

# PRAGUE

CHECK INTO THE HOTEL U ŠUTERŮ

SUNDAY, AUGUST 02, 2015

# 2

## Important Notes:

- 1 If you wish to take a tour of the Chapel of the Holy Rood in Castle Karlštejn, which is a jewel encrusted chapel decorated with amazing medieval art, you must call ahead to reserve a place in a special tour. You may call yourself, or ask your hotel front desk to call. Call either 274 008 154 or 311 681 617. This tour may not be available during the winter months.



13 minutes    Approx. travel time to Main Train Station (Praha hl.n.)

45 minutes    Train trip to Karlštejn Station (not including wait time)

35 minutes    Walk to the castle

Morning/Early Afternoon:    Self-Guided Excursion to Castle Karlštejn

30 minutes    Walk back to train station

45 minutes    Train trip back to Prague (not including wait time)



9 minutes    Approx. travel time to Wenceslas Square

Late Afternoon/Evening:    Self Guided Tour of Prague's New Town

5 minutes    Approx. travel time to Hotel U Šuterů

## Hotel U Šuterů ~ Main Train Station (Praha hl.n.)

*Travel Directions*

### step 1 HOTEL U ŠUTERŮ ~ WENCESLAS SQUARE

*(Walk approx. 0.25 Miles.)*

- 1 From the front door of your hotel take a right onto the street and walk to the t-intersection. Then take a left and walk straight about 200 yards, until the street intersects a long open square. This is Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí), the center of New Town.

### step 2 WENCESLAS SQUARE ~ MAIN TRAIN STATION (PRAHA HL.N.)

*(Walk approx. 0.43 Miles.)*



Figure 2.1: Wenceslas Square to Main Train Station



Figure 2.2: Entrance to Main Station

- 1 Go to the end of Wenceslas Square where the equestrian statue is located. Just past the equestrian statue take a left onto Washingtonova street, following the sidewalk running along the buildings to your left, not the large multi-lane road.
- 2 After about 300 yards the road turns to the left. Continue straight instead, taking the large paved path in the park. After another 150 yards you reach the entrance (figure 2.2) to the Main Train Station (Praha Hlavní nádraží).

## Train trip and walk to the Castle

**45 minutes**

### *Purchasing Train Tickets*

In the center of the rail station main hall you will see a set of two escalators leading up (perhaps better described as two inclined moving walkways). Don't take these, but instead go just behind them, where you will see the information and ticket center.

Go to any of the lines for domestic tickets and purchase roundtrip tickets to Karlštejn. Be sure to ask which platform the train leaves from and how to find the platform. If the person at the ticket counter doesn't speak English, show them this message:

## Ze kterého nástupiště odjíždí vlak na Karlštejn?

### The Train Trip to Karlštejn



Figure 2.3: Karlštejn Train Station

The train follows a scenic route along the Berounka river and takes about 45 minutes. You will know you have reached the Karlštejn station when you see a large field to the left of the train station. The name of the station is also posted on signs visible from the train.

### TRAIN TRIP ITINERARY

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Departure Station: Praha Hlavní nádraží (Prague Main Station)

Arrival Station: Karlštejn

Departure Times: During the morning trains depart at 19 and 49 minutes past the hour

Number of Stops to Karlštejn: 10

Last Stop before Karlštejn: Zadní Třebaň

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## Walk to the Castle

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**35 minutes**

Leave the rail station and walk alongside the road with the train tracks to your right. You will hit an intersection where you see a bridge across the river to your left. Cross the bridge and then take a right. You will soon reach the road leading up to the castle, you will see shops, restaurants, souvenir and snack stands, etc., lining the road.



Figure 2.4: The walk from the train station to the road leading to the castle.

At this point, if you don't want to walk nearly a mile up the hill, keep going straight, parallel to the river. After about 100 yards you will come to a large parking lot. Usually there are horse drawn carriages and vans which leave from the parking lot and take visitors up to the top of the hill. In the winter months they may not be available or you may have to wait for them to return from a trip up the hill.

