

Around Prague

Tower Tour

Prague's 100 spires are best seen from the top down – and luckily there are plenty of towers to accommodate your desire for a view. Here we lay out a day-long tower tour showing you the best Prague has to offer from a bird's eye view. **Editorial warning:** There is stair climbing involved – be prepared! Wear comfy shoes, choose a clear day when views will be best and allow yourself about six hours to hit all the “high” points.

First stop is **Petřín Hill** in Malá Strana. Take a tram (numbers 9, 12, 21, 22 and 23 go there) to the **Újezd** stop or walk across the bridge from the National Theater. Next to the tram stop is a funicular going up a hill, that's Petřín Hill. Since you are in the area, check out the sculptures on a wide staircase to the left of the tram stop – that's a memorial for the victims of the communist regime. To your right you'll find the funicular station (lanová dráha.) This cable car will take you up the hill between the hours of 09:15 to 20:45 for the bargain price of a single 26 CZK public transport ticket. If you've had a quick trip over your tram ticket to Újezd may still be valid – ask the ticket taker in the station.

There are only two stops on this ride – and the second one is the one you want. Upon exiting the funicular, head towards the right and remind yourself you are in Prague, not Paris. There in front of you should be a mini Eiffel Tower. This is actually the **Petřín Observation Tower**, designed as a replica of the “real” Eiffel Tower for the Jubilee Exhibition in 1891. Put your comfy shoes to good use and climb to the top (entrance fee 60 CZK.) Be sure to scoop out **Prague Castle** and the **TV Tower** – you'll be hitting them both later in the day. One of the reasons this is such a good view is you get to see the “back” of Prague. One side gives you the undeniably lovely views of the river, Old Town, etc. but you can also glimpse the neighborhoods situated on the opposite side of Petřín.

Since you've come all this way – be sure to wander the lovely gardens scattered about, especially the incredible rose gardens if in season. Once you've finished, you can either take the funicular back down, or walk it; there are slow looping paths to bring you to the bottom.

Moving on – hop on a 22 or 23 tram at Újezd again and head for **Prague Castle** – the stop will be called **Pražský hrad**. You may have been here before, and if not, you should go – but no time for dawdling over the castle's exhibits, ; we've got some more stairs to climb. Head straight for the tallest structure you see: **St. Vitus Cathedral**. You'll need to pay an entrance fee for the privilege of climbing the roughly 300 steps to the top – but it'll be worth it. In addition to a stunning view of the surrounding city, the bird's-eye-view of the castle grounds is even more fun. Make your way back down and head to the other side of the castle complex. Here you will find more views of Malá Strana and the river, and there are numerous winding paths to make your way back down.

Once down, hop on the green, metro line A at Malostranská to **Jiřího z Poděbrad**. Upon exiting the station, look up. If a huge **TV Tower** is not immediately visible, wander a bit until you get a clear view. Yep, there it is. Head towards it, curiously trying to guess what the large humps on the sides of the tower are. Some sort of important transmitting devices? Nope, huge crawling babies. Czech artist David Černý is responsible for this example of large-scale experimental outdoor art. Your feet get a break here; pay the small entrance fee and allow the elevator to transport you to the observation deck. There are two restaurants here – one slightly more pricey than the other, but you can't beat the view and you'll get a discount with your tower ticket.

The TV Tower 'offers a new view, compared to our first two towers – it's so high up, you'll see all the way to the outskirts of the city. Don't forget to look for Prague Castle and Petřín and marvel at how far you've come.

Summer Fun

Letná

The premiere city-center park, **Letná** is the place for Praguers to come on sunny days. Easily accessible from all sides; walking, skating and biking paths, plus playgrounds, lots of grass AND beer – what's not to love?

Eating and Drinking: One of the focal points of Letná is the **Letenský zámeček**, a pale yellow Neo-Classical building in the eastern section of the park, not far from the **National Technical Museum**. This is the best area for refreshment as there's a beer stand and picnic tables for the local, rustic experience; behind Letenský zámeček is **Výletní Restaurant** for a casual dining experience or go for style at Letenský zámeček. Both restaurants offer outdoor seating, but the best view to be had is from the picnic grounds

Other Activities: Letná is probably the city's number one spot for in-line skating, with special paths for enthusiasts. Jogging is another possibility, as is the less strenuous pétanque; there are gravel areas where you can play.

Getting there: You can easily walk to Letná from the Old Town by crossing Stefánikův Bridge and then climbing up the steps to the Metronome. Once you've reached the top follow the paths to the left, and this will take you to the Letenský zámeček restaurant. Alternatively, take trams 1, 8, 15, 25 or 26 to the Sparta stop and walk across the vast space towards the Metronome.

