

The Czech Republic

General information

- the CR is situated in Central Europe (it is said "in the heart of Europe")
- the Capital is Prague; largest cities are Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň
- the official language is Czech
- the currency is Czech Crown

National symbols

- the flag consists of a white and a red stripe and a blue triangle
- the Czech anthem is the song "Where my home is" by J.K. Tyl

International Organizations

- The CR joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999.
- In 2004 the CR joined the EU.

Land and Climate

- Our country is divided into three historical parts: Bohemia in the west, Moravia in the south-east and Silesia in the north-east.
- The CR is surrounded by four countries: Germany to the west, Poland to the north, Slovakia to the east and Austria to the south.
- The CR has a humid continental climate with cold winters and warm summers.

Rivers and Lakes

- The longest river is the Vltava (there are many dams: Lipno, Slapy). Another important rivers are the Labe, the Morava, the Berounka.
- several ponds are traditionally in southern Bohemia
- a favourite place for recreation is Máchovo Lake (a pond in fact)

People

- the population is about 10.300.000 inhabitants; the Czechs are descended from Slavonic tribes, but there are also ethnical groups: Slovaks, Poles, Germans, Roma, Russians, Ukrainians

- eating and drinking is very popular in the CR; roast pork, sauerkraut and dumplings (together with the traditional Czech beer) is our traditional meal
- Czech people like spending their weekends in their country houses or cottages

Industries

- *metallurgy* in Ostrava,
- *chemical industry* in Ústí nad Labem, Neratovice;
- *breweries* in Plzeň, České Budějovice, Litovel;
- *textile, clothes and leather industry,*

History

- Charles IV - Charles made Prague the imperial capital and was a great builder in the city, which uses his name in many spots (Charles University, Charles Bridge, Charles Square).
- On the 1st of January in 1993, the Velvet Divorce occurred, and two separate states were created out of the former Czechoslovakia: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic

Public holidays

- 1 January - Restoration Day of the Independent Czech State; New Year's Day
- March, April Easter Monday - Easter is celebrated for two days (Sunday and Monday)
- 1 May - Labour Day
- 8 May Liberation Day 1945, the end of the European part of World War II
- 5 July - Saints Cyril and Methodius came to propagate Christian faith and literacy.

- 6 July Jan Hus Day - The religious reformer Jan Hus was burned in 1415.
- 28 September - St. Wenceslas Day , Czech Statehood Day
- 28 October Independent Czechoslovak State Day - Creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918.
- 17 November - Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day
- 24 December - Christmas Eve - Christmas is celebrated during the evening of the 24th.

Places of interest

- **The Castle of Karlštejn** – the castle was built by Charles IV as a safe place for the crown jewels
- **The Mountain of Říp** – according to the legend Forefather Čech went up to the top of the mountain and decided and claimed that this was the land where his nation settled for good

- **The Třeboň Ponds** – in Southern Bohemia, it has its natural beauty and breathtaking scenery, but the major importance of the ponds is fish farming
- **The Slovacko District** – the local wine is of first class quality

The Czech Republic is:

- One of the youngest countries on the world map
- Surrounded on all sides by mountains
- a country at the very heart of Europe
- Divided into Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia
- Prague: the astronomical clock, the Old Town Square, the National Theatre, Charles Bridge

- Moravian wine cellar
- Bohemian beer pub
- Food: pork with dumplings and sauerkraut, roast beef in cream sauce, fruit dumplings, home made apple pie
- Member of NATO and EU