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A Guide of the Capital

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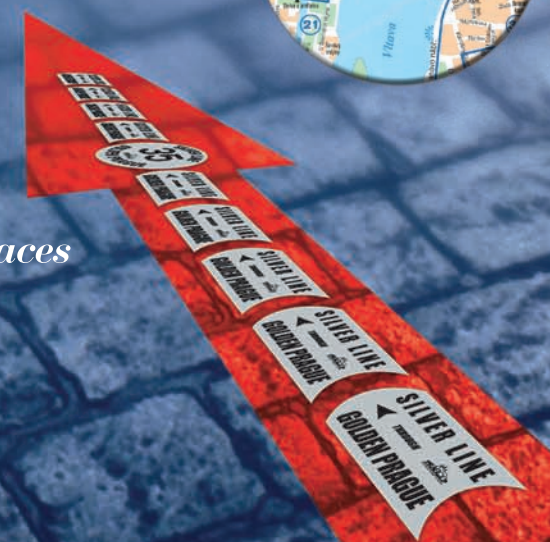


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will find the unreachable places
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Dear visitors of Prague,

we are very pleased that we can invite you to the tour through our Capital City.

Prague – is one of the most visited cities in Europe – it has got many adjectives: magical, mysterious, romantic, the City of a hundred towers. The charm of Prague and its magic has developed through the uninterrupted one thousand years long development. The streets we walk through often follow the trading routes of the bygone era of the City origins. Since then, each century, each architectural and cultural style has left its trace here. A visitors of the City, when he has a good guidebook at his disposal, may touch the rare history, imagine the changes, which took place through the development, and at the same time to learn about the City of today. Prague likes to uncover its secrets to sensitive eyes and hearts and our main wish is that you enjoy every moment, which you will stay in this beautiful City, and that Prague will stay forever recorded in your memories.

Follow this guide during your stay in Prague, and it will make your understanding of the City easier. We wish you a pleasant spending of your days in Prague with the Silver-Line.



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The Old Town / Staré město

The Old Town was settled as early as the 11th century, and along with Prague Castle, is the oldest part of Prague. At the centre of the Old Town is the Old Town Square. Part of the Old Town has kept its original medieval layout with narrow lanes lined with houses resting on Romanesque cellars.

1/ THE MUNICIPAL HOUSE - Obecní dům

Náměstí Republiky 5

The Municipal House situated next to the Powder Tower was built by the City of Prague in 1906-12 and designed by architects Bašánek and Polívka. This Art Nouveau building's facade is decorated with a mosaic by Karel Špinar called *Homage to Prague* and a sculpture by Ladislav Šaloun entitled *The Humiliation and Resurrection of the Nation*. Such great names as Alfons Mucha (Mayor's Hall), Max Švabinský (Rieger's Hall), Mikoláš Aleš and Josef Václav Myslbek worked on the decoration of the six halls and state rooms inside. Visitors will also find the Prague's main concert hall here, the Smetana Hall, topped with an impressive dome. It was here on October 28, 1918 that the independent Czechoslovak Republic was declared.

2/ THE POWDER TOWER - Prašná brána

Na Příkopě

The Powder Tower is the gateway to the Old Town. It replaced the Přemyslid dynasty era gate in 1475 and was built in the Gothic style by Matěj Rejsek as a gift from the Old Town to King Vladislav Jagiello. Originally called the 'Horská' gate it acquired the name 'Powder' in the 17th century, when it was used to store gunpowder ('prašná' coming from the word '*prach*' meaning powder). The appearance of the tower today dates back to 1875 - 76, when it was given a neo-Gothic makeover by architect Josef Mocker. Sculptures representing the Czech kings adorn the tower – on the eastern side we find Přemysl Otakar II and Charles IV and on the western side George of Poděbrady and Vladislav Jagiello.

3/ CELETNÁ STREET - Celetná ulice

Celetná ulice

Celetná Street is one of the oldest and most important streets in the Old Town. In the 14th century, during the reign of one of the most prominent Czech and European rulers, Emperor Charles IV, the importance of Celetná Street grew when it became part of the so-called Royal Way. The Royal Way was a route through the city which Czech kings had to follow on the day of their coronation. It leads from Vyšehrad – Prague's second castle – along Celetná Street, over the Old Town Square, along Karlova Street and across Charles Bridge up to Prague Castle, where the coronation would take place in the Cathedral of St Vitus.

The name of the Street is probably derived from the word *Caly* – a type of bread baked here in the Middle Ages. Celetná Street is full of interesting and historically valuable buildings whose

foundations go back to the Gothic period. These structures then underwent Renaissance and then mostly baroque reconstruction. Celetná Street is regarded as one of the highlights of Prague's architectural treasure trove. Some of its most noteworthy buildings are the House of the Black Madonna, the Pacht Palace and the House of the Golden Angel.

4/ THE HOUSE OF THE BLACK MADONNA - Dům U Černé Matky Boží

Celetná 34

The House of the Black Madonna is situated at the corner of Celetná Street and Ovocný trh. It was built in 1911 – 1912 by architect Josef Gočár in the cubist style. With some exceptions, cubist architecture is specific to the Czech lands and this building is one of the best examples. Cubism uses geometrical shapes in its architecture. This comes from the architect's conviction that the basic geometrical form is the cube. The House of the Black Madonna was originally a multifunctional building with shops on the ground floor and offices, flats and the famous Orient coffee house with its cubist furniture on the floors above. At present the building is a national monument and houses a collection of Czech cubist paintings, furniture, sculpture and architects' plans. The name of the building comes from the Black Madonna house symbol on the corner, kept behind gold Renaissance bars.



5/ THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES - Kostel sv. Jakuba

Malá Štupartská 6

The Church of St James was originally a part of the Minorite Monastery and dates from the 13th century. In 1311 a feast to mark the coronation of King John of Luxemburg and Eliška of the Přemyslids was held here. After a fire in 1366 it was rebuilt in the Gothic style, but burnt down again in 1596 when it was hit by a lightning. Only at the end of the 17th century after yet another fire did it acquire its current baroque appearance. The church has excellent acoustics and concerts often take place here. The church also boasts a tremendous baroque organ from 1702. The creator of the stucco decoration on the church facade is the Italian Ottavio Mosto. Above the main entrance visitors can see St James in traditional pilgrim's attire holding a stick.



There are 21 altars in the church made by such master craftsmen as Heinsch, Brandl and Reiner, whose painting called *The Martyrdom of St James* adorns the main altar. After the Cathedral of St Vitus, the Church of St James is the longest church in Prague. In the left nave the baroque tomb of the Czech chancellor Vratislav of Mitrovic

attracts most attention. It was designed by Jan Bernard Fischer of Erlach and decorated with sculptures by Ferdinand Maxmilián Brokoff. It is regarded as the most attractive tomb in the Czech lands. Underneath the tomb is a crypt containing the tombs of the Earls of Mitrovice. There is a well known legend associated with the tomb – the earl was buried alive by mistake and four years later, when the tomb was opened, his body was found in the sitting position trying in vain to lift the top off the tomb. In reality he died and was buried in Vienna. On the main altar can see wooden statue of the Virgin Mary, a priceless piece from the 15th century. As legend would have it, this statue was always considered to have miraculous powers and people brought it all kinds of valuable gifts, even gold.

6/ UNGELT

Malá Štupartská

A walled courtyard housing a customs post for merchants entering the Old Town was situated here as early as the 12th century. Every merchant had to submit his goods and pay duty (um Geld – Geld is German for Money, hence the name). In return the ruler would guarantee his safety. Customs duty was paid here until the end of the 16th century. The original shape of the courtyard with two gates either end has remained. Around the Ungelt a hospital and church for the merchants were built and in 1135 a pharmacy was added, the oldest in Prague. In houses near the two gates to the courtyard one can still find remains of Romanesque houses in the cellars (at the turn of the 13th century, when Prague was experiencing huge problems with flooding, the whole of the Old Town was raised by 3.5—4m, meaning the ground floor of the buildings we see today would have been the first floor of Romanesque era structures). In the enclosed courtyard stands the Granovský House, one of the best preserved Renaissance buildings in Prague. The loggia of the wing we can see from the courtyard is decorated with religious and mythical motifs.



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OLD TOWN SQUARE / Staroměstské náměstí

Alongside Prague Castle the Old Town Square is the most important place in Prague. Its long history goes back to the 11th century when the square formed the crossroads of several long-distance trade routes and served as a marketplace. It was known across the whole of Europe at that time. Celebrations, jousting tournaments and executions took place there.

In 1321 King John of Luxemburg held a jousting tournament in the square, which he took part in himself. He was badly injured and for a long time his life hung in the balance. One of the most wretched events to take place in the square happened in 1621, at the beginning of the Thirty Years War, which affected the whole of Europe. 27 Czech nobles, knights and burghers, leaders of an anti-Habsburg revolt, were executed. The events of that day are commemorated by a plaque on the eastern side of the Old Town Hall. 27 crosses formed by cobblestones near the town hall mark the site where the executions took place. It is said that Emperor Ferdinand II, who had the rebellious Czechs decapitated, ordered drums to be beaten loudly during the execution so as not to hear the defiant cries of the condemned. For instance Prokop Dvořický of Olbramovice, before he went to his death, cried: „*Tell the emperor that I now stand before his unjust court, but he will face a terrible and just one*“. In 1945, as World War II was drawing to a close, fighting took place here during the Prague Uprising and the Old Town Hall was severely damaged. The Old Town Square is a national monument.

The remains of some very old buildings have survived on the square. Even here the original ground level used to be 2—3m lower. This means that some of the present-day houses sit on the remains of Romanesque cellars. Many of these now house restaurants and winebars, a visit to which provides the opportunity to see these medieval spaces. The houses in the Old Town Square are like a textbook of almost all architectural styles going. You'll find Gothic, Renaissance and baroque elements, and on the south side of the square you'll discover houses which still occupy their medieval plots of land, evident from their narrow facades. Some of the most fascinating buildings on the square are the Kinský Palace, The House at the Stone Bell, The Týn School and the Štorch's House. The names of houses here and throughout the medieval parts of the city are very often derived from a house symbol which can be found on the facade.

7/ THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF TÝN

- Chrám Panny Marie před Týnem

Staroměstské nám.

The Gothic Church of Our Lady before Týn with its 80m high twin towers, of which the southernmost is noticeably thicker than the other, competes with the tower of the Old Town Hall across the square. The church was begun in the 14th century on the site of an original Romanesque chapel dating back to the 12th century, and it served as the church for foreign merchants staying at the Ungelt. During the Hussite wars the Týn Church was the main place of worship for the Old Town and played an important role in the Hussite cause. From 1427 Jan Rokycana, later elected as Hussite archbishop, served as a priest there. According to legend, in 1437 the timber meant for the construction of



the roof of the main Hussite church in Prague was used to build the gallows for the Hussite leader Jan Roháč z Dubé. 20 years later the timber used to build the roof was to have been used for the stage at the wedding of King Ladislav Pohrobek. The young regent died just before his wedding day.

The interior decoration of the Church dates chiefly from the 15th century. Visitors will find a Gothic stone pulpit, a Gothic tin font, statues of *St John and the Virgin Mary* and the statue of the *Týn Madonna with Child*, which dates back to around 1420. The most beautiful stonework in the church is considered to be the canopy above the tomb of bishop Lucían of Mirandola by Matěj Rejsek (builder of the Powder Tower) from the end of the 15th century. We can also find statues by Jan Jiří Bendl and paintings by artists such as Škréta – the main altar of the *Ascension of the Virgin Mary*, the altar of *St Barbora* on the right and the *Annunciation*, *St Vojtěch* and *St Joseph* are all his works. In the south nave and on the altar of *St Anne* we find paintings by Brandl and on the third pillar in the church there is a carved Renaissance altar from around 1600. One of the most celebrated works of art in the Church is the tomb with a portrait of Tycho de Brahe, the world famous astronomist and astrologist who worked at the famous court of Rudolf II.