If you want to walk to the castle, continue on the road going up the hill until reaching a point where the town is transitioning into forest. On your left you will see a pedestrian pathway branching off to the left side of the road. Take this path, which soon hits a small road. Take a left on this road and you will shortly reach the castle gates. Enter the castle and you will soon reach a courtyard where you will see the ticket office (the "pokladna"). If there is not an English speaking tour starting at a time that is convenient to you, you can take a Czech or German speaking tour and ask for written information in English that follows along with the tour.

## Opening Times and Tour Costs

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During the months of July and August the castle is open daily from 9:00am-6:30pm. Tours in English are offered but if the tour time is inconvenient to your schedule you can also take a tour in Czech with an English language written guide. There are three tour routes to choose from:

1. **Route 1:** 50-60 minute tour covering the main palace and the tower. The cost of a tour in English is 270 CZK, and the cost of a tour in Czech is 170 CZK.
2. **Route 2:** 100-110 minute tour covering the main palace and tower, as well as the castle picture gallery and the Chapel of the Holy Rood - see the note at the beginning of the itinerary day for reserving a spot on one of these tours. The cost of the tour is 300 CZK.
3. **Route 3:** Covers the upper floors of the main tower with views of the surrounding countryside. Available only in the summer months, and weekends in May and September. The cost of the tour is 120 CZK.

You can also pay 40 CZK for unguided access into the upper courtyards of the castle (but no interiors).

## Self-Guided Excursion to Castle Karlštejn

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### ***Morning/Early Afternoon***

Karlštejn, i.e. Charles' Stone Castle, is the most famous castle in the Czech Republic. The fairy-tale perfect castle was founded by King Charles IV in 1348 to guard his royal treasures. Its massive towers and walls are spread out over a series of rocky peaks above the Berounka River and commands striking views of the surrounding hills. The castle is reached by a winding path lined by shops, restaurants, and stands selling traditional Czech snacks, making the trip up to the castle half the fun.

Charles IV was both Holy Roman Emperor and the King of Bohemia (i.e. King of the Czechs). He originally intended to build Karlštejn as a rural retreat from the city of Prague; however, he soon broadened the castle's purpose and began building a fortress strong and grand enough to house the coronation jewels of the Holy Roman Empire and his collection of holy relics. There was major political significance in housing the coronation jewels at the castle as it helped to bolster Charles' efforts to establish Prague as the center of the Empire. Charles was a dynamic and energetic ruler, and he personally supervised much of the construction. The castle was completed in 1365.

In the early 1400's during the long and tumultuous religious conflict known as the Hussite Wars, the coronation jewels of the Holy Roman Empire were moved to Germany while the Bohemian coronation jewels were moved to Karlštejn. The castle faced long and vicious sieges by the Hussites. The Hussites even resorted to a form of biological warfare, catapulting rotting corpses and tons of dung into the castle in order to spread disease among its defenders. Still the castle's strong walls held out and the Hussites never captured the castle.

The castle continued to guard the Bohemian coronation jewels and underwent reconstructions in the late 1400's and late 1500's, but the castle's prominence was not to last. The crown jewels were moved from the castle to Prague during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which was another religious conflict which caused unprecedented misery for Bohemia. In 1648, a Swedish army captured and damaged Karlštejn. The castle rapidly fell into disrepair as advancing military technology eliminated its strategic importance. Over time, however, the Czechs became increasingly aware of their national identity and history, and in the late 1800's they decided to repair the castle as a potent political symbol of Bohemia.



Figure 2.5: Karlštejn Castle prior to the gothic reconstruction



Figure 2.6: Chapel of the Holy Rood

The reconstruction and repair was done in a neo-Gothic style which attempted to be faithful to the original castle. Much of the original castle was also saved and preserved, including a lot of what you will see if you go on the tour, which will take you along Karlštejn's impressive battlements and into its Gothic interiors. Among other highlights, you will see wall paintings dating back to the 1300's, a portrait gallery of Czech Kings, and a replica of the medieval Czech crown. While the interiors are mostly empty of furnishings, the tour is still an interesting and worthwhile experience.