Riegrovy Sady

The biggest and probably best known Vinohrady park, **Riegrovy sady** is a popular local attraction all summer long.

Eating and Drinking: Riegrovy sady's prime attraction is probably its huge, well-shaded beer garden. Alas, no view like at Letná. Beer is served in real glasses and munchies are available. There is also a restaurant (**Park Café**) next door, with space for sitting outside in the summer.

Other Activities: The beer garden has a large screen showing football (soccer) matches and other sports events, and you can also enjoy a game of table football here. The park is also a favored place for sunbathing, Frisbee tournaments, and other sports. There is an excellent play area conveniently situated next to the beer garden. You may have to hike to reach Riegrovy sady, but you'll be rewarded with superb views over to Malá Strana and **Hradčany**.

Getting there: One way to approach Riegrovy Sady is to take Tram 11 to the **Vinohradská Tržnice** stop and then turn onto Budečská from Vinohradská. Ahead of you is the large Sokol Vinohrady building. Here, cross the road to the park. The beer garden is roughly in the middle.

Prague's Green Spaces

Letná, **Stromovka** (another Prague 7 park in close proximity to Letná, with similar features, but a bit more “wild,”) and Riegrovy Sady may be some of the more popular parks in Prague, but there are also less-frequented areas perfect for jogging, hiking, and enjoying nature.

Obora Hvězda

Surprisingly close to the center and an easy tram ride; this is one spot which once you discover it, you'll be back. Stepping off the tram, you may be shocked by the wide open space. Off to your right, is a



walled “forest” with an entry gate. Walking through, you are instantly transported to a wooded oasis. Welcome to **Obora Hvězda**.

The Czech word **obora** can translate as enclosure, and that’s what Hvězda (now a nature reserve) still is, a green enclave fenced off from the outside world. Walking straight down from the entrance you’ll run into **Letohrádek Hvězda**, a Renaissance star-shaped (hence the name) summer palace originally belonging to Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol, who built it for his wife.

The surrounding park was his personal hunting grounds. You can go into the chateau; you’ll find beautiful plaster work by Italian artists and an exhibition of the Battle of White Mountain (**Bílá Hora**), which occurred nearby.

Although you’ll spot people strolling up and down here, and kids playing on the huge grassy field in front of the chateau’s entrance – if you break off onto the wooded side paths you’ll think you have the place to yourself. The park’s size gives that impression – another one of its perks. And pay a visit throughout the year– each season brings a unique treat.

The summer of course is cool and shady; fall brings the beautiful changing of the leaves; in winter, folks actually practice cross-country skiing in the area and finally prepare for summer by visiting in spring when the flowers and trees are awakening from their long winter naps.

Getting there: Trams 15, 22 & 25 run to **Vypich** (this is the terminus for the no.15). Alternatively take trams 1, 2 or 18 to **Petřiny** (terminus), then turn onto U Hvězdy. Continue to the end of this street and turn right onto Libocká. The entrance to the park is about 50 meters on your left.

Letohrádek Hvězda is open from April to October, daily except Monday from 10.00 – 17.00.

Divoká Šárka

Another quick tram ride brings you to **Divoká Šárka**, one of Prague’s largest parks and an easy one to lose yourself in. Hike or bike on the large variety of paths; climb some of the small hills for an amazing view; heck, rock climbing can be done here as well. While the entrance and nearby fields may seem crowded, walking about 15 minutes will quickly lose the multitudes. The “main” path follows a small stream allowing some relaxation in a shaded valley, complete with bubbling brook.

As previously mentioned, the park is large, so you know you’ll be coming back again and again to explore the variety of paths and fields.

If you need some cooling off, there’s a public swimming pool. Be prepared to be really cooled off – it is stream fed. The pool is in the middle of the valley, admission charges are low and cover the whole day. Opening hours are summer only: June, 10:00 to 18:00; July & August, 09:00 to 19:00 and depending on the weather, it may stay open into September.

The pool is more of an entertainment center, offering foosball, pétanque courts and other activities. Nearby is **U Veselíků**, a lovely pub with a large terrace area, which serves up ice cold beer, ice cream and cheap pub treats. A must-stop for the weary walker.

Your other swimming choice is the reservoir, called **Džbán**. There is a camp ground, pub and nude bathing area here and occasionally concerts are held here too. The reservoir’s hours are a little less regular, as they seem more dependent on the weather, so it’s good to have the pool as a back up plan (admission prices are about the same).

The place does tend to fill up summer weekends, so if you need some solitude, visit on the weekdays. And don’t overlook Divoká Šárka in the winter. The place is super quