memory of the place, for it was from its balcony in February 1948 that Klement Gottwald proclaimed communist rule in Czechoslovakia.

There are Kafka connections here, too – young Franz once attended a school around the back of the building, and his father ran a shop in the premises now occupied by the Kafka Bookshop (see the boxed text, p83).

Today, the palace is home to a branch of the National Gallery, housing a collection of 17th- to 20th-century Czech landscape art and temporary art exhibitions.

HOUSE AT THE GOLDEN RING

Map pp88–9

Dům U zlatého prstenu; ☎ 224 827 022; Týnská 6; adult/child 120/60Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 Staroměstská

The restored Renaissance House at the Golden Ring, located at the corner of Týnská just outside the western entrance to Týn courtyard, contains another branch of the Prague City Gallery; the original painted ceiling beams can still be seen in some of the rooms. It was closed for reconstruction work at the time of research, but was due to reopen soon with a collection of Central European art from the second half of the 20th century.

HOUSE AT THE STONE BELL Map pp88–9

Dům U kamenného zvonu; ☎ 224 827 526; Staroměstské náměstí 13; adult/child 120/60Kč;

🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 Staroměstská

Next door to the Goltz-Kinský Palace is this elegant medieval building, its 14th-century Gothic dignity rescued from a second-rate baroque renovation. During restoration in the 1980s the stucco façade was stripped away to reveal the original stonework; the eponymous stone bell is on the building's corner. Inside, two restored Gothic chapels now serve as branches of the Prague City Gallery (with changing exhibits of modern art) and as chamber-concert venues.

OLD TOWN HALL Map pp88–9

Staroměstská radnice; ☎ 12444; Staroměstské náměstí 1; separate tickets for guided tour & admission to tower, each adult/child 70/50Kč; 🕒 11am–6pm Mon, 9am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 9am–5pm Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm Sun Nov–Mar; 🚶 Staroměstská Prague's Old Town Hall, founded in 1338, is a hotchpotch of medieval buildings acquired piecemeal over the centuries, presided over by a tall Gothic tower with a splendid **Astronomical Clock** (see the boxed text, p94). The main entrance is to the left of the clock; beyond that is the **House at the Minute** (dům U minuty), an arcaded building covered with Renaissance *sgraffito* – Franz Kafka lived here (1889–96) as a child just before the building was bought by the town council.

As well as housing the Old Town's main tourist information office, the town hall has several historic attractions, and hosts **art exhibitions** (adult/concession 60/40Kč) on the ground floor and the 2nd floor. The **guided tour** takes you through the council chamber and assembly room, with beautiful mosaics dating from the 1930s, before visiting the Gothic **chapel** and taking a look at the inner workings of the **12 apostles** who parade above the Astronomical Clock every hour. The tour is rounded off with a trip through the Romanesque and Gothic **cellars** beneath the building. However, the town hall's best feature is the view from the 60m-tall **tower**, which is well worth the climb (there's also a lift).

The area outside the town hall is one of the most crowded corners of Old Town Square, especially during the hourly show put on by the Astronomical Clock. Around the corner to the right, a **plaque** on the building's eastern face lists the 27 Protestant nobles who were beheaded

THE MISSING MONUMENTS

Prague witnessed several profound changes of political regime during the 20th century: from Habsburg Empire to independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918; to Nazi Protectorate from 1938 to 1945; to communist state in 1948; and back to democratic republic in 1989.

Each change was accompanied by widespread renaming of city streets and squares to reflect the heroes of the new regime. The square in front of the Rudolfinum in Staré Město, for example, has been known variously as Smetanovo náměstí (Smetana Square; 1918–39); Mozartplatz (Mozart Square; 1939–45); náměstí Krasnoarmějců (Red Army Square; 1948–89); and náměstí Jana Palacha (Jan Palach Square; 1989–present).

This renaming was often followed by the removal of monuments erected by the previous regime. Here are four of Prague's most prominent 'missing monuments'.

The Missing Virgin

If you look at the ground in Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí; [Map pp88–9](#)) about 50m south of the Jan Hus monument, you'll see a circular stone slab set among the cobblestones at the far end of the brass strip marking the [Prague Meridian](#) (p87). This was the site of a Marian column (a pillar bearing a statue of the Virgin Mary), erected in 1650 in celebration of the Habsburg victory over the Swedes in 1648. It was surrounded by figures of angels crushing and beating down demons – a rather unobtrusive symbol of a resurgent Catholic Church defeating the Protestant Reformation.

The column was toppled by a mob – who saw it as a symbol of Habsburg repression – on 3 November 1918, five days after the declaration of Czechoslovak independence. Its remains can be seen in the [Lapidárium](#) (p131).

The Missing General

A prominent victim of the change of regime in 1918 was the statue of Field Marshal Václav Radecký (1766–1858) – or Count Josef Radetzky, to give him his Austrian name – that once stood in the lower part of Malá Strana Square (Malostranské náměstí; [Map pp76–7](#)); it is now in the [Lapidárium](#) (p131). Although Radecký was a Czech, his fame derived from leading the Habsburg armies to victory against Napoleon and crushing the Italians at the battles of Custoza and Novara. (Composer Johann Strauss the Elder wrote the *Radetzky March* in his honour.) The Starbucks coffee shop here was once called the Radetzky Café.

The Missing Dictator

If you stand on Old Town Square ([Map pp88–9](#)) and look north along the arrow-straight avenue of Pařížská you will see, on a huge terrace at the far side of Čechův most, a giant metronome. If the monumental setting seems out of scale that's because the terrace was designed to accommodate the world's biggest statue of Stalin. Unveiled in 1955 – two years after Stalin's death – the 30m-high, 14,000-tonne colossus showed Uncle Joe at the head of two lines of communist heroes, Czech on one side, Soviet on the other. Cynical Praguers used to constant food shortages quickly nicknamed it *fronta na maso* (the meat queue).

The monument was dynamited in 1962, in deference to Khrushchev's attempt to airbrush Stalin out of history. The demolition crew was instructed, 'it must go quickly, there mustn't be much of a bang, and it should be seen by as few people as possible'. The [Museum of Communism](#) (p107) has a superb photo of the monument – and of its destruction.

The Missing Tank

Kinský Square (náměstí Kinských; [Map pp76–7](#)), at the southern edge of Malá Strana, was until 1989 known as náměstí Sovětských tankistů (Soviet Tank Crews Square), named in memory of the Soviet soldiers who 'liberated' Prague on 9 May 1945. For many years a Soviet T-34 tank – allegedly the first to enter the city – squatted menacingly atop a pedestal here (in fact it was a later Soviet 'gift').

In 1991 artist David Černý (p39) decided that the tank was an inappropriate monument to the Soviet soldiers and painted it bright pink. The authorities had it painted green again, and charged Černý with a crime against the state. This infuriated many parliamentarians, 12 of whom repainted the tank pink. Their parliamentary immunity saved them from arrest and secured Černý's release.

After complaints from the Soviet Union the tank was removed. Its former setting is now occupied by a circular fountain surrounded by park benches; the vast granite slab in the centre is split by a jagged fracture, perhaps symbolic of a break with the past. The tank still exists, and is still pink – it's at the Military Museum in Lešany, near Týnec nad Sázavou, 30km south of Prague.

THE ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK

The Old Town Hall tower was given a clock in 1410 by the master clockmaker Mikuláš of Kadané; this was improved in 1490 by one Master Hanuš, producing the mechanical marvel you see today. Legend has it that Hanuš was afterwards blinded so he could not duplicate the work elsewhere, and in revenge crawled up into the clock and disabled it. (Documents from the time suggest that he carried on as clock-master for years – unblinded – although the clock apparently didn't work properly until it was repaired in about 1570.)

Four figures beside the clock represent the deepest civic anxieties of 15th-century Praguers: Vanity (with a mirror), Greed (with his money bag; originally a Jewish moneylender, but cosmetically altered after WWII), Death and Pagan Invasion (represented by a Turk). The four figures below these are the Chronicler, Angel, Astronomer and Philosopher.

On the hour, Death rings a bell and inverts his hourglass, and the 12 Apostles parade past the windows above the clock, nodding to the crowd. On the left side are Paul (with a sword and a book), Thomas (lance), Jude (book), Simon (saw), Bartholomew (book) and Barnabas (parchment); on the right side are Peter (with a key), Matthew (axe), John (snake), Andrew (cross), Philip (cross) and James (mallet). At the end, a cock crows and the hour is rung.

On the upper face, the disk in the middle of the fixed part depicts the world known at the time – with Prague at the centre, of course. The gold sun traces a circle through the blue zone of day, the brown zone of dusk (*Crepusculum* in Latin) in the west (*Occasus*), the black disc of night, and dawn (*Aurora*) in the east (*Ortus*). From this the hours of sunrise and sunset can be read. The curved lines with black Arabic numerals are part of an astrological 'star clock'.

The sun arm points to the hour (without any daylight-saving time adjustment) on the Roman-numeral ring; the top XII is noon and the bottom XII is midnight. The outer ring, with Gothic numerals, reads traditional 24-hour Bohemian time, counted from sunset; the number 24 is always opposite the sunset hour on the fixed (inner) face.

The moon, with its phases shown, also traces a path through the zones of day and night, riding on the offset moving ring. On the ring you can also read which houses of the zodiac the sun and moon are in. The hand with a little star at the end of it indicates sidereal (stellar) time.

The calendar wheel beneath all this astronomical wizardry, with 12 seasonal scenes celebrating rural Bohemian life, is a duplicate of one painted in 1866 by the Czech Revivalist Josef Mánes. You can have a close look at the beautiful original in the [Prague City Museum](#) (p105). Most of the dates around the calendar wheel are marked with the names of their associated saints; 6 July honours Jan Hus.

here in 1621 after the Battle of Bílá Hora; white crosses on the ground mark where the deed was done. Another plaque commemorates a critical WWII victory by Red Army and Czechoslovak units at Dukla Pass in Slovakia, and yet another the Czech partisans who died during the Prague Rising on 8 May 1945. If you look at the neogothic eastern gable, you can see that its right-hand edge is ragged – the wing that once extended north from here was blown up by the Nazis in 1945, on the day before the Soviet army marched into the city.

TÝN COURTYARD Map pp88–9

Týnský dvůr; entrances on Malá Štupartská & Týnská ulička; admission free; ☎ 24hr; 📍 Staroměstská
This picturesque courtyard tucked behind the Church of Our Lady Before Týn was originally a sort of medieval caravanserai – a fortified hotel, trading centre and customs office for visiting foreign merchants. First established as long ago as the 11th century, it's still often called by its German name, Ungelt ('customs duty'), and was busiest and most prosperous during the reign of Charles

IV. Now attractively renovated, the courtyard houses shops, restaurants and hotels.

In the northwest corner is the 16th-century [Granovský Palace](#), with an elegant Renaissance loggia, and *sgraffito* and painted decoration depicting biblical and mythological scenes. Across the yard, to the right of the V Ungeltu shop, is [dům U černého medvěda](#) (House at the Black Bear), whose baroque façade is adorned with a statue of St John of Nepomuk above the door and a bear in chains on the corner, a reminder of the kind of 'entertainment' that once took place here.

JOSEFOV

Half-a-dozen historic synagogues, a town hall and the Old Jewish Cemetery are all that survive of the once-thriving Jewish quarter of Josefov – the slice of Staré Město bounded by Kaprova, Dlouhá and Kozí. Most of the district's buildings were demolished around the turn of the 20th century, when massive redevelopment saw the old slums replaced with expensive new apartments.

When the ghetto was cleared at the turn of the 20th century, the broad boulevard of

Pařížská třída (Paris Ave) was driven in a straight line through the heart of the old slums. This was a time of widespread infatuation with the French Art Nouveau style, and the avenue and its side streets were lined with elegant apartment buildings adorned with stained glass and sculptural flourishes. In recent years Pařížská has become a glitzy shopping strand, studded with expensive brand names such as Dior, Louis Vuitton and Fabergé.

Jan Palach Square (náměstí Jana Palacha; [Map pp88–9](#)) is named after the young Charles University student who in January 1969 set himself alight in Wenceslas Square in protest against the Soviet invasion (see the boxed text, [p29](#)). On the eastern side of the square, beside the entrance to the philosophy faculty building where Palach was a student, is a bronze [memorial plaque](#) with a ghostly death mask.

Presiding over the square is the Rudolfinum, home to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. This and the National Theatre, both designed by architects Josef Schulz and Josef Zítěk, are considered Prague's finest neo-Renaissance buildings. Completed in 1884, the Rudolfinum served between the wars as the seat of the Czechoslovak parliament, and during WWII as the administrative offices of the occupying Nazis (see the boxed text, [below](#)).

CONVENT OF ST AGNES [Map pp88–9](#)

Kláster sv Anežky; ☎ 224 810 628; [www.ngprague.cz](#); U Milosrdných 17; adult/child 150/80Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 📍 5, 8, 14

In the northeastern corner of Staré Město is the former Convent of St Agnes, Prague's oldest surviving Gothic building. The 1st-floor rooms hold the National Gallery's permanent collection of medieval art (1200–1550) from Bohemia and Central Europe.

In 1234 the Franciscan Order of the Poor Clares was founded by Přemysl king Wenceslas I, who made his sister Anežka (Agnes) its first abbess. Agnes was beatified in the 19th century and, with hardly accidental timing, Pope John Paul II canonised her as St Agnes of Bohemia just weeks before the revolutionary events of November 1989.

In the 16th century the buildings were handed over to the Dominicans, and after Joseph II dissolved the monasteries, they became a squatters' paradise. It is only since the 1980s that the convent complex has been restored and renovated. In addition to the 13th-century cloister, you can visit the French Gothic [Church of the Holy Saviour](#), which contains the tombs of St Agnes and of Wenceslas I's Queen Cunegund. Alongside this is the smaller [Church of St Francis](#), where Wenceslas I is buried; part of its ruined nave now serves as a chilly concert hall.

The gallery is fully wheelchair accessible, and the ground-floor cloister has a tactile presentation of 12 casts of medieval sculptures with explanatory text in Braille.

MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS

[Map pp88–9](#)

Umělecko-průmyslové muzeum; ☎ 251 093 111; [www.upm.cz](#); 17.listopadu 2; permanent collection adult/child 80/40Kč, temporary exhibitions 80/40Kč, combined 120/70Kč; 🕒 10am–7pm Tue, to 6pm Wed–Sun; 📍 Staroměstská

This museum opened in 1900 as part of a European movement to encourage a return to the aesthetic values sacrificed to the Industrial Revolution. Its four halls are a feast for the eyes, full of 16th- to 19th-century artefacts such as furniture, tapestries, porcelain and a fabulous collection of glasswork.

MENDELSSOHN IS ON THE ROOF

The roof of the [Rudolfinum](#) ([p97](#)) is decorated with statues of famous composers. It housed the German administration during WWII, when the Nazi authorities ordered that the statue of Felix Mendelssohn – who was Jewish – should be removed.

In *Mendelssohn is on the Roof*, a darkly comic novella about life in wartime Prague, the Jewish writer Jiří Weil weaves a wryly amusing story around this true-life event. The two Czech labourers given the task of removing the statue can't tell which of the two dozen or so figures is Mendelssohn – they all look the same, as far as they can tell. Their Czech boss, remembering his lectures in 'racial science', tells them that Jews have big noses. 'Whoever one has the biggest conk, that's the Jew.'

So the workmen single out the statue with the biggest nose – 'Look! That one over there with the beret. None of the others has a nose like his' – then sling a noose around its neck and start to haul it over. As their boss walks across to check on their progress, he gapes in horror as they start to topple the figure of the only composer on the roof that he does recognise – Richard Wagner.

The neo-Renaissance building is itself a work of art, the façade decorated with reliefs representing the various decorative arts and the Bohemian towns famous for them. The staircase leading up from the entrance hall to the main exhibition on the 2nd floor is beautifully decorated with colourful ceramics, stained-glass windows and frescoes representing graphic arts, metalworking, ceramics, glass-making and goldsmithing. It leads to the ornate **Votive Hall**, which houses the **Karlštejn Treasure**, a hoard of 14th-century silver found hidden in the walls of Karlštejn Castle (see p230) in the 19th century.

To the right is a textiles exhibit and a fascinating collection of clocks, watches, sundials and astronomical devices, but the good stuff is to the left in the **glass and ceramics hall** – exquisite baroque glassware, a fine collection of Meissen porcelain and a range of Czech glass, ceramics and furniture in Cubist, Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles, the best pieces being by Josef Gočár and Pavel Janák. The graphic arts section has some fine Art Nouveau posters, and the gold and jewellery exhibit contains some real curiosities – amid the Bohemian garnet brooches, 14th-century chalices, diamond-studded monstrosities and Art Nouveau silverware you will find a Chinese rhino-horn vase in a silver mount, a delicate nautilus shell engraved with battle scenes, and a silver watchcase in the shape of a skull.

Labels are in Czech, but detailed English and French texts are available in each room. What you see is only a fraction of the collection; other bits appear now and then in single-theme exhibitions.

PRAGUE JEWISH MUSEUM Map pp88–9

Židovské muzeum Praha; ☎ 222 317 191; www.jewishmuseum.cz; Reservation Centre, U Starého Hřbitova 3a; ordinary ticket adult/child 300/200Kč, combined ticket 480/320Kč; 🕒 9am–6pm Sun–Fri Apr–Oct, to 4.30pm Sun–Fri Nov–Mar, closed on Jewish hols; 📍 Staroměstská

In one of the most grotesquely ironic acts of WWII, the Nazis took over the management of the Prague Jewish Museum – first established in 1906 to preserve artefacts from synagogues that were demolished during the slum clearances in Josefov around the turn of the 20th century – with the intention of creating a ‘museum of an extinct race’. They shipped in materials and objects from destroyed Jewish communities throughout Bohemia and Moravia, helping to amass

what is probably the world’s biggest collection of sacred Jewish artefacts and a moving memorial to seven centuries of oppression.

The museum consists of six Jewish monuments clustered together in Josefov: the Maisel Synagogue; the Pinkas Synagogue; the Spanish Synagogue; the Klaus Synagogue; the Ceremonial Hall; and the Old Jewish Cemetery. There is also the Old-New Synagogue, which is still used for religious services, and requires a separate ticket or additional fee. If you are pressed for time, the highlights are the Old-New Synagogue and the Old Jewish Cemetery.

An ordinary ticket gives admission to all six main monuments; a combined ticket includes the Old-New Synagogue as well. Admission to the Old-New Synagogue alone costs 200/140Kč. You can buy tickets at the Reservation Centre (see address preceding), the Pinkas Synagogue, the Spanish Synagogue and the shop opposite the entrance to the Old-New Synagogue. Queues tend to be shortest at the Spanish Synagogue.

Completed around 1270, the **Old-New Synagogue** (Staronová synagoga; Červená 2) is Europe’s oldest working synagogue and one of Prague’s earliest Gothic buildings. You step down into it because it predates the raising of Staré Město’s street level in medieval times to guard against floods. Men must cover their heads (a hat or bandanna will do; paper yarmulkes are handed out at the entrance). Around the central chamber are an entry hall, a winter prayer hall and the room from which women watch the men-only services. The interior, with a pulpit surrounded by a 15th-century wrought-iron grill, looks much as it would have 500 years ago. The 17th-century scriptures on the walls were recovered from beneath a later ‘restoration’. On the eastern wall is the Holy Ark that holds the Torah scrolls. In a glass case at the rear, little light bulbs beside the names of the prominent deceased are lit on their death days.

With its steep roof and Gothic gables, this looks like a place with secrets, and at least one version of the Golem legend ends here. Left alone on the Sabbath, the creature runs amok; Rabbi Loew rushes out in the middle of a service, removes its magic talisman and carries the lifeless body into the synagogue’s attic, where some insist it still lies.

Across the narrow street is the elegant 16th-century **High Synagogue** (Vysoká synagoga), so-called because its prayer hall

(closed to the public) is upstairs. Around the corner is the **Jewish Town Hall** (Židovská radnice), also closed to the public, built by Mordechai Maisel in 1586 and given its rococo façade in the 18th century. It has a clock tower with one Hebrew face where the hands, like the Hebrew script, run 'backwards'.

The handsome **Pinkas Synagogue** (Pinkasova synagoga; Široká 3) was built in 1535 and used for worship until 1941. After WWII it was converted into a memorial, with wall after wall inscribed with the names, birth dates, and dates of disappearance of the 77,297 Czech victims of the Nazis. It also has a collection of paintings and drawings by children held in the Terezín concentration camp (see p234) during WWII.

The Pinkas Synagogue contains the entrance to the **Old Jewish Cemetery** (Starý židovský hřbitov; entrance on Široká), Europe's oldest surviving Jewish graveyard. Founded in the early 15th century, it has a palpable atmosphere of mourning even after two centuries of disuse (it was closed in 1787); however, remember that this is one of Prague's most popular sights, so if you're hoping to have a moment of quiet contemplation you'll probably be disappointed. Around 12,000 crumbling stones (some brought from other, long-gone cemeteries) are heaped together, but beneath them are perhaps 100,000 graves, piled in layers because of the lack of space.

The most prominent graves, marked by pairs of marble tablets with a 'roof' between them, are near the main gate; they include those of Mordechai Maisel and Rabbi Loew. The oldest stone (now replaced by a replica) is that of Avigdor Karo, a chief rabbi and court poet to Wenceslas IV, who died in 1439. Most stones bear the name of the deceased and his or her father, the date of death (and sometimes of burial), and poetic texts. Elaborate markers from the 17th and 18th centuries are carved with bas-reliefs, some of them indicating the deceased's occupation – look out for a pair of hands marking the grave of a pianist.

Since the cemetery was closed, Jewish burials have taken place at the **Jewish Cemetery** (p125) in Žižkov. There are remnants of another old Jewish burial ground at the foot of the TV Tower in Žižkov (see p128).

You exit the cemetery through a gate between the **Klaus Synagogue** and the **Ceremonial Hall** (Obřadní síň), both of which house exhibitions on Jewish forms of worship, family

ceremonies and traditions such as birth, circumcision, bar mitzvah and marriage.

A block to the southeast lies the neo-gothic **Maisel Synagogue** (Maiselova synagoga; Maiselova 10), which replaced a Renaissance original built by Mordechai Maisel, mayor of the Jewish community, in 1592. It houses an exhibit on the history of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia from the 10th to the 18th centuries, with displays of ceremonial silver, textiles, prints and books.

Finally, about two blocks east of the Maisel is the **Spanish Synagogue** (Španělská synagoga; Věžeňská 1). Named after its striking Moorish interior and dating from 1868, its exhibit continues the story of the Jews in the Czech Republic from emancipation to the present day.

RUDOLFINUM Map pp88–9

☎ 227 059 270; www.rudolfinum.cz; Alšovo nábřeží 12; 🕒 17, 18

This complex of concert halls and offices built in neo-Renaissance style in the late 19th century is the home turf of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra – the impressive **Dvořák Hall**, its stage dominated by a vast organ, is one of the main concert venues for the Prague Spring festival (see the boxed text, p202). The building served as the seat of the Czechoslovak parliament from 1918 to 1938.

The northern part of the complex (entrance facing the river) houses the **Galerie Rudolfinum** (☎ 227 059 205; www.galerierudolfinum.cz; adult/child 120/60Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun), a gallery that specialises in changing exhibitions of contemporary art. There's also a sumptuous café with tables ranged amid the Corinthian splendour of the **Column Hall**.

ALONG THE ROYAL WAY

The Royal Way (Královská cesta) was the ancient processional route followed by Czech kings on their way to St Vitus Cathedral for coronation. The route leads from the Powder Gate (Prašná brána; p100) along Celetná, through Old Town Square and Little Square (Malé náměstí), along Karlova and across Charles Bridge to Malá Strana Square (Malostranské náměstí), before climbing up Nerudova to the castle. The only procession that makes its way along these streets today is the daily crush of tourists shouldering their way through a gauntlet of gaudy souvenir shops and bored-looking leaflet touts. For a less

crowded alternative route, see the Walking Tour on p102.

