



Czechia

A green, hilly land in the heart of Europe, with fairy-tale castles, a capital of a hundred spires, spa towns and the world's first golden lager.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Prague

POPULATION

About 10.9 million

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Czech in practice; the constitution does not name an official language

CURRENCY

Czech koruna (K), since 1993

AREA

About 78,900 km²

GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary republic

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Snžka, 1,603 m, in the Giant Mountains on the border with Poland

LONGEST RIVER IN CZECHIA

The Vltava, about 430 km, flowing through eský Krumlov, eské Budjovice and Prague

NEIGHBOURS

Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Austria. Czechia is landlocked

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+420

A 45-minute trip to Czechia

Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Czechia together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: AD 863: Cyril and Methodius arrive; 1620: Battle of White Mountain; 2004: Joins the European Union. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Svíková (beef in cream sauce) and Roast pork with dumplings and sauerkraut. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "Dobrý den" (Hello, good day), "Dobré ráno" (Good morning), "Dobrý večer" (Good evening). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/czechia/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Czechia and its cities



- Prague (Prague (capital city)): Prague Castle and Charles Bridge, The astronomical clock on Old Town Square, The Jewish Quarter and Petín hill
- Brno (South Moravian Region): Villa Tugendhat, Špilberk Castle, Gregor Mendel, the founder of genetics, who spent most of his life here
- Ostrava (Moravian-Silesian Region): Its coal-mining and steel history, The Lanek Park mining museum, The Colours of Ostrava music festival
- Plze (Plze Region): The Pilsner Urquell brewery, The Škoda Works, founded in 1869, European Capital of Culture in 2015
- Olomouc (Olomouc Region): The Holy Trinity Column, The town hall on the Upper Square, Strong-smelling Olomouc cheese
- Liberec (Liberec Region): The Ještđ Tower on the mountain above the city, Its textile-industry past
- eské Budjovice (South Bohemian Region): Budweiser Budvar beer, The Black Tower, Koh-i-Noor pencils
- eský Krumlov (South Bohemian Region): eský Krumlov Castle and its Baroque theatre, Its Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque old town
- Karlovy Vary (Karlovy Vary Region): Hot mineral springs and spa houses, Becherovka herbal liqueur, made here since 1807, The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

- Kutná Hora (Central Bohemian Region): St Barbara's Church, The Sedlec Ossuary, decorated with human bones, Its silver-mining history

A short history of Czechia

The Czech story runs from a Slavic realm that welcomed two Greek missionaries, through the kingdom of Bohemia and the golden age of Charles IV, the Hussite wars and almost four centuries of Habsburg rule, to Czechoslovakia, the Velvet Revolution and a peaceful split in 1993.

AD 863 **Cyril and Methodius arrive**

Prince Rastislav of Great Moravia asked the Byzantine emperor for teachers. The brothers Cyril and Methodius came, bringing the Glagolitic alphabet and a church service in a Slavic language.

AD 935 **Saint Wenceslas is killed**

Duke Wenceslas of Bohemia was killed, probably in 935, and legend says his younger brother Boleslaus was behind it. He became the patron saint of the Czech state and the 'Good King Wenceslas' of the English Christmas carol.

1212 **Golden Bull of Sicily**

Frederick II, then King of Sicily and later Holy Roman Emperor, granted Ottokar I and his heirs the hereditary title of King of Bohemia. The Kingdom of Bohemia lasted in law until the end of the First World War.

1348 **Charles University founded**

King Charles IV, who also became Holy Roman Emperor, founded a university in Prague. Today it is one of the oldest universities in the world still in continuous operation.

1415 **Jan Hus burned at the stake**

The Prague preacher and church reformer Jan Hus was burned as a heretic at the Council of Constance on 6 July 1415. His followers, the Hussites, soon rose up in Bohemia.

1419 **Defenestration of 1419**

On 30 July 1419 a crowd of Hussites threw town councillors out of the windows of Prague's New Town Hall. It started the Hussite Wars, in which the Hussites defeated five crusades sent against them.

- 1526** **The Habsburgs take the throne**
King Louis II died fighting the Ottomans at the Battle of Mohács, and the crown of Bohemia passed to Ferdinand I of Habsburg. The Habsburgs ruled the Czech lands until 1918.
- 1618** **Defenestration of 1618**
Protestant nobles threw two royal governors and their secretary out of a window of Prague Castle on 23 May 1618. All three survived, but the revolt that followed started the Thirty Years' War.
- 1620** **Battle of White Mountain**
On 8 November 1620, just outside Prague, the Bohemian rebels were crushed by the Catholic army of Emperor Ferdinand II. Protestants had to convert or leave, and Habsburg rule grew much stronger.
- 1918** **Czechoslovakia is born**
As Austria-Hungary collapsed at the end of the First World War, independence was proclaimed in Prague on 28 October 1918. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk became the first president of Czechoslovakia.
- 1938** **Munich Agreement**
On 30 September 1938 Germany, Britain, France and Italy agreed in Munich that Germany could take the Sudetenland, the border region where about three million mostly German-speaking people lived. Czechoslovakia was not at the table.
- 1948** **Communist coup**
In February 1948 the Communist Party, backed by the Soviet Union, took full power. One-party rule lasted for the next 41 years.
- 1968** **Prague Spring crushed**
Party leader Alexander Dubek tried to build 'socialism with a human face', with more freedom of speech and travel. On 21 August 1968 troops of the Soviet Union and four other Warsaw Pact countries invaded to stop the reforms.
- 1989** **Velvet Revolution**
Peaceful protests began on 17 November 1989 and ended 41 years of communist rule. On 29 December the playwright and dissident Václav Havel became president.

1993

Czech Republic is born

Czechoslovakia was peacefully dissolved at the end of 31 December 1992, a split often called the Velvet Divorce. On 1 January 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia became independent countries.

2004

Joins the European Union

After joining NATO in 1999, the Czech Republic became a member of the European Union in 2004 and joined the Schengen area in 2007.

What people eat in Czechia

Czech cooking is hearty Central European food built on pork, beef, duck and goose, rich sauces, cabbage and, above all, dumplings. A traditional lunch, the main meal of the day, starts with a hot soup and continues with a main course of meat, sauce and a side on the same plate. Sweet pastries filled with fruit, poppy seed or curd cheese are more often eaten with afternoon coffee than as a dessert. As of September 2026, Czechs drink more beer per person than any other nation, and the golden pilsner style was born in the city of Plze.

Svíková (beef in cream sauce) (svíková na smetan)

All of Czechia, also Slovakia

Slices of slow-cooked beef in a smooth, golden sauce made from root vegetables (carrot, parsley root, celeriac and onion) blended with cream and spices. It is served with bread dumplings, a spoon of whipped cream, cranberry sauce and a slice of lemon.

Roast pork with dumplings and sauerkraut (vepo knedlo zelo)

All of Czechia

Roast pork seasoned with caraway and garlic, served with slices of dumpling and sweet-and-sour cabbage, with the meat juices poured over. It is often called the most typical Czech dish.

Czech goulash (guláš)

All of Czechia, from Hungarian roots

A thick stew of beef or pork cooked with onions and spices, usually served with bread dumplings or bread.

Roast duck with red cabbage (peená kachna)

All of Czechia

A whole duck roasted until the skin is crisp, served with braised red cabbage and bread or potato dumplings.

Fried cheese (smažený sýr)

All of Czechia, also Slovakia

A thick slice of cheese, usually Edam, coated in flour, egg and breadcrumbs and fried until golden and melting inside. It comes with tartar sauce and potatoes or chips, and is a favourite street food and canteen lunch.

Kulajda (creamy mushroom and dill soup) (kulajda)

South Bohemia

A thick, white soup of potatoes, mushrooms, cream and plenty of fresh dill, often finished with a poached egg, sometimes a quail's egg.

Garlic soup (esneka)

All of Czechia

A simple, strongly flavoured garlic soup served with fried croutons, and sometimes with sausage or cheese.

Bread dumplings (houškové knedlíky)

All of Czechia

Large dumplings of wheat flour, often mixed with cubes of stale bread rolls, steamed and then cut into slices like bread. They soak up the sauce of svíková, goulash and roast pork.

Potato pancakes (bramboráky)

All of Czechia, with many local names

Crisp pancakes of grated raw potato, flour and egg, flavoured with garlic and marjoram and fried in fat. They are eaten on their own or as a side dish.

Pickled sausages (utopenci)

All of Czechia, a pub classic

Fat pork sausages pickled in a sweet-and-sour vinegar with onion, black pepper, bay leaf and chilli. They are a classic snack in many Czech pubs.

Olomouc cheese (olomoucké tvaržky)

Loštice, near Olomouc in Moravia

Small, ripened cheeses made from low-fat curd cheese, with a yellowish skin, a very strong smell and a sharp taste. They are a classic snack with beer and can also be fried or marinated.

Fruit dumplings (ovocné knedlíky)

All of Czechia

Soft dumplings wrapped around whole plums, apricots or strawberries, boiled and served with melted butter, sugar and grated curd cheese or poppy seed.

Koláe (koláe)

All of Czechia, especially Moravia

Soft yeast pastries with a filling of poppy seed, curd cheese, plum jam or apricot showing in the middle. They take work to make and are baked for special occasions.

Trdelník (chimney cake) (trdelník)

Skalica in Slovakia and nearby Moravia

A spiral of sweet dough wrapped around a stick, baked over heat and rolled in sugar and chopped walnuts. In Prague it is sold on every tourist street, often filled with ice cream.

Pilsner lager (plzecké pivo)

Plze, West Bohemia

A clear, golden, bottom-fermented beer with a thick foam and the bitter aroma of Saaz hops. The original, Pilsner Urquell, is still brewed in Plze.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- Before eating, people wish each other 'Dobrou chu' (enjoy your meal).
- When glasses are raised, people say 'Na zdraví' (to your health).
- A traditional lunch begins with a hot soup. Many local restaurants offer a cheap 'daily menu' (denní menu) of two or three courses at lunchtime only, usually until about 13:00 or 14:00.
- When you visit a Czech home, take off your shoes at the door. Your hosts will often offer you slippers.
- On Christmas Eve the traditional dinner is fried carp with potato salad.

Svíková (beef in cream sauce)

Slices of slow-cooked beef in a smooth, golden sauce made from root vegetables (carrot, parsley root, celeriac and onion) blended with cream and spices. It is served with bread dumplings, a spoon of whipped cream, cranberry sauce and a slice of lemon.

Ingredients

- 1 kg beef topside or silverside, in one piece
- 2 carrots, 1 parsley root (or a small parsnip) and a quarter of a celeriac, all peeled and chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 5 allspice berries, 10 black peppercorns, 3 bay leaves and a sprig of thyme
- 50 g butter or 50 g diced bacon
- 250 ml double cream
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon sugar, salt
- To serve: bread dumplings, whipped cream, cranberry sauce and lemon slices

Method

1. Heat the oven to 170°C. Season the beef with salt and brown it on all sides in the butter or bacon fat in a casserole dish.
2. Add the vegetables, onion and spices around the meat and stir for 5 minutes. Pour in 500 ml of water, cover and cook in the oven for about 2 to 2½ hours, until the beef is tender.
3. Lift out the beef. Remove the bay leaves, allspice and peppercorns, then blend the vegetables and cooking liquid until completely smooth.
4. Stir in the cream and simmer gently for 5 minutes. Season with lemon juice, sugar and salt: the sauce should be gently sweet and sour.
5. Slice the beef, pour the sauce over it and serve with dumplings, a spoon of whipped cream, cranberry sauce and a slice of lemon.

Roast pork with dumplings and sauerkraut

Roast pork seasoned with caraway and garlic, served with slices of dumpling and sweet-and-sour cabbage, with the meat juices poured over. It is often called the most typical Czech dish.

Ingredients

- 1.2 kg boneless pork shoulder or neck
- 1 tablespoon caraway seeds, 4 garlic cloves, crushed, and salt
- 2 onions, sliced
- 500 g sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon lard or oil, 1 to 2 tablespoons sugar and 1 tablespoon flour
- To serve: bread dumplings or boiled potatoes

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C. Rub the pork with salt, garlic and caraway, and lay it on one of the sliced onions in a roasting tin.
2. Pour 250 ml of water into the tin and roast for about 2 hours, basting now and then and adding a little water when the tin gets dry.
3. Meanwhile, soften the second onion in the lard, add the sauerkraut and 200 ml of water, cover and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Stir the flour into the cabbage and cook for 5 more minutes. Season with sugar and salt so it is both sweet and sour.
5. Slice the pork and serve with the cabbage and dumplings, spooning the juices from the tin over the meat.

Fried cheese

A thick slice of cheese, usually Edam, coated in flour, egg and breadcrumbs and fried until golden and melting inside. It comes with tartar sauce and potatoes or chips, and is a favourite street food and canteen lunch.

Ingredients

- 4 slices of Edam cheese, about 1.5 cm thick (about 500 g)
- 50 g plain flour
- 2 eggs, beaten with a pinch of salt
- 100 g dry breadcrumbs
- Oil for shallow frying
- To serve: tartar sauce and boiled potatoes or chips

Method

1. Coat each slice of cheese in flour, then in beaten egg, then in breadcrumbs, pressing them on well.
2. Dip each slice in the egg and breadcrumbs a second time. The double coat stops the cheese from leaking out.
3. Heat about 1 cm of oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat.
4. Fry the slices for about 1 to 2 minutes on each side, until deep golden. Do not fry for too long, or the cheese will burst out.
5. Drain on kitchen paper and serve at once with tartar sauce and potatoes.

Kulajda (creamy mushroom and dill soup)

A thick, white soup of potatoes, mushrooms, cream and plenty of fresh dill, often finished with a poached egg, sometimes a quail's egg.

Ingredients

- 400 g floury potatoes, peeled and diced
- 250 g fresh mushrooms, sliced, or 20 g dried mushrooms soaked in warm water
- 1 litre water or vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds, 1 bay leaf and salt
- 250 ml sour cream mixed with 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 to 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar and a large bunch of fresh dill, chopped
- 4 eggs

Method

1. Put the potatoes, mushrooms, caraway and bay leaf in a pot with the water or stock and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the potatoes are soft.
2. Whisk a ladle of the hot soup into the sour cream and flour, then pour it all back into the pot, stirring. Simmer gently for 5 minutes until it thickens.
3. Season with vinegar and salt to taste and stir in most of the dill.
4. Poach the eggs in simmering water for about 3 to 4 minutes. Poached eggs with a soft yolk are not fully cooked: use pasteurised eggs, or cook them until firm, if serving pregnant women, older people, young children or anyone with a weak immune system.
5. Put an egg in each bowl, ladle the soup over it and sprinkle with the rest of the dill.

Potato pancakes

Crisp pancakes of grated raw potato, flour and egg, flavoured with garlic and marjoram and fried in fat. They are eaten on their own or as a side dish.

Ingredients

- 1 kg floury potatoes, peeled
- 1 egg
- 3 to 4 tablespoons plain flour
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram, salt and black pepper
- Lard or oil for frying

Method

1. Grate the potatoes finely, put them in a clean cloth and squeeze out as much liquid as you can.
2. Mix the potatoes with the egg, flour, garlic, marjoram, salt and pepper into a thick batter. Add a little more flour if it is too wet.
3. Heat a thin layer of lard or oil in a frying pan. Spread spoonfuls of batter into thin pancakes.
4. Fry for about 3 minutes on each side until golden brown and crisp.
5. Drain on kitchen paper and serve hot, on their own or with meat and sauerkraut.

Useful phrases

Dobrý den

DOH-bree dehn · Hello, good day

Dobré ráno

DOH-breh RAH-noh · Good morning

Dobrý veer

DOH-bree VEH-chehr · Good evening

Dobrou noc

DOH-broh nohts · Good night

Na shledanou

NAHS-kleh-dah-noh · Goodbye

Jak se máte?

yahk seh MAH-teh · How are you? (polite)

Dobe, dkuji

DOH-brzheh, DYEH-koo-yih · Fine, thank you

Tší m

TYEH-shee myeh · Nice to meet you

Promite

PROH-mihn-yteh · Excuse me

Mluvíte anglicky?

MLOO-vee-teh AHN-glits-kee · Do you speak English?

Nerozumím

NEH-roh-zoo-meem · I don't understand

Kde je záchod?

gdeh yeh ZAH-khoht · Where is the toilet?

Kolik stojí tohle?

KOH-lihk STOH-yee TOH-leh · How much is this?

Jedno pivo, prosím

YEHD-noh PIH-voh, PROH-seem · One beer, please

Na zdraví!

nah ZDRAH-vee · Cheers! (to your health)

Dobrou chu

DOH-broh khootch · Enjoy your meal

Bylo to výborné

BIH-loh toh VEE-bohr-neh · It was delicious

Zaplatím, prosím

ZAH-plah-teem, PROH-seem · The bill, please (literally 'I will pay, please')

Pomoc!

POH-mohts · Help!

Things you might not know

1. The word 'robot' comes from Czech. It first appeared in Karel apek's 1920 play R.U.R., and apek said his brother Josef had invented it. In Czech, 'robota' means the forced labour that serfs once had to do for their lords.
2. Modern soft contact lenses go back to the Czech chemists Otto Wichterle and Drahoslav Lím, who developed the soft gel material for them around 1960.
3. The first sugar cube factory was set up in the Czech town of Daice by Jakub Kryštof Rad, who patented his sugar cubes in 1843. A monument with a sugar cube on top stands in the town today.
4. Although Czechia is landlocked, its rivers flow to three different seas: the North Sea (through the Elbe), the Baltic (through the Oder) and the Black Sea (through the Morava and the Danube).
5. Czechia even rents a piece of port in Hamburg, Germany, called the Moldauhafen. It was given to Czechoslovakia by the Treaty of Versailles, and the lease runs out in 2028.
6. As of September 2026, Czechs drink more beer per person than the people of any other country, although consumption has fallen in recent years.
7. Prague Castle is listed by Guinness World Records as the largest ancient castle in the world. It is about 570 metres long and about 130 metres wide.
8. A legend says Charles IV laid the first stone of Charles Bridge at 5:31 in the morning on 9 July 1357. Written as 1357 9 7 5 3 1, the time reads the same backwards and forwards.
9. The short English name 'Czechia' was made official by the Czech government in 2016. Both 'Czechia' and 'Czech Republic' are still used.
10. The carol 'Good King Wenceslas' is about a real Czech ruler: Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia in the 10th century, who became the patron saint of the Czech state.
11. Czech hikers follow a system of painted trail markers in red, blue, green and yellow that the Czech Tourist Club began in 1889. Slovakia uses the same system, and it has been copied in mountains as far away as Romania, Albania and Mongolia.