8/ HOUSE AT THE STONE BELL - Dům U kamenného zvonu

Gallery of the Capital City of Prague, Staroměstské nám. 13

The House at the Stone Bell on the south side of the square is perhaps the most attractive building in the Old Town Square. It was probably the property of Queen Eliška of the Přemyslids, the wife of King John of Luxembourg and it was originally a Romanesque structure, proof of which are the 12th-century walls in the cellars.

In the early 14th century the house was transformed into a splendid Gothic Palace with two floors, Gothic halls and two chapels. Frescoes from the early 14th century have survived to this day, and in the parts of the ground floor accessible to the public the remains of the original carved stone decoration can be seen featuring a king and a queen on the throne and two armed figures. The house gets its name from the obvious house symbol, a stone bell which protrudes out into the square from the corner of the building.



Today this is a replica of the bell. It's generally thought that the bell serves as a reminder of the events of 1310, when Queen Eliška of the Přemyslid's chaplain gave a signal to the army of King John of Luxembourg and his followers in the town to open the gates, avoiding the taking of the Old Town by force. In 1333 Charles IV stayed in the house when he found Prague Castle completely deserted and abandoned on his return to Prague from France and Italy.

9/ THE JAN HUS MONUMENT - Pomník Mistra Jana Husa

Staroměstské nám.

commemorates the life of the famous religious reformer. It stands on the northern side of the Old Town Square. This group of statues created by Ladislav Šaloun in 1915 represents two groups of people; the first are the victorious Hussite warriors, the other second are Protestants forced into exile 200 years later. A few steps from the monument visitors will find a row of cobblestones showing the line of longitude (14°30' east) that passes through the Czech capital.

Jan Hus (1371 – 1415)

A prominent Czech religious reformer who criticised the Church at a time when Europe was heading into religious turmoil due to the papal schism. Hus was born in the small village of Husinec in South Bohemia, graduated from the Theological Faculty of Prague University, and later became its rector. At the time he was one of the

greatest thinkers in Europe. He preached in the Bethlehem Chapel about putting right problems which had developed in the Church, and about returning the Church to its original beliefs such as modesty and recognising the bible as the single religious text. He criticised corruption in the Church, rife at the time, and wrote many works on reforming the Church which later formed the basis for the reform movement in Germany under Martin Luther.

Hus soon brought the wrath of the pope in Rome upon himself, and was excommunicated. Even though for a long time he was under direct protection of King Wenceslas IV who also had his grievances with the state of the Church, he was forced to leave Prague in 1412. In 1414 he was invited to appear before the church Church Council in Constance, where he would be given the opportunity to defend his thoughts. But Hus's fate was decided by the council long before he arrived and he was declared a heretic in 1415 and burnt at the stake.



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10/ THE OLD TOWN HALL - Staroměstská radnice

Staroměstské nám. 1

The Old Town Hall was founded in 1338. It is comprised of 5 individual houses which were gradually joined together into one building. The dominating feature of the Old Town Hall is its 69.5m high tower dating from the late 14th century, with an ornate oriel window, part of the chapel, on the eastern side. On the southern side of the tower we find the famous Astronomical Clock, created by Mikuláš of Kadaně in 1410. According to the legend, when the Astronomical Clock was finished, the councillors had Mikuláš of Kadaně's eyes put out so that he couldn't repeat the feat in another city. The Astronomical Clock can be divided into three sections: The first section contains the small windows, at which every hour the 12 apostles appear and bow to the waiting crowds. Every apostle holds his symbol: St Peter has a key, St Matthew an axe, St John a chalice and so on. Four figures directly underneath also spring into action when the apostles appear. The skeleton inverts his hourglass and rings a bell to let us know that our lives are at an end; the Turk, a symbol of a comfortable life, nods his head but then shakes it refusing death. The figure representing Vanity looks in the mirror and the Miser shakes his purse full of money. At the end of the show the cockerel crows marking the beginning of another hour of this life.



The second section is called the upper face and shows the movement of the planets. Naturally, this represents an old way of thinking with the planets and the Sun circling a stationary Earth. At the very bottom is the calendar-wheel, where in addition to the coat of arms of the Old Town, the signs of the zodiac and the months of the year represented by motifs from rural life are depicted. Around the edge of the wheel are 365 notches; the wheel turns one notch each day taking a whole year to make one full turn. The Astronomical Clock also shows four times: Central European time shown with Roman numerals around the edge of the upper face; Old Bohemian time is shown with gold Gothic numbers (according to this method of time keeping, the day begins at sunset); Babylonian time where the hours are much longer in the summer than in winter; and celestial time shown by a small star on a rod extending from the zodiacal cross. The 2nd floor interiors of the town hall are of particular historical interest. Here the original Gothic council chamber has survived. The large chamber is decorated with pictures by Václav Brožík. In the late Gothic Jiřík's Chamber visitors will find the remnants of murals from the end of the 15th century. Just like every medieval town hall, the Old Town Hall used to have a prison. Prisoners were lowered down into their own private cell, a hole in the ground which was then filled in with stone. Prisoners were, in essence, buried alive.

11/ CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS - Kostel sv. Mikuláše

Staroměstské nám. 27a

The Church of St Nicholas was originally a Gothic building and served as the parish church of the Old Town before the Týn Church was built. Following the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620, and during the Counter-Reformation in the Czech lands, the church was taken over by Benedictine monks. In 1732 - 1735 it was then rebuilt in the baroque style by Kilián Ignác Dienzenhofer. The entrance to the church faced the Jewish Town and so did not have to be particularly decorative. The side of the church faces the Old Town Hall. For this reason the side of the building is richly decorated, creating the impression that this is the main entrance. The decoration on the side was designed to be looked at from close up, evident from the way the statues



(created by Antonín Braun) are leaning over. The interior of the church is full of intricate stucco work by Bernardo Spinetti. Petr Assamo painted the pictures which adorn the dome, the presbytery and the side chapels. These paintings show scenes from the life of St Nicholas and St Benedict. It is hard not to notice the huge crown-shaped chandelier, a gift from Tsar Nicholas II. In 1787 as part of Emperor Josef II's religious reforms, almost all the monasteries and many churches that did not provide a service for the community, were closed.

The Church of St Nicholas was not spared and after the closure was used by the military. During a later war, the then commander of the Prague garrison had the decoration in the church restored by artists who otherwise would have been sent to the front. After the creation of Pařížská Street the eastern corner of the church was completed and in 1906 a recess holding a statue of St Nicholas and a neo-classical fountain with dolphins were added. After World War I the church was once again used for its original purpose by the Hussite Church.

The building joined on to the church in Kafka Square stands on the site of the former Benedictine Monastery. The house bears a plaque reminding us that this is the birthplace of the famous Czech author (who of course wrote in German), Franz Kafka.

FRANZ KAFKA (1883 – 1924) Franz Kafka is one of the most widely known and celebrated writers of the 20th century. He is known above all for his novels *The Trial*, *America* and *The Castle*. Kafka came from a Jewish family and grew up at a time when ethnic conflicts began to escalate in Prague, a fact evident in his work. As mentioned earlier, Kafka was born in the former Benedictine Monastery next to the Church of St Nicholas and spent most of his life in the Old Town. Kafka's family lived, for instance, in the House U minuty, part of the Old Town Hall and in Celetná Street. The young Kafka also attended the German Grammar School in the Kinský Palace.

In the course of his life in Prague, Kafka became acquainted with the elite of the Prague literary world such as Franz Werfel, Max Brod and the Kirsch brothers. In 1915 he won his first literary prize for a short story called *The Stoker*. In 1916 – 17 he worked in the Golden Lane at Prague Castle, but had already been diagnosed as having tuberculosis. At the end of his life Kafka left Prague and died of tuberculosis in 1924 in Kierling near Vienna.

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THE JEWISH TOWN – JOSEFOV / Židovské město

Prague's Jewish community has a history going back a very long way indeed. Jewish merchants and money lenders were settling in Prague as early as the 10th century. The original community in the Malá Strana moved in the middle of the 12th century to Josefov. Throughout its existence, the Jewish community was confined to clearly marked areas which it could not leave. At the height of its development, 1,900 people were crammed into 93,000m².

From the outset the Jewish population of Josefov set up its own administration and had its own schools and synagogues. The synagogues were the most important places in the ghetto. In medieval times they weren't only places of worship but also places where Jewish teachers met their pupils. Before the Jewish Town had its own town hall, all public matters were settled in the synagogues too. Over the course of their history the Jews suffered numerous pogroms. The first is recorded as having happened in 1096 when the first army of crusaders was passing through the city. In 1389 another large pogrom took place in the Jewish ghetto, which the young Avigdor Kara, a future Prague Rabbi, experienced at first hand. He wrote of what he saw in his *Selichot* – remorseful prayers still read today on days of atonement around the world. The status of Prague's Jews improved slightly in 1781, when Emperor Josef II issued his so-called 'Toleration Act', which gave the Jewish population access to schooling. In 1848 Jews were given the same rights as everybody else and for the first time in history they were allowed to move out of the ghetto. These reforms meant that almost all the rich Jewish families moved out of the ghetto and poor Czech families moved in. Gradually the ghetto began to deteriorate and become a dangerous, run-down area. At the end of the 19th century the situation in the ghetto had become so bad (for instance, rooms in some old houses were divided up into smaller rooms with a chalk line or a curtain, and each room was inhabited by a whole family), that the Prague authorities decided to demolish it to prevent the spread of illness. Some 300 medieval houses and 20 streets were wiped off the map. After this, only a small part of the original ghetto remained – today's Jewish Town – Josefov.

12/ THE OLD-NEW SYNAGOGUE - Staronová synagoga

Červená 2

The Old-New Synagogue dating back to the late 13th century used to be the Jewish community's main place of worship. It is one of the oldest and most beautiful Gothic buildings in Prague, and the oldest synagogue in Europe. It is made up of a double-naved hall divided by pillars on which rests unique five-ribbed vaulting. In the centre of the synagogue stands the pulpit behind a 15th-century iron grille and surrounded by pews for eminent members of the Jewish community. Notice pew number one, above which is the Star of David. It was here that the legendary Rabbi Löw, creator of the Golem, used to sit. The most important place in the whole Synagogue is the bimah which faces east and contains the Torah – the five books of Moses. For Jews, the Torah is something sacred; those who read from it may not touch it with their hands, but use a silver pointer instead. At the beginning of the 14th century an entrance hall was added to the synagogue housing two treasuries for tax collectors. Both brick gable ends were also added at this time. To pass from the entrance hall into the main hall of the synagogue one goes through one of the oldest entrances in Prague. The tympanum (space above the



entrance) is decorated with a relief of vine leaves and grapes. This decoration symbolises the 12 tribes of Israel as branches of one bush. This synagogue is steeped in legends. The most famous of these, the subject of several films, is the Golem – a monster created by Rabbi Bezael Löw. The Golem was made of clay and did all the work in the rabbi's household. Rabbi Löw brought him to life by placing a small roll of parchment with a sacred text written on it called a Shem under the Golem's tongue, after which he acquired enormous strength and inexhaustible energy. He remained in that state until the Shem was removed. The Old-New Synagogue is the only synagogue in Prague where services still take place.

13/ THE HIGH SYNAGOGUE - Vysoká synagoga

Červená 5

The High Synagogue, which can be found directly opposite the Old-New Synagogue, was built at the same time as the Jewish Town Hall next door by Mordechai Maisel in the second half of the 16th century. The Italian architect Pankrác Roder designed the building. The High Synagogue was originally linked to the town hall by an entrance on the 1st floor, and served as a meeting place for the Jewish community and representatives of the Jewish Town. However, this entrance was bricked up at the end of the 19th century and a new one created in Červená Street. The Renaissance building now houses an exhibition of 16th–19th-century synagogue textiles from the Jewish Museum.

14/ THE KLAUS SYNAGOGUE - Klausová synagoga

U starého hřbitova 4

The Klaus Synagogue is another public building which Mordechai Maisel, head of the Jewish community, had built, funding the work from his own pocket. This baroque synagogue acquired its name from three small buildings called klausy, from which it was created. The first of these buildings housed Rabbi Löw's famous Talmudic School, the second a synagogue and the third was used as a hospital linked to the ritual baths and an organisation which looked after the sick – later the Jewish funeral service. Inside the building we find exquisite stucco work and cylindrical vaulting with four pairs of lunettes. The synagogue now houses the exhibition of old Hebrew prints and manuscripts tracing the history of the Jews in central Europe since the Middle Ages.




15/ THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY - Starý židovský hřbitov

Široká 3

The Old Jewish Cemetery, adjacent to the Klaus Synagogue, is called Beth-chaim (The House of Life) by the Jews themselves, and it is a place of great significance around the world. It is not known exactly when the cemetery was established, but the oldest gravestone found there bears the date April 25, 1439 and belongs to the well known scholar and poet, Avigdor Kara, who described the pogrom of 1389. Burials took place in the cemetery continuously until 1787, when it was closed. As the Jewish community for centuries had just one cemetery at its disposal, crammed in between the houses, and as Jews were not allowed to dig up the bones of the dead, they began to bury people one on top of the other in layers. It's estimated that the cemetery holds 12 thousand gravestones and 80 thousand graves in 12 layers. The gravestones show the name's of the deceased as well as many other interesting clues about his or her life. Many gravestones bear verse's and emblems symbolising names, occupations and traditional clans. Some of the best known symbols are hands giving a blessing, signifying that the deceased belonged to the Aron tribe (Kohen) of

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priests; the Hebrew name Dob means bear, a kettle is the symbol of the Levi family, a mouse signifies the Maisel family and so on. Unlike the majority of Jewish cemeteries, we find reliefs depicting human forms. These are somewhat imperfect, intentionally so, as the stonemasons did not want to break the holy law forbidding the depiction of people (it was considered as an arrogant attempt to imitate God's work).

THE PINKAS SYNAGOGUE This synagogue was established by Rabbi Pinkas in the late 15th century as part of a house called U Erbů. The Pinkas Synagogue has been rebuilt several times as the building was the victim of several floods. During the last archeological digging here, remnants of a medieval ritual bath (a Mikva) were discovered. Today the interior of the synagogue with its Gothic vaulted ceilings is a monument to the victims of the holocaust. The walls are covered from floor to ceiling with the names of more than 77,000 Jews from Bohemia and Moravia, who were murdered by the Nazis.

16/ THE MAISEL SYNAGOGUE - Maiselova synagoga

Maiselova 10

This Renaissance synagogue was built by the head of the Jewish community, Mordechai Maisel in 1590-93 as a private place of worship. Maisel was granted permission to build a synagogue by Emperor Rudolf II. Maisl, one of the richest merchants in Prague, had lent the emperor money for his war against the Turks. He used his fortune, which according to legend he acquired from wood elves as a young pauper, to build the synagogue, pave the streets of the Jewish Town, build a hospital and enlarge the cemetery. The Maisel Synagogue was built as a grand structure, fitted out with valuable ritual objects. When it was built it would have been the largest synagogue in Prague, but since then it has been rebuilt several times and reduced in size. Its current appearance dates from the turn of the 19th century when it was given a neo-Gothic facelift by architect J.M. Weltmüller. During the Nazi occupation the synagogue served as a store for confiscated Jewish property. Today it houses a collection of liturgical objects belonging to the Jewish Museum, which mainly originate from that confiscated property.



17/ THE CLEMENTINUM - Klementinum

Klementinum 190

The Clementinum, a former Jesuit college, is the second largest place of interest in Prague after Prague Castle, and the largest Jesuit building in the Czech lands. The Jesuits arrived in Prague in 1556 on the invitation of Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand I in order to strengthen the Counter-Reformation in the Czech lands. For more than 200 years they built up their college, a complex of buildings between four streets and two squares and divided by five courtyards. Architects such as Carlo Lugaro, Francesco Caratti, Domenico Orsi and František Maxmilián Kaňka worked on the Clementinum. The statues adorning the buildings are the work of Jan Jiří Bendl – the statues of the saints on the facade of the Church of the Holy Saviour



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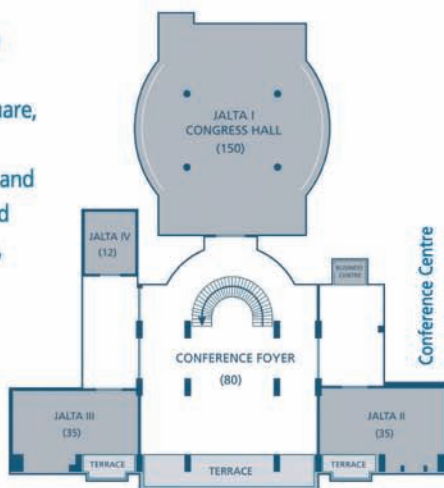
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are by Giovanni Bartolomeo Cometi. Other interesting features at the Clementinum are the thirteen sundials on the walls of the various buildings and the tower of the observatory from 1751, from which the noon gun used to be fired. During their time in the Czech lands and at the Klementinum, the Jesuits devoted much of their effort to education. They built all kinds of schools and in 1571 they were granted permission by the pope to award academic titles. Many future Czech scholars, who would have a significant bearing on the history of the country, studied at schools and colleges in the Klementinum. The Jesuit Order also had its darker side such as witch trials and book burning. In 1773 the Jesuit Order was abolished by Pope Clement XIV and the monks were forced to leave the Klementinum. In the third courtyard of the complex rises the observatory tower with the metal statue of Atlantis on the top. For more than 200 years (since 1775) a meteorological observatory has been in constant operation here, recording the weather in Prague, longer than anywhere else in Europe.

The entrance to the Mirrored Chapel, now used as a concert hall, can be found in the fourth courtyard. Most of its halls are decorated with rich stucco work or paintings. At present, the Clementinum is home to the National Library and many valuable collections of books can be found here.

18/ THE OLD TOWN BRIDGE TOWER - Staroměstská mostecká věž

Karlův most

The Old Town Bridge Tower is regarded as one of the most attractive medieval towers in the city. On one side it borders on Křižovnické Square and forms the gateway to Charles Bridge. The tower was begun during the reign of Charles IV, and formed a part of the Old Town's defence's. The tower's creator was the celebrated Prague architect, who also worked on the Cathedral of St Vitus at Prague Castle, Petr Parléř. The Old Town Bridge Tower is decorated with many pieces of sculpture. On the east side we see rulers Charles IV on the right and Wenceslas IV on the left, during whose reigns the tower was built. Between them stand the patron saints of the Czech lands, St Vít and above him St Zikmund and St Vojtěch. On the side of the tower Petr Parléř had the Latin inscription made which reads: SIGNATESIGNATEMERE METANGISETANGIS („Be told, be told and watch out; he who touches me, dies“). The inscription is a palindrome in Latin.



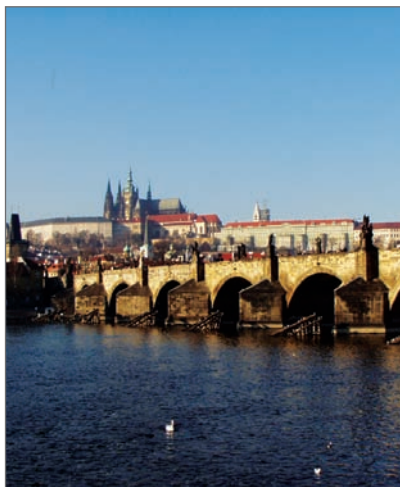
The importance in the Middle Ages, and in particular the reign of Charles IV, of symbolism is indicated by the moment when the foundation stone for the tower was laid: year 1357, 9th July, at 5:31 (135797531, another palindrome). In the same vein, the tower is divided into four 'spheres'. The first is the Earth and the second the Moon decorated with 28 crabs (28-day cycle of the moon). Above the Moon is the Sun's sphere (symbolising royal and imperial might), and the fourth is the celestial sphere, symbolised by statues of the saints.

The tower also features symbols of the lands belonging to the Czech Crown. The western side of the tower is much plainer. Facing the length of the bridge is it was open to attacks (for instance in 1648, when the Swedes laid siege to Prague – these events are commemorated by a plaque on the wall of the tower dating back to 1650). The tower was for a while used as a prison for debtors and to this day one can still see graffiti scribbled by prisoners on the walls inside. The steps up into the tower ascend to floors from which there are stunning views of the bridge and Hradčany.

19/ CHARLES BRIDGE - Karlův most

Karlův most

Charles Bridge replaced Judith Bridge which had spanned the Vltava since the late 12th century. Judith Bridge was the longest in central Europe (514m long) until it was swept away in a flood in 1342. It was Charles IV's idea to build a new bridge (originally called simply the Stone Bridge). The first stone was laid in 1357. Charles IV was concerned whether the new bridge would be built properly so that it did not meet the same fate as its predecessor. He therefore ordered raw eggs to be mixed into the mortar to make it stronger. A study has shown that Petr Parléř, the builder of the bridge, did indeed add raw eggs as well as wine to the mortar! The striking feature of the bridge, 520m span and 95m wide roadway is the gallery of 30 mostly baroque statues which date from the 17th, and to a lesser extent, the 19th century, by leading artists of the day (F. M. Brokoff, M. B. Braun, M. V. Jaekl for example). The oldest statue is the bronze knight called Bruncvík with a lion that



stands on a plinth on Kampa Island. The second oldest is the statue of the Holy Cross on the third pillar as one heads from the Old Town Bridge Tower). A Hebrew inscription celebrating the Almighty is draped around the cross. On the penultimate pillar on the right stands the famous Turk guarding a cave where Christians have been imprisoned. This is part of a group of statues representing *St John of Matha*, *St Felix of Valois* and *St Ivan*. Another well known statue is that of St John of Nepomuk, and about halfway along the bridge is a relief showing this saint being cast from the bridge. The last statue representing SS Cyril and Methodius was only installed here in 1938. In the Middle Ages jousting tournaments used to take place on Charles Bridge. Dishonest bakers would be dunked into the icy waters of the Vltava in a special cage from one of the ledges on the bridge.

20/ THE MALÁ STRANA BRIDGE TOWER - Malostranské mostecké věže

Karlův most

The Malá Strana Bridge Towers mark the end of Charles Bridge on the Malá Strana (Minor Town) side. These two towers, unlike the tower on the Old Town side, were never decorated. The smaller of the two has survived from the days of Judith Bridge, when it was part of the defence system. It got its Renaissance overcoat in the 16th century. Rare Romanesque reliefs have survived on the walls depicting a ruler on the throne and a figure on his knees. The larger tower was built in 1464 during the reign of King George of Poděbrady. On this tower there are symbols relating to the reign of Wenceslas IV, as it was originally intended to mimic the Old Town Bridge Tower, the proof of which are the empty recesses on the facade. An interesting fact about the tower is that on the battlements there is one empty space where a stone is missing. According to chroniclers, the stone fell out when ravens sat on it. The stone landed on the head of King Wenceslas's favourite knight when he was returning to Prague after a battle. The knight is said to have been valiant and courageous, and had been through many battles without a scratch. Now he had died from a stone dislodged by ravens hitting him on the head. In his memory the king never had the stone replaced.





THE MALÁ STRANA DISTRICT / Malá Strana

The Malá Strana District was the second part of Prague to be established after the Old Town. It was created by King Přemysl Otakar II in 1257, mainly to beef up the defences surrounding the castle. The first inhabitants of the Malá Strana were settlers from northern Germany. The area underwent extensive development during the reign of Charles IV. He enlarged it considerably and put up defensive walls, a part of which is called the Hunger Wall, which can still be seen today at the top of Petřín Hill.

From the outset there were a large number of religious sites in the small area the Malá Strana occupies. This concentration of churches led at the beginning of the Hussite wars in 1419 to the complete plunder of the Malá Strana. The Hussites attacked the royal barracks and burnt down the Archbishop's court and half the district went with it. The Malá Strana had only just recovered when another disaster struck. In 1541 a huge fire broke out on this side of the river, practically razing the area to the ground. It was only after this did the Malá Strana acquire its current appearance which differs so much from the Old Town. Around the castle huge residences were constructed and the nobility built luxury palaces. These buildings were mainly baroque in style. In the 17th century, residences such as the Valdštejn, Nostitz, Michnovský and Fürstenberg Palaces were built. Architects such as Kilián Ignác Dienzenhofer, Anselmo Lurago, Giovanni Domenico Orsi and many other famous names worked there. The beauty of the Malá Strana was heightened by the creation of numerous gardens and terraced slopes, an architectural speciality of central Europe.

21/ KAMPA ISLAND - Ostrov Kampa

Malá strana

Kampa Island is one of the most idyllic and tranquil places in the Czech capital. The island is divided into two visibly distinct parts. The section nearest to Charles Bridge is formed by a small, cosy square; the second is a park, formed when several historical gardens were joined together. Kampa was first mentioned in the late 12th century, when the island was given over to the Johannine Monastery. For centuries the island was a victim of regular flooding, thanks to which its shape was in constant flux. This situation changed after the fire of 1541 when Kampa was shorn up with rubble from the burnt-out buildings. Kampa is divided from the Malá Strana by a channel of the Vltava known as the Čertovka. It is said the name (which comes from the Czech word for 'demon') comes from a woman who owned a mill there. As she was so successful, and unusually for the time ran the mill herself, people began to think that she was in league with the Devil. Until the mid 16th century the island was practically deserted except for three watermills. Today visitors can still see two mill wheels. In the 16th century the island was settled by craftsmen responsible for the upkeep of Charles Bridge.



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22/ MALTÉZSKÉ SQUARE - Maltézské náměstí

Malá strana

This square gets its name from the Priory of the Maltese Knights which can be found there. At the northern end of the square stands a statue of St John the Baptist (by Ferdinand Maxmilián Brokoff), the patron saint of the Maltese Knights. It was erected in 1715 on the site of a temporary altar, set up during a plague epidemic. Maltézské Square is lined with picturesque Renaissance houses as well as grand baroque Palaces from the 17th and 18th centuries.



THE NOSTITZ PALACE This is an early baroque building from the mid 17th century built by architect Francesco Caratti. The palace is decorated with statues of emperors, copies of the originals by Brokoff, and a balustrade with classic statues. Today the Nostitz Palace houses the Dutch embassy.

THE STRAKA OF NEDABYLICE PALACE This baroque palace, which stands opposite the Nostitz Palace, is also known as the House of the White Horse thanks to the white horse house symbol, or sometimes as the House of the Seven Devils. It was built around 1690 by J.B. Alliprandi. An interesting fact about this palace is that in the early 17th century, the famous Dutch sculptor, Adriaen de Vries, had his workshop there. It was here that he created his wonderful bronze statues of ancient gods for the Valdštejn Garden in the Malá Strana.

23/ THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY VICTORIOUS - Kostel Panny Marie Vítězné

Karmelitská ulice

was built on the site where originally the Church of the Holy Trinity stood, the oldest baroque place of worship in Prague which was finished in 1613 by Giovanni Mario Filippi for German Lutherans. In 1624 the church was handed over to the Carmelites who turned it around (originally the front had faced towards Petřín Hill) and in 1669 they had a new spire built. Paintings by Petr Brandl adorn the side altars. Today the Church of Our Lady Victorious houses one of the most revered figures in the Catholic world – *the Pražské Jezulátko (il Bambino di Praga)*, a wax figure which supposedly has miraculous healing powers.



The Bambino stands on a richly decorated marble altar on the right hand side of the church. It was brought to Bohemia by Polyxena Lobkovicz who donated it to the Carmelites in 1628. Another interesting fact is that some of the Carmelites are buried in the church in open coffins in a crypt under the main altar. Remarkably, their remains have been preserved by the dry air underground.

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MALOSTRANSKÉ SQUARE See stop No. 31

24/ THE TRINITY COLUMN - Sloup Nejsvětější Trojice

Malostranské nám.

At the top of Malostranské Square, in front of the Church of St Nicholas, a monument was built in 1715 to commemorate the terrible plague which hit Prague in 1713-14. It was made by sculptor František Herstorfer according to a design by Giovanni Batista Alliprandi. The column is 20m high and decorated with a statue of the Holy Trinity and the Czech patron saints. Three fountains around the column represent the sources of life, mercy and salvation.

25/ THE CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS - Chrám sv. Milukáše

Malostranské nám. 25

The Church of St Nicholas dominates Malostranské Square. The church is one of the most exquisite baroque buildings anywhere in Europe and is built on the grand principle of interlocking ellipsoids. Building work was begun on the church in 1703 on the site of an earlier Gothic church dedicated to the same saint. The order behind the building of a new place of worship was the Jesuits, who acquired the site through one of the most influential men in the country, Albrecht von Wallenstein. It was such an important building project that Emperor Leopold I himself came to lay the first stone. In the first phase of construction Kryštof Dientzenhofer demonstrated his remarkable skills as a builder. He is responsible for the nave and the side chapels. The dynamic 40 m high twisting facade and huge interior were the first architectural experiment of its kind on a baroque building in Europe. Kryštof's son Kilián Ignác Dientzenhofer, who took over the project when his father died, built



the presbytery with its huge dome. After him, Anselmo Lurago added the slender spire in 1751-56. One enters the church via an entrance, above which the Kolowrat coat of arms tells allcomers that they were significant benefactors when the church was being built. The vast ceiling fresco in the nave called *The Glory of St Nicholas* is by Jan Lukáš Kracker, and whit 1500m2 it one of the largest in Europe. It said about the fresco - that he the painter was working on it, he didn't want anybody watching him. He only wanted the work to be seen when it was finished. But one of the Jesuit monks was so curious that would hide behind one of the church pillars to watch. However, the painter caught sight of him, and as a punishment he included him in the fresco as a figure hiding behind a pillar watching everything. When the painter was finished and everyone was let in to admire the work, they couldn't stop laughing when they recognised their colleague on the ceiling! The fresco in the dome is the work of František Xaver Palko and depicts the *Glory of the Holy Trinity*. Palko was the most celebrated artist of his time with the possible exception of V. V. Reiner. The dome is 70m high and the spire next to it reaches 79m into the Prague skyline. The nave is adorned with numerous late baroque sculptures, mainly by Ignác František Platzer. Probably the most noteworthy works of art in the entire church are paintings by Karel Škréta – *The Crucifixion* from the mid 17th century in the Chapel of St Barbora and the *Passion Cycle* in the church gallery. In 1773, after the abolition of the Jesuit Order, the Church of St Nicholas became the main parish church of the Malá Strana.

26/ NERUDOVA STREET - Nerudova ulice

Nerudova ulice

This steep, picturesque street is the main road linking the Malá Strana and Hradčany. It was once part of the Royal Way, the route sovereigns would follow up to Prague Castle on the day of their coronation. The street has a distinctly baroque appearance, but many of the houses date back to medieval times. The street, originally called Strahovská at the lower end and Ostruhová at the top end, was renamed at the end of the 19th century after the writer and journalist Jan Neruda who spent a part of his life in the street, and who wrote about the Malá Strana in many of his books. This street is well known for its house symbols. House symbols were an everyday sight until Austrian Empress Maria Theresa had the houses numbered. They made the houses distinguishable from those around them and often told a great deal about the status, occupation or name of the owner.

House **U TŘÍ HOUSLIČEK** (No. 12) (House of the Three Little Violins). Just the name tells us that three families of Prague violin makers lived here, one after the other. The house facade is decorated with paintings of Greek gods. Another interesting dwelling is the Renaissance House **U ZLATÉ ČÍŠE** (No.16) (House of the Golden Chalice). As the name suggests, it was owned by a goldsmith. The House **U ST JANA NEPOMUCKÉHO** (No.18) (House of St John of Nepomuk), originally a Renaissance building, was given a baroque face in the early 18th century. The entrance is decorated with a relief of St John of Nepomuk from the beginning of the 18th century. Midway up the street, notice the green house that protrudes from the row and makes the street quite narrow. This house was originally joined onto the Strahov Gate. In the Middle Ages, the Malá Strana town walls ran through the street at this point. The house is now a tea room. Legend has it that every Friday night a fiery team of horses thunders through this place, on which sits a headless skeleton waiting for his soul to be released from damnation, but nobody knows how to set him free. Approximately midway up Nerudova Street stands the monastery and the **CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF UNCEASING SUCCOUR** dating from the 18th century and probably built by architects Jean B. Mathey and Jan Blažej Santini. The church is decorated with statues by Matěj Václav Jaeckl. One of the last houses at the top of Nerudova Street is the **HOUSE U DVOU SLUNCŮ** (No. 47) (House of the Two Suns), where the writer Jan Neruda lived from 1845-57. The last house at the top of the hill is called **U ZLATÉ HVĚZDY** (House of the Golden Star). Here the street veers to the right and becomes **KE HRADU** Street. This street was driven through rock in 1638-44, in order to give better access to the castle. Immediately above Ke Hradu Street towers the Renaissance Schwarzenberg Palace in Hradčanské Square.



27/ THE MORZINSKÝ PALACE - Morzinský palác

Nerudova 5

This baroque palace on the lefthand side of Nerudova Street replaced four old houses and was given its current appearance by Giovanni Santini in 1713-14. The facade was decorated by Ferdinand Maxmilián Brokoff with statues of Moors, allegorical busts representing Day and Night and statues representing the four continents known to antiquity (Europe, Asia, America and Africa). The Morzinský Palace now houses the Romanian Embassy.

28/ THE THUN-HOHENSTEIN PALACE - Palác Thun-Hohensteinský

Nerudova 20

Now the Italian Embassy, this palace was built in 1721-26 by Giovanni Santini, originally for the Kolowrat family. Matthias Bernard Braun placed two gigantic eagles beside the entrance, symbols of the Kolowrat family. Above the entrance he put statues representing Jupiter and Junona. The staircase inside the palace was rebuilt in 1871 by Josef Zitek. It is lined with paintings of various stages of human life from the cradle to the grave by Josef Tulka and František Ženíšek (who designed the curtain at the National Theatre)

THE HRADČANY DISTRICT - Hradčany

Hradčany

Historically, Hradčany was the third of Prague independent towns. It grew up around the castle (roughly today's Hradčanské Square), an area inhabited since the 10th century. It was officially founded around 1320 and governed directly by the burgrave of Prague Castle. In 1360 Charles IV had Hradčany enlarged, but in 1541 it was almost entirely destroyed by fire along with the Malá Strana. After the fire, the area was cleared and gradually some of the finest examples of Renaissance and baroque architecture in Prague began to appear there. In an attempt to build a residence as close to the emperor as possible, many aristocratic families competed with each other to put up the biggest and most expensive palaces. At this time magnificent buildings such as the Černínský Palace, the Toskánský Palace and the Martinický Palace were built.

HRADČANSKÉ SQUARE - Hradčanské náměstí

Hradčanské náměstí

Hradčanské Square forms a kind of forecourt to Prague Castle. Its current appearance dates back to the mid 18th century, a time when grand Renaissance and baroque palaces were being construction here. The dominant architectural style of the square is baroque. In the middle of the square we find the baroque Marian column with a statue of the Virgin Mary by Ferdinand Maxmilián Brokoff, as well as one of the last remaining cast iron gas street lamps from the 1860s. The square boasts several grand palaces, details of two of them follow.

THE ŠTERNBERK PALACE - Šternebrský palác

Hradčanské nám. 15

The Šternberk Palace, accessed through a passageway in the lefthand gate of the Archbishop's Palace, is a baroque work by Giovanni Santini and Domenico Martinelli (among others) dating from 1698 - 1707. From 1796 the palace was home to the Society of Patriotic Friends of Art in the Czech Lands, to which the nobility donated paintings and sculptures from their private collections. Since 1949 the palace has housed the National Gallery's exhibition of Old European Art. The National Gallery's collections are spread over three floors of the palace: **ITALIAN ART:** This collection is made up of art from 1300-1800. The highlight is a series of panel paintings which come from the collection of the d'Este Family, which Archduke Franz Ferdinand inherited and enjoyed at Konopiště Chateau. One of the most valuable works on show is *the Lamentation* by Lorenzo Monaco. *The Holy Conversation* by Palma il Vecchio, *Eleonora of Toledo* by A. Bronzino, and the *Madonna* by Sebastiano del Piomba represent the Italian Renaissance. Baroque art is represented mostly by the so-called Venetian School: Bassano, S. Ricci, F. Guardi and Canaletti's *View of the Thames*, which is on long-term loan from the Lobkovitz family. Visitors will also see works such as *St Jerome* by Tintoretto and *Portrait of an Elderly Man* by Jacob Bassano. **GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN PAINTING:** Visitors can see a whole range of interesting works dating from 1400-1800. For example, there is the

Festival of the Rosary by Dürer, which was once part of the famous art collection owned by Emperor Rudolf II.

DUTCH AND FLEMISH PAINTING: Art from the Netherlands from 1400 – 1700 makes up the bulk of the collection. Here visitors will find mainly still life and landscapes. There are paintings by Rubens – *Death of St Thomas and Death of St Augustine*, Rembrandt – *Portrait of a Scholar*, El Greco, Cranach, Tintoretto, Goya and many others. A large part of the collection of Dutch art can be found at the chateau at Hluboká nad Vltavou in South Bohemia. In addition to the above, there are also sections devoted to icons, classical art, French art and temporary exhibitions. A visit to the gallery should not be missed!

THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE - Arcibiskupský palác

Hradčanské nám. 16

This building stands on the righthand side of the gate to Prague Castle. It is high baroque in style, with a yellowy Rococo facade decorated by Jan Josef Wirch in 1760, the same man who rebuilt the palace in 1722 - 25. In the centre of the facade visitors will notice the large archbishop's coat of arms. The palace contains some exquisite interiors, especially the chapel and gallery. On the second floor there is a large hall with a row of nine Gobelin tapestries with a 'New India' theme, made in Paris in 1754 - 65. The Archbishop's Palace also houses the precious archbishop's carriage, one of the only two in Europe to have survived. This hand-made piece of baroque artistry with carved, gilded decoration has the archbishop's coat of arms on the doors. The palace became the archbishop's residence in the mid 16th century during the reign of Emperor Ferdinand I. The Archbishop of Prague lives there to this day. In 1990 Pope John Paul II stayed there during his visit to Czechoslovakia.

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PRAGUE CASTLE –

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PRAGUE CASTLE - Pražský hrad

Hradčanské nám.

Prague Castle is an unmissable part of any visit to the Czech capital. It symbolises a thousand years of history. It was founded in 880 – 890 as a Romanesque fort, the remains of which can still be found under the paving stones in the third courtyard. A tour of the complex includes such remarkable buildings as the Cathedral of St Vitus, which dominates the Prague skyline, the Royal Palace, the Convent of St George with its Romanesque walls, the Golden Lane, where you will wonder how people could have lived in such a limited space, the famous art collection of Rudolf II and many more fascinating places. Those tired after a long tour can retreat to the Royal Gardens, a fine example of Renaissance landscape gardening.

THE FIRST COURTYARD

Visitors enter the first courtyard through a baroque gate guarded by two giant statues by Ignác František Platzer dating from 1769. For centuries a moat divided the castle from Hradčanské Square where the gate now stands, and the castle could only be accessed across a drawbridge. This natural ditch was one of the three moats that originally protected the castle. The other two were man-made and encircled the other courtyards. The first courtyard is closed in by palace buildings which Empress Maria Theresa had constructed. Building work on this Rococo court was taken on by the Viennese architect Niccolò Pacassi. It was decided to preserve the Matthias Gate, one of the first baroque structures in Prague and the original entrance to the castle, erected in 1614 by Giovanni Mario Fillipi. In front of the gate stand two huge flagpoles made of several pine tree trunks. From the passageway between the first and the second courtyard a staircase leads up into the representative rooms of the castle. These are now used by the Czech president as audience chambers. The staircase to the left leads up to the Spanish Hall.



THE SECOND COURTYARD

As with the first courtyard, the current appearance of the second courtyard is the work of Maria Theresa's court architect Niccolò Pacassi. This courtyard was originally created in the 16th century on the site of the second moat. Most of the northern section of the courtyard was built during the reign of Emperor Rudolf II. First of all, stables on the ground floor were created and several years later the Imperial Palace was added on the opposite side. Rudolf II was a great lover of the arts and he earmarked many of the castle's rooms to house his collections. Soon these rooms were bursting at the seams, so he decided to add another floor above the stables and store a part of his collections there. On the first floor he had another two grand Renaissance halls built – the Spanish Hall and the Gallery. The Prague Castle Picture Gallery, which now houses a fraction of Rudolf II's famous collections, is situated in what used to be the stables. During reconstruction work carried out on the stables, the remains of the first church at Prague Castle dedicated to the Virgin Mary were discovered. Built in the 9th century, this was only the second Catholic church to be established in the Czech lands.

PRAGUE CASTLE PICTURE GALLERY The gallery was created from Rudolf II's stables in 1965 and houses a part of the emperor's original art collection. Rudolf II was a highly educated man for his times. It is known that during his reign he surrounded himself with an assortment of creative individuals such as painters, sculptors, various craftsmen, astronomers, alchemists and doctors. He had a great interest in art as well as science, especially types of science which had a hint of magic and quackery in them such as alchemy and astrology. During his reign he collected an incredible 30 thousand pictures by the best artists of the day. He owned a unique collection of works by Dürer, Bosch, Brueghel the elder, Leonardo, Tizian, Raffael, Cranach and Tintoretto. His collections also contained various artefacts, gold, minerals, clocks, astronomical and measuring equipment, mechanical toys, an extensive library, stuffed animals and various rare curios such as a perpetual motion machine, a unicorn's horn, mandrake, a giant's shinbone... and the list goes on.



His art collection was one of the largest in the world at the time. His collection of precious stone was one of the most valuable. Rudolf II had plans to create a kind of universal museum from his collection called the 'encyclopedia of the visible world'. Many eminent artists also worked at Rudolf's court, such as the painter Hans von Aachen and the sculptor Adrien de Vries. Another was the Italian painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, known around the world for his paintings of animals, flowers and vegetables. The famous astronomers Tycho de Brahe, Jan Kepler and G. Bruno also worked for the Emperor. And we should not forget the alchemists who, though nowadays surrounded in a mist of secrecy and witchcraft, are considered as pioneers in the field of physics and chemistry. Rudolf himself possessed a great deal of knowledge in this area and often took part in experiments. Rudolf was also a very eccentric ruler and in his passion for art and science, often forgot to rule. His approach to being emperor indirectly led to the outbreak of the Thirty Years War and to the subsequent break-up of his beloved collections. At the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648, a large amount of objects from Rudolf's collections were stolen by Swedish troops. However, you can still find a part of the collection in the Prague Castle Picture Gallery. Some of the most noteworthy works of art on display are *The Young Woman at her Toilet* by Tizian, Tintoretto's *The Whipping of Christ* and Rubens's *Assembly of the Olympic Gods*. Other works by Master Theodoricus, Paolo Veronese, Hans von Aachen, Domenico Fetti, Bartolomeo Spranger, Jan Kupecký, Petr Brandl and many others can also be viewed.

THE SPANISH HALL The famous Spanish Hall, built on the orders of Rudolf II in 1602–1606 on the first floor of this wing of the castle, was at the time the largest secular room in the castle. Unfortunately it has not survived in its original entirety. It was given a neo-baroque facelift in preparation for the coronation of Emperor Franz Josef I as Czech king, an event which never took place. The hall is 48m long, 24m wide and 12m high.

THE THIRD COURTYARD

Passing through a passageway in the east wing we reach the third courtyard, around which are grouped the oldest parts of the castle complex. Even here, buildings from various periods were united behind one facade by Pacassi. The entire courtyard was paved in the 1920s, under which the remains of the original medieval structures can be found, such as a small 12th-century church and graveyard. The most significant building in the courtyard is the largest Christian place of worship in Prague, the Cathedral of St Vitus, containing the tombs of Czech kings and the crown jewels.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST VITUS - Katedrála sv. Víta

The Gothic Cathedral of St Vitus dominates the whole courtyard and is the most distinct medieval building in Prague. A stone rotunda founded in 926-929 and then a Romanesque basilica from 1085 used to stand on the site of today's cathedral. Charles IV had the basilica demolished, and decided to build a cathedral in its place. Firstly, he wanted to create a symbol of his power, and secondly the Prague bishopric had been promoted to an archbishopric during his reign, and every city at the centre of an archbishopric needed a cathedral. So in 1344, Charles IV gave the order for a cathedral to be built. The first architect to work on the building was Matthias of Arras, who completed the eight chapels at the end of the cathedral. When he died in 1352, Petr Parléř from Gmünd in Austria continued the work. By the time of his death in 1399, he had managed to complete the remaining parts of the chapel, establish the gallery, put a roof over the choir and put up temporary walls. The cathedral at the time of Petr Parléř was only half the size it is today and work stopped for 500 years. Not until the 19th century was the Union for the Completion of the Cathedral of St Vitus founded, and it was 1929 before the architects Josef Kranner, Josef Mocker and Kamil Hilbert completed the building. The Cathedral of St Vitus is 124m long, 33m high and 60m wide at its widest point. It is a triple nave cathedral with two side naves and a wreath of choir chapels overhead. 28 pillars support the amazing vaulted ceiling. The tower is 96.5m high and is topped with a Renaissance spire, atop of which stands a 3.5m high Czech lion. The largest bell in the Czech lands dating from 1549 and weighing 16.5 tons hangs in the tower.



THE CATHEDRAL DECORATION: The entrance to the cathedral is through the western facade, over which rise two 82m-high towers on both sides. The doors bear scenes in bronze from the history of the cathedral and the lives of SS Wenceslas and Adalbert (Vojtěch). In the middle of the facade one cannot fail to notice

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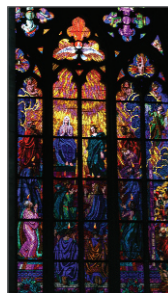
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ce the rose window showing the Creation of the World by František Kysela in stained glass. The original entrance to the church was through the Golden Gate comprised of three doors (representing the three gates into Jerusalem according to St John), above which glitters an extremely valuable mosaic depicting the Last Judgement dating from 1370 - 71. The mosaic is made of pieces of glass and stone and features Christ, the Virgin Mary, St John, the Czech patron saints, the apostles and Charles IV, the founder of the cathedral with his fourth wife Eliška of Pomerania.