Celetná, leading from the Powder Gate to Old Town Square, is an open-air museum of pastel-painted baroque façades covering Gothic frames resting on Romanesque foundations, deliberately buried to raise Staré Město above the floods of the Vltava River. But the most interesting building – Josef Gočár's delightful **House of the Black Madonna** (dům U černé Matky Boží), now the Museum of Czech Cubism (p100) – dates only from 1912.

Little Square (Malé náměstí; Map pp88–9), the southwestern extension of Old Town Square, has a Renaissance fountain with a 16th-century wrought-iron grill. Here several fine baroque and neo-Renaissance exteriors adorn some of Staré Město's oldest structures. The most colourful is the **VJ Rott Building** (1890), decorated with wall paintings by Mikuláš Aleš.

A dog-leg from the southwestern corner of the square leads to narrow, cobbled Karlova (Charles St; Map pp88–9), which continues as far as Charles Bridge – this section is often choked with tourist crowds. On the corner of Liliová is the house called **At the Golden Snake** (U zlatého hada), the site of Prague's first coffee house, opened in 1708 by an Armenian named Deomatus Damajan.

Karlova sidles along the massive southern wall of the Klementinum (right) before emerging at the riverside on Křižovnické náměstí. On the north side of the square is the 17th-century **Church of St Francis Seraphinus** (kostel sv Františka Serafinského), its dome decorated with a fresco of the Last Judgment. It belongs to the Order of Knights of the Cross, the only Bohemian order of Crusaders still in existence.

Just south of the bridge, at the site of the former Old Town mill, is Novotného lávka (Map pp88–9), a riverside terrace full of sunny, overpriced *vinárny* (wine bars) with great views of the bridge and castle, its far end dominated by a statue of composer Bedřich Smetana.

CHARLES BRIDGE MUSEUM Map pp88–9

Muzeum Karlova mostu; ☎ 739 309 551; www.muzeumkarlovamostu.cz; Křižovnické náměstí 3; adult/concession 150/100Kč; ☎ 10am–8pm Apr–Oct, to 6pm Nov–Mar; 📍 Staroměstská

Founded in the 13th century, the Order of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star were the guardians of Judith Bridge (and its successor Charles Bridge), with their 'mother house' at the Church of St Francis Seraphinus on Křižovnické náměstí. This new museum, housed in the order's headquarters,

covers the history of Prague's most famous landmark, with displays on ancient bridge-building techniques, masonry and carpentry, and models of both Judith and Charles Bridges. In Room 16 you can descend into the foundations of the building to see some of the original stonework of Judith Bridge (dating from 1172), but perhaps the most impressive exhibits are the old photographs of flood damage to Charles Bridge in 1890, when three arches collapsed and were swept away.

OLD TOWN BRIDGE TOWER Map pp88–9

Staroměstská mostecká věž; Charles Bridge; adult/child 70/50Kč; ☎ 10am–10pm May–Sep, to 7pm Apr & Oct, to 6pm Mar, to 5pm Nov–Feb; 📍 Staroměstská

Perched at the eastern end of Charles Bridge, this elegant late-14th-century tower was built not only as a fortification but also as a triumphal arch marking the entrance to the Old Town. Like the bridge itself, it was designed by Peter Parler and incorporates many symbolic elements. Here, at the end of the Thirty Years' War, an invading Swedish army was finally repulsed by a band of students and Jewish ghetto residents.

On the 1st floor there's a small exhibition and a video explaining the astronomical and astrological symbolism of Charles Bridge and the bridge tower, while the 2nd floor has a display of photographs recording the restoration of the tower's east face, completed in 2007. The main justification for paying the admission fee, however, is the amazing view from the top of the tower.

CZECH MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Map pp88–9

České muzeum výtvarných umění; ☎ 222 220 218; www.cmuv.cz; Husova 19–21; adult/child 50/20Kč; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 📍 Staroměstská

Housed in three beautifully restored Romanesque and Gothic buildings, this often-overlooked little gallery stages temporary exhibitions of 20th-century and contemporary art, though it's worth the admission fee just for a look at the architecture.

KLEMENTINUM Map pp88–9

☎ 222 220 879; www.klementinum.cz; entrances to courtyards on Křižovnická, Karlova & Mariánské náměstí; 📍 Staroměstská

When the Habsburg emperor Ferdinand I invited the Jesuits to Prague in 1556 to

boost the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Bohemia, they selected one of the city's choicest pieces of real estate and in 1587 set to work on the **Church of the Holy Saviour** (kostel Nejsvětějšího Spasitele), Prague's flagship of the Counter-Reformation. The western façade faces Charles Bridge, its sooty stone saints glaring down at the traffic jam of trams and tourists on Křížovnické náměstí.

After gradually buying up most of the adjacent neighbourhood, the Jesuits started building their college, the Klementinum, in 1653. By the time of its completion a century later it was the largest building in the city after Prague Castle. When the Jesuits fell out with the pope in 1773, it became part of Charles University.

The Klementinum today is a vast complex of beautiful baroque and rococo halls, now occupied by the Czech National Library. Most of the buildings are closed to the public, but you can take a 50-minute guided tour of the baroque **Library Hall & Astronomical Tower** and the **Chapel of Mirrors** (adult/child 220/140Kč; ☎ 10am-7pm, hourly Mon-Thu, every 30min Fri-Sun). The chapel dates from the 1720s and is an ornate confection of gilded stucco, marbled columns, fancy frescoes and ceiling mirrors – think baroque on steroids. Concerts of classical music are held here daily (tickets are available at most ticket agencies).

There are two other interesting churches in the Klementinum. The **Church of St Clement** (kostel sv Klimenta; ☎ services 8.30am & 10am Sun), lavishly redecorated in the baroque style from 1711 to 1715 to plans by Kilian Dientzenhofer, is now a Greek Catholic chapel. Conservatively dressed visitors are welcome to attend the services. And then there's the elliptical, Italian **Chapel of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** (Vlašská kaple Nanebevzetí Panny Marie), built in 1600 for the Italian artisans who worked on the Klementinum (it's still technically the property of the Italian government).

MARIONETTE MUSEUM Map pp88–9

Muzeum loutek; ☎ 222 228 511; www.puppetart.com; Karlova 12; adult/child 100/50Kč; ☎ noon-8pm; 🕒 17, 18

Rooms peopled with a multitude of authentic, colourful marionettes illustrate the evolution of this wonderful Czech tradition from the late-17th to early-19th centuries. The star attractions are the Czech children's

favourites, Spejbl and Hurvínek – kids and adults alike can enjoy the Czech equivalent of Punch and Judy at the **Spejbl & Hurvínek Theatre** (p203).

MUNICIPAL HOUSE Map pp88–9

Obecní dům; ☎ 222 002 101; www.obecni-dum.cz; náměstí Republiky 5; guided tours adult/child 160/110Kč; ☎ bldg 7.30am-11pm, information centre 10am-7pm; 📍 Náměstí Republiky
Prague's most exuberant and sensual building stands on the site of the Royal Court, seat of Bohemia's kings from 1383 to 1483 (when Vladislav II moved to Prague Castle), which was demolished at the end of the 19th century. Between 1906 and 1912 the Municipal House was built in its place – a lavish joint effort by around 30 leading artists of the day, creating a cultural centre that was the architectural climax of the Czech National Revival. Restored in the 1990s after decades of neglect during the communist era, the entire building was a labour of love, every detail of design and decoration carefully considered, every painting and sculpture loaded with symbolism.

The mosaic above the entrance, *Homage to Prague*, is set between sculptures representing the oppression and rebirth of the Czech people; other sculptures ranged along the top of the façade represent history, literature, painting, music and architecture. You pass beneath a wrought-iron and stained-glass canopy into an interior that is Art Nouveau down to the doorknobs (you can look around the lobby and the downstairs bar for free). The restaurant and the *kavárna* (café; see the boxed text, p181) flanking the entrance are like walk-in museums of Art Nouveau design.

Upstairs are half a dozen sumptuously decorated halls and assembly rooms that you can visit by **guided tour** (90 minutes, three or four per day), which can be booked at the building's information centre (through the main entrance, and around to the left of the stairs).

First stop on the tour is **Smetana Hall**, Prague's biggest concert hall, with seating for 1200 ranged beneath an Art Nouveau glass dome. The stage is framed by sculptures representing the Vyšehrad legend (to the right) and Slavonic dances (to the left).

Several impressive official apartments follow, but the highlight of the tour is the octagonal **Lord Mayor's Hall** (Primatorský sál), whose windows overlook the main entrance.

Every aspect of its decoration was designed by Alfons Mucha, who also painted the superbly moody murals that adorn the walls and ceiling. Above you is an allegory of *Slavic Concord*, with intertwined figures representing the various Slavic peoples watched over by the Czech eagle. Figures from Czech history and mythology, representing the civic virtues, occupy the spaces between the eight arches, including Jan Hus as *Spravedlnost* (justice), Jan Žižka as *Bojovnost* (military prowess) and the Chodové (medieval Bohemian border guards) as beady-eyed *Ostražitost* (vigilance).

On 28 October 1918 an independent Czechoslovak Republic was declared in Smetana Hall, and in November 1989 meetings took place here between Civic Forum and the Jakeš regime. The Prague Spring (Pražské jaro) music festival (see the boxed text, p202) always opens on 12 May, the anniversary of Smetana's death, with a procession from Vyšehrad to the Municipal House followed by a gala performance of his symphonic cycle *Má Vlast* (My Country) in Smetana Hall.

MUSEUM OF CZECH CUBISM Map pp88–9

Muzeum Českého kubismu; ☎ 224 211 746; Ovocný trh 19; adult/child 100/50Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 📍 Náměstí Republiky

Though dating from 1912, Josef Gočár's **House of the Black Madonna** (dům U černé Matky Boží) – Prague's first and finest example of Cubist architecture – still looks modern and dynamic. It now houses three floors of remarkable Cubist paintings and sculpture, as well as furniture, ceramics and glassware in Cubist designs.

POWDER GATE Map pp88–9

Pražná brána; ☎ 724 063 723; Na Příkopě; adult/child 70/50Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm mid-Mar–Oct; 📍 Náměstí Republiky

The 65m-tall Powder Gate was begun in 1475 on the site of one of Staré Město's original 13 gates. Built during the reign of King Vladislav II Jagiello as a ceremonial entrance to the city, it was left unfinished after the king moved from the neighbouring Royal Court to Prague Castle in 1483. The name comes from its use as a gunpowder magazine in the 18th century. Josef Mocker rebuilt and decorated it and put up a steeple between 1875 and 1886, giving it its neogothic icing.

The tower houses exhibitions on the history of the Royal Court (see Municipal House, p99) and the towers that once punctuated Prague's town walls, but the main attraction is the view from the top.

SMETANA MUSEUM Map pp88–9

Muzeum Bedřicha Smetany; ☎ 222 220 082; Novotného lávka 1; adult/child 50/25Kč; 🕒 10am–noon & 12.30–5pm Wed–Mon; 📍 Staroměstská
This small museum is devoted to Bedřich Smetana, Bohemia's favourite composer. It isn't that interesting unless you're a Smetana fan, and has only limited labelling in English, but there's a good exhibit on popular culture's feverish response to Smetana's opera *The Bartered Bride* – it seems Smetana was the Andrew Lloyd Webber of his day.

HAVELSKÉ MĚSTO

In about 1230 a market district named Havelské Město (St Gall's Town; Map pp88–9), named after the 7th-century Irish monk who helped introduce Christianity to Europe, was laid out for the pleasure of the German merchants invited to Prague by Wenceslas I.

Modern-day Rytířská and Havelská streets were at that time a single plaza surrounded by arcaded merchants' houses. Specialist markets included those for coal (Uhelný trh) at the western end of the plaza and for fruit (Ovocný trh) at the eastern end. In the 15th century an island of stalls was built down the middle.

All that remains of St Gall's market today is the touristy open-air market on Havelská and the clothes hawkers in adjacent V Kotcích. Though no match for the original, it's still Prague's most central open-air market.

At the eastern end of Havelská is the **Church of St Gall** (kostel sv Havla), as old as St Gall's Town itself, where Jan Hus and his predecessors preached religious reform. The Carmelites took possession of it in 1627, and in 1723 added its shapely baroque façade. The Czech baroque painter Karel Škréta (1610–74) is buried in the church.

Near the former Uhelný trh (coal market) is the plain, 12th-century **Church of St Martin in the Wall** (kostel sv Martin ve zdi), a parish church enlarged and Gothicised in the 14th century. The name comes from its having had the Old Town wall built right around it. In 1414 the church was the site of the first-ever Hussite communion service *sub utraque specie* (with both bread and wine), from which the name 'Utraquist' derives.

KAROLINUM Map pp88–9

Univerzita Karlova; ☎ 224 491 250; www.cuni.cz/ukeng-4.html; Ovocný trh 3; 📍 Můstek

Central Europe's oldest university, founded by Charles IV in 1348, was originally housed in the so-called Rotlev House. With Protestantism and Czech nationalism on the rise, the reforming preacher Jan Hus became Charles University's rector in 1402 and soon persuaded Wenceslas IV to slash the voting rights of the university's German students – thousands of them left Bohemia when this was announced.

The facilities of the ever-expanding university were concentrated here in 1611, and by the 18th century the old burgher's house had grown into a sizeable complex known as the Karolinum. After the Battle of Bílá Hora (1620) it was handed over to the Jesuits, who gave it a baroque makeover; when they were booted out in 1773 the university took it back. Charles University now has faculties all over Prague, and the Karolinum today houses only some faculty offices, the University Club and a ceremonial hall. It is open to the public only on 'open doors' days (details from tourist information offices).

Among pre-university Gothic survivals is the **Chapel of Sts Cosmas & Damian** (kapele sv Kosmas a Damian), with its extraordinary oriel window protruding from the southern wall. Built around 1370, it was renovated in 1881 by Josef Mocker.

ESTATES THEATRE Map pp88–9

Stavovské divadlo; ☎ 224 215 001; www.narodni-divadlo.cz; Ovocný trh 1; 📍 Náměstí Republiky

Beside the Karolinum is Prague's oldest theatre and finest neoclassical building, the Estates Theatre, where the premiere of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was performed on 29 October 1787, with the maestro himself conducting. Opened in 1783 as the Nostitz Theatre (after its founder, Count Anton von Nostitz-Rieneck), it was patronised by upper-class German citizens and thus came to be called the Estates Theatre – the Estates being the traditional nobility.

After WWII it was renamed the Tylovo divadlo (Tyl Theatre) in honour of the 19th-century Czech playwright Josef Kajetán Tyl. One of his claims to fame is the Czech national anthem, *Kde domov můj?* (Where is My Home?), which came from one of his plays. In the early 1990s the theatre's name

reverted to Estates Theatre. Around the corner is the 17th-century **Kolowrat Theatre** (Ovocný trh 6), now also a National Theatre venue. See also p199 for more information on classical-music venues.

SOUTHWESTERN STARÉ MĚSTO

The meandering lanes and passageways between Karlova and Národní třída are Prague's best territory for aimless wandering. When the crowds thin out late in the day, this area can cast such a spell that it's quite a surprise to emerge from its peaceful backstreets into the bustle of the 21st century.

The charm goes a bit cold along Bartolomějská, however, and not just because it is lined with police offices. Before November 1989 this block was occupied by the StB (Státní bezpečnost, or State Security), the hated secret police. Older Czechs are still understandably twitchy about police of any kind and it's a common suspicion that a few former StB officers are still around, just wearing new uniforms.

Backing onto Bartolomějská is an old convent and the once-lovely 18th-century **Church of St Bartholomew** (kostel sv Bartoloměje), for a time part of the StB complex but now returned to the Franciscans. The area boasts a couple more historic churches in the shape of the Bethlehem Chapel and the Rotunda of the Holy Cross.

BETHLEHEM CHAPEL Map pp108–9

Betlémská kapele; ☎ 224 248 595; Betlémské náměstí 3; adult/child 50/30Kč; 🕒 10am–6.30pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, to 5.30pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar; 📍 6, 9, 18, 21, 22, 23

The Bethlehem Chapel is one of Prague's most important churches, being the true birthplace of the Hussite cause. In 1391, Reformist Praguers won permission to build a church where services could be held in Czech instead of Latin, and proceeded to construct the biggest chapel Bohemia had ever seen, able to hold 3000 worshippers. Architecturally it was a radical departure, with a simple square hall focused on the pulpit rather than the altar. Jan Hus preached here from 1402 to 1412, marking the emergence of the Reform movement from the sanctuary of the Karolinum (where he was rector).

In the 18th century the chapel was torn down. Remnants were discovered around 1920, and from 1948 to 1954 – because Hussitism had official blessing as an ancient form of communism – the whole thing was painstakingly reconstructed in its original

form, based on old drawings, descriptions, and traces of the original work. It's now a national cultural monument.

Only the southern wall of the chapel is brand new. You can still see some original parts in the eastern wall: the pulpit door, several windows and the door to the preacher's quarters. These quarters, including the rooms used by Hus and others, are also original; they are now used for exhibits. The wall paintings are modern, and are based on old Hussite tracts. The indoor well predates the chapel.

The chapel has an English text available at the door. Every year on the night of 5 July, the eve of Hus' burning at the stake in 1415, a commemorative celebration is held here, with speeches and bell-ringing.

CHURCH OF ST GILES Map pp88–9

Kostel sv Jiljí; cnr Zlatá & Husova; ☎ 6, 9, 18, 21, 22, 23

With stocky Romanesque columns, tall Gothic windows, and an exuberant baroque interior, the Church of St Giles – founded in 1371 – is a good place to ponder the architectural development of Prague's religious buildings. The proto-Hussite reformer Jan Milíč of Kroměříž preached here before the Bethlehem Chapel was built. The Dominicans gained possession during the Counter-Reformation, built a cloister next door and 'baroquefied' it in the 1730s. Václav Reiner, the Czech painter who created the ceiling frescoes, is buried here.

NÁPRSTEK MUSEUM Map pp108–9

Náprstkovo muzeum; ☎ 224 497 500; www.aconet.cz/npm; Betlémské náměstí 1; adult/child 80/40Kč; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Tue–Sun; ☎ 6, 9, 18, 21, 22, 23

The small Náprstek Museum houses an ethnographical collection of Asian, African and American cultures, founded by Vojta Náprstek, a 19th-century industrialist with a passion for both anthropology and modern technology (his technology exhibits are now part of the [National Technical Museum](#) in Holešovice; p133).

ROTUNDA OF THE HOLY CROSS

Map pp108–9

Kaple sv kříže; Konviktská; ☎ services 5pm Sun & Tue, in English 5.30pm 1st Mon of each month; ☎ 6, 9, 18, 21, 22, 23

This tiny Romanesque rotunda is one of Prague's oldest buildings, starting out as

a parish church in about 1100. Saved from demolition and restored in the 1860s by a collective of Czech artists, it still has the remnants of some 600-year-old wall frescoes, though you will have to attend Mass to see them.

NOT QUITE THE ROYAL WAY

Walking Tour

1 Republic Square At [Republic Square](#) (náměstí Republiky), three ages of Prague architecture face each other across the intersection of Na Příkopě and Celetná – the sooty Gothic tracery of the [Powder Gate](#) (Prašná brána; p100), the elegant Art Nouveau convolutions of the [Municipal House](#) (Obecní dům; p99), and the stern functionalist façades of the [Czech National Bank](#) (Česká národní banka) and the [Commercial Bank](#) (Komerční banka). As you look west along Celetná you'll see the tower of the Old Town Hall framed at the end of the street like a target in a gun-sight; set off towards it.

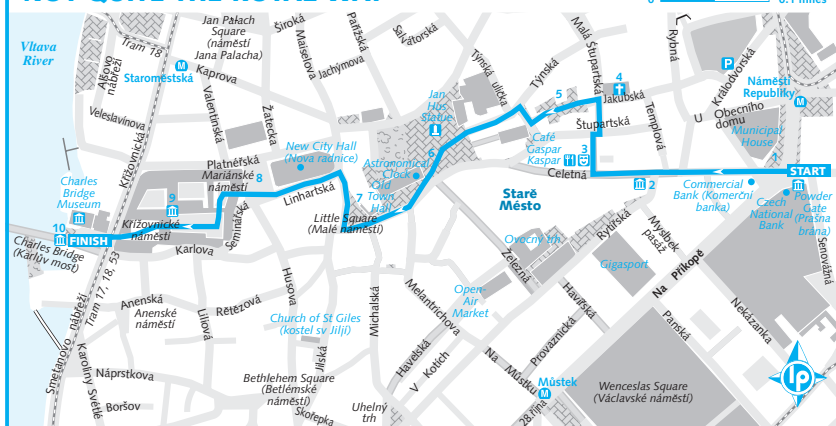
2 House of the Black Madonna In addition to the many souvenir shops, Celetná is lined with many interesting buildings. As you reach the open space of Ovocný trh you'll see an unusual, origami-like façade on the left. It belongs to the [House of the Black Madonna](#) (dům U černé Matky Boží), one of Prague's finest examples of Cubist architecture, and home of the [Museum of Czech Cubism](#) (p100).

3 Celetná Theatre A little further along Celetná, turn right into the passage at No 17, which leads to a peaceful little courtyard beside the [Celetná Theatre](#) (divadlo v Celetné; p202). Head up the stairs to [Café Gaspar Kasper](#) if you fancy a coffee or a cold beer.

4 Church of St James The passage on the far side of the courtyard leads out onto Štupartská; go straight ahead along Malá Štupartská for a look at the baroque sculptures adorning the façade of the [Church of St James](#) (kostel sv Jakuba; p90). If it's open, go inside for a peek at its gloomy, gilded splendour and the grisly exhibit hanging next to the door.

5 Týn Courtyard Retrace your steps for a few metres and turn right through the cobbled passage just beyond Big Ben Bookshop to enter the [Týn Courtyard](#) (Týnský dvůr; p94). This lovely little square is lined with posh shops, good restaurants and a Renaissance loggia,

NOT QUITE THE ROYAL WAY



WALK FACTS

Start Republic Square (metro Náměstí Republiky)

End Charles Bridge (tram 17, 18)

Distance 1.5km

Time 45 minutes

Exertion Easy

Fuel stop Café Gaspar Kasper

and has a fine view of the twin steeples of the **Church of Our Lady Before Týn** (kostel Panny Marie před Týnem; p87). Exit at the far end of the courtyard and go along the narrow alley to the right of the church, stopping to look up at the semicircular tympanum above the northern door, decorated with a superb Gothic relief of the Last Judgment.

6 Old Town Square You emerge from the alley into the melee of **Old Town Square** (Staroměstské náměstí; p87), dominated by the brooding **statue of Jan Hus** and the Gothic tower of the **Old Town Hall** (Staroměstská Radnice; p92). If you've timed it right, you'll be able to join the crowd at the foot of the tower to watch a performance by the **Astro-nomical Clock** (see the boxed text, p94) set into the tower wall.

7 Little Square Continue past the clock and the *sgraffito*-clad **House at the Minute** (dům U minuty) to reach **Little Square** (Malé náměstí). To your left you'll see the beautiful baroque shop called **U zlaté koruny** (At the Golden Crown); it was once a pharmacy (you can still see the original fittings) but now houses a jewellery

shop. Ahead is the neo-Renaissance façade of the **VJ Rott Building**, decorated with colourful murals by Mikuláš Ales. You'll see the main tourist throng bearing left into Karlova, but bear right towards the opposite end of the square and then turn left into Linhartská.

8 Virgin Mary Square This leads to the quieter space of **Virgin Mary Square** (Mariánské náměstí), dominated by **New City Hall** (Nova radnice), seat of Prague's city council. The façade is framed by brooding Art Nouveau statues by Ladislav Šaloun, the same chap who created the Jan Hus Monument in Old Town Square, and decorated with red and yellow flags, Prague's municipal colours.