12. The Czech letter stands for a rare sound, a trilled r said together with a 'zh' sound. It is found as a separate sound in only a few languages in the world, and the composer Antonín Dvoák has it in his name.
13. Czech words can have long clusters of consonants and a few have no vowels at all, because the letters r and l can act as vowels. 'tvrť', meaning a quarter, is one example.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Czechia, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Svíková (beef in cream sauce) or Roast pork with dumplings and sauerkraut? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- Velvet Revolution (1989). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Czech Republic is born (1993). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen Prague Castle, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Czechia, which would it be and why?

QUIZ

How well do you know Czechia?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. Svíková is beef served in a sauce made mainly from what?

- A) Paprika and sour cabbage
- B) Mushrooms and dill
- C) Tomatoes and red wine
- D) Root vegetables blended with cream

2. In Czechia a driver may have one small beer and still drive legally.

- A) True
- B) False

3. The two royal governors thrown out of a window of Prague Castle in 1618 survived the fall.

- A) True
- B) False

4. St Barbara's Church in Kutná Hora was begun in 1388 but not completed until 1905.

- A) True
- B) False

5. What do you need before driving a car on Czech motorways?

- A) A mountain permit
- B) A permit from the town hall
- C) A special motorway driving test
- D) A vignette

6. Karlovy Vary is named after King Charles IV.

- A) True
- B) False

7. You see the sign 'Oteveno' on a shop door. What does it mean?

- A) Exit
- B) Push
- C) Open
- D) Closed

8. On 1 January 1993 Czechoslovakia split peacefully into the Czech Republic and which other country?

- A) Poland
- B) Slovenia
- C) Slovakia
- D) Austria

9. Charles IV founded Karlštejn Castle in 1348 mainly to do what?

- A) Keep the crown jewels and holy relics safe
- B) Serve as a hunting lodge for the Habsburgs
- C) Host the first Czech university
- D) Guard the border with Poland

10. What does the Czech word 'pivo' mean?

- A) Bread
- B) Cheese
- C) Beer
- D) Water

11. Which river does Charles Bridge cross?

- A) The Elbe
- B) The Morava
- C) The Vltava
- D) The Danube

12. The cheap 'denní menu' in local restaurants is usually offered at lunchtime.

- A) True
- B) False

Quiz answers

1. D) Root vegetables blended with cream

The sauce is made of root vegetables blended with cream. It is served with bread dumplings, whipped cream, cranberry sauce and a slice of lemon.

2. False

False. Czechia has zero tolerance: it is illegal to drive with any amount of alcohol in your blood.

3. True

True. Both governors and their secretary survived the fall of about 21 metres. The revolt that followed started the Thirty Years' War.

4. True

True. Work stopped for decades during the Hussite Wars, and the church, dedicated to the patron saint of miners, was finished only in 1905.

5. D) A vignette

A vignette (dálniční známka) is required on motorways and is bought online at edalnice.cz.

6. True

True. Karlovy Vary means 'Charles' Baths'. Charles IV founded the spa in the 14th century.

7. C) Open

Oteveno means open. Closed is zaveno.

8. C) Slovakia

The Czech Republic and Slovakia became independent on 1 January 1993, a split often called the Velvet Divorce.

9. A) Keep the crown jewels and holy relics safe

Keep the crown jewels and holy relics safe: Karlštejn was built to guard the imperial regalia, the Bohemian crown jewels and holy relics.

10. C) Beer

Pivo means beer. Bread is chleba, water is voda and cheese is sýr.

11. C) The Vltava

Charles Bridge crosses the Vltava in Prague. It was begun in 1357 and is 516 metres long.

12. True

True. The daily menu is a two- or three-course lunch special that usually ends by about 13:00 or 14:00.

Czechia visa page

Name: _____ Date: _____



Next stops

Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____
Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____

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