THE CATHEDRAL INTERIOR: The interior of the cathedral is very richly decorated. On entering, look up to admire the beautiful vaulted ceiling. This type of vaulting, called net vaulting, was used here for the first time in central Europe by architect Petr Parléř. At the same height as the first gallery we see the most important series of Gothic statues – a kind of portrait gallery depicting 11 members of the royal family, 3 archbishops, 5 heads of the building project and the first two architects to work on the cathedral. If you continue to the southern side of the cathedral, around halfway along you will reach the most beautiful chapel, the Chapel of St Wenceslas. It was created in 1362 – 1367 and is the work of Petr Parléř. The chapel contains the remains of St Wenceslas. St Wenceslas's grave has remained in the same place since his death in 935 despite the church which surrounds it having been rebuilt several times. The chapel is adorned with 1345 semiprecious stones and Gothic murals, probably by Master Theodoricus from the 14th century and paintings from the 16th century depicting the life of St Wenceslas by the creator of the Litoměřice altar. St Wenceslas's grave and a statue of him dating from the 14th century are also situated in the chapel. There is also a green basket which, it is said, was used in divine judgements. The individual on trial had to prove his innocence by putting his hand into burning coals in the basket. If he did not burn himself, he was deemed innocent. Of course, it often happened that innocent people who relied on the miraculous basket, got badly burnt and were declared guilty. This practice was abolished by Charles IV, but the basket stayed in the Chapel of St Wenceslas.



Under the windows of the chapel visitors will see a small door leading to the steps to the chamber containing the crown jewels, situated above the chapel. In the chamber protected by seven locks (seven different people in important office in the Czech lands each hold a key), lie the crown jewels - a crown, the only one in Europe to be shaped like a hat – a sceptre, an orb, a coronation sword and a cross. The most famous of these objects is the crown of St Wenceslas, which Emperor Charles IV had crafted in 1346. Charles placed great emphasis on maintaining old royal traditions and so the crown was dedicated to St Wenceslas, the patron of the Czech lands, on whose head it would be kept. It could be taken off only on the occasion of the coronation of a new king or for very special occasions where the king was present, and only in Prague and the immediate surroundings. After the coronation the king was allowed to keep the crown for just one day before returning it to the head of St Wenceslas. The crown is made of 22 karat gold, and is decorated with 95 precious stones and 20 pearls. Some of the stones are the biggest examples on the planet. The crown jewels are only displayed on very special occasions.

Behind the Chapel of St Wenceslas are more steps which this time lead to the royal tomb where Emperor Charles IV is buried alongside his four wives. Here visitors can also see the foundations of the old Romanesque rotunda and basilica. At the end of the cathedral we find more Gothic graves of Czech princes and

kings of the Přemyslid dynasty such as Přemysl Otakar II, Břetislav I, Břetislav II, Bořivoj II and Spytihněv II. There are also the graves of the first Czech archbishop Jan Očko of Vlašim and the builders of the cathedral itself Matthias of Arras and Petr Parléř. The tomb of St John of Nepomuk dating from 1736 is made of solid silver. In front of the main altar we find the part of the royal tomb which is above ground. It is the work of Dutch sculptor Alexander Collin and dates from 1571-89. The main neo-Gothic altar dates from the time when the cathedral was being completed. To the right of the main altar visitors will find the royal oratory from 1493, decorated with intertwining branches, the symbol of Vladislav Jagiello, as well as symbols of the countries he ruled over. The Renaissance organ loft by architect Bonifác Wohlmut dates back to 1557 – 1561, and was originally situated on the western side of the cathedral.



It was moved to the northern side of the side nave when the cathedral was being finished at the beginning of the last century. In the centre of the old part of the cathedral we find the tomb of the first Habsburgs to sit on the Czech throne. Once again, the sculptor is Dutchman Alexander Collin. Emperor Ferdinand I, his wife and his son Maximilián II are all depicted. This is the most interesting part of the cathedral packed with decorations and interesting works of art wherever you look.

THE STATUE OF ST GEORGE - *Socha sv. Jiří*

The statue is a copy of the Gothic original which is stored in at the National Gallery. The original was made in 1373 by Jiří and Martin of Kluže. It was one of the first free standing statues in the Czech lands, as at the time it was the custom to attach statues to churches and monasteries. This meant that it was only necessary to complete the front of every statue.

GRANITE MONOLITH - *Žulový monolit*

The 16m-high monolith has stood here since 1928 and commemorates the victims of World War I. It was erected to mark the 10th anniversary of the declaration of Czechoslovak independence.

THE ROYAL PALACE - *Královský palác*

The Old Royal Palace is situated to the south of the Cathedral of St Vitus and is one of Prague Castle's oldest structures. Over the course of its long history it has been the scene of several significant events. During the Habsburg rule it housed state offices. In 1618 the so-called Prague defenestration took place here, and in 1621 the death sentence was passed on 27 anti-Habsburg rebels. The palace was built in three stages over many centuries. As early as the 11th century a Romanesque palace stood on the site. That building now forms the cellars of today's palace. Přemysl Otakar II and later Charles IV built new floors on top of the Romanesque palace, and these now constitute the lower floors. A striking feature built at that time is the Gothic arcading on the north side of the courtyard. The All Saints Chapel was also added at that time which is now joined to the western end of the palace. The most important period in the development of the palace came during the

reign of Vladislav Jagiellon at the end of the 15th century when the architect Benedikt Reid worked on its reconstruction. He linked up the earlier spaces where Charles IV had resided and created the largest medieval secular space of its day in Europe – the Vladislav Hall.

THE VLADISLAV HALL: This is the most important part of the palace, and is still the venue for important events such as the elections of new presidents. The hall is 62m long, 16m wide and 13m high. The windows and entrances are Renaissance in style, while the ceiling is late Gothic. Benedikt Ried, who worked on the building for Vladislav Jagiello in 1486-1502, is responsible for this blend of styles. The Vladislav Hall used to be called the Great Throne Hall, and was originally created for special occasions such as coronations, feasts and even jousting tournaments. The knights would enter the hall on horseback via the Riders' Stairs which lead from the Square of St George and pass into the hall through a special entrance. During the reign of Rudolf II, art markets used to take place here. Now the hall is used for important state occasions.

THE BASILICA OF ST GEORGE - *Bazilika sv. Jiří*

The Basilica of St George is the best preserved Romanesque place of worship in Prague. The only 'blemish' on the purely Romanesque character is the baroque facade from the 17th century. The twin spires of the basilica are a well-known sight. They are not of the same proportions; the south spire (named Adam) is larger, the north spire (Eva) is slimmer. Inside the basilica in the apse on the north side visitors can see the remains of Romanesque murals and a Gothic statue of the Virgin Mary and Christ. A double baroque stairway leads us from the nave up into the presbytery, which ends in a semicircular apse. The vaulting above the presbytery still bears late Romanesque frescoes from the mid 13th century. During renovation work, the graves of some Czech princes from the 10th and 11th centuries were discovered in the basilica. The tomb of St Ludmila, Přemyslid dynasty princess and patron saint of the Czech lands who was murdered in the 9th century, is also situated in the basilica. The baroque chapel of St John of Nepomuk is attached to the basilica on the southern side, and a statue of the saint by Brokoff can be seen on the facade. The Convent of St George – the first convent in the Czech lands – was founded next to the basilica in 973. The convent was a centre of scientific research and housed an important scriptorium (a room where manuscripts were copied) where a number of medieval illuminated manuscripts were produced. The convent was such an important place that the abbess had the right to crown Czech queens alongside the archbishop. The convent, rebuilt many times over, was finally abolished in 1782 and made into an army barracks. In 1962-74 it was renovated to house the National Gallery's collection of Czech art from the Gothic, Renaissance and baroque periods.



THE ART COLLECTION OF THE CONVENT OF ST GEORGE: The art collections at Convent of St George are organised in chronological order according to the various periods. The ground floor houses Czech art from the 14th century, the second floor continues with collections from the 15th and 16th centuries, and the third floor holds Mannerism and baroque works. Highlights of the collection include St Elizabeth, a 14th-century panel painting by Master Theodoricus, who decorated the famous Chapel of the Holy Cross at Karlštejn Castle; a selfportrait by Jan Kupecký from 1711 and The Speaking Apostle from 1725 by the world famous baroque painter Petr Brandl. There are also sculptures by Brokoff, Adrien de Vries, M. B. Braun and many other priceless and wonderful pieces.

THE GOLDEN LANE - Zlatá ulička

can be located behind the Convent of St George on the eastern flank of Prague Castle, right up against the ramparts. It is named after the goldsmiths who lived here in the 17th century. It is one of Prague's most picturesque places and is shrouded in myths and legends, mainly about alchemists trying to make a stone of wisdom, which would transform ordinary metals into gold, and make its owner immortal. The Viennese professor Mr Uhde, who lived in the Golden Lane around 1830, certainly fuelled these legends. The professor was known for his eccentricity; he wore a long black coat that didn't have a single button; he had a long white beard and in his small dwelling he regularly carried out chemical experiments, in an attempt to make a stone of wisdom. These experiments went out of control one night and there was an explosion and a fire. The professor suffered a stroke, but as he was dying, a smile came across his face as he held a nugget of pure gold in his hand.



Alchemists certainly did work in Prague on the invitation of Emperor Rudolf II. However, they lived in Víkářská Street behind the Cathedral of St Vitus. The Golden Lane was home to the castle guardsmen, 24 riflemen who built their houses in arches in the ramparts. Later the lane attracted the poor and the name 'Golden' was used in irony as the place was so dirty. The inhabitants, it is said, had only one toilet and an open sewer ran down the middle of the lane. It wasn't until the turn of the 19th century did its romantic side come to be recognised. The lane was renovated, and several famous writers lived here including Franz Kafka in 1917, who lived at No. 22, and the poet Jaroslav Seifert – winner of the Nobel Prize for literature.

THE MIHULKA TOWER - Prašná věž Mihulka

During the reign of Emperor Rudolf II, alchemists had a laboratory in the Mihulka Tower. Today it houses an exhibition dedicated to alchemy, Renaissance metal foundries, various crafts, the late Gothic fortifications at Prague Castle and the beginnings of scientific research at the court of Rudolf II.

THE LOBKOVICZ PALACE - Lobkovický palác

The Lobkovicz Palace next to the easternmost gate into Prague Castle was built after a fire in 1541. The remains of the original Renaissance sgraffito can be seen on the outside of the building. Its current appearance dates from the 17th century when it was rebuilt by Carlo Lugaro for the Lobkovicz family. The grandest room is the banqueting hall dating from the 17th century with mythological paintings lining its walls. Opposite the palace rises the Black Tower, an original part of the castle's Romanesque fortifications. In the 16th century the tower served as a debtors' prison. The prisoners were allowed to bring personal items with them into the prison, and could even have people visit them, but they had to find their own food, sometimes by begging. Paradoxically, for a time the lender himself was responsible for feeding the prisoner, and if he died of hunger in prison, the lender had to fast as a punishment.

PRAGUE CASTLE GARDENS The castle gardens spread out around almost the entire castle, and following extensive renovation, are once again open to the public. They are ideal places to relax and admire the skill of garden

planners of the past. But let us return to the Silver-line route which continues down the New Castle Steps (Nové zámecké schody) and past the Czech Parliament in Sněmovní Street to Valdštejnské Square.