9 Klementinum Facing City Hall across the square is the main gate of the **Klementinum** (p98). Go through the gate into the courtyard and turn left; on your right is the entrance to the **Chapel of Mirrors** (Zrcadlová kaple), where classical concerts are held daily. Continue past the chapel and through the triple arch, then turn right and continue through the quiet courtyards (look up to your right to spot a modern sculpture of a child with a paper plane perched on a ledge).

10 Old Town Bridge Tower At the far end of the Klementinum courtyards you emerge again into the bustling traffic and tourist crowds of Křižovnické náměstí. End your walk by climbing up the **Old Town Bridge Tower** (Staroměstská mostecká věž; p98) for a view over Prague's most famous bridge, before visiting the nearby **Charles Bridge Museum** (p98).

NOVÉ MĚSTO & VYŠEHRAĐ

Eating p163; Drinking p183; Shopping p148; Sleeping p218

Nové Město means 'New Town', although this crescent-shaped district to the east and south of Staré Město was new only when it was founded by Charles IV in 1348. It extends eastwards from Revoluční and Na Příkopě to Wilsonova and the main railway line, and south from Národní třída to Vyšehrad.

Most of Nové Město's outer fortifications were demolished in 1875 – a section of wall still survives in the south, facing Vyšehrad – but the original street plan of the area has been essentially preserved, with three large market squares that once provided the district's commercial focus: Senovážné náměstí (Hay Market Square), Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí; originally called Koňský trh, or Horse Market) and Charles Square (Karlovo náměstí; originally called Dobyččí trh, or Cattle Market).

Though originally a medieval neighbourhood, most of the surviving buildings in this area are from the 19th and early 20th centuries, many of them among the city's finest examples of Art Nouveau, neo-Renaissance, Czech National Revival and functionalist architecture. Many blocks are honeycombed with pedestrian-only arcades – Prague's famous *pasáže* (passages) – lined with shops, cafés, cinemas and theatres.

In the south, overlooking the river, is the ancient citadel of Vyšehrad. Since the 1920s the old fortress has been a quiet park, with splendid panoramas of the Vltava Valley. It retains a fond place in Czech hearts and is a popular destination for weekend family outings – take along a picnic and find a quiet spot among the trees, or on the battlements with a view over the river.

NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

The northern part of Nové Město stretches from the Vltava River down to Wenceslas Square. The area is mostly rather nondescript, but there are a few gems hidden away among the bland façades.

JINDŘIŠSKÁ TOWER Map pp108–9

Jindřišská věž; ☎ 224 232 429; www.jindrisskavez.cz; Jindřišská 1; adult/child 75/25Kč; 🕒 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–7pm Sat & Sun; 📍 3, 9, 14, 24

This Gothic bell tower, dating from the 15th century but rebuilt in the Gothic style in the 1870s, dominates the end of Jindřišská, a busy street running northeast from Wenceslas Square. Having stood idle for decades, the tower was renovated and reopened in 2002 as a tourist attraction, complete with exhibition space, shop, café and restaurant, and a lookout gallery on the 10th floor.

JUBILEE SYNAGOGUE Map pp108–9

Jubilejní synagoga; ☎ 222 319 002; Jeruzalémská 7; admission 50Kč; 🕒 1–5pm Sun–Fri Apr–Oct, closed on Jewish hols; 📍 Hlavní Nádraží

The colourful Moorish façade of the Jubilee Synagogue, also called the Velká synagoga (Great Synagogue), dates from 1906. Note the names of the donors on the stained-glass windows, and the grand organ above the entrance.

MUCHA MUSEUM Map pp108–9

Muchovo muzeum; ☎ 221 451 333; www.mucha.cz; Panská 7; adult/child 120/60Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm; 📍 Můstek

This fascinating (and busy) museum features the sensuous Art Nouveau posters, paintings and decorative panels of Alfons Mucha (1860–1939), as well as many sketches, photographs and other memorabilia. The exhibits include countless artworks showing Mucha's trademark Slavic maidens with flowing hair and piercing blue eyes, bearing symbolic garlands and linden boughs; photos of the artist's Paris studio, one of which shows a trouserless Gauguin playing the harmonium; a powerful canvas entitled *Old Woman in Winter*; and the original of the 1894 poster of actress Sarah Bernhardt as Giselda, which shot him to international fame. The fascinating 30-minute video documentary about Mucha's life is well worth watching, and helps to put his achievements in perspective. For more information on Mucha see the boxed text, p40.

POSTAL MUSEUM Map p106

Poštovní muzeum; ☎ 222 312 006; Nové Mlýny 2; adult/child 25/10Kč; 🕒 9am–noon & 1–5pm Tue–Sun; 📍 5, 18, 14

Philatelists will love this tiny museum with its letter boxes, mail coach and drawers of old postage stamps, including a rare Penny

Black. Look for the beautiful stamps created in the early 20th century by Czech artists Josef Navrátil and Alfons Mucha.

Across the street is the **Petrská Waterworks Tower** (Petrská vodárenská věž), which was built about 1660 on the site of earlier wooden ones. From here, wooden pipes once carried river water to buildings in Nové Město.

PRAGUE CITY MUSEUM Map p106

Muzeum hlavního města Prahy; ☎ 224 816 773; www.muzeumprahy.cz; Na Poříčí 52; adult/child 100/40Kč, 1st Thu of each month 1Kč; 🕒 9am–6pm Tue–Sun, to 8pm 1st Thu of each month; 🚶 Florenc This excellent museum, opened in 1898, is devoted to the history of Prague from pre-historic times to the 20th century. Among the many intriguing exhibits are the brown silk funeral cap and slippers worn by astronomer Tycho Brahe when he was interred in the Týn Church in 1601 (they were removed from his corpse in 1901) and the Astronomical Clock's original 1866 calendar wheel with Josef Mánes' beautiful painted panels representing the months – that's January at the top, toasting his toes by the fire, and August near the bottom, sickle in hand, harvesting the corn.

But what everybody comes to see is Antonín Langweil's astonishing 1:480 scale model of Prague as it looked between 1826 and 1834. The display is most rewarding after you get to know Prague a bit, as you can spot the changes – look at St Vitus Cathedral, for example, still only half-finished.

Most labels are in English as well as Czech, but you'll need the English text (available at the ticket desk) for Room I (prehistory to medieval).

PRAGUE MAIN TRAIN STATION

Map pp108–9

Praha hlavní nádraží; Wilsonova; 🕒 closed 12.40–3.15am; 🚶 Hlavní Nádraží

What? The train station is actually a tourist attraction? Perhaps not all of it, but it's worth going to the top floor for a look at the grimy, soot-blackened splendour of the original Art Nouveau building designed by Josef Fanta and built between 1901 and 1909. The domed interior is adorned with a mosaic of two nubile ladies, the words *Praga: mater urbium* (Prague, Mother of Cities) and the date '28.října r:1918' (28 October 1918, Czechoslovakia's Independence Day).

WENCESLAS SQUARE & AROUND

Originally a medieval horse market, and more a broad, sloping boulevard than a typical city square, Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí, also called Václavák) got its present name during the nationalist revival of the mid-19th century. Since then it has witnessed a great deal of Czech history – a giant Mass was held here during the revolutionary upheavals of 1848; in 1918 the creation of the new Czechoslovak Republic was celebrated here; and in 1989 the fall of communism was announced here.

Following the police attack on a student demonstration on 17 November 1989 (see the boxed text, p29), angry citizens gathered in Wenceslas Square by the thousands night after night. A week later, in a stunning mirror image of Klement Gottwald's 1948 proclamation of communist rule in Old Town Square, Alexander Dubček and Václav Havel stepped onto the balcony of the Melantrich Building to a thunderous and tearful ovation, and proclaimed the end of communism in Czechoslovakia.

At the southern end of the square is Josef Myslbek's muscular equestrian **statue of St Wenceslas** (sv Václav; Map pp108–9), the 10th-century pacifist Duke of Bohemia and the 'Good King Wenceslas' of Christmas carol fame (he was never a king, only a prince, but was widely regarded as being a good man). Flanked by other patron saints of Bohemia – Prokop, Adalbert, Agnes and Ludmila – he has been plastered with posters and bunting at every one of the square's historical moments. Near the statue, a small **memorial to the victims of communism** bears photographs and handwritten epitaphs to Jan Palach and other anticommunist rebels.

In contrast to the solemnity of this shrine, the square around it has become a monument to capitalism, a gaudy gallery of cafés, fast-food outlets, expensive shops, greedy cabbies and pricey hotels, haunted at night by drunken British stag parties, prostitutes and strip club touts.

CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

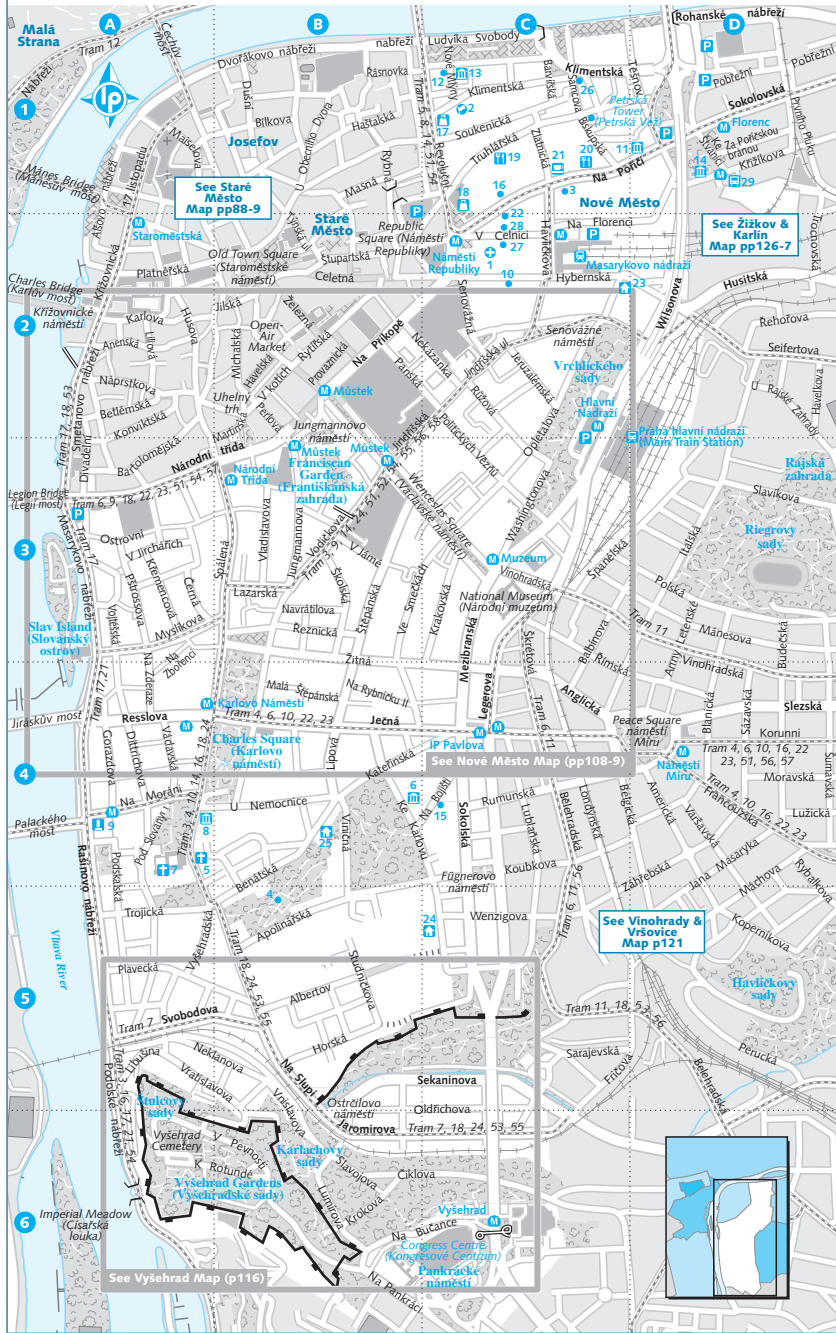
Map pp108–9

Kostel Panny Marie sněžné; Jungmannovo náměstí 18; 🚶 Můstek

The most sublime attraction in the neighbourhood is this Gothic church at the northern end of Wenceslas Square. It was begun in the 14th century by Charles IV but only the chancel was ever completed, which

NOVÉ MĚSTO & VYŠEHŘAD

0 400 m
0 0.2 miles



NEIGHBOURHOODS NOVÉ MĚSTO & VYŠEHŘAD

NOVÉ MĚSTO & VYŠEHRAĐ

INFORMATION

American Dental Associates.....	1	C2
Australian Consulate.....	2	C1

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp104–19)

Bank of Czechoslovak Legions.....	3	C1
Charles University Botanical Garden (Botanická Zahrada Univerzity Karlovy).....	4	B5
Church of St John of Nepomuk on the Rock (Kostel Sv Jana Nepomuckého na Skalce).....	5	A4
Dvořák Museum (Muzeum Antonína Dvořáka).....	6	B4
Emmaus Monastery (Klášter Emauzy).....	7	A4
Faust House (Faustův Dům).....	8	A4
František Palacký Memorial.....	9	A4
Hotel Central.....	10	C2
Jiří Švestka.....	11	D1


Petrská Waterworks Tower (Petrská Vodárenská Věž).....	12	C1
Postal Museum (Poštovní Muzeum).....	13	C1
Prague City Museum (Muzeum Hlavního Města Prahy).....	14	D1
U Kalicha.....	15	C4
Vila Amerika.....	(see 6)	
Workers' Accident Insurance Co (Kafka's Workplace).....	16	C1

SHOPPING 	(pp143–51)	
Galerie České Plastiky.....	17	C1
Palladium Praha Shopping Centre.....	18	C1

EATING 	(pp153–73)	
Albio.....	19	C1
Siam Orchid.....	20	C1

DRINKING 	(pp175–91)	
Café Imperial.....	21	C1

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp205–10)		
Sportcentrum YMCA.....	22	C1

SLEEPING 	(pp211–27)	
Alfa Tourist Service.....	23	C2
Hostel U Melounu.....	24	C5
Hotel 16 U Sv Kateřiny.....	25	B4

TRANSPORT (pp241–51)		
Avis.....	26	C1
CD Travel.....	27	C2
Cedaz Minibus Stop.....	(see 28)	
Czech Airlines (CSA).....	28	C2
Florenc Bus Station.....	29	D1
Student Agency.....	(see 29)	
Touring Bohemia/ Eurolines.....	(see 29)	

accounts for its proportions – seemingly taller than it is long. Charles had intended it to be the grandest church in Prague; the nave is higher than that of St Vitus Cathedral, and the altar is the city's tallest. It was a Hussite stronghold, ringing with the sermons of Jan Želivský, who led the 1419 defenestration that touched off the Hussite Wars.

The church is approached through an arch in the Austrian Cultural Institute on Jungmannovo náměstí, but you can get a good view of the exterior from the neighbouring **Franciscan Garden** (see p118). Beside the church is the **Chapel of the Pasov Virgin**, now a venue for temporary art exhibitions.

LUCERNA PALACE Map pp108–9

Palác Lucerna; Vodičkova 36; ☎ 3, 9, 14, 24
The most elegant of Nové Město's many shopping arcades runs beneath the Art Nouveau Lucerna Palace (1920), between Štěpánská and Vodičkova streets. The complex was designed by Václav Havel (grandfather of the expresident), and is still partially owned by the family. It includes theatres, a cinema, shops, a rock club and several cafés and restaurants. In the marbled atrium hangs artist David Černý's sculpture **Horse**, a wryly amusing counterpart to the equestrian statue of St Wenceslas in Wenceslas Square. Here St Wenceslas sits astride a horse that is decidedly dead; Černý never comments on the meaning of his works, but it's safe to assume that this Wenceslas (Václav in Czech) is a reference to Václav Klaus, former prime minister and now president of the Czech Republic.

The neighbouring **Novák Arcade**, connected to the Lucerna and riddled by a maze of passages, has one of Prague's finest Art Nouveau façades (overlooking Vodičkova), complete with mosaics of country life.

MUSEUM OF COMMUNISM Map pp108–9

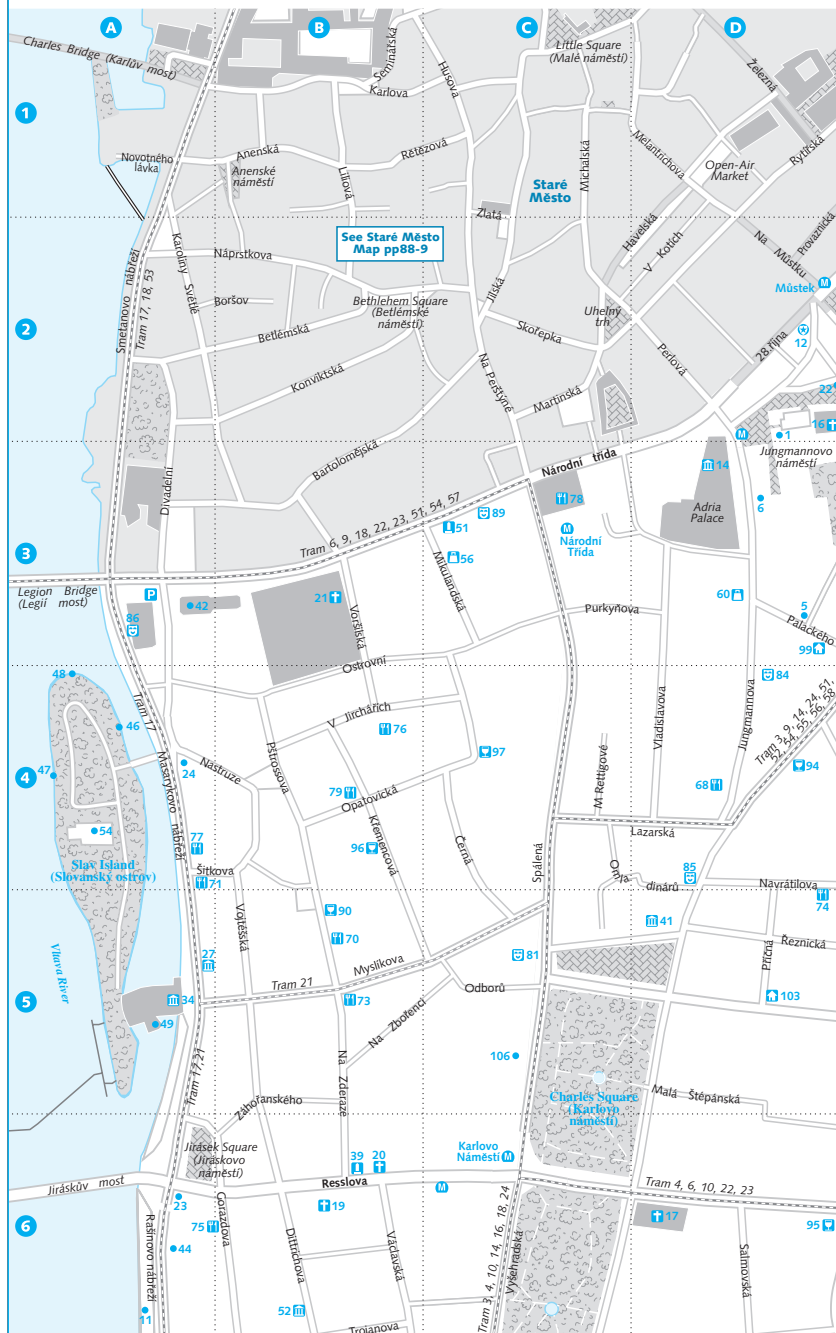
Muzeum komunismu; ☎ 224 212 966; www.muzeumkomunismu.cz; Na Příkopě 10; adult/child 180/140Kč; ☎ 9am–9pm; 📄 Můstek

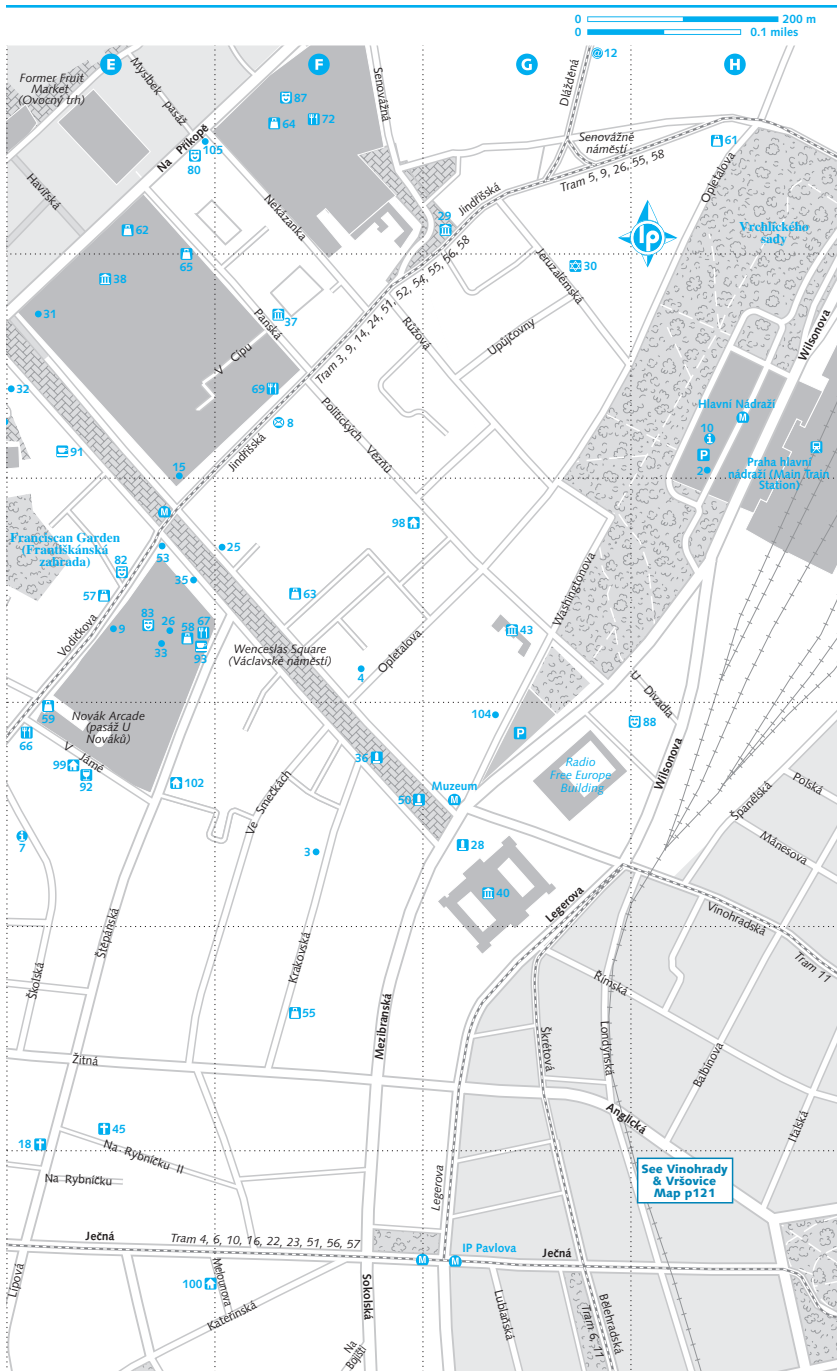
It's difficult to think of a more ironic site for a museum of communism – it occupies part of an 18th-century aristocrat's palace, stuck between a casino on one side and a McDonald's burger restaurant on the other. Put together by an American expat and his Czech partner, the museum tells the story of Czechoslovakia's years behind the Iron Curtain in photos, words and a fascinating and varied collection of...well, stuff. The empty shops, corruption, fear and double-speak of life in socialist Czechoslovakia are well conveyed, and there are rare photos of the Stalin monument that once stood on Letná terrace – and its spectacular destruction. Be sure to watch the video about protests leading up to the Velvet Revolution: you'll never think of it as a pushover again.