Unfortunately, the most important and impressive part of the castle, the Chapel of the Holy Rood (see figure 2.6), is open only to special guided tours due to the fact that its walls are literally covered in precious jewels. Please see the note at the beginning of the itinerary day for more information on reserving a spot on a tour that visits the chapel.

## Walk back to the train station

**30 minutes**

Once through visiting the castle and surroundings, return to the Karlštejn train station and wait for one of the trains traveling back in the direction of Prague. All of the passenger trains traveling in this direction will go to the Prague Main Station (Praha hl.n.).

## Train trip back to Prague

**45 minutes**

If you didn't purchase roundtrip tickets you can board the train without a ticket. You will purchase the ticket from a conductor who will be walking through the center aisle of the train.

### TRAIN TRIP ITINERARY

Departure Station: Karlštejn  
Arrival Station: Praha Hlavní nádraží (Prague Main Station)  
Departure Times in the Afternoon: At 26 and 56 past the hour  
Number of Stops to Praha Hlavní nádraží: 10  
Train Travel Time: About 45 minutes  
Last Stop before Praha Hlavní nádraží: Praha Smíchov

## ! Main Train Station (Praha hl.n.) ~ Wenceslas Square

*Travel Directions*

step 1 **MAIN TRAIN STATION (PRAHA HL.N.) ~ WENCESLAS SQUARE**  
(Walk approx. 0.43 Miles.)



Figure 2.7: Main Train Station to Wenceslas Square

- 1 Proceed to main entry hall of the train station (not the hall of the original historic station). Exit out the front doors onto a park and take a left onto the path. Then walk straight for about 100 yards until reaching a street (Washingtonova street).
- 2 Continue straight on Washingtonova street for about 350 yards until you reach the far end of a long square, next to an equestrian statue. This is Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí), and it is the center of Prague's New Town.

## Self Guided Tour of Prague's New Town

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### *Late Afternoon/Evening*

**Note:** Please reference your map of Prague for suggested attractions, restaurants, shopping, and other points of interest in the area.

Despite being nearly 700 years old, the New Town (Nové Město) is the youngest of the original five independent towns that made up Medieval Prague. In one sense however, the New Town is new. In the late 19th century much of the New Town was demolished and rebuilt, giving it a distinctly different look and feel than the Old Town.

Today, the heart of New Town is still one of the three original central markets around which it was planned - Wenceslas Square (Vaclavské Náměstí). The square, which could also be described as a wide boulevard, is the commercial center of Prague, and is busy nearly 24-hours a day. In the New Town you will find a great variety of shops, restaurants, nightspots, and pubs, as well as churches, cultural sites, and museums, such as the Museum of Communism (T2 on your map) and the Mucha Museum (H5). In the Lucerna shopping gallery located between Wenceslas Square, Štěpánská street, and Vodičkova street, you can see a very interesting if somewhat disturbing equestrian statue hanging from the glass-domed ceiling.

Branching off from the end of Wenceslas Square is Na příkopě street, which is another wide commercial street with some of Prague's most expensive commercial real estate. It is lined by high end stores and is completely pedestrianized. From either Wenceslas Square or Na Příkopě you will see that many of the shops are actually located in passages (galleries) that are entered from the street but stretch far into the buildings and courtyards lining the street. At the far end of the Na Příkopě you will reach Republic Square (Náměstí Republiky). On the square you will see the beautiful art-nouveau Municipal House (T3 on your map), and on the other end of the square you can find the Palladium, one of Europe's nicest and most impressive new shopping malls. Opposite the Palladium is the black modernist style building housing the Kotva shopping center, which was once the best shopping center in all of Communist Czechoslovakia. While it has been updated, you can still feel a bit of the Iron Curtain atmosphere.

### *Shopping in New Town*

In an amazing contrast to its Communist past, Prague is now a great shopping destination. Some of the best shopping for fashion is found on Na příkopě. While today the street is lined by posh shops, its name literally means "On the Moat". Some shopping galleries you can enter from Na příkopě include the Černá Růže, Myslbek, and Slovanský dům shopping galleries. Similar passages can also be found branching off Wenceslas Square.