29 THE LEDEBURG, FÜRSTENBERG AND PÁLFFY GARDENS - Zahrady Ledeburská, Černínská a Pálffyovská

Valdštejnské nám. 3

These gardens are located in places where in the Middle Ages one would have found vineyards growing on the steep northern approaches to Prague Castle. In the 16th century, the nobility began to construct palaces and terraced gardens here. The three gardens, which once belonged to the Ledeburg, Fürstenberg and Pálffy palaces, were joined together to form a single garden. The Fürstenberg Garden was created in 1784 by Ignác Palliardi. On the upper terrace there is a pavilion, decorated with statues and classic vases. The small house with the bulbous tower high up on the hill once housed a spa for the owner, Barbora Čemínová. The Pálffy Garden isn't as richly adorned, but one can still find a unique sundial painted at the top of the covered staircase. The Ledeburg Garden boasts a stunning sala terrena by architects Jan Santini and Giovanni Battista Alliprandi. The gardens are accessed from the Pálffy Palace in Valdštejnské Square and are well worth a visit.



30 THE VALDŠTEJN (WALLENSTEIN) PALACE - Valdštejnský palác

Valdštejnské nám. 4

The Valdštejn Palace, a long block standing opposite the Ledeburg Palace, was one of the first baroque buildings to appear in Prague. It was built by Duke Albrecht von Wallenstein (Valdštejn in Czech), Emperor Ferdinand II's generalissimo, as his private residence. Albrecht von Wallenstein became a legendary figure during the Thirty Year's War. During the struggle between the Czech Estates and the Habsburg monarchy, he cleverly sided with the king, confiscating property of the defeated Czech nobility for himself. Wallenstein was a slippery character who, in the course of the war, managed to change sides several times, but always with an eye on gaining property. When he actually began to consider taking the imperial crown away from the Habsburgs, the emperor had him murdered in Cheb in 1634, to the relief of many. The Valdštejn Palace was intended to compete with the royal palace in grandness and size. The Italian architects Spezza, Marini, Pieronni and Sebgondi all worked on this monumental baroque structure. The main, 60m-long facade is fairly simple and is more Renaissance in character, but the arrival of the new baroque style can be seen on the three entranceways, of which the middle one is false. Inside, the highlight of the palace is the remarkable Main Hall which is two storeys high. It is decorated with stucco work and ceiling frescoes by Italian Baccio Bianco depicting Wallenstein himself as the god Mars. The Chapel of St Wenceslas boasts the oldest baroque altar in Prague dating from 1630. Adjoining the main building of the palace is the sala terrena, in front of which extends the Valdštejn Garden, a baroque French-style park. The sala terrena is a huge hall, full of columns and decorated with stucco and paintings depicting scenes from the Trojan Wars (1629 – 30), again by Baccio Bianco. To the right is a man-made dripstone cave. From the sala terrena one can see the Venus Fountain and a row of

bronze statues by Adrian de Vries, regarded as the best example of Mannerism in Europe. Sadly, they are copies as the originals were carted off by Swedish troops in 1648. In the rear section of the garden visitors will find a pool full of fish, in the centre of which stands de Vries's Hercules. Beyond the pool stands the old riding school, now used by the National Gallery for temporary exhibitions.

31/ MALOSTRANSKÉ SQUARE - Malostranské náměstí

Malostranské náměstí

A square has been located in this part of Prague since the foundation of the Malá Strana District in the 13th century. It was originally a marketplace, divided into two parts by buildings in the middle. Most of the houses on the square have Gothic foundations with Renaissance and baroque upper floors and facades. Malostranské Square is completely dominated by one of the most beautiful baroque buildings in Prague, the Church of St Nicholas, in front of which we also find the Holy Trinity Column.

THE ŠTERNBERK PALACE The Šternberk Palace is situated at the lower end of the square. It has a baroque facade and was built in 1684 when two houses were joined together. One of these was an inn where foreign delegations would be accommodated, and where the Turkish ambassador, Mehmet Beg (who brought some camels with him to Prague) stayed. This inn played a notorious part in the history of the city, as it was here in 1541 that a fire broke out which destroyed almost the entire Malá Strana and Hradčany and almost reached Prague Castle itself. The palace is decorated with 7 eye-catching gargoyles representing 7 faces of the Czech parliament. You may also notice the beautiful sundial. Today the palace houses the lower chamber of the Czech parliament.

THE MALOSTRANSKÁ BESEDA – MALÁ STRANA TOWN HALL The lower part of the square is where you'll also find the former Malostranská Town Hall, which acquired its current appearance after a Renaissance and early baroque reconstruction by Giovanni Mario Filippi. In 1575 it witnessed the drawing up of the so-called Czech Confession, an agreement legalising religious freedom in the Czech lands. This was unheard of in Europe at the time. A gallows and stocks used to stand in front of the town hall.

32/ THE BEDŘICH SMETANA MUSEUM / Museum Bedřicha Smetany

Novotného lávka 1

The Bedřich Smetana Museum is situated at the end of the Novotný footbridge near Charles Bridge. It was built in the neo-Renaissance style in 1883 from a former waterworks. Sgraffito on the facade by František Ženíšek depicts The Battle with the Swedes on Charles Bridge in 1648. The museum was opened in 1936 and houses exhibitions of Smetana's original manuscripts, letters written by the composer himself and many first editions of all Smetana's works.

BEDŘICH SMETANA (1824 – 1884) Bedřich Smetana is generally regarded as the greatest composer to come from the Czech lands. Paradoxically, in a similar way to Beethoven, he wrote the majority of his greatest works when he was deaf. He was somehow able to remember music and composed whole symphonies without even touching the piano. He simply sat at his desk and wrote down the notes straight onto paper. In this way he wrote works like *Má vlast* (My Fatherland) and the operas *The Bartered Bride* and *Brandenburgers in Bohemia*. Smetana was also a well known conductor, piano virtuoso and



music teacher. Some of his other works include the operas *The Kiss*, *The Two Widows*, the piano pieces *Polkas*, *Czech Dances* and many others.

33/ THE NATIONAL THEATRE - Národní divadlo

Národní 2

The National Theatre is not just a theatre, but a symbol of the Czech national revival. May 16, 1868 witnessed the laying of the first stone, followed by a huge national celebration with processions in national folk costumes which all important Czech politicians of the day took part in. Architect Josef Zitek oversaw the project which was funded solely from contributions from the public. The theatre was opened in 1881 on the occasion of a visit by crown prince Rudolf, even though it remained unfinished. Smetana's opera *Libuše* was premiered specially for the opening. Just twelve days later disaster struck when a fire broke out in the theatre and as good as razed it to the ground. It was apparently started accidentally by workmen, who were still working on the roof and who probably forgot to put out a coal fire after welding the lightning conductor. Another national appeal was launched, and less than two months after the fire, a million gold pieces had been donated to rebuild



the theatre. This time the work was overseen by architect Josef Schulz. November 18, 1883 saw the theatre reopened with another performance of Smetana's *Libuše*. The outside of the theatre is in the neo-Renaissance style and is the work of B. Schnirch (he completed almost all the facade, including the 3m-high statue of the Sun God Apollo, the Nine Muses on the loggia, and the huge triega driven by the Goddess of Victory). The interiors are the work of eminent Czech artists of the day. For instance, you will find works by M. Aleš (series of 14 lunettes called *The Homeland*) and V. Hynais (the main stage curtain bearing the words 'Národ sobě' – 'From the Nation to the Nation'). In the main foyer there are marble busts of people who were responsible for the creation and development of the National Theatre. The auditorium has 986 seats and the ceiling is decorated with paintings by F. Ženíšek, from which hangs a wonderful bronze chandelier weighing just short of two tons. Then there is the presidential box lined with red velvet and decorated with paintings of figures from Czech history by Václav Brožík. The theatre has a wonderful painted stage curtain created by Vojtěch Hynais. A celebration of art, the Czech nation and the laying of the theatre's first stone are all depicted on it. The Nová scéna (New Scene) – the Laterna magika (Magic Latern) was added to the National Theatre 100 years later. This is the glass building constructed by architect Karel Prager.

34/ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY CROSS - Rotunda s. Kříže

Karolíny Světlé

The Chapel of the Holy Cross at the corner of Karolíny Světlé and Konviktská Street is one of four surviving Romanesque rotundas in Prague and was built in the first half of the 12th century. In the Middle Ages it was an important place of worship on the track that led from Vyšehrad to the Vltava. Today it is encircled with a pseudo-romanesque grille by Josef Mánes, placed around the rotunda when it was renovated in 1853 - 1865. Services are still held in the tiny chapel to this day.

35/ THE BETHLEHEM CHAPEL - Betlémská kaple

Betlémské nám. 255/4

The Bethlehem Chapel (in Betlémské Square) was the focal point of the Czech reform movement, associated above all with the name of Jan Hus who preached here in 1402-13. The chapel, which held up to 3,000 people, was built in a place famous for being a cesspit of vice in one of the poorest parts of the city. It was meant for preaching only, and was dedicated to the infants murdered in Bethlehem on the orders of King Herod. The chapel went down in Czech history as the place where Jan Hus preached against the Catholic Church. Greatly influenced by the teachings of the English reformer John Wycliff, Hus attempted to spark a renaissance in the Church, which at the time was divided due to the papal schism and riddled with corruption and witch hunts. Hus appealed to the Church for a return to its original mission. He claimed that the Bible should be the only text the Church should follow. His sermons were



attended by thousands of people including the Queen herself. In the end, however, Jan Hus became too much of a threat to the Church, and at the Church Council of 1415 in Constance it was decided to burn him at the stake as a heretic. Hus had been invited there to defend his views. After the Thirty Years War, the Bethlehem Chapel fell to the Jesuits, but in 1786 it was pulled down and houses built on the site, though three walls survived. In 1950-54 the chapel was recreated along with the House of the Preachers next door. Today we can still see the well in the chapel which was here before the chapel was even built. Its water was so good that it was still drawn from the well even after it became a part of the chapel. The chapel was originally painted red, probably to make the signs and pictures which lined the walls, stand out. Three of these signs, one dating back to 1412 relating to the sale of Church appointments, and two relating to communion in both kinds, have survived. The remaining decoration is copied from old sources.

36/ CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS - Kostel Panny Marie Sněžné

Jungmannovo nám. 18

The Church of Our Lady of the Snows was established by Charles IV to commemorate his coronation in 1347. According to Charles's plans, the church was meant to have been over 100m long and should have dominated the New Town, but it was never finished. The building we see today is only the presbytery of what would have been a triple-naved church. It is 33m and was completed in 1397. The church gets its name from a 4th-century legend. The pope had a dream in which the Virgin Mary ordered him to build a church dedicated to her at a place where it would snow in August. The Church of Our Lady of the Snows originally belonged to the Carmelite Order, but later it taken over by the Franciscans, who laid out the beautiful gardens nearby with beds of herbs. During the Hussite wars, the church was damaged and the spire completely destroyed. The famous radical Hussite priest Jan Želivský preached here, and his sermons were extremely popular among the poor. It was from here in 1419 that Želivský led his radical Hussites to the New Town Hall, where the so-called first Prague defenestration occurred. Several New Town councillors were thrown from a window onto spears and 11 people died. When Wenceslas IV heard of these events, he was so infuriated he died of a stroke. Želivský, executed before the Old Town Hall, was finally buried in the church in 1922. In 1603, the church was renovated by the Franciscan Order. The intricate vaulted ceiling dates from that time. Although the vaulting dating from the 17th century is lower than the original Gothic vaulting, it is the highest in Prague after the Cathedral of St Vitus. The church houses a monumental three-storey altar, the highest in Prague, decorated in the baroque style with a priceless painting of the The Annunciation by Václav Vavřinec Reiner from 1724.