NA PŘÍKOPĚ Map pp108–9

Na Příkopě (On the Moat), along with **Revoluční (Revolution)**, 28.října (28 October 1918; Czechoslovak Independence Day) and **Národní třída (National Ave)**, follows the line of the moat that once ran along the foot of Staré Město's city walls (the moat was filled in at the end of the 18th century).

NOVÉ MĚSTO





NOVÉ MĚSTO

INFORMATION

Austrian Cultural Institute.....	1	D2	Melantrich Building.....	35	E3	Country Life.....	68	D4
AVE Travel.....	2	H2	Memorial to Victims of Communism.....	36	F4	Fruits de France.....	69	F2
Czech Blind United.....	3	F4	Mucha Museum (Muchovo Muzeum).....	37	F2	Globe Bookstore & Café.....	70	B5
DHL.....	4	F3	Museum of Communism (Muzeum Komunismu).....	38	E2	Karavanseráj.....	71	A4
District Clinic (24hr Pharmacy).....	5	D3	National Memorial to the Victims of Post-Heydrich Terror (Národní Pamatník Obětí Heydrichiády).....	39	B6	Kogo.....	72	F1
Globe Bookstore & Café..... (see 70)			National Museum (Národní Muzeum).....	40	G4	Lemon Leaf.....	73	B5
Happy House Rentals.....	6	D3	National Theatre-Národní divadlo..... (see 86)			Miyabi.....	74	D5
Information-Advisory Centre of Charles University (IPC).....	7	E4	New Town Hall (Novoměstská Radnice).....	41	D5	Na Rybářně.....	75	A6
Main Post Office.....	8	F2	Nová Scéna.....	42	A3	Pizzeria Kmotra.....	76	B4
Prague Card Change Office.....	9	E3	Peček Palace (Pačkův Palác).....	43	G3	Suterén.....	77	A4
Prague Information Service.....	10	H2	Rašínovo Nábřeží 78 (Václav Havel's Old Flat).....	44	A6	Tesco.....	78	C3
Prague Passenger Shipping.....	11	A6	Rotunda of St Longinus (Rotunda sv Longina).....	45	E5	U Matěje Kotrby.....	79	B4
Praha 1 Police Station.....	12	D2	Rowboat Hire.....	46	A4			
Spika.....	13	G1	Rowboat Hire.....	47	A4			

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

(pp104-15)

Adria Palace.....	14	D3	Šitovská Věž.....	49	A5			
Assicurazioni Generali (Kafka's Workplace 1907-08).....	15	E2	St Wenceslas (sv Václav) Statue.....	50	F4			
Baťa Shoe Store..... (see 32)			Student Memorial.....	51	C3			
Church of Our Lady of the Snows (Kostel Panny Marie Sněžné).....	16	D2	Tranzit/Display Gallery.....	52	B6			
Church of St Ignatius (Kostel sv Ignáce).....	17	D6	Wielh House (Wiehluv dům).....	53	E3			
Church of St Stephen (Kostel sv Štěpána).....	18	E5	ofin.....	54	A4			
Church of St Wenceslas in Zderaz (Kostel sv Václava na Zderaza).....	19	B6						
Church of Sts Cyril & Methodius (Kostel sv Cyril a Metoděj).....	20	B6						
Convent of St Ursula (Klášter sv Vorská).....	21	B3						
Cubist Lamppost.....	22	D2						
Dancing Budling (Taneční Dům).....	23	A6						
Goethe Institute.....	24	A4						
Grand Hotel Evropa.....	25	F3						
Horse-David Černý Sculpture.....	26	E3						
House of the Black Rose (Dům U Černé Růže)..... (see 62)								
House of the Hlahol Choir.....	27	A5						
Jan Palach Memorial.....	28	G4						
Jindřišská Tower (Jindřišská Věž).....	29	G1						
Jubilee Synagogue (Jubilejní Synagoga).....	30	G2						
Koruna Palace (Palác Koruna).....	31	E2						
Lindt Building.....	32	E2						
Lucerna Palace (Palác Lucerna).....	33	E3						
Mánes Gallery (Galerie Mánes).....	34	A5						

ENTERTAINMENT

(pp193-203)

Bohemia Ticket International (BTI).....	80	E1						
Kino MAT.....	81	C5						
Kino Světozor.....	82	E3						
Laterna Magika..... (see 42)								
Lucerna Music Bar.....	83	E3						
Metropolitan Jazz Club.....	84	D4						
Minor Theatre (Divadlo Minor).....	85	D4						
National Theatre-Národní divadlo.....	86	A3						
Palace Cinemas.....	87	F1						
Prague State Opera (Státní Opera Praha).....	88	H4						
Reduta Jazz Club.....	89	C3						
Reduta Theatre..... (see 89)								
Reduta Café..... (see 89)								
Ticketpro..... (see 83)								

DRINKING

(pp175-91)

Bokovka.....	90	B5						
Dobrá Cajovna.....	91	E2						
Jáma.....	92	E4						
Kavárna Lucerna..... (see 26)								
Kávovarna.....	93	E3						
Novoměstský Pivovar.....	94	D4						
Pivovarský Dům.....	95	D6						
U Fleků.....	96	B4						
Velryba.....	97	C4						

SLEEPING

(pp211-27)

Hotel Yasmin.....	98	F3						
Icon Hotel.....	99	E4						
Miss Sophie's.....	100	E6						
Penzion U Šuterů.....	101	D3						
Radisson SAS Alcron Hotel.....	102	E4						
Suitehome Residence.....	103	D5						

TRANSPORT

(pp241-5)

A-Rent Car/Thrifty.....	104	G4						
Cedok.....	105	E1						
Hertz.....	106	C5						

Na Příkopě meets Wenceslas Square at **Na Můstku** (On the Little Bridge; [Map pp108-9](#)). A small stone bridge once crossed the moat here – you can still see a remaining arch in the underground entrance to Můstek metro station, on the left just past the ticket machines.

In the 19th century this fashionable street was the haunt of Prague's German café society. Today it is (along with Wenc-

eslas Square and Pařížská) the city's main upmarket shopping precinct, lined with banks, shopping malls and tourist cafés.

NATIONAL MUSEUM [Map pp108-9](#)

Národní muzeum; ☎ 224 497 111; [www.nm.cz](#); adult/child 120/70Kč, admission free 1st Mon of each month; 🕒 10am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Apr, closed 1st Tue of month; 📺 Muzeum

Looming above Wenceslas Square is the neo-Renaissance bulk of the National Museum, designed in the 1880s by Josef Schulz as an architectural symbol of the Czech National Revival.

The main displays of rocks, fossils and stuffed animals have a rather old-fashioned feel – serried ranks of glass display cabinets arranged on creaking parquet floors – but even if trilobites and taxidermy are not your thing it's still worth a visit just to enjoy the marbled splendour of the interior and the views down Wenceslas Square. The opulent main staircase is an extravaganza of polished limestone and serpentine, lined with paintings of Bohemian castles and medallions of kings and emperors. The domed pantheon, with four huge lunette paintings of (strangely womanless) Czech legend and history by František Ženíšek and Václav Brožík, houses bronze busts and statues of the great and the good of Czech art and science.

The light-coloured areas on the façade of the museum are patched-up bullet holes. In 1968 Warsaw Pact troops apparently mistook the museum for the former National Assembly or the radio station, and raked it with gunfire. It's also here where you'll find a cross-shaped [memorial](#) set into the pavement, to the left of the fountain in front of the museum, that marks the spot where Jan Palach fell (see the boxed text, [p29](#)).

The museum building is badly in need of a face-lift, and in 2011 it will close for five years to allow for major renovation.

NÁRODNÍ TŘÍDA [Map pp108–9](#)

Národní třída (National Ave) is central Prague's 'high street', a stately row of mid-range shops and grand public buildings, notably the National Theatre at the Vltava River end.

Fronting Jungmannovo náměstí, at the eastern end, is an imitation Venetian palace known as the [Adria Palace](#). Its distinctive, chunky architectural style, dating from the 1920s, is known as 'rondocubism'. Note how the alternating angular and rounded window pediments echo similar features in neoclassical baroque buildings such as the [Černín Palace](#) ([p68](#)).

Beneath it is the [Adria Theatre](#), birthplace of *Laterna Magika* and meeting place of

TRANSPORT: NOVÉ MĚSTO

Metro The city's three metro lines all intersect in Nové Město, at Muzeum and Můstek stations at the eastern and western ends (respectively) of Wenceslas Square, and at Florenc station in northern Nové Město, while Karlovo náměstí station on Line B serves southern Nové Město.

Tram Cutting across the middle of Wenceslas Square, trams 3, 9, 14 and 24 run along Vodičková and Jindřišská. Lines 17 and 21 run along the river embankment in the west.

Civic Forum in the heady days of the Velvet Revolution. From here, Dubček and Havel walked to the Lucerna Palace and their 24 November 1989 appearance on the balcony of the Melantrich Building. Wander through the arcade for a look at the lovely marble, glass and brass decoration; the main atrium has a 24-hour clock from the 1920s, flanked by sculptures depicting the signs of the zodiac. It was once the entrance to the offices of the Adriatica insurance company (hence the building's name).

Along the street, inside the arcade near No 16, is a [bronze plaque](#) on the wall with a cluster of hands making the peace sign and the date '17.11.89', in memory of students beaten up by police on that date (see the boxed text, [p29](#)).

West of Voršílská, the lemon-yellow walls of the [Convent of St Ursula](#) (klášter sv Voršila) frame a pink church, which has a lush baroque interior that includes a battalion of Apostle statues. Out front is the figure of St John of Nepomuk, and in the façade's lower-right niche is a statue of St Agatha holding her severed breasts – one of the more gruesome images in Catholic hagiography.

Across the road at No 7 is the Art Nouveau façade (by Osvald Polívka) of the [Viola Building](#) ([Map pp88–9](#)), former home of the Prague Insurance Co, with the huge letters 'PRAHA' entwined around five circular windows, and mosaics spelling out *život, kapitál, důchod, věno* and *pojišťuje* (life, capital, income, dowry and insurance). The building next door, a former publishing house, is also a Polívka design.

On the southern side at No 4, looking like it has been built out of old TV screens, is the [Nová Scéna](#) (1983), the 'New National Theatre' building, now home of *Laterna Magika* (see [p20](#)).

top picks

ARCHITECTURE

Despite the parade of garish ads and globalised brand names, Wenceslas Square still manages some architectural dignity, having retained some of the city's finest early-20th-century buildings. Here are the edited highlights, starting at the southern (uphill) end and working down, with even numbers on the western (left) side:

- No 25 **Grand Hotel Evropa** (1906) is perhaps the most beautiful building on the square, Art Nouveau inside and out; have a peep at the French restaurant at the rear of the ground floor, and at the 2nd-floor atrium.
- No 36 **Melantrich Building** (1914), now a Marks & Spencer; the balcony overlooking the Tramvaj Café is where Havel and Dubček appeared to announce the end of communist rule in November 1989.
- No 34 **Wiehl House** (Wiehlův dům; 1896) has a gorgeous façade decorated with neo-Renaissance murals by top Czech artist Mikuláš Aleš and others; it's named after its designer, Antonín Wiehl.
- No 6 **Baťa shoe store** (1929) is a functionalist masterpiece, designed by Ludvík Kysela for Tomáš Baťa, art patron, progressive industrialist and founder of the worldwide shoe empire.
- No 4 **Lindt Building** (1927) was also designed by Ludvík Kysela, and is one of the republic's earliest functionalist buildings.
- No 1 **Koruna Palace** (1914), with an Art Nouveau design by Antonín Pfeiffer, has a tower topped with a crown of pearls; note its tiny but charming façade around the corner on Na Příkopě.

Finally, facing the Vltava near Smetanovo nábřeží is the **National Theatre** (Národní divadlo), neo-Renaissance flagship of the Czech National Revival and one of Prague's most impressive buildings. Funded entirely by private donations and decorated inside and out by a roll call of prominent Czech artists, architect Josef Zítěk's masterpiece burned down within weeks of its 1881 opening but, incredibly, was funded again and restored under Josef Schulz in less than two years. It's now used mainly for ballet and opera performances (see p201).

Across from the theatre is the **Kavárna Slavia** (see the boxed text, p181), known for its Art Deco interior and river views, once the place to be seen or to grab an after-theatre meal. Now renovated, it's once again the place to be seen – though mainly by other tourists.

PEČEK PALACE Map pp108–9

Pečkův palác; Politických Vězňů 20; ☒ closed to the public; 🏛 Muzeum

This gloomy neo-Renaissance palace served as the wartime headquarters of the Gestapo. A memorial on the corner of the building honours the many Czechs who were tortured and executed in the basement detention cells. Today, it is home to the Ministry of Trade & Industry.

ALONG THE RIVER

The Nové Město riverfront, stretching south from the National Theatre to Vyšehrad, is lined with some of Prague's grandest 19th- and early-20th-century architecture – it's a great place for an evening stroll, when the setting sun gilds the façades with a beautiful golden light.

Masarykovo nábřeží (Masaryk Embankment; Map pp108–9) sports a series of stunning Art Nouveau buildings. At No 32 is the duck-egg green **Goethe Institute**, once the East German embassy, while No 26 is a beautiful apartment building with owls perched in the decorative foliage that twines around the door, dogs peeking from the balconies on the 5th floor, and birds perched atop the balustrade.

No 16 is the **House of the Hlahol Choir**, built in 1906 by Josef Fanta for a patriotic choral society associated with the Czech National Revival. It's decorated with elaborate musical motifs topped by a giant mosaic depicting *Music* – the motto beneath translates as 'Let the song reach the heart; let the heart reach the homeland'.

At the next bridge is **Jirásek Square** (Jiráskovo náměstí), dedicated to writer Alois Jirásek (1851–1930), author of *Old Czech Legends* (studied by all Czech schoolchildren) and an influential figure in the drive towards Czechoslovak independence. His statue is overlooked by the famous Dancing Building.

A little further along the riverbank is **Rašínovo nábřeží 78**, an apartment building designed by the grandfather of ex-president Václav Havel – this was where Havel first chose to live (in preference to Prague Castle) after being elected as president in December 1989, surely the world's least pompous presidential residence.

Two blocks south, sitting on Palackého náměstí, is Stanislav Sucharda's extraordinary Art Nouveau **František Palacký Memorial** (Map p106); a swarm of haunted bronze figures (allegories of the writer's imagination) swirling around a stodgy statue of the 19th-century historian and giant of the Czech National Revival.

DANCING BUILDING Map pp108–9

Tančíci dům; Rašínovo nábřeží 80; ☎ 17, 21
The junction where Resslova meets the river at Rašínovo nábřeží is dominated by the Dancing Building, built in 1996 by architects Vlado Milunić and Frank Gehry. The curved lines of the narrow-waisted glass tower clutched against its more upright and formal partner led to it being christened the 'Fred & Ginger Building', after legendary dancing duo Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. It's surprising how well it fits in with its ageing neighbours.

MÁNES GALLERY Map pp108–9

Galerie Mánes; ☎ 224 930 754; www.nadace-cfu.cz;
Masarykovo nábřeží 1; adult/child 60/30Kč;
🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; ☎ 17, 21

Spanning a branch of the river beneath a 15th-century water tower is the Mánes Building (1927–30), which houses an art gallery founded in the 1920s by a group of artists, headed by painter Josef Mánes, as an alternative to the Czech Academy of Arts. It is still one of Prague's best venues for viewing contemporary art, with a lively programme of changing exhibitions. The building itself, designed by Otakar Novotný, is considered a masterpiece of functionalist architecture.

SLAV ISLAND Map pp108–9

Slovanský ostrov; Masarykovo nábřeží; ☎ 17, 21
This island is a sleepy, dog-eared sandbank with pleasant gardens, river views and several jetties where you can hire **rowing boats**. Its banks were reinforced with stone in 1784, and a spa and a dye works were built in the early part of the following century. Bohemia's first train had a demonstration run here in 1841, roaring down the island at a rattling 11km/h. In 1925 the island was named after the Slav conventions that had taken place here since 1848.

In the middle stands **Žofín**, a 19th-century cultural centre that has been restored and opened as a restaurant and social venue. At the southern end is **Šitovská věž**, a 15th-century water tower (once part of a mill) with an 18th-century onion-dome roof.

CHARLES SQUARE & AROUND

With an area of more than seven hectares, Charles Square (Karlovo náměstí; Map pp108–9) is the city's biggest square; it's more like a small park, really. Presiding over it is the **Church of St Ignatius** (kostel sv Ignáce), a 1660s baroque *tour de force* designed for the Jesuits by Carlo Lurago.

The baroque palace found at the southern end of the square belongs to Charles University. It's known as **Faust House** (Faustův dům; Map p106) because, according to a popular story, this house was where Mephisto took Dr Faust away to hell through a hole in the ceiling, and because of associations with Rudolf II's English court alchemist, Edward Kelley, who toiled here in the 16th century trying to convert lead into gold.

Resslova runs west from Karlovo náměstí to the river. Halfway along is the baroque **Church of Sts Cyril & Methodius**, a 1730s work by Kilian Dientzenhofer and Paul Bayer. The crypt now houses the moving **National Memorial to the Victims of Post-Heydrich Terror**.

On the other side of Resslova you'll find the 14th-century Gothic **Church of St Wenceslas in Zderaz**, the former parish church of Zderaz, a village that predates Nové Město. On its western side are parts of a wall and windows from its 12th-century Romanesque predecessor.

The area to the east of Karlovo náměstí is occupied by Charles University's medical faculty, and is full of hospitals and clinics. Halfway between Žitná and Ječná on Štěpánská is the 14th-century **Church of St Stephen** (kostel sv Štěpána). Behind it on Na Rybníčku II is one of Prague's three surviving Romanesque rotundas, the **Rotunda of St Longinus** (rotunda sv Longina), built in the early 12th century.

CHARLES UNIVERSITY BOTANICAL GARDEN Map p106

Botanická zahrada Univerzity Karlovy; ☎ 221 953 142; **Viničná 7; admission to garden free, to glasshouses adult/child 50/25Kč;** 🕒 10am–6pm Mar–Nov, to 5pm Dec–Feb; ☎ 18, 24
Just south of Karlovo náměstí (main entrance on Na Slupi) is Charles University's botanical garden. Founded in 1775 and moved from

top picks**FOR CHILDREN**

- Boat trips (p251)
- Children's Island (p82)
- Mirror Maze (p84)
- National Technical Museum (p133)
- Prague Zoo (p140)

Smíchov to its present site in 1898, it's the country's oldest botanical garden. The steep, hillside garden concentrates on Central European flora and is especially pretty in spring.

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY & CHARLEMAGNE

Map p116

Kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie a Karla Velikého; Ke Karlovu; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat; 🕒 6, 11 to Bělehradská or 🚶 IP Pavlova

At the southern end of Ke Karlovu is a little church with a big name, founded by Charles IV in 1350 and modelled on Charlemagne's burial chapel in Aachen. In the 16th century it acquired its fabulous ribbed vault, the revolutionary unsupported span of which was attributed by some to witchcraft.

From the terrace beyond the church you can see some of Nové Město's original fortifications, and look out towards ancient Vyšehrad and the modern Nusle Bridge (Nuselský most), which vaults across the valley of the Botič creek, with six lanes of traffic on top and the metro inside.

DVOŘÁK MUSEUM Map p106

Muzeum Antonína Dvořáka; ☎ 224 923 363; www.nm.cz; Ke Karlovu 20; adult/child 50/25Kč; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 2-5.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 9.30am-1.30pm & 2-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar; 🚶 IP Pavlova

The most striking building in the drab neighbourhood south of Ječná is the energetically baroque **Vila Amerika**, a 1720s, French-style summer house designed by (you guessed it) Kilian Dientzenhofer. It's one of the city's finest baroque buildings, and now houses a museum dedicated to the composer Antonín Dvořák. Special concerts of Dvořák's music are staged here.

EMMAUS MONASTERY Map p106

Klášter Emmauz; Vyšehradská 49; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, services noon Mon-Fri, 10am Sun; 🕒 18, 24

Founded for a Slavonic Benedictine order at the request of Charles IV, and originally called Na Slovanech, the Emmaus Monastery dates from 1372. During WWII the monastery was seized by the Gestapo and the monks were sent to Dachau concentration camp, then in February 1945 it was almost destroyed by a stray Allied fire-bomb. Some monks returned after the war, but the reprieve was short-lived: in 1950 the com-

munist closed down the monastery, and tortured the prior to death. It was finally restored to the Benedictine order in 1990, and reconstruction has been going on ever since.

The monastery's Gothic **Church of Our Lady** (kostel Panny Marie), badly damaged by the 1945 bombing, reopened in 2003, though the swooping, twin spires were added back in the 1960s. The atmospheric Gothic cloisters have some fine, but faded, original frescoes dating from the 14th century, salted with bits of pagan symbolism.

Across Vyšehradská is the baroque **Church of St John of Nepomuk on the Rock** (kostel sv Jana Nepomuckého na Skalce), built in 1739 and one of the city's most beautiful Dientzenhofer churches.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF POST-HEYDRICH TERROR Map pp108-9

Národní památník obětí Heydrichiády; ☎ 224 920 686; Resslova 9; adult/child 50/20Kč; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, to 4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb; 🚶 Karlovo náměstí

In 1942 seven Czech paratroopers who were involved in the assassination of Reichs-protektor Reinhard Heydrich (see the boxed text, **opposite**) hid in the crypt of the Church of Sts Cyril & Methodius for three weeks after the killing, until their hiding place was betrayed by the Czech traitor Karel Čurda. The Germans besieged the church, first attempting to smoke the paratroopers out and then flooding the church with fire hoses. Three paratroopers were killed in the ensuing fight; the other four took their own lives rather than surrender to the Germans.

The crypt now houses a moving memorial to the men, with an exhibit and video about Nazi persecution of the Czechs. In the crypt itself you can still see the bullet marks and shrapnel scars on the walls, and signs of the paratroopers' last desperate efforts to dig an escape tunnel to the sewer under the street. On the Resslova side of the church, the narrow gap in the wall of the crypt where the Germans inserted their fire hoses is still pitted with bullet marks.

NEW TOWN HALL Map pp108-9

Novoměstská radnice; ☎ 224 948 229; www.novomestskaradnice.cz; Karlovo náměstí 23; adult/child 40/20Kč; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep; 🚶 Karlovo náměstí

The historical focus of Charles Square is the New Town Hall, built in the late 14th century

when the New Town was still new. From the window of the main hall (the tower was not built until 1456), two of Wenceslas IV's Catholic councillors were flung to their deaths in 1419 by followers of the Hussite preacher Jan Želivský, giving 'defenestration' (throwing out of a window) a lasting political meaning and sparking off the Hussite Wars. (This tactic was repeated at Prague Castle in 1618.) You can visit the Gothic Hall of Justice, which was the site of the defenestration, and climb the 221 steps to the top of the tower.

U KALICHA Map p106

☎ 224 912 557; www.ukalicha.cz; Na Bojišti 12;
 ☎ 11am-11pm; 🚶 IP Pavlova

A few blocks east of Karlovo náměstí is the pub U kalicha (At the Chalice). This is where the eponymous antihero was arrested at the beginning of Jaroslav Hašek's comic novel of WWI, *The Good Soldier Švejk* (which Hašek cranked out in instalments from his own local pub). The pub is milking the connection for all it's worth – it's an essential port of call for Švejk fans, but the rest of us can find cheaper beer and dumplings elsewhere.

VIŠEHRAD

Legend has it that Vyšehrad (High Castle) is the place where Prague was born. According to myth the wise chieftain Krok built a castle here in the 7th century, and Libuše, the cleverest of his three daughters, prophesied that a great city would rise here. Taking as her king a ploughman named Přemysl, she founded both the city of Prague and the Přemysl dynasty.