To find Na příkopě street go to the far end of Wenceslas Square on the side of the square where the equestrian statue is NOT located and then take a right (your right if facing away from the square). Within about 150 yards, you will reach the Černá Růže shopping passage on your right, where Moser Glass is located. If you are looking for top-quality, high-end Bohemian glass and crystal, you can find it there.

Na příkopě street continues for about another 350 yards, at which point you will see a tall, black medieval tower (the Powder Tower) and the ornate Municipal House (Obecní Dům) on your left side. Walk past both of them, keeping them to your left side, and you will reach the square called Náměstí Republiky. On the far right side of the square you will see the pink Palladium, one of Europe's nicest and most impressive new shopping malls. Actually a covered courtyard between historical buildings, the Palladium is one of the only malls in the world where you can find remains of medieval churches within the shopping center grounds, and even inside some of the stores. Continue walking across the square and you will see the black modernist shopping center called Kotva at the far left end of the square (it is set back so you won't see it until crossing the square). There is a large crystal shop located in this shopping center which

usually has better prices than those crystal shops which cater to tourists. The shop is on the third floor (or the 4th floor if using North American terminology).

### *Finding the Museum of Communism*

The Museum of Communism can be tricky to find. It is located on Na přikopě street. When you reach the point of the street where the Museum is located, you will see a McDonald's. Enter the passage to the right of the McDonald's and take the first stairs on the right. The Museum of Communism is just above the McDonald's and next to the Casino (how's that for irony?). The museum contains a lot of excellent information, including some exhibits showing how people lived under Communism, but on the other hand it is already a bit dated and lacks multimedia features. If your trip includes Budapest and you only plan to visit one museum focused on Communism, we suggest the House of Terror in Budapest instead.

### *Nightlife and Markets on the River*

In recent years the New Town riverbank has become an attraction. If you walk to the river in New Town and then stroll along the riverbank (see figure 2.8) you will pass pubs and boat restaurants. The amount of activity and number of open establishments will depend a lot on the weather and season. On a warm, weekend summer evening, lots of smaller pubs will also open and you are likely to see live music as well. The riverbank will be packed with locals - this is definitely the place to go if you want to meet "real" Prague residents. On Saturdays from 8am-2pm, there is also a good farmer's market set up just south of the Palackého bridge, which is the bridge at the bottom of your map.



Figure 2.8: The riverbank here is a nightlife spot in warm months, and a farmer's market on Saturdays



Figure 2.9: Jerusalem Synagogue

### *The Scenic Route of Tram #22*

You can catch tram #22 at the stops Národní divadlo, Národní třída, or Lazarská. Both directions of travel are scenic. When you are ready to head back, you can just get off and get back on a tram going the opposite direction. Remember to stamp an extra ticket if you run out of time. The best time of day to avoid crowds on the tram (on weekdays at least) is the later morning or evening.

### *The Jerusalem Synagogue: Hidden Jewish Prague*

After the Austrian Emperor Josef II passed an edict of toleration in 1782, the Jews of Prague were no longer forced to live in the cramped Jewish Quarter and spread out over the city. In



1906 they opened the Jerusalem synagogue well outside the area of the Old Jewish Quarter, on Jeruzalémská street in New Town. It is a beautiful Moorish-style synagogue influenced by Art Nouveau (see figure 2.9). It was recently renovated and opened for tours, and unlike the crowded sites of the Jewish Quarter, it is almost completely undiscovered. To find it, follow the tram tracks which run through the center of Wenceslas Square towards the tower in the distance. Once past the tower and the church, take a right onto Jeruzalémská street, and you will shortly reach the synagogue.

## Wenceslas Square ~> Hotel U Šuterů

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### *Travel Directions*

#### step 1 *WENCESLAS SQUARE ~> HOTEL U ŠUTERŮ*

*(Walk approx. 0.25 Miles.)*

- 1 Go to the center of Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí) where the tram lines run perpendicularly through the square. From this spot, you will see a building with a ČSOB bank on the ground floor, adjacent to the tram line. Go to the corner this building is located on, and you will be on Vodičkova Street.
- 2 Walk down Vodičkova Street about 200 yards until reaching the first opportunity to take a right. This is Palackého Street, and you should see Hotel U Šuteru on its left side.