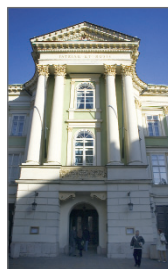
WENCESLAS SQUARE / Václavské náměstí

Continuing our tour of Prague, you will now cross the bottom section of Wenceslas Square. The upper part of the square is dominated by the imposing building of the National Museum, a short distance in front of which stands the famous monument to the Czech patron saint, St Wenceslas. Almost all the important meetings and demonstrations that have influenced the modern history of the Czech lands, have taken place under St Wenceslas on his mighty steed. In 1969 the student Jan Palach burnt himself to death in protest at the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968, and in 1989 demonstrations took place here which culminated in the fall of the communist regime.

37/ THE ESTATES THEATRE - Stavovské divadlo

Ovocný trh 1

The Estates Theatre is considered Prague's most beautiful neo-classical building. Its history is closely associated with major European and Czech composers, virtuosi, and with the Czech national revival. Count František Nostitz had it built at his own expense and with the permission of Emperor Josef II in 1781 – 1783, and it was the first separate theatre building in the city. The theatre was symbolically built on a site where students from nearby Charles University used to earn a bit of extra money putting on short plays. Architect Antonín Haffenecker built the theatre with a rectangular layout and adorned with Corinthian columns with an underpass for horse-drawn carriages on the ground floor. After the fire which destroyed the Ringtheater in Vienna in the 1880s killing almost all the people who were attending a performance, a law was passed in Austro-Hungary about safety in theatres. The Estates Theatre had to be rebuilt because of this. Architect Wolf built added emergency exits, widened the staircase and added balconies so that the building could be evacuated in five minutes. The last rebuilding work was carried out in 1920 when the theatre became a National Theatre venue. The Estates Theatre is known above all as Mozart's favourite scene. Mozart put on concerts here several times and experienced the first public success of the opera *Marriage of Figaro* here, the premiere of which had flopped in Vienna. October 28, 1787 saw the premiere of a Mozart opera, written especially for Prague. It is said that he wrote the last part the night before the premiere of *Don Giovanni* and conducted the orchestra from the piano. Not long after that came the premiere of the opera *La Clemenza di Tito*, composed to mark the coronation of Leopold II as Czech king. In 1834 one of the first purely Czech comedies, *Fidlovačka*, premiered at the theatre. It was the first time the song *Kde domov můj* (Where is my Home?) was performed. The song is now the Czech national anthem.



38/ THE CAROLINUM - Karolinum

Ovocný trh 5

The Carolinum is the heart of Charles University, founded by Charles IV in 1348 as the first university in central Europe. The Carolinum was built in 1383 from a grand house owned by Rotlev from Kutná Hora. Only the richly decorated Gothic oriel window (originally part of the chapel), the Gothic vaulted corridors and a few other sections have survived from the original building. The highlight of the interior is the large assembly hall from the 17th century. Jan Hus also taught as a professor at the Carolinum, and after his death the university became a focal point of the reform movement. At the beginning of the 17th century, after the Battle of the White Mountain, the university was taken over by the Jesuits who removed any reminders of the Hussite era. The building's current appearance is the work of architect Jaroslav Fragner and is the oldest university building still in use in Europe.

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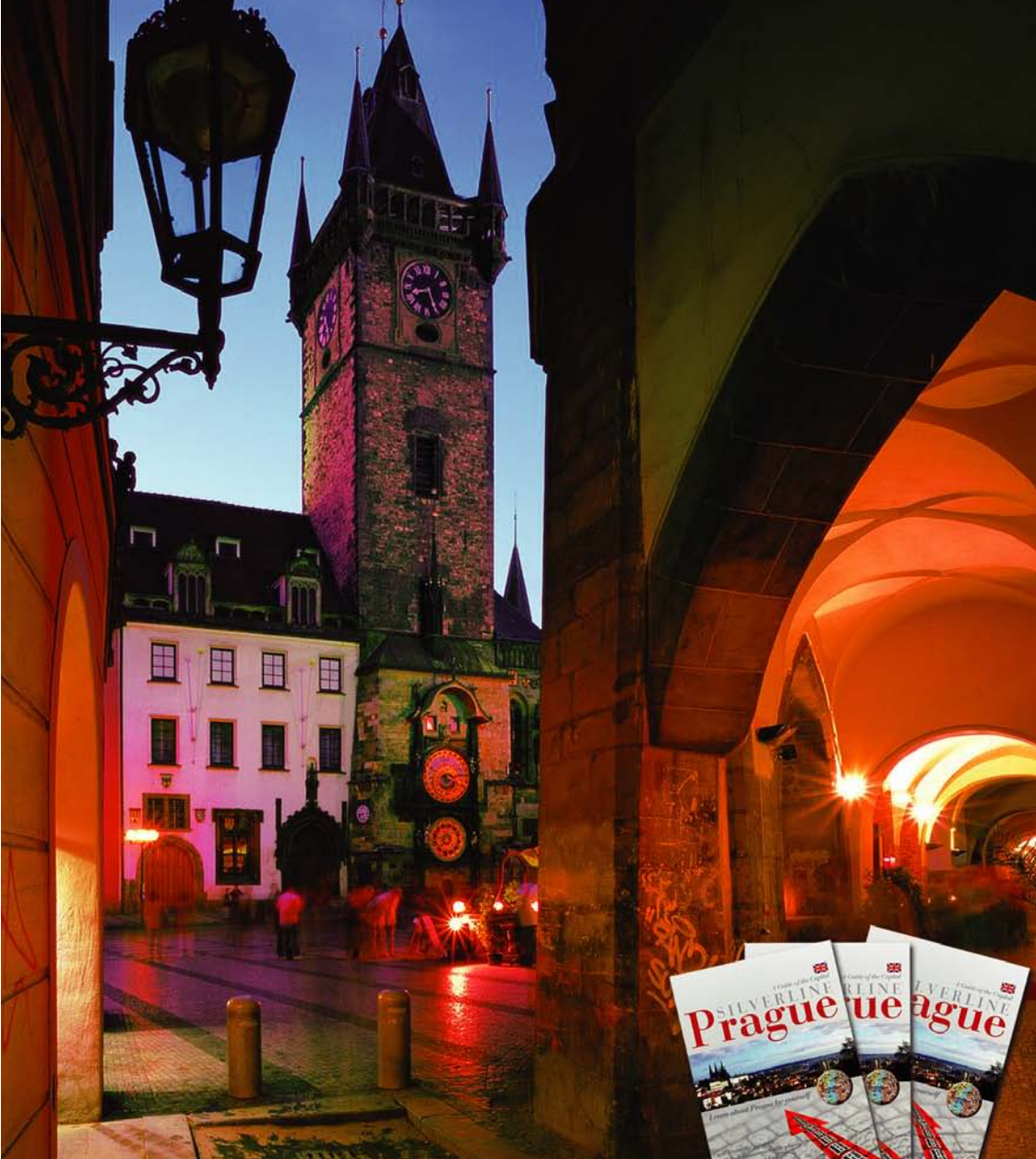
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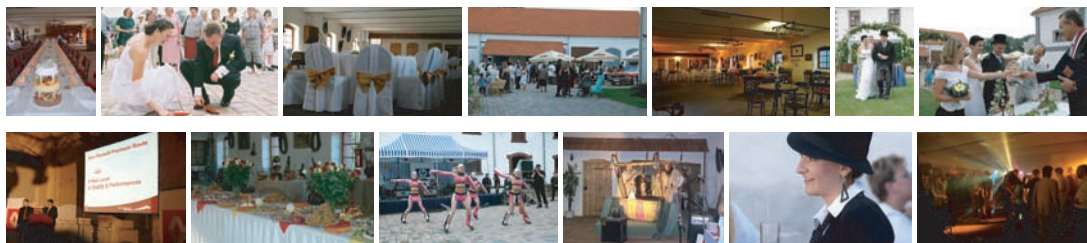
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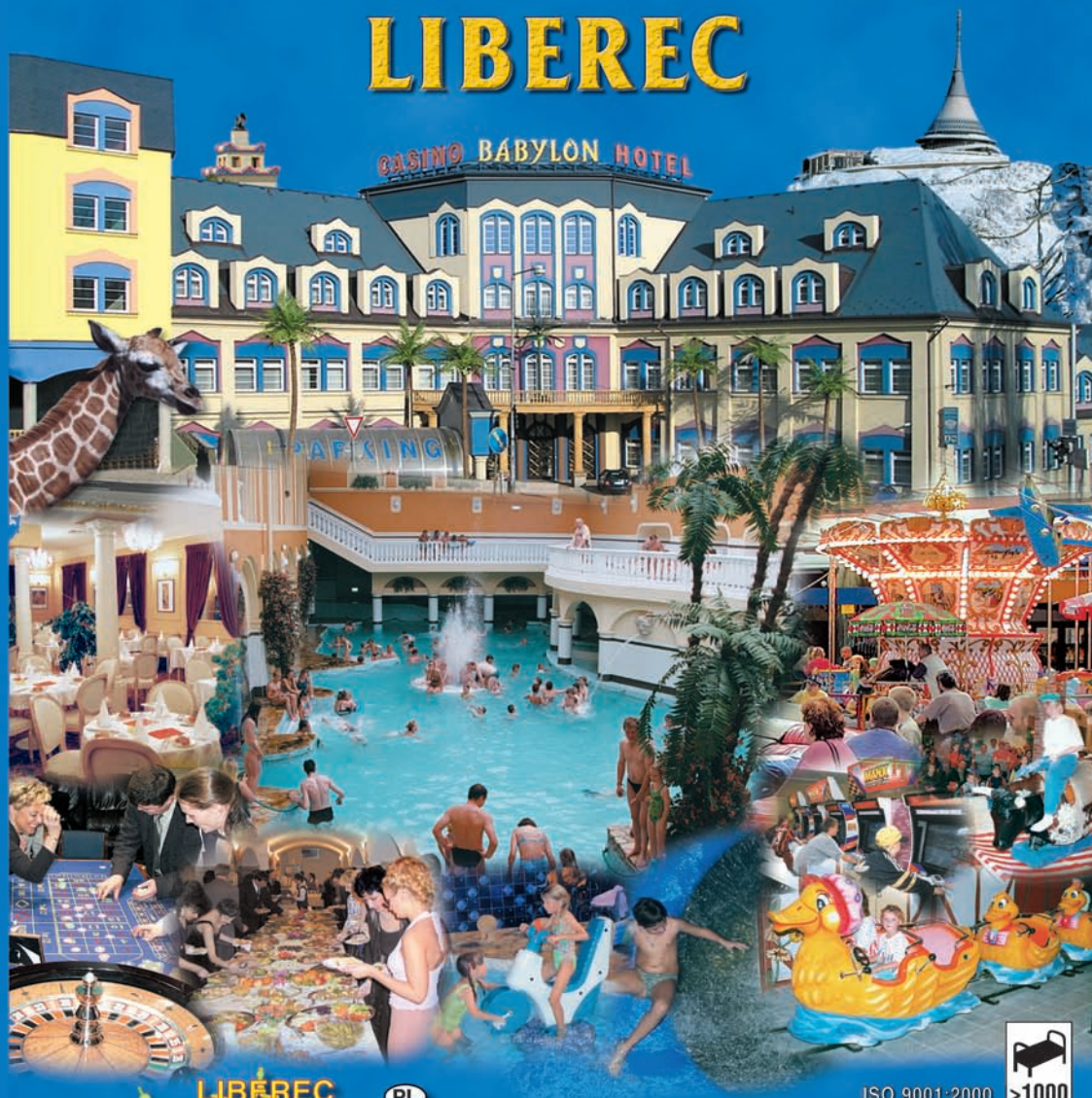
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