Archaeologists have discovered that various early Slavonic tribes set up camp at Vyšehrad, a crag above the Vltava River south of the Nusle Valley. The site may have been permanently settled as early as the 9th century, and Boleslav II (r 972–99) may have lived here for

a time. By the mid-11th century there was a fortified settlement, and Vratislav II (r 1061–92) moved his court here from Hradčany, beefing up the walls and adding a castle, the Basilica of St Lawrence, the original Church of Sts Peter & Paul and the Rotunda of St Martin. His successors stayed until 1140, when Vladislav II returned to Hradčany.

Vyšehrad then faded into the background until Charles IV, aware of its symbolic importance, repaired the walls and joined them to those of his new town, Nové Město. He built a small palace and decreed that the coronations of Bohemian kings should begin with a procession from here to Hradčany.

Nearly everything there was wiped out during the Hussite Wars. The fortress remained a ruin – except for a ramshackle township of artisans and traders – until after the Thirty Years' War, when Leopold I refortified it.

The Czech National Revival generated new interest in Vyšehrad as a symbol of Czech history. Painters painted it, poets sang about the old days, and Smetana set his patriotic opera *Libuše* here. In 1866 many of the old fortifications were dismantled, various buildings were restored, and the parish graveyard was converted into a national memorial cemetery. Today it is a peaceful green park with great views across the river, the haunt of old ladies walking their dogs, mothers playing with their children on the lawns, and young lovers canoodling on park benches.

BRICK GATE & CASEMATES Map p116

Vratislavova; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm
 Nov-Mar; 🚶 Vyšehrad

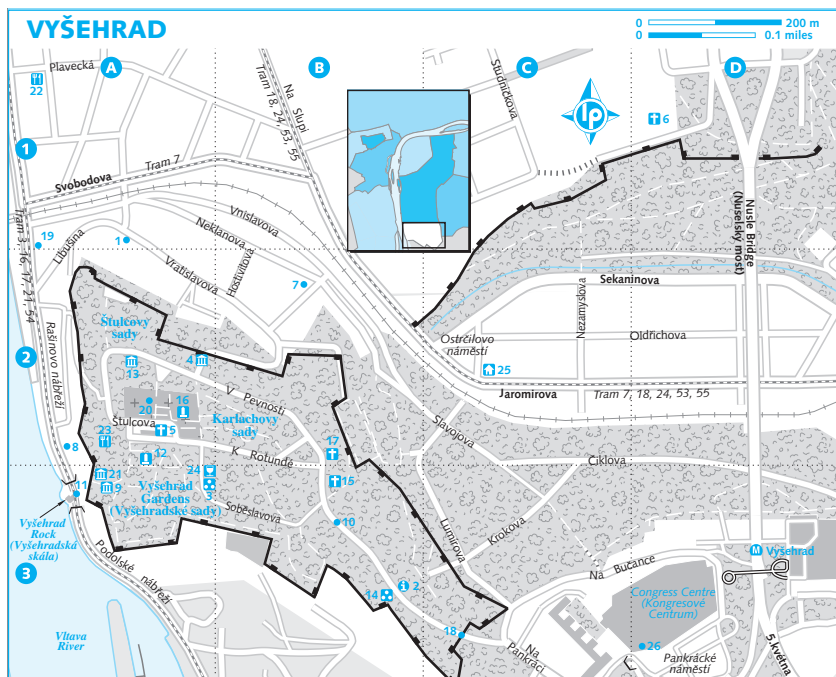
At the 19th-century **Brick Gate** (Cihelná brána; admission 10Kč) on the northern side of the fortress you can see an exhibit explaining the history of Vyšehrad and Prague's other fortifications. Here you will also find the entrance

THE HEYDRICH ASSASSINATION

In 1941, in response to a series of crippling strikes and sabotage operations by the Czech resistance movement, the German government appointed SS general Reinhard Heydrich, an antisubversion specialist, as Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia. Heydrich immediately cracked down on resistance activities with a vengeance.

In a move designed to support the resistance and boost Czech morale, Britain secretly trained a team of Czechoslovak paratroopers for an attempt to assassinate Heydrich. Astonishingly, it succeeded. On 27 May 1942, two paratroopers, Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík, attacked Heydrich as he rode in his official car through the city's Libeň district (see p142) – he later died of his wounds. The assassins and five co-conspirators fled but were betrayed in their hiding place in the Church of Sts Cyril & Methodius (see [opposite](#)); all seven died in the ensuing siege.

The Nazis reacted with a frenzied wave of terror, which included the annihilation of two entire Czech villages, Lidice and Ležáky (see p234 for more on the grim fate of Lidice) and the shattering of the underground movement.



VYŠEHRAD

INFORMATION

- Institute for Language & Preparatory Studies..... 1 A1
- Vyšehrad Information Office..... 2 B3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp115–18)

- Basilica of St Lawrence (Bazilika sv Vavřince)..... 3 A3
- Brick Gate (Cihelná Brána)..... 4 A2
- Casemates (Kasematy)..... (see 4)
- Church of Sts Peter & Paul (Kostel sv Petra a Pavla)..... 5 A2
- Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary & Charlemagne (Kostel Nanebevstí Panny Marie a Karla Velikého)..... 6 D1

- Church of the Beheading of John the Baptist (Kostelík Stěti sv Jana Křtitele)..... (see 17)
- Cubist Apartment Block..... 7 B2
- Cubist Houses..... 8 A2
- Gothic Cellar (Gotický Sklep)..... 9 A3
- Leopold Gate (Leopoldova Brána)..... 10 B3
- Libuše's Bath..... 11 A3
- Myslbek Statues..... 12 A2
- New Provost's House (Nové Proboštství)..... 13 A2
- Peak Gate (Špička Brána)..... 14 B3
- Rotunda of St Martin..... 15 B3
- Royal Palace..... (see 21)
- Slavin..... 16 A2
- St Mary Chapel in the Ramparts (Kaple Panny Marie v Hradbách)..... 17 B2

- Tábor Gate (Táborská Brána)..... 18 C3
- Villa Libušina (Cubist House)..... 19 A1
- Vyšehrad Cemetery..... 20 A2
- Vyšehrad Gallery (Galerie Vyšehrad)..... 21 A3

EATING (pp153–73)

- Oliva..... 22 A1
- Rio's Vyšehrad..... 23 A2
- U Neklana..... (see 7)

DRINKING (pp175–91)

- Občerstvení U Okénka..... 24 A3

SLEEPING (pp211–27)

- Hotel Union..... 25 C2

TRANSPORT (pp241–5)

- CS-Czechocar..... 26 D3

to the **Casemates** (adult/child 30/20Kč), a system of vaulted brick tunnels beneath the ramparts. The largest of these is the barrel-vaulted **Gorlice Hall**, which served as an air-raid shelter and potato store during WWII. It now houses six of the original baroque statues from Charles Bridge, including *St Ludmila with the Young St Wenceslas* by Matthias Braun (the other originals are in the **Lapidárium**; see p131), as well as temporary art exhibitions in sum-

mer. The Casemates ticket also gives admission to the **Gothic Cellar** (see **opposite**).

CHURCH OF STS PETER & PAUL

Map p116

Kostel sv Petra a Pavla; ☎ 249 113 353; K Rotundě 10; adult/child 10/5Kč; 🕒 9am-noon & 1-5pm

Wed-Mon; 🚶 Vyšehrad
Vratislav II's Church of Sts Peter & Paul has been built and rebuilt over the centuries,

culminating in a neogothic work-over by Josef Mocker in the 1880s. The twin steeples, a distinctive feature of the Vyšehrad skyline, were added in 1903. The interior is a swirling acid trip of colourful Art Nouveau frescoes, painted in the 1920s by various Czech artists.

GOTHIC CELLAR Map p116

Gotický sklep; Vyšehradský sady; adult/child 30/20Kč; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar;

📍 Vyšehrad

The restored Gothic cellars that once lay beneath Charles IV's palace (now gone) house an exhibition dedicated to the history and legend of Vyšehrad. It is packed with archaeological finds and religious relics associated with life on the fortress from 3800 BC until the present day.

ROTUNDA OF ST MARTIN Map p116

Rotunda sv Martina; V Pevnosti; ☎ closed to the public; 📍 Vyšehrad

Vratislav II's little chapel, the 11th-century Rotunda of St Martin, is Prague's oldest surviving building. In the 18th century it was used as a powder magazine. The door and frescoes date from a renovation made about 1880.

Nearby are a 1714 plague column and the baroque **St Mary Chapel in the Ramparts** (kaple Panny Marie v hradbách), dating from about 1750, and behind them the remains of the 14th-century **Church of the Beheading of St John the Baptist** (kostelík Stětí sv Jana Křtitele).

VYŠEHRAD CITADEL Map p116

☎ 241 410 348; www.praha-vysehrad.cz; V Pevnosti 5; admission free; ☎ grounds 24hr, information office 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar; 📍 Vyšehrad

The main entrance to the citadel is through the **Tábor Gate** (Táborská brána) at the southeastern end. On the other side of the brick ramparts and ditch are the scant remnants of the Gothic **Peak Gate** (Špička brána), a fragment of arch that is now part of the information office – all that remains of Charles IV's 14th-century fortifications. Beyond that lies the grand, 17th-century **Leopold Gate** (Leopoldova brána), the most elegant of the fortress gates.

It's possible to walk around most of the battlements, with grand views over the river and city. Beside the southwestern

TRANSPORT: VYŠEHRAD

Metro Vyšehrad metro station (on line C) is five minutes' walk east of the citadel, past the Congress Centre (Kongresové centrum).

Tram Lines 17 and 21 run along the riverbank below the citadel; trams 7, 18 and 24 run along the Nusle Valley to its east. From the tram stop on either line, it's a steep climb up to the citadel.

bastion are the foundations of a small **royal palace** built by Charles IV but dismantled in 1655. Perched on the bastion itself is the **Vyšehrad Gallery** (galérie Vyšehrad; admission 10Kč; ☎ same as information office), which holds temporary exhibitions. Below the bastion are some ruined guard towers poetically named **Libuše's Bath**. You can also examine the foundations of the 11th-century Romanesque **Basilica of St Lawrence** (bazilika sv Vavřince; admission 5Kč; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-4pm Sat & Sun). Ask for the key at the snack bar next door.

South of the Church of Sts Peter & Paul lie the **Vyšehrad Gardens** (Vyšehradské sady), with four imposing **statues** by Josef Myslbek based on Czech legends. Prague's founders Libuše and Přemysl are in the northwestern corner; in the southeast are Šárka and Ctirad (see p130). On Sundays in May, June and August, open-air concerts are held here at 2.30pm, with anything from jazz to oompah bands to chamber music.

In the northwestern corner is the former **New Provost's House** (Nové proboštství), built in 1874. In the adjacent park, **Štulpovy sady**, there is an open-air **Summer Theatre** (Letní scéna) where you can catch a concert or cultural show at 6pm on most Thursdays or the odd children's performance on Tuesday afternoon (usually around 2pm).

The information centre sells a map and guide to Vyšehrad's buildings in English, German, French and Italian.

VYŠEHRAD CEMETERY Map p116

Vyšehradský hřbitov; ☎ 249 198 815; K Rotundě 10; admission free; ☎ 8am-7pm May-Sep, to 6pm Mar, Apr & Oct, to 5pm Nov-Feb; 📍 Vyšehrad For Czechs, the Vyšehrad Cemetery is the hill's main attraction. In the late 19th century the parish graveyard was made into a memorial cemetery for famous figures of Czech culture, with a graceful, neo-Renaissance arcade running along the

northern and western sides. For the real heroes, an elaborate pantheon called the **Slavín** (loosely, 'Hall of Fame'), designed by Antonín Wiehl, was added at the eastern end in 1894; its 50-odd occupants include painter Alfons Mucha, sculptor Josef Myslbek and architect Josef Gočár. The motto reads *Ač Zemeřeli Jeřtě Mluví* (Though dead, they still speak).

The 600 or so graves in the rest of the cemetery include those of composers Smetana and Dvořák and writers Karel Čapek, Jan Neruda and Božena Němcová; there's a directory of famous names at the entrance. One word that you will see all over the place is *rodina* – it means 'family'.

Many of the tombs and headstones are themselves works of art – Dvořák's is a sculpture by Ladislav Šaloun, the Art Nouveau sculptor who created the Jan Hus monument in Old Town Square. To find it from the gate beside the church, head straight across to the colonnade on the far side, and turn left; it's the fifth tomb on your right. To find Smetana's grave, go to the Slavín and stand facing the monument; it's the pale-grey obelisk to your right.

The annual Prague Spring music festival (see the boxed text, p202) kicks off on 12 May, the anniversary of Smetana's death, with a procession from his grave at Vyšehrad to the **Municipal House** (p99).

AROUND WENCESLAS SQUARE

Walking Tour

1 National Museum Begin at the steps in front of the neo-Renaissance **National Museum** (Národní muzeum; p110), which dominates the upper end of Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí). From the steps you have a grand view down the square, a focal point of Czech history since the 19th century. At the foot of the steps is a pavement memorial to student Jan Palach (see the boxed text, p29).

2 Statue of St Wenceslas Cross the busy traffic artery of Mezibranská to Prague's famous landmark, the equestrian **statue of St Wenceslas** (sv Václav), the 10th-century 'Good King Wenceslas' of Christmas-carol fame.

3 Memorial to the Victims of Communism A flower bed a short distance downhill from the statue contains a modest **memorial** to

those who died for their resistance to communism (see also p84). Around the anniversary of Jan Palach's death (19 January) the memorial is surrounded by votive candles, flowers and photographs.

4 Grand Hotel Evropa Wander down the middle of the square, admiring the grand buildings on either side. The finest is the 1906 Art Nouveau **Grand Hotel Evropa** (p112) at No 25, about halfway down on the right.

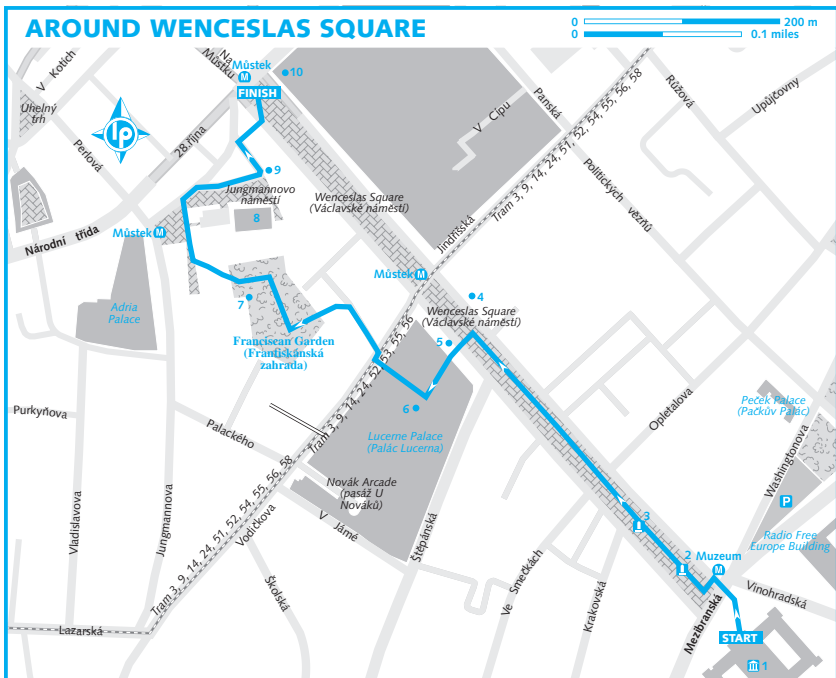
5 Melantrich Building Across the street at No 36 is the **Melantrich Building**, from whose balcony the death of Czech communism was pronounced by Alexander Dubček and Václav Havel on 24 November 1989 (it now houses a Marks & Spencer store).

6 Lucerna Palace Turn left into **Pasáž Rokoko**, a glittering, mirror-lined Art Deco shopping arcade directly across the street from the Grand Hotel Evropa. It leads to the central atrium of the **Lucerna Palace** (palác Lucerna; p107), dominated by David Černý's **Horse**, an ironic twist on the St Wenceslas statue in the square outside (it helps to know that the first prime minister of the Czech Republic was also a Václav). For more on David Černý, see the boxed texts, p39 and p137. Turn right beneath the dead horse (you'll see when you get there), and follow the passage to Vodičkova. Bear right across the street and enter the **Světozor arcade**. Up ahead you'll see a beautiful **stained-glass window** dating from the late 1940s – it's actually an advertisement for Tesla Radio, an old Czech electronics company.

7 Franciscan Garden At the far end of the Světozor arcade, turn left into the **Franciscan Garden** (Františkánská zahrada), a hidden oasis of peace and greenery dominated by the soaring nave of the Church of Our Lady of the Snows. Make your way to the far northern corner of the garden, diagonally opposite from where you came in, and you'll find an exit to Jungmann Square (Jungmannovo náměstí).

8 Church of Our Lady of the Snows Go past the arch leading to the **Church of Our Lady of the Snows** (kostel Panny Marie sněžné; p105), an old Gothic church and former Hussite stronghold, and turn right.

9 Cubist lamppost Keep to the right of the Lancôme shop, and you will come to what



WALK FACTS

Start National Museum (metro Muzeum)

End Na Můstku (metro Můstek)

Distance 1.5km

Time 45 minutes

Exertion Easy

Fuel stops Various cafés around Nové Město

must be the only **Cubist lamppost** in the entire world, dating from 1915. Turn left here and

then duck right through the short **Lindt arcade** and you will emerge at the foot of Wenceslas Square.

10 Koruna Palác Across the street, on the corner with Na Příkopě, is the Art Nouveau **Koruna Palác** (Crown Palace) – look up and you will see the corner tower with the crown of pearls that gives the building its name. From here you can head right along Na Příkopě to the **Municipal House** and the beginning of the Not Quite the Royal Way walking tour (p102), or retire to one of the many nearby bars and cafés.

VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE

Eating [p166](#); Drinking [p184](#); Shopping [p149](#); Sleeping [p219](#)

Upscale Vinohrady is one of the few parts of Prague that has a consistent personality throughout. In Vinohrady's case, that would be bourgeois. An address in an early 20th-century townhouse on one of Vinohrady's leafy streets marks one as upwardly mobile, enjoying the good life, and perhaps eyeing a move someday to a villa in Střešovice or the nether reaches of Dejvice (in Prague terms, the sign that one's really arrived).

The name Vinohrady means 'vineyards' and refers to the vines that were cultivated here in centuries past; as recently as 200 years ago there was little urbanisation. There is still some wine cultivation in the area and even a lovely, restored wooden gazebo where you can sample some of the local product ([p186](#)).

Vinohrady's physical and commercial heart is Peace Square (náměstí Míru), dominated by the neogothic Church of St Ludmilla (kostel sv Ludmily). Right behind it is the neo-Renaissance National House (Národní dům), holding exhibitions and concerts. On the north side of the square is the Vinohrady Theatre (divadlo na Vinohradech), built in 1909, a popular drama venue.

For visitors, there are not many traditional sights, but it's a great place to ramble. The streets to the right or left of the main avenue, Vinohradská, are filled with small cafés and restaurants. There are plenty of parks and at least one terrific open-air beer garden ([p184](#)). It's also become the unofficial centre of Prague's gay community, with small bars tucked here and there, as well as the home of mammoth dance club Valentino ([p196](#)) in the former Radio Palác complex.

Vršovice is not quite as sophisticated, yet it's hoping a little of Vinohrady's polish might rub off. The area along Francouzská, where it meets Moskevská, including Voroněžská and Krymská, is rapidly gentrifying, and worth a look.

CHURCH OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF OUR LORD Map p121

Kostel Nejsvětějšího Srdce Páně; náměstí Jiřího z Poděbrad 19; ☎ services 8am & 6pm Mon-Sat, 7am, 9am, 11am & 6pm Sun; 📄 Jiřího z Poděbrad This church was built in 1932 and is one of Prague's most original and unusual pieces of 20th-century architecture. It's the work of Jože Plečnik, the Slovenian architect who also raised a few eyebrows with his additions to Prague Castle. Inspired by Egyptian temples and early Christian basilicas, the glazed-brick building sports a massive, tombstone-like bell tower pierced by a circular glass clock-window.

VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE

Walking Tour

This walk (see [Map p123](#)) covers a lot of ground but thankfully has few hills. It meanders along some of Prague's nicest residential streets, allowing you to indulge your inner real estate agent for a moment. In the first years after the 1989 revolution, apartments in Vinohrady were going for a song; now they fetch prices that would not be out of place in Paris or London. You could plan a midmorning start, with a light lunch at Viniční Altán or a bigger meal at Mozaika, or an early afternoon start

TRANSPORT: VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE

Metro Line A runs east through Vinohrady starting at Náměstí Míru station.

Tram Line 11 runs east along Vinohradská and south down Bělehradská; lines 10 and 16 run east along Korunní; lines 4, 22 and 23 run east along Francouzská, turning south to meet up with lines 6, 7 and 24, which also run east along Vršovická.

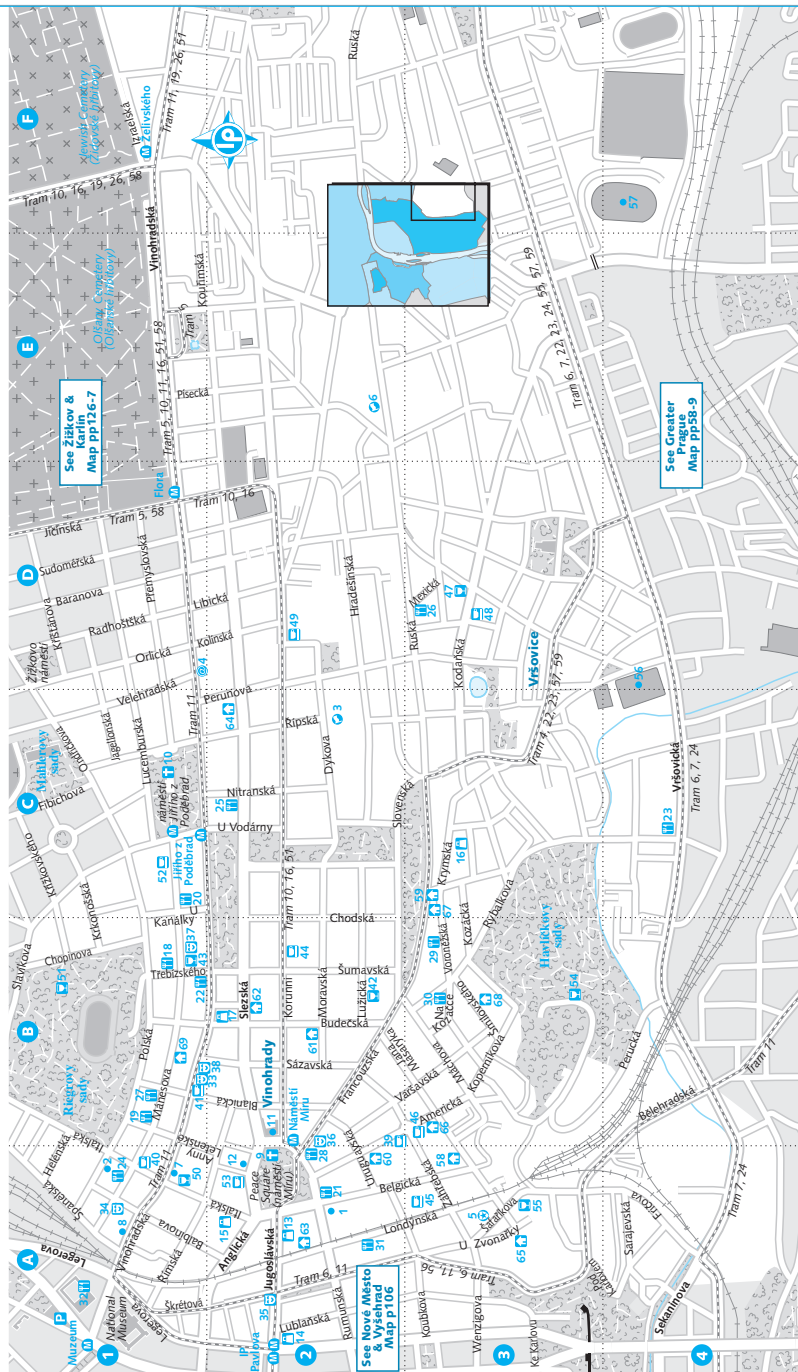
and wind up with a beer at the Riegrovy sady beer garden.

1 Peace Square (náměstí Míru) Known affectionately to Czechs as 'Mirák' – a diminutive form of 'Míru' – this leafy square is the lively heart of Vinohrady. The name still has faint echoes of communist times, when everything was labelled 'Peace' this or 'Peace' that. After 1989, there was talk of scrapping the name. In the end, though, Prague residents decided they didn't mind, and the 'Peace' stayed.

2 Americká Leave the square via **Americká**, a quiet residential street leading south. It's hard to believe now, but by the time of the Velvet Revolution this street was badly rundown; several apartment houses were even abandoned.

VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE

0 400 m
0 0.2 miles






See Žitňov & Karlín
Map pp126-7

See Greater Prague
Map pp58-9



VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE

INFORMATION						
Lekarna U sv Ludmily.....	1 A2	Aromi.....	20 C1	Dobrá Trafika.....	44 B2	
Mary's Travel & Tourist Service.....	2 A1	Café FX.....	(see 35)	Kavárna Medúza.....	45 A3	
New Zealand Consulate.....	3 C2	Cheers.....	21 A2	Kavárna Zanzibar.....	46 B3	
Pl@neta.....	4 D1	Chudoba.....	22 B1	Mon Ami.....	47 D3	
Police Station.....	5 A3	Huang He.....	23 C4	Nanocafé.....	48 D3	
South African Embassy.....	6 E2	Kavárna Pavilón.....	(see 17)	Out.....	49 D2	
Stop City Accommodation.....	7 A1	Masala.....	24 A1	Popo/Café Petl.....	50 A1	
Wittmann Tours.....	8 A1	Mozalka.....	25 C2	Riegrový Sady Beer Garden.....	51 B1	
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp120-4)			Osteria Da Clara.....	26 D3	Ryba na Ruby.....	52 C1
Church of St Ludmilla (Kostel sv Ludmily).....	9 A2	Pasticčka.....	27 B1	Sahara Café.....	53 A2	
Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord (Kostel Najsvětějšího Srdce Páne).....	10 C1	Pizzeria Grosseto.....	28 A2	Viniční Altán.....	54 B3	
National House (Národní Dům).....	11 B2	Sedm Krasavic.....	29 B3	Zvonafká.....	55 A3	
Vinohrady Theatre (Divadlo na Vinohradech).....	12 A2	U Dědka.....	30 B3	SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp205-10)		
SHOPPING 			Veg Food.....	31 A2	FC Bohemians Stadium.....	56 D4
Dům Porcelánu.....	13 A2	Zahrada v Opeře.....	32 A1	Stadión Eden.....	57 F4	
Karel Vávra.....	14 A2	ENTERTAINMENT  (pp193-203)			SLEEPING  (pp211-27)	
Orientální Koberce Paláčka.....	(see 38)	Bordo.....	33 B1	Amethyst.....	58 A3	
Passion Chocolat.....	15 A2	Le Clan.....	34 A1	Czech Inn.....	59 C3	
Shakespeare & Sons.....	16 C3	Radost FX.....	35 A2	Holiday Home.....	60 A2	
Vinohradský Pavilón.....	17 B2	Retro Music Hall.....	36 B2	Hotel Anna.....	61 B2	
EATING  (pp153-73)			Skutečnost.....	(see 59)	Hotel Claris.....	62 B2
Ambiente.....	18 B1	Termix.....	37 B1	Hotel Lunik.....	63 A2	
Amigos.....	19 B1	Valentino.....	38 B1	Hotel Sieber.....	64 C2	
DRINKING   (pp175-91)			Blatouch.....	39 B2	Le Palais Hotel.....	65 A3
			Café Celebrity.....	40 B1	Orion.....	66 B3
			Caffé Kaaba.....	41 A1	Pension Arco.....	67 C3
			Club Stella.....	42 B2	Pension Beetle.....	68 B3
			Corner Bar & Bistro.....	43 B1	Penzion Mánes.....	69 B1

Under communism, older buildings such as these were poorly maintained and the vogue was to get a new place in a high-rise housing estate – a *panelák* – on the outskirts of town. Now the trend is exactly the opposite. Follow the street and walk through the small roundabout, marked by an ugly fountain built a couple of years ago chiefly to keep people from parking here. At this point Americká become Koperníková and ends at the park Havlíčkovy sady.

3 Havlíčkovy sady This rocky hillside park marks the border between Vinohrady and Vršovice and is particularly popular with lovers (since it's relatively secluded) and mothers with strollers (which is arguably a logical consequence of the 'lovers' part). There's no prescribed walk for exploring the park – just choose the most inviting path leading vaguely downhill. Look for signs to the wine garden and gazebo [Viniční Altán](#) (p186).

4 Viniční Altán At this stage you're likely to have one of those light-bulb moments when everything suddenly seems clear: this is how Vinohrady ('vineyards') got its name. Open-air wine gardens are a rarity in Prague and none are as nice as this one, with its wooden

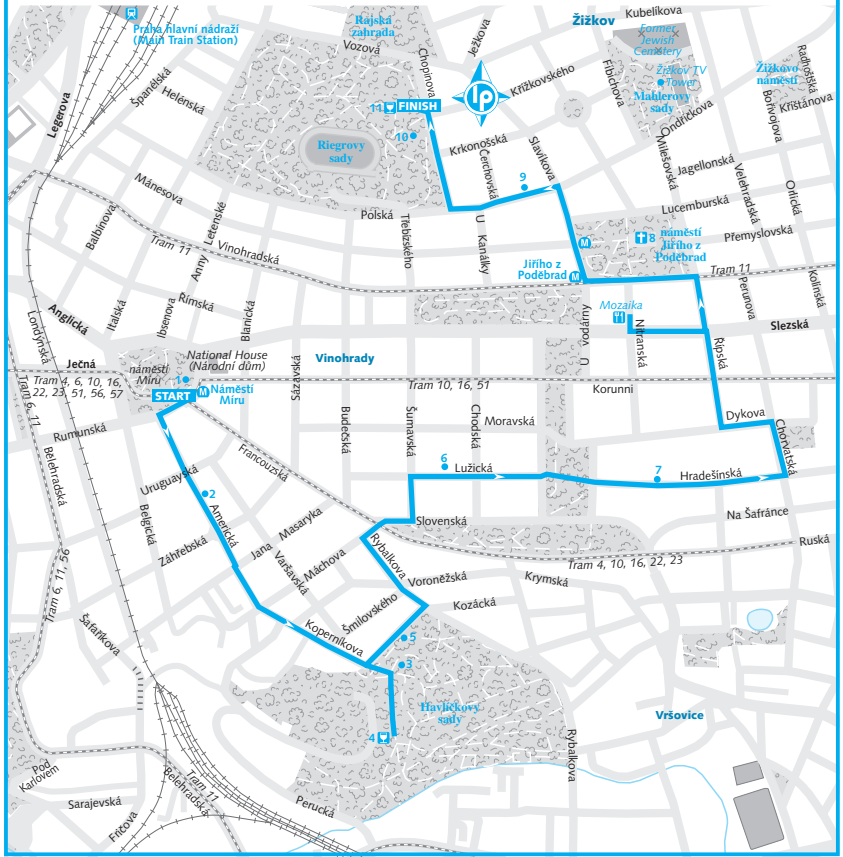
gazebo overlooking a terraced hillside lined with grape vines. The wine list includes bottles from around the world, but go with a local vintage. On the food side, the choices are limited to salads and sausages – mostly to accompany the beverages.

5 U Havlíčkových Sadů Retrace your steps as best you can through the park, back to the street that lines the park, [U Havlíčkových Sadů](#). Follow this to the right, then make a left at the end of the street onto Rybalkova. Follow Rybalkova, passing the street Voroněžská, which leads down into Vršovice, and continue on to Máchova. At Máchova turn right, crossing busy Francouzská onto Šumavská, and then make a right at Lužická.

6 Lužická This is another classic, tree-lined Vinohrady street, filled with handsome apartment houses and rapidly rising housing valuations – which is just the way the locals like it. [Lužická](#) empties out into a small park. Cut straight ahead through park, and onto the street Hradešínská.

7 Hradešínská This street and the one that parallels it to the right, Na Šafránci, have some of the most beautiful private villas in this part of the city. The most famous of these is at

VINOHRADY & VRŠOVICE WALKING TOUR



WALK FACTS

- Start** Peace Square (metro Náměstí Míru or tram 4, 10, 16, 22, 23)
- End** Riegrovy sady beer garden (metro Jiřího z Poděbrad or tram 11)
- Distance** 4km to 5km
- Time** Two to three hours
- Exertion** Moderate
- Fuel stops** Viniční Altán, Mozaika, Riegrovy sady beer garden

Hradešinská 6, the family home of early modern Czech architect Jan Kotěra, built in 1908. Turn left at Chorvatská and left again onto Dykova, then right onto Řípská, with a dead-on view of Žižkov's **TV Tower (p128)** in the background. If it's mealtime, walk one more block to the

left to Nitranská to **Mozaika (p167)**, one of the best newer restaurants in the city. At lunch you probably won't have to book ahead, but it can get crowded at dinner.

8 Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord Řípská takes you eventually to Vinohradská and náměstí Jiřího z Poděbrad, defined by the imposing dark-red brickwork and enormous clock of one of the city's most controversial churches (**p120**), the work of the modern Slovene master Jože Plečnik. Unless it's Sunday around Mass time, you're unlikely to get a glimpse inside, but walk around to the front entrance just in case the door is open. To continue the walk, find the street Slavikova that runs past the church's front entrance and follow it to the right, arriving at **Polská**.

9 Polská Walk left onto **Polská** for another row of handsome townhouses in various states of disrepair and renovation. About 200m down the road, you'll see the small street Chopinova, which runs to the right. Take this and walk uphill, passing the streets Krkonošská (with another great view of the Žižkov TV Tower) and then Na Švihance.

10 Riegrovy sady You'll see the entrance to Vinohrady's largest park, **Riegrovy sady**, to the left, just opposite Na Švihance. Before dipping into the park you might want to meander down Krkonošská or Na Švihance. Both are

lined with beautifully restored townhouses, many with Art Nouveau façades.

11 Riegrovy sady beer garden The entrance to the beer garden is about 50m from the park entrance; you'll see it to the left as you follow the walkway in. End the walk here or continue another 100m along the path for an amazing panorama of Prague, with Prague Castle in the distance. To return to the centre, retrace your steps to the Jiřího z Poděbrad metro. Alternatively, follow the path in the park downhill, which takes you to the bottom of Vinohradská, from where you can walk to the centre or take tram 11.

ŽIŽKOV & KARLÍN

Eating [p168](#); Drinking [p186](#); Sleeping [p221](#)

Named after the one-eyed Hussite hero, Jan Žižka, who defeated the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund here in 1420, Žižkov was one of Prague's earliest industrial suburbs. It has long had a reputation as a rough-and-ready, working-class neighbourhood, and was full of left-wing revolutionary fervour well before the communist takeover of 1948 – in fact, Žižkov was an independent municipality from 1881 till 1922 and was widely known as the 'people's republic of Žižkov'.

Today it is one of Prague's liveliest districts, with more bars per capita than any other part of Prague (or indeed, it is claimed, any other part of Europe). It's still pretty rough around the edges and much of the district is still grimy and run-down, but the streets near the city centre are slowly getting a face-lift as gentrification creeps in – the upper part of the district is already being referred to in estate agents' adverts as 'Lower Vinohrady'.

The district is dominated by two prominent hilltop landmarks – the communist-vintage TV Tower and the National Monument. The latter sits atop Žižkov Hill, originally known as Vítkov. The famous Battle of Vítkov took place in July 1420 on the long, narrow ridge that separates the Žižkov and Karlín districts. A colossal statue of Jan Žižka ([Map pp126–7](#)), the victorious Hussite general, was erected here in 1950, commanding superb views across Staré Město to Prague Castle.

The mostly residential suburb of Karlín lies to the north of Žižkov, squeezed between Žižkov Hill and the Vltava River. It was devastated by the floods of 2002, and since then has been undergoing massive redevelopment, with new glass-and-steel office complexes rising along the banks of the river. The older part of the district, along Křižíkova, is another up-and-coming area, with lots of lovely old Art Nouveau buildings – Lýčkovo namesti is one of the prettiest squares in the city.

ARMY MUSEUM [Map pp126–7](#)

Armádní muzeum; ☎ 973 204 924; [www.vhu.cz](#);
U Památníku 2, Žižkov; admission free; 🕒 9.30am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 Florenc

On the way up Žižkov Hill you will find this grim-looking barracks of a museum, which displays a courtyard full of rusting tanks and exhibits on the history of the Czechoslovak army and resistance movement from 1918 to 1945. There is also a fascinating exhibition on the 1942 assassination of Reinhard Heydrich (see the boxed text, [p115](#)), with pride of place going to the Mercedes in which Heydrich was travelling when the attack took place.

JEWISH CEMETERY [Map pp126–7](#)

Židovské hřbitovy; Izraelská, Žižkov; admission free;
🕒 9am–5pm Sun–Thu & 9am–2pm Fri Apr–Oct,
9am–4pm Sun–Thu & 9am–2pm Fri Nov–Mar, closed
on Jewish hols; 🚶 Želivského

Franz Kafka is buried in this cemetery, which opened around 1890 when the older Jewish cemetery – now at the foot of the [TV Tower \(p128\)](#) – was closed. To find Kafka's grave, follow the main avenue east (signposted), turn right at row 21, then left at the wall; it's at the end of the 'block'.

Fans make a pilgrimage on 3 June, the anniversary of his death.

The entrance is beside Želivského metro station; men should cover their heads (yarmulkes are available at the gate). Last admission is 30 minutes before closing.

KARLÍN STUDIOS [Map pp126–7](#)

☎ 251 511 804; [www.karlinstudios.cz](#); Křižíkova
34; admission free; 🕒 noon–6pm Tue–Sun;
🚶 Křižíkova

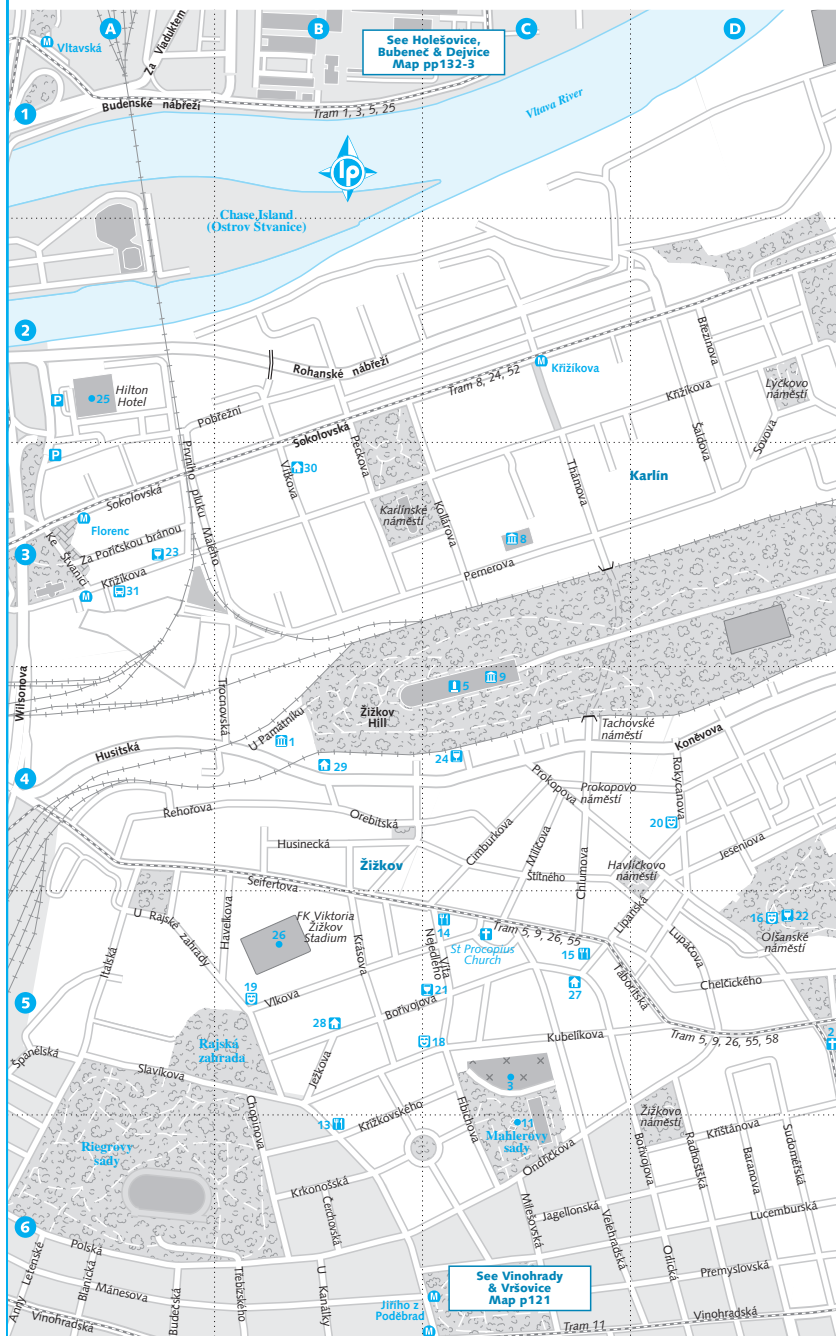
Housed in a converted factory building, this complex of artists' studios includes a public art gallery that showcases the best of Czech contemporary art, plus two small commercial galleries. This is the place to come and see what's happening at the cutting edge of art in the city.

NATIONAL MONUMENT [Map pp126–7](#)

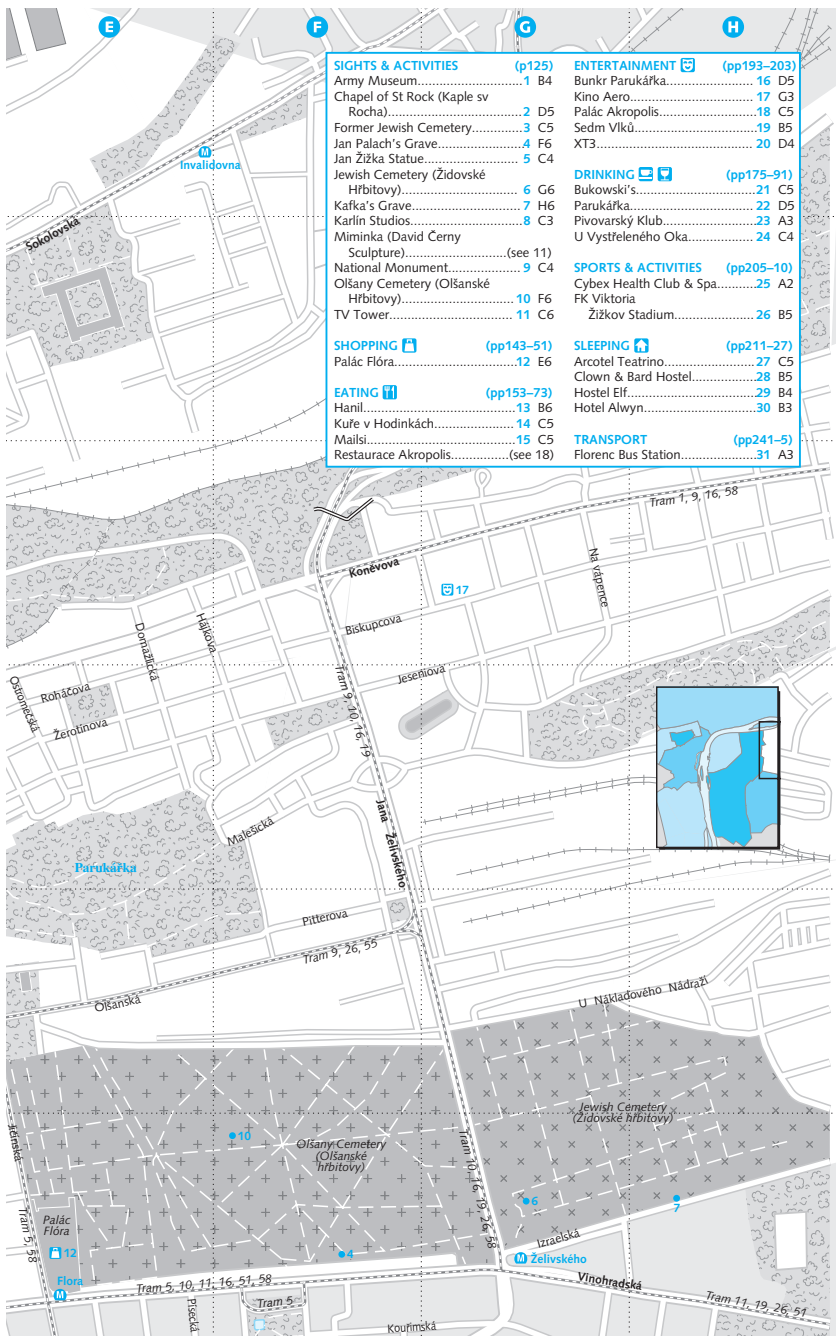
Národní památník; ☎ 222 781 676; U Památníku
1900, Žižkov; 🚶 Florenc

Although not, strictly speaking, a legacy of the communist era – it was completed in the 1930s – the huge monument atop Žižkov Hill is, in the minds of most Praguers over a certain age, inextricably linked with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and

ŽIŽKOV & KARLÍN



NEIGHBOURHOODS ŽIŽKOV & KARLÍN



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (p125)	ENTERTAINMENT (pp193-203)
Army Museum.....1 B4	Bunkr Parukářka.....16 D5
Chapel of St Rock (Kaple sv Rocha).....2 D5	Kino Aero.....17 G3
Former Jewish Cemetery.....3 C5	Palác Akropolis.....18 C5
Jan Palach's Grave.....4 F6	Sedm Vlků.....19 B5
Jan Žižka Statue.....5 C4	XT3.....20 D4
Jewish Cemetery (Židovské Hřbitovy).....6 G6	DRINKING (pp175-91)
Kafka's Grave.....7 H6	Bukowski's.....21 C5
Karlín Studios.....8 C3	Parukářka.....22 D5
Miminka (David Černý Sculpture).....(see 11)	Pivovarský Klub.....23 A3
National Monument.....9 C4	U Vystřeleného Oka.....24 C4
Olsánský Cemetery (Olsánské Hřbitovy).....10 F6	SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp205-10)
TV Tower.....11 C6	Cyberx Health Club & Spa.....25 A2
SHOPPING (pp143-51)	FK Viktoria Žižkov Stadium.....26 B5
Palác Flóra.....12 E6	SLEEPING (pp211-27)
EATING (pp153-73)	Arcotel Teatrino.....27 C5
Hanič.....13 B6	Clown & Bard Hostel.....28 B5
Kuře v Hodinkách.....14 C5	Hostel Elf.....29 B4
Mails.....15 C5	Hotel Alwyn.....30 B3
Restaurace Akropolis.....(see 18)	TRANSPORT (pp241-5)
	Florenc Bus Station.....31 A3

JAROSLAV SEIFERT

Born into a working-class family in Žižkov, the poet and journalist Jaroslav Seifert (1901–86) is the only Czech (so far) to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Although he was originally a member of the Communist Party, he was later expelled after protesting against its increasingly 'Bolshevik tendencies' and, along with Václav Havel, was a signatory of the 1977 human rights charter, Charter 77. Hailed as a spokesman for the people of Czechoslovakia, and a standard-bearer for freedom of expression during the years of communist suppression, he was a vocal critic of the communist government; one of his best-known sayings was, 'If a writer is silent, he is lying.'

in particular with Klement Gottwald, the country's first 'worker-president'.

Designed in the 1920s as a memorial to the 15th-century Hussite commander Jan Žižka, and to the soldiers who had fought for Czechoslovak independence, it was still under construction in 1939 when the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany made the 'Monument to National Liberation', as it was called, seem like a sick joke.

After 1948 the Communist Party appropriated the story of Jan Žižka and the Hussites to use for propaganda purposes, extolling them as shining examples of Czech peasant power. The communists completed the National Monument with the installation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Bohumil Kafka's gargantuan bronze statue of Žižka. But they didn't stop there.

In 1953 the monument's mausoleum – originally intended to hold the remains of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's founding father – received the embalmed body of the recently deceased Klement Gottwald, displayed to the public in a refrigerated glass chamber, just like his more illustrious comrade Lenin in Moscow's Red Square. It soon became a compulsory outing for school groups and busloads of visiting tourists from around the Soviet Bloc. Gottwald's morticians, however, were not as adept as the Russians – by 1962 the body had decayed so badly that it had to be cremated.

Since 1989 the monument has been closed to the public except on a few special occasions (although you can wander

freely around the exterior). This is a pity; although the massive memorial building has all the elegance of the reactor house at a nuclear power station, the interior is a spectacular extravaganza of polished marble and gilt, and its memorials – Soviet as well as Czech – allow a glimpse into a period of Czech history that many would prefer to forget.

Things are looking up, though – at the time of research the National Monument was undergoing a two-year renovation project, and was scheduled to open to the public in October 2009 with a new museum and café.

OLŠANY CEMETERY Map pp126–7

Olšanské hřbitovy; Vinohradská 153, Žižkov; admission free; ☎ 8am–7pm May–Sep, to 6pm Mar, Apr & Oct, to 5pm Nov–Feb; 📍 Flora Huge and atmospheric, Prague's main burial ground was founded in 1680 to handle the increased deaths during a plague epidemic; the oldest stones can be found in the northwestern corner, near the 17th-century **Chapel of St Roch** (kaple sv Rocha). There are several entrances to the cemetery running along Vinohradská, east of Flora metro station, and also beside the chapel on Olšanská.

Jan Palach, the student who set himself on fire on the steps of the National Museum in January 1969 to protest the Soviet invasion (see the boxed text, p29), is buried here. To find his grave, enter the main gate (flanked by flower shops) on Vinohradská and turn right – it's about 50m along on the left of the path.

TV TOWER Map pp126–7

Televizní vysílač; ☎ 242 418 784; www.tower.cz; Mahlerovy sady 1, Žižkov; adult/child under 6/child 6–14/student 150/free/60/120Kč; 🕒 10am–11.30pm; 📍 Jiřího z Poděbrad

Prague's tallest landmark – and, depending on your tastes, either its ugliest or its most futuristic feature – is the 216m-tall TV Tower, erected between 1985 and 1992. It dominates the skyline from most parts of the city, and is floodlit at night in the national colours of red, white and blue.

The viewing platforms, reached by high-speed lifts, have comprehensive information boards in English and French explaining what you can see; there's also a

restaurant at 66m up. But the most bizarre thing about it is the 10 giant crawling babies with coin-slots for faces that appear to be exploring the outside of the tower – an installation called *Miminka* (Mummy) by artist David Černý (see the boxed texts, p39 and p137).

The tower is built on the site of a **former Jewish cemetery** (admission 20Kč; 🕒 9am-1pm Tue & Thu). The cemetery was opened after the **Old Jewish Cemetery** (p97) in Josefov was closed, and remained in use until 1890, when the much larger **Jewish Cemetery** (p125) off Vínohradská was opened.

HOLEŠOVICE, BUBENEČ & DEJVICE

Eating p169; Drinking p187; Shopping p150; Sleeping p222

Holešovice, Bubeneč and Dejvice are contiguous neighbourhoods, running east to west, north of the Old Town across the Vltava. Holešovice, the furthest east, nestles inside the big bend of the Vltava, and runs west. It's bisected by a major rail line and highway into distinct eastern and western halves. Bubeneč, in the middle and largely residential, occupies the land directly north of Old Town on the other side of Letná Park. Its defining features are two major parks, Letná Gardens (Letenské sady) and Stromovka. Dejvice, a sprawling, mostly green area to the west, is situated north of Malá Strana and Hradčany.

For decades, Holešovice was badly neglected. It was long considered the 'German' area of the city and became rundown in the decades after WWII when many of the residents left or were expelled. It didn't help that the district was chopped in two by insensitive rail and road construction. The far eastern half, built around the container ports on the Vltava, was the closest Prague had to a true slum.

All of that changed in 2002, when the Vltava flood inundated the low-level areas around the river. The flood's aftermath saw a massive injection of development funds into the neighbourhood. The district's former brewery is now being converted into luxury apartments and office complexes. High-priced condos and office towers now line the western bank of the Vltava, and clubs, restaurants and hotels are moving in. The future looks bright.

Holešovice is home to the vast exhibition grounds known as the Výstaviště (Map pp132–3). Many of the buildings were built to house the 1891 Jubilee Exhibition and are still impressive in a faded-glory kind of way. These include the Prague Pavilion and the grand, Art Nouveau Palace of Industry. Sadly, though, the Výstaviště grounds have been allowed to fall into disrepair and look a little shabby these days. There are a couple of attractions here, including the T-Mobile Arena, one of the leading concert and ice hockey venues in town, but you're not likely to want to linger long.

Bubeneč, up the hill from the western side of Holešovice, has always been a comfortable middle-class neighbourhood, and it's no different now. Anchored by two of Prague's nicest parks, the late 19th-century townhouses on both sides of central avenue Milady Horákové and to the north around Stromovka Park are in high demand. Many embassies and villas, including the spectacular residence of the US ambassador, are here.

Dejvice, further to the west, is a mix of university campuses and residential areas in the western part that merges into the leafy backstreets of Prague's embassy district in the eastern section. There's not too much to see out here, but there are some good restaurants and accommodation options.

Just north of Dejvice is the unusual 1930s villa suburb of Baba, a functionalist project designed by a team of artists and designers that aimed to provide cheap, attractive, single-family houses. The Hanspaulka suburb to its southwest was a similar project, built between 1925 and 1930. Both are now highly desirable addresses.

DIVOKÁ ŠÁRKA Map pp58–9

Evporská; ☑ 20, 26

The valley of the Šárcký potok (Šárka Creek) is one of Prague's best-known and most popular nature parks. It's named after the mythical warrior Šárka, who is said to have thrown herself off a cliff here after the death of her enemy, the handsome Ctirad – whom she either seduced and murdered (committing suicide afterwards to avoid capture), or fell in love with and failed to protect (killing herself out of grief and guilt), depending on which version of the legend you prefer. The most attractive area is nearby, among the rugged cliffs near the Džbán Reservoir.

People sunbathe on the rocks, and you can swim in the Džbán Reservoir.

From there it's a 7km walk northeast down the valley on a red-marked trail to the suburb of Podbaba, where the creek empties into the Vltava River. There's a bus stop by the Vltava at Podbaba, for the trip back to the centre, or you can walk south about 1.5km on Podbabská to the northern terminus of tram 8, opposite the [Hotel Crowne Plaza](#) (opposite) in Dejvice.

ECOTECHNICAL MUSEUM Map pp132–3

Ekotechnické muzeum; ☎ 233 325 500; www.ekotechnickemuzeum.cz; Papirenská 6, Bubeneč;

adult/family 80/150Kč; ☎ 10am–4.30pm Sat & Sun
May–Oct; 🚏 131 from 🚏 Hradčanská

Prague's former wastewater treatment plant was built between 1895 and 1906 following a design by English architect WH Lindley. Surprisingly, as the plant was designed to service a city of 500,000 people, it remained in operation until 1967, by which time Prague had a population of over a million. Several steam-powered engines are on display and more are being repaired; there are also guided tours (included with admission) of the labyrinth of sewers beneath the building.

HOTEL CROWNE PLAZA [Map pp132–3](#)

☎ 224 393 111; www.crowneplaza.cz; Koulouva 15; 🚏 8

The silhouette of this huge Stalin-era building in northern Dejvice will be familiar to anyone who has visited the Russian capital. Originally called the Hotel International, it was built in the 1950s to a design inspired by the tower of Moscow University, right down to the Soviet-style star on top of the spire (though this one is green, not red).

Nip into the gleamingly restored, marble-clad lobby bar (to the right), and take a look at the large tapestry hanging on the wall in the far left-hand corner. Entitled *Praga Regina Musicae* (Prague, Queen of Music) and created by Cyril Bouda around 1956, it shows an exaggerated aerial view of central Prague. Bang in the centre is the

TRANSPORT: HOLEŠOVICE & BUBENEČ

Metro The Vltavská and Nádraží Holešovice metro stations on line C serve the southern and northern parts of Holešovice respectively.

Tram Lines 5, 12, 14, 15 and 17 run along Dukelských Hrdinů, the main north–south street in Holešovice, while trams 1, 8, 15, 25 and 26 run east–west on Milady Horákové, serving both Holešovice and Bubeneč.

TRANSPORT: DEJVICE

Metro Dejvická station is the northwestern terminus of line A; Hradčanská, the last stop but one, serves the southern part of the district.

Tram Lines 2, 8, 20 and 26 all pass through Vítězné náměstí in the centre of Dejvice.

former Stalin Monument on Letná terasa, and at the bottom edge you can spot the now-departed Soviet Tank memorial (see the boxed text, p93). For a review of the hotel see p224.

KŘÍŽÍK'S FOUNTAIN [Map pp132–3](#)

Křížikova fontána; ☎ 220 103 280; www.krizikova-fontana.cz; U Výstaviště 1, Holešovice; shows around 250Kč; 🎫 performances hourly 8–11pm Mar–Oct; 🚏 5, 12, 14, 15, 17

Each evening from spring to autumn the musical Křížík's Fountain performs its computer-controlled light-and-water dance. Performances range from classical music such as Dvořák's *New World Symphony* to rousing works performed by Andrea Bocelli, Vangelis and Queen, and theme music from popular films. Call ahead or check the website for details of what's on. The light show is best after sunset – from May to July go for the later shows.

LAPIDÁRIUM [Map pp132–3](#)

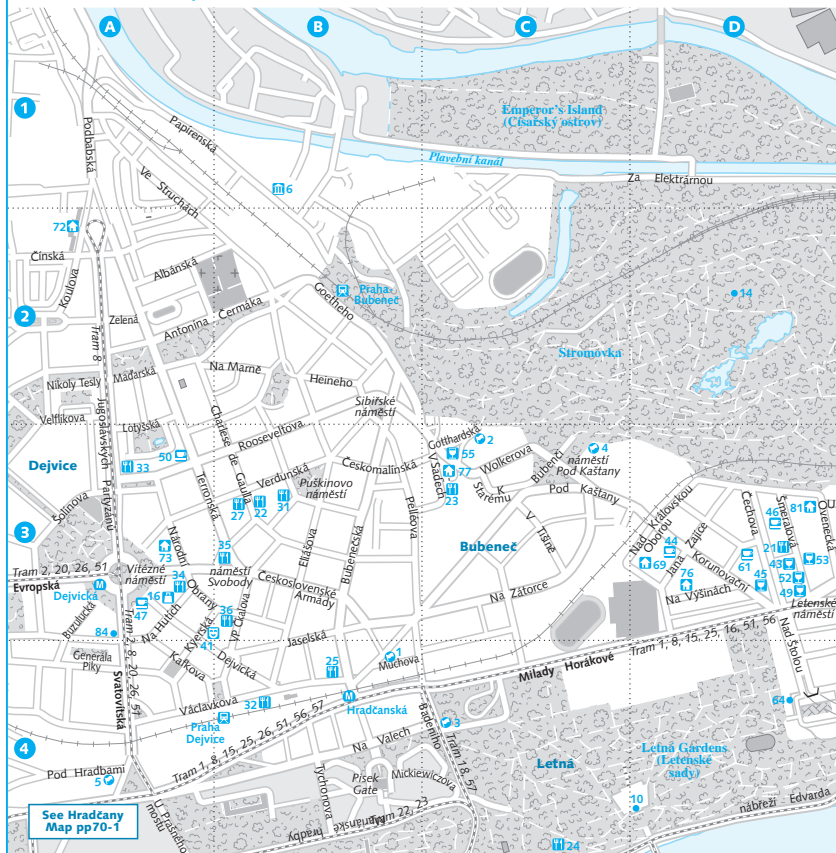
☎ 233 375 636; U Výstaviště 1, Holešovice; adult/child 40/20Kč; 🕒 noon–6pm Tue–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun; 🚏 5, 12, 14, 15, 17

An outlying branch of the National Museum and an often-overlooked gem, the Lapidárium is a repository for some 400 sculptures from the 11th to the 19th centuries. The exhibits include the Lions of Kouřim (Bohemia's oldest surviving stone sculpture), parts of the Renaissance Krocín Fountain that once stood in Old Town Square, 10 of Charles Bridge's original statues, and many other superb sculptures. See also the boxed text, p93.

LETNÁ [Map pp132–3](#)

Letná is a vast open space between Milady Horáková and the river, with a parade ground to the north and a peaceful park, the **Letná Gardens** (Letenské sady), in the south, offering picture-postcard views over the city and its bridges. In summer you'll find an open-air beer garden (see p187). In 1261 Přemysl Otakar II held his coronation celebrations here, and during communist times, Letná was the site of Moscow-style May Day military parades. In 1989 around 750,000 people gathered here in support of the Velvet Revolution. In 2008, the far northwestern corner of the park was torn up to build the enormous Blanka Tunnel, part of Prague's future ring-road system.

HOLEŠOVICE, BUBENEČ & DEJVICE



The tunnel will lead under both Letná and Stromovka parks.

In the southwestern corner is the charming, neobaroque **Hanavský Pavilón** (p169), built by Otto Přieser for the 1891 Jubilee Exposition.

For a walking tour through the park, see p134.

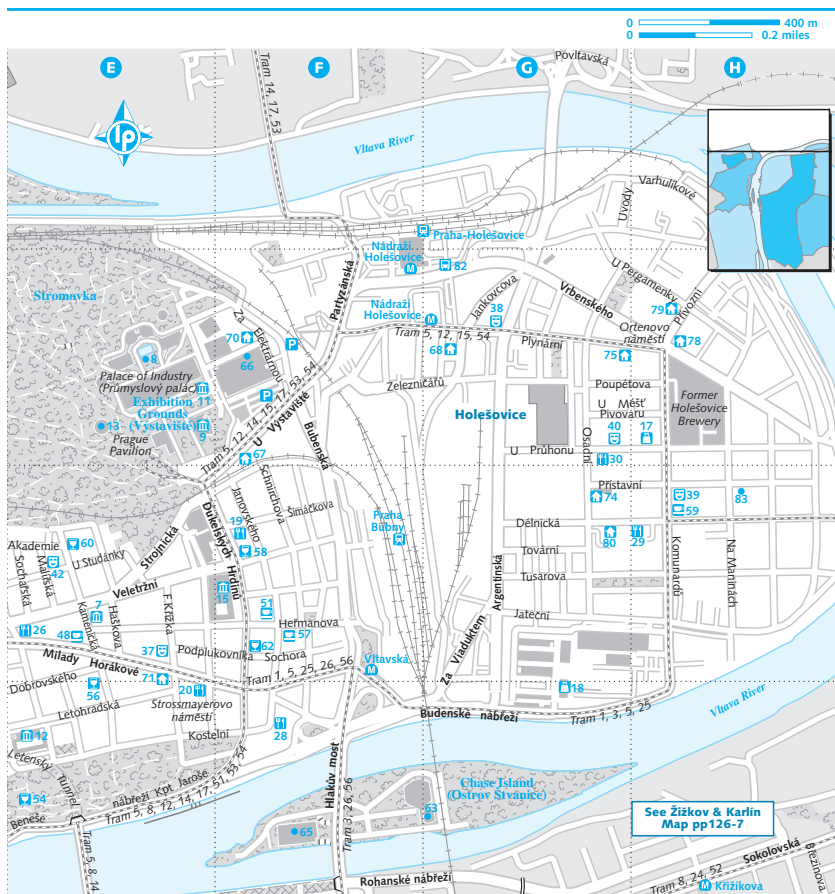
LETNÁ TERÁSA Map pp132–3

The monumental, stepped terrace overlooking the river on the southern edge of Letná Gardens dates from the mid-1950s, when a huge statue of Stalin – the world's largest – was erected here by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, only to be blown up in 1962 by the same sycophants when Stalin was no longer flavour of the decade (see the boxed

text, p93). A giant **metronome** designed by artist David Černý – a symbolic reminder of the passing of time – has stood in its place since 1991.

MORSKÝ SVĚT Map pp132–3

☎ 220 103 275; U Výstaviště 1, Holešovice; adult/child 240/145Kč; 🕒 10am-7pm; 🚶 5, 12, 14, 15, 17
The Czech 'Sea World' has the largest water tank in the country, with a capacity of around 100,000L. Some 4500 living species of fish and sea creatures are on display, with a good and suitably scary set of sharks. The cramped interior will be disappointing if you're used to larger 'Sea World'-type amusement parks around the world. Nevertheless, it's a fun day out for little kids.



NATIONAL TECHNICAL MUSEUM

Map pp132–3

Národní technické muzeum; ☎ 220 399 111; www.ntm.cz; Kostelní 42, Holešovice; adult/child 70/30Kč; 🕒 9am–5pm Tue–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 1, 8, 15, 25

The museum was closed in 2008 for extensive renovations, and there was some concern that it might not reopen in time for the 2009 season. We recommend calling in advance to make sure. Before it was closed, the museum had a huge main hall chock-full of vintage trains, planes and automobiles, including 1920s and '30s Škoda and Tatra cars and even a couple of Bugattis, plus an active programme of other temporary technical exhibits aimed at machine-loving geeks and gearheads.

PRAGUE PLANETARIUM

Map pp132–3

Planetárium Praha; ☎ 220 999 001; www.planetarium.cz; Královská Obora 233, Holešovice; exhibition adult/child 10/5Kč, shows 60Kč; 🕒 8.30am–noon & 1–8pm Mon–Thu, 9.30am–noon & 1–8pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 5, 12, 14, 15, 17

The planetarium in Stromovka park, just west of Výstaviště, presents various slide and video presentations in addition to the star shows. Most shows are in Czech only, but one or two of the more popular ones provide a text summary in English. There's also an astronomical exhibition in the main hall.

STROMOVKA

Map pp132–3

☎ 5, 12, 14, 15, 17
Stromovka, west of Výstaviště, is Prague's largest park. In the Middle Ages it was a

HOLEŠOVICE, BUBENEČ & DEJVICE

INFORMATION

Canadian Embassy.....	1	B4
Dutch Embassy.....	2	C3
Israeli Embassy.....	3	C4
Russian Embassy.....	4	C3
Slovak Embassy.....	5	A4

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp130–6)

Ecotechnical Museum (Ekotechnické Muzeum).....	6	B1
Hotel Crowne Plaza.....(see 72)		
Hunt Kastner Artworks.....	7	E3
Křížík's Fountain (Křížíkova Fontána).....	8	E2
Lapidárium.....	9	E2
Létna Terása.....	10	D4
Mofský Svět.....	11	E2
National Technical Museum (Národní Technické Muzeum).....	12	E4
Prague Planetarium (Planetárium Praha).....	13	E2
Stromovka.....	14	D2
Veletržní Palace (Veletržní Palác).....	15	F3

SHOPPING (pp143–51)

Antikvíta.....	16	A3
Pivní Galerie.....	17	H2
Pražská Tržnice.....	18	G4

EATING (pp153–73)

Bohemia Bagel.....	19	F3
Capua.....	20	E4
Činská Zahrada.....	21	D3
Da Emanuel.....	22	B3
El Gaucho.....	23	C3

Hanavský Pavilón.....	24	C4
Haveli.....	25	B4
Hong Kong.....	26	E3
Kavala.....	27	B3
La Créperie.....	28	F4
Lucky Luciano.....	29	H3
Molo 22.....	30	G2
Na Urále.....	31	B3
Open-Air Market.....	32	B4
Pizzeria Grosseto.....	33	A3
Restaurant U Cedru.....	34	A3
Sakura.....	35	B3
Staročeská Krčma.....	36	B3

ENTERTAINMENT (pp193–203)

Bio Oko.....	37	E3
Cross Club.....	38	G2
La Fabrika.....	39	H3
Mecca.....	40	G2
Spejbl & Hurvínek Theatre.....	41	A3
Wakata.....	42	E3

DRINKING (pp175–91)

Akademie.....	43	D3
Alchymista.....	44	D3
Andaluský Pes.....	45	D3
Antonie.....	46	D3
Artesa.....	47	A3
Bio Oko.....(see 37)		
Erhartova Cukrárna.....	48	E3
Fraktal.....	49	D3
Kabinet.....	50	A3
Kumbal.....	51	F3
La Bodega Flamenca.....	52	D3
Le Tram.....	53	D3
Letenský Zámeček.....	54	E4

Na Slavníku.....	55	C3
Na Staré Kovárně.....	56	E4
Ouky Douky.....	57	F3
Postel.....	58	F3
První Holešovická Kavárna.....	59	H3
Stromoffka.....	60	E3
Těsně Vedle Burundi.....	61	D3
U sv Antonička.....	62	F3

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp205–10)

Czech Lawn Tennis Club.....	63	G4
Půjčovna Bruslí Miami.....	64	D4
Štvanice Stadium.....	65	F4
T-Mobile Aréna.....	66	F2

SLEEPING (pp211–27)

A&O Hostel.....	67	F2
Absolut Hotel.....	68	G2
Art Hotel.....	69	D3
Expo Prague.....	70	F2
Hotel Belvedere.....	71	E3
Hotel Crowne Plaza.....	72	A2
Hotel Denisa.....	73	A3
Hotel Extol Inn.....	74	G3
Hotel Leon.....	75	G2
Hotel Letná.....	76	D3
Hotel Villa Schwaiger.....	77	C3
Plaza Alta Hotel.....	78	H2
Plus Prague Hostel.....	79	H2
Sir Toby's Hostel.....	80	G3
Splendid.....	81	D3

TRANSPORT (pp241–5)

Holešovice Bus Station.....	82	G2
Secco Car.....	83	H3
Vecar.....	84	A3

royal hunting preserve, which is why it's sometimes called the Královská obora (Royal Deer Park). Rudolf II had rare trees planted here and several lakes created (fed from the Vltava River via a still-functioning canal). It's now the preserve of strollers, joggers, cyclists and in-line skaters. For a walking tour through the park, see [right](#).

VELETRŽNÍ PALACE [Map](#) pp132–3

Veletržní palác; ☎ 224 301 024; www.ngprague.cz; Dukelských Hrdinů 47, Holešovice; adult/child 200/100Kč, after 4pm 100/50Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🕒 5, 12, 14, 15, 17

The huge, functionalist Veletržní palác (Trade Fair Palace), built in 1928 to house trade exhibitions, is now home of the National Gallery's superb collection of 20th- and 21st-century Czech and European art.

You can easily spend an entire day here – the collection is spread over three floors of the vast, ocean-liner-like building – but if you have only an hour to spare, head for the 3rd floor (Czech Art 1900–30, and 19th- and 20th-century French Art) to see the paintings of František Kupka, pioneer

of abstract art, and the art, furniture and ceramics of the Czech Cubists. The French section includes some sculpture by Rodin, a few Impressionist works, Gauguin's *Flight* and Van Gogh's *Green Wheat*.

The 1st floor (20th-century Foreign Art) includes works by Klimt, Schiele and Picasso, while the 2nd floor (Czech Art 1930 to present day) has early examples of kinetic art, some Socialist Realist stuff from the communist era and various amusing works by contemporary artists.

LETNÁ & STROMOVKA

Walking Tour

This is a long walk through some of the leafiest parts of Prague; make a half-day or even a full-day expedition out of it. Instead of taking the bus and metro from Troja back to the city centre, you can also time it so as to catch a boat trip back (see [p251](#)).

1 Stone grotto Begin at the Summer Palace (Letohrádek) at the eastern end of the Royal

(p169), where you can enjoy a superb panorama and, perhaps, a little lunch.

3 Metronome The path continues along the top of a bluff directly above the Vltava, with great views over the river and the eastern and southern parts of the city, before arriving at a monumental stepped terrace topped by a giant, creaking **metronome**. Designed by artist David Černý, the metronome sits on a spot once occupied by a giant statue of Stalin (see the boxed text, p93). For more on David Černý, see the boxed texts, p39 and [opposite](#).

4 Letná beer garden Continue east along the path at metronome level and you will eventually arrive at Letná's popular beer garden, **Letenský zameček** (p187), where it's almost compulsory to stop for a cold one.

5 Expo 58 Restaurant Beyond the beer garden, the path slopes down through pretty flower gardens and along an avenue of plane trees, past the futuristic **Expo 58 Restaurant**. Built for the Brussels World Exposition of 1958, and later re-erected here, it is no longer a restaurant but has been beautifully renovated and now houses some fortunate office workers.

If the Hanavský Pavilón didn't tempt you into a lunch stop, perhaps cosy **La Crêperie** (p172) on nearby Janovského will.

6 Veletržní Palace Leave the park and continue downhill on Skalecká, then turn left along busy Dukelských Hrdinů. Follow this street north for 400m – stopping to visit the **Veletržní Palace** (p134), Prague's premier collection of modern art, if you wish – to the entrance of the Výstaviště exhibition grounds; if you don't fancy walking this section, hop on a tram for a couple of stops (lines 5, 12 or 17 will do).

7 Lapidárium If the Veletržní Palace has whetted your appetite for cultural attractions (or maybe it's just started raining), you might like to detour into the **Lapidárium** (p131) for a wander among some of the city's finest sculptures.

8 Prague Planetarium Otherwise, bear left at the entrance to Výstaviště and follow the path just to the left of the terminal loop of the 5 tram, passing the dome of the **Prague Planetarium** (Planétárium Praha; p133) on your right as you enter the former royal hunting ground, Stromovka (p133).

9 Old restaurant Follow your nose as the path curves to the left, past people playing *boules* on the gravel verge, then bear right towards the pond. Turn left when you reach a broad main path (signposted 'Dejvice & Bubeneč'), which leads between a series of artificial lakes on the right and a once-grand but now ruined **old restaurant** and bandstand on the left.

10 Mistodržitelký Summer Palace Beyond this you'll see the Renaissance **Mistodržitelký Summer Palace** perched on a hill to the left, where Bohemian royals used to hang out on their hunting trips to Stromovka. It was remodelled in neogothic style in the early 19th century.

11 Emperor's Island At the T-junction below the palace, turn right and continue along an avenue of trees, following the path as it curves around to the right. Take the first path on the left (following the signs to 'Troja' and 'Zoo'), continue through the short tunnel under the railway line, and go up the steps ahead in the distance. Cross the bridge and go left, then right (signposted 'Zoo'; if you're planning on taking the boat back into town, this is where it leaves from). You are now on **Emperor's Island** (Císařský ostrov); the road leads to a sweeping pedestrian bridge over the main branch of the Vltava, with a canoe slalom course visible upstream (if there's a competition on, you can guarantee there'll be a beer tent there also). At the far end of the pedestrian bridge go left along the riverbank path, and in about 300m you'll reach a parking area; turn right, and the road will lead you to the 112 bus terminus. On one side of the bus terminus is **Troja Chateau** (Trojský zámek; p140), with a museum of wine-making in the cellar; on the other is the entrance to **Prague Zoo** (p140). Take your pick.

SMÍCHOV

Eating [p172](#); Drinking [p190](#); Shopping [p151](#); Sleeping [p226](#)

Smíchov arguably deserves a reputation as Prague's most economically varied district. For years, it languished as a depressed industrial backwater that was (by some accounts) home to Prague's largest Roma community. At the same time, the hills southwest of the Anděl metro station, not far from the Barrandov film studios, had some of the city's swankiest villas. These days, those jarring contrasts are seen in the area around Anděl, which is filled with gleaming office towers, the vast Nový Smíchov shopping centre ([p151](#)), the Staropramen brewery, and some of the city's hottest boutique hotels. Just down the road, near the Smíchovské nádraží train station, the poverty and neglect sets in again.

As with the city's other riverside districts, Smíchov both suffered and benefited from the 2002 flood. Low-lying areas were submerged, but the aftermath saw a big infusion of development capital. Like Holešovice and Karlín, Smíchov is also hoping to play off its industrial chic a bit. That effort got a huge boost in 2007 when artist David Černý (see the boxed text, [p39](#)) decided to relocate his 'Meet Factory' performance art space amid the tenements and abandoned factories south of Smíchovské nádraží.

FUTURA GALLERY [Map p138](#)

☎ 251 511 804; www.futuraprojekt.cz; Holečkova 49; admission free; ☎ 11am-6pm Wed-Sun; 🕒 4, 7, 9, 10

The Futura Gallery focuses on all aspects of contemporary art, ranging from painting, photography and sculpture to video, installations and performance art. The gallery spaces, which include two floors of 'white cube' halls, a more intimate brick-vaulted cellar and a garden, host changing exhibitions by both Czech and international artists. The most notorious exhibit is in the garden, a permanent installation by David Černý (see the boxed texts, [p39](#) and [below](#)). It consists of two huge, naked human figures, bent over at the waist with their heads

buried in a blank wall. Ladders allow you to climb up and place your head – there's really no polite way to say this – up each figure's arse, where you can watch a video of Czech president Václav Klaus and the director of Prague's National Gallery spooning mush into each other's mouths. Richly metaphorical, to say the least.

MEET FACTORY [Map p138](#)

☎ 251 551 796; <http://meetfactory.cz>; Ke Sklárně 15; admission free; ☎ vary by event; 🕒 12, 14, 20 stop to Lihovar

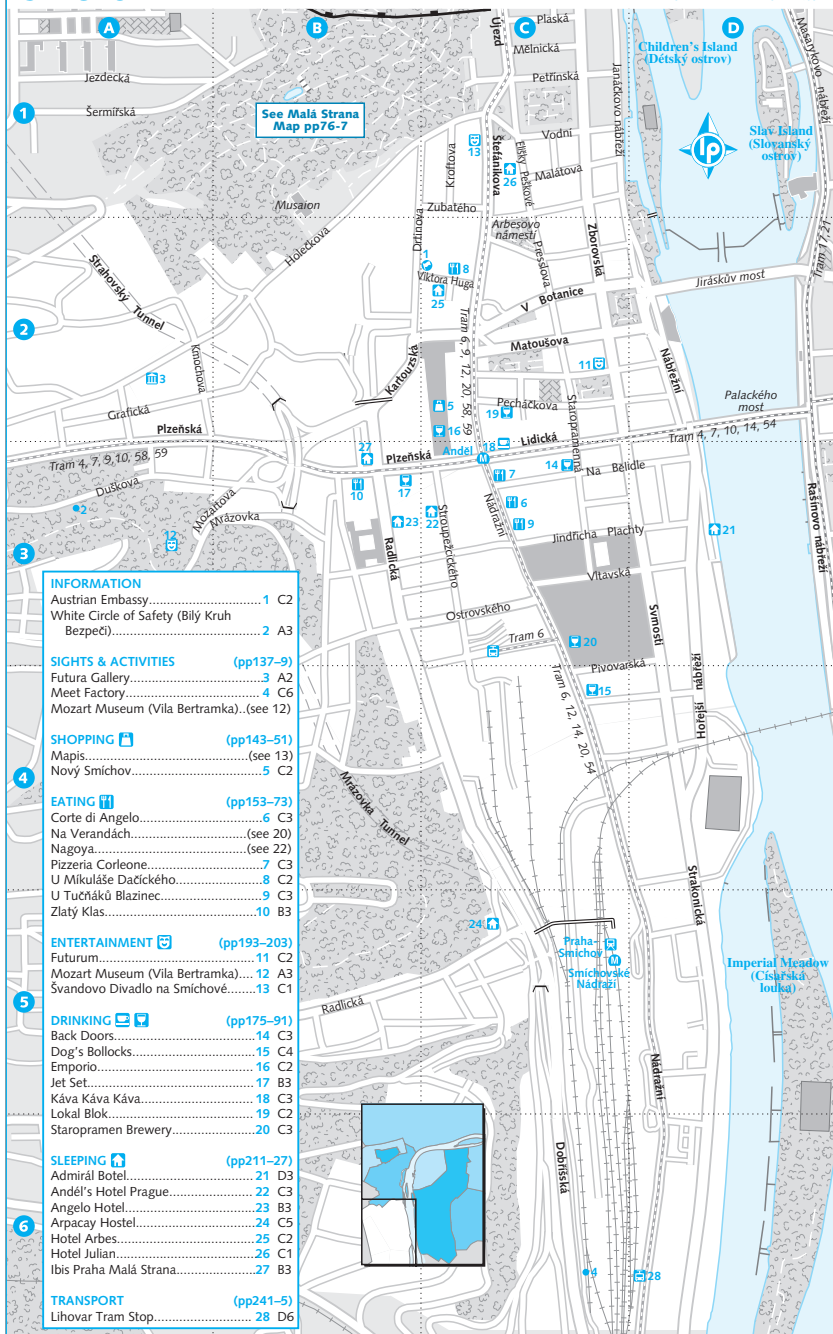
Don't come here looking for a polished art experience. For the moment, David Černý's 'Meet Factory' is very much a work in progress. The idea is to invite artists from

WEIRD ART

David Černý's sculpture is often controversial, occasionally outrageous and always amusing. Here are six of his best-known works that are permanently on view in Prague. See also the boxed text, [p39](#).

- *Quo Vadis* (Where Are You Going; 1991) – in the garden of the German Embassy in Malá Strana ([Map pp76–7](#)). A Trabant (an East German car) on four human legs serves as a monument to the thousands of East Germans who fled the communist regime in 1989 prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and camped out in the embassy garden seeking political asylum. See Malá Strana Walking Tour, [p85](#).
- *Viselec* (Hanging Out; 1997) – above Husova street in Staré Město ([Map pp88–9](#)). A bearded, bespectacled chap with a passing resemblance to Sigmund Freud, casually dangling by one hand from a pole way above the street.
- *Kun* (Horse; 1999) – in the Lucerna Palace shopping arcade, Nové Město ([Map pp108–9](#)). Amusing alternative version of the famous St Wenceslas Statue in Wenceslas Square, only this time the horse is dead.
- *Miminka* (Mummy; 2000) – on the TV Tower, Žižkov ([Map pp126–7](#)). Creepy, giant, slot-faced babies crawling all over a TV transmitter tower – something to do with consumerism and the media. We think.
- *Brownnosers* (2003) – in the Futura Gallery, Smíchov ([Map p138](#)). Stick your head up a statue's backside and watch a video of the Czech president and the director of the National Gallery feeding each other baby food.
- *Proudy* (Streams; 2004) – in the courtyard of Hergetova Cihelna, Malá Strana ([Map pp76–7](#)). Two guys pissing in a puddle (whose irregular outline, you'll notice, is actually the map outline of the Czech Republic) and spelling out famous quotations from Czech literature with their pee. (Yes, the sculpture moves! It's computer controlled.)

SMÍCHOV

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles

TRANSPORT: SMÍCHOV

Metro Line B has stations at Anděl, in the heart of Smíchov, and at Smíchovské Nádraží in the south.

Tram Lines 4, 7, 10 and 14 rumble across Palackého most from Charles Square (Karlovo náměstí) to Smíchov; from Malá Strana take trams 12 or 20 south from Malostranské náměstí or Újezd.

around the world to live and create in this cavernous, abandoned factory south of Smíchovské nádraží. The Meet Factory also holds visual and performance art happenings, film screenings and concerts. The problem is that the group that runs it, headed by prominent local artists, is still scraping together the cash to patch the walls and install heating, so actual happenings are few and far between. Be sure to check the website before venturing this far out.

There's no easy way to get here. The best bet is to take tram 12, 14 or 20 from

Smíchovské nádraží two stops to Lihovar, find the narrow gate on the right side of the road, cross five or six sets of railway tracks (be sure to look both ways!), and there it is – a crumbling greenish factory with two red fibreglass cars hanging from hooks outside, courtesy of David Černý himself.

MOZART MUSEUM Map p138

Vila Bertramka; ☎ 257 318 461; www.bertramka.com; Mozartova 169; museum admission adult/child 110/30Kč, concerts 390-450Kč; 🕒 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar; 🚶 4, 7, 9, 10 Mozart stayed at the elegant 17th-century Vila Bertramka during his visits to Prague in 1787 and 1791 as the guest of composer František Dušek – it was here that he finished his opera *Don Giovanni*. Today the house is a modest Mozart museum. Regular concerts are held in the salon (see p200 for more details) and in the garden (April to October only).

OUTER NEIGHBOURHOODS

Clustered around the city's historic core are the largely 20th-century suburbs of Troja, Kobylisy, Kbely, Zbraslav, Barrandov, Střešovice and Břevnov. Except to visit the Prague Zoo and Troja Chateau, few tourists venture into these outer regions and you will often have the attractions here to yourself.

PRAGUE ZOO Map pp58–9

Zoo Praha; ☎ 296 112 111; www.zoopraha.cz; U Trojského Zámku 120, Troja; adult/child/family 150/100/450Kč; 🕒 9am–7pm Jun–Aug, to 6pm Apr, May, Sep & Oct, to 5pm Mar, to 4pm Nov–Feb; 🚶 112 from 🚶 Nádraží Holešovice

Prague's attractive zoo is set in 60 hectares of wooded grounds on the banks of the Vltava River. Pride of place, at the top of the hill, goes to a herd of Przewalski's horses – the zoo's breeding programme played an important part in saving them from extinction (the zoo's logo is a Przewalski's horse) – and the Komodo dragons, which bred in captivity for the first time in 2006. Other attractions include a miniature cable car and an extensive kids' play area with adventure playground and paddling pool.

TROJA CHATEAU Map pp58–9

Trojský zámek; ☎ 283 851 614; U Trojského Zámku 1; adult/child 120/60Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, to 5pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar; 🚶 112 from 🚶 Nádraží Holešovice

Troja Chateau is a 17th-century baroque palace built for the Šternberk family, inspired by the Roman country villas seen by the architect on a visit to Italy. The sumptuously decorated palace now houses the Prague City Gallery's collection of 19th-century Czech art, a gallery of paintings of dogs and horses owned by the Bohemian aristocracy, and exhibits explaining the sculptures and frescoes that adorn the palace itself. In the cellars you'll find a small museum dedicated to the history of wine-making in the Czech lands (admission free, 20Kč per sample if you want to taste some wines). There's free admission to the palace grounds, where you can wander in the beautiful French gardens, watched over by a gang of baroque stone giants on the balustrade outside the southern door.

KOBYLISY ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE MEMORIAL off Map pp58–9

Památník protifašistického odboje v Kobylisích; Žernosecká; admission free; 🕒 24hr; 🚶 10, 17, 24

This grassy quadrangle of earthen embankments, ringed by trees and overlooked by apartment blocks, was once the Kobylisy Rifle Range. More than a hundred Czechs were executed here by firing squads during WWII. Today it's the site of a national memorial: a huge bronze plaque lists all the names of the dead and – such is the legacy of Nazi bureaucracy – the dates and times of their executions. Take tram 10, 17 or 24 to the terminal at Dáblická, then walk west for 800m (about 10 minutes) along Žernosecká.

KBELY AIRCRAFT MUSEUM off Map pp58–9

Letecké muzeum Kbely; ☎ 973 207 500; Mladoboleslavská; admission free; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun May–Oct; 🚶 185 or 259 from 🚶 Českomoravská The Kbely airfield in northeastern Prague is home to this aircraft museum, where you can have a close look at Russian MiG fighter planes and a host of exhibits on aeronautics and space flight. The impressive collection amounts to no less than 275 aircraft, including several British and American machines such as a 1931 De Havilland Tiger Moth, a Gloster Meteor jet-fighter (1950) and a McDonnell Douglas F4 Phantom (1954).

ZBRASLAV CHATEAU off Map pp58–9

Zámek Zbraslav; ☎ 257 921 638; Bartoňova 2; adult/child 80/40Kč; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 129, 241, 243, 255 or 360 from 🚶 Smíchovské Nádraží Zbraslav is a small town on the western bank of the Vltava, 10km south of the centre, that was only recently incorporated into Greater Prague. As long ago as 1268 Přemysl Otakar II built a hunting lodge and a chapel here, later rebuilt as a Cistercian monastery. In 1784 it was converted into a baroque chateau that now houses the National Gallery's permanent collection of Asian art, with copies of well-known Czech sculptures in the gardens.

BARRANDOV Map pp58–9

🚶 246, 247, 248 from 🚶 Smíchovské Nádraží The southern suburb of Barrandov, on the western bank of the Vltava River, was de-

veloped in the 1930s by Václav Havel, the father of ex-president Havel. It is famous for the **Barrandov Studios**, the film studios founded by Miloš Havel (the ex-president's uncle) in 1931 and increasingly popular with Hollywood producers in recent years: *Mission Impossible* (1996), *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003), *Casino Royale* (2006) and the first two 'Chronicles of Narnia' movies (2005 and 2008) all made use of the facilities here.

The district was deliberately developed as an homage to 1920s Hollywood, with the Jazz Age architect Max Urban commissioned to create the **Barrandov Terraces**, an upmarket complex of Art Deco mansions, villas and apartments ranged along a bluff overlooking the Vltava River, in conscious imitation of the Hollywood Hills. Sadly, the district was 'nationalised' and neglected during the communist era and fell into disrepair; the best views of its crumbling splendour are from the opposite side of the river.

The suburb was named after the 19th-century French geologist **Joachim Barrande**, who studied the fossils in the contorted limestone of the Barrandov Cliffs (Barrandovské skály; **Map pp58–9**) – hundreds of them are on display in the National Museum.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Map pp70–1

Muzeum MHD; ☎ 296 124 900; www.dpp.cz; Patočkova 4, Střešovice; adult/child 35/20Kč; 🕒 9am–5pm Sat, Sun & hols Apr–Oct; 🚶 1, 2, 15, 18, 25

The museum at the Střešovice tram depot has a large collection of trams and buses, from an 1886 horse-drawn tram to present-day vehicles. It's a great place for kids as they can climb into some of the vehicles, and you can board a vintage tram (see **p252**) for a sightseeing tour of the city.

VILLA MÜLLER **Map pp58–9**

Müllerova vila; ☎ 224 312 012; www.mullerova.vila.cz; Nad Hradním Vodojemem 14, Střešovice; guided tours in Czech adult/concession 300/200Kč, in English or German 400/300Kč; 🕒 9am–6pm Tue,

TRANSPORT: TROJA

Boat Take a boat trip (see **p251**) from the city centre to the Troja landing.

Bus Take bus 112 from Nádraží Holešovice metro station to the end of the line. From April to September a free shuttle bus (Linka Zoo) runs on this route at weekends.

On Foot Walk from Výstaviště to Troja through Stro-movka (3km).

Thu, Sat & Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–5pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun Nov–Mar; 🚶 1, 2, 18 to **Ořechovka**

Fans of functionalist architecture will enjoy this masterpiece of domestic design. It was built in 1930 for construction entrepreneur František Müller, and designed by the Viennese architect Adolf Loos, whose clean-cut, ultramodernist exterior contrasts with the polished wood, leather and oriental rugs of the classically decorated interior. The villa can be visited only by guided tour, which must be booked in advance; tours begin every two hours from 9am April to October, from 10am November to March.

BŘEVNOV MONASTERY **Map pp58–9**

Břevnovský klášter; ☎ 220 406 111; Patočkova 72; gardens admission free, guided tour of church, crypt & monastery 50Kč; 🕒 gardens 5.30–8am & 5–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 5.30am–8.30pm Sat & Sun, tours 10am & 2pm Sat & Sun, plus 4pm May–Sep; 🚶 15, 22, 25

Břevnov Monastery is the Czech Republic's oldest Benedictine monastery, founded in 993 by Boleslav II and Bishop Vojtěch Slavníkovec (later to be canonised as St Adalbert). The two men, from powerful and opposing families intent on dominating Bohemia, met at Vojtěška spring, each having had a dream that this was the place where they should found a monastery. Its name comes from *břevno* (beam), after the beam laid across the spring where they met.

The present baroque monastery building and the nearby **Basilica of St Margaret** (Bazilika sv Markéty) were completed in 1720 by Kristof Dientzenhofer. During the communist era the monastery housed a secret-police archive; Jan Patočka (1907–77), a leading figure of the Charter 77 movement, who died after interrogation by the secret police, is buried in the cemetery behind the monastery. In 1993 (the 1000th anniversary of the monastery's

TRANSPORT: BŘEVNOV

Tram Lines 15, 22 and 25 run along Patočkova and Bělohorská, the main drag. Tram 15 terminates at the Vypich stop; 22 and 25 continue to Bílá Hora.

TRANSPORT: STŘEŠOVICE

Tram Lines 1, 2 and 18 run along Střešovická, the main street.

founding) the restored 1st floor, with its fine ceiling frescoes, and the Romanesque crypt, with the original foundations and a few skeletons, were opened to the public for the first time.

The church, crypt and monastery can be visited only by guided tour (minimum 10 people for a tour in Czech, 20 people in English or German), but at weekends you can wander the gardens at your leisure.

STAR SUMMER PALACE off Map pp58–9

Letohrádek hvězda; ☎ 235 357 938; **Obora hvězda**, entrances on **Libocká & Bělohorská**; **adult/child 30/15Kč;** 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun May–Sep, to 5pm Tue–Sun Apr & Oct, closed Nov–Mar; 🚶 15, 22, 25 The Letohrádek hvězda is a Renaissance summer palace in the shape of a six-pointed star, built in 1556 for Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol. It sits at the end of a long avenue through the lovely wooded park of Obora hvězda, a hunting reserve established by Ferdinand I in 1530. The palace houses a small museum about its history and an exhibit on the battle of White Mountain (see [below](#)).

From the Vypich tram stop, bear right across open parkland to the white archway in the wall; the avenue on the far side leads to the palace (a 1.5km walk from the tram).

WHITE MOUNTAIN off Map pp58–9

Bílá Hora; access from **Karlovarská**; 🚶 22, 25 The 381m-high White Mountain – more of a gentle hillock, actually – on the western outskirts of Prague was the site of the 1620

collapse of Protestant military forces that ended Czech independence for almost 300 years. The only reminder of the battle is a small memorial cairn located on a mound in the middle of a field, with the roof of the Star Summer Palace poking above the forest to the northeast.

Take the tram to the end of the line, then continue west past the **Church of Our Lady Victorious** (kostel Panny Maria Vítězná), an early-18th-century celebration of the Habsburg victory at White Mountain, and turn right; the field is visible up ahead.

V HOLEŠOVIČKÁCH Map pp58–9

🚶 10, 24

The spot in the suburb of Libeň where Reichsprotektor SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich was assassinated (see the boxed text, [p115](#)) has changed considerably since 1942 – the tram tracks have gone and a modern road intersection has been built. It's near where the slip road exits north from V Holešovičkách to Zenklova. A small memorial was finally built here in May 2008, 66 years after the event – because the Czech paratroopers who carried out the assassination were trained in Britain, the communist regime had preferred not to remember them. At the time of research, a competition had just been launched to design a larger monument.

To get to the site, take tram 10 or 24 to the Zenklova stop ([Map pp58–9](#)) and walk south for a few minutes. The neighbouring streets, Gabčíkova and Kubišova, are named after the parachutists who carried out the attack.

The **Army Museum** ([p125](#)) in Žižkov has a fascinating exhibition detailing the assassination, including the actual car in which Heydrich was travelling at the time of the attack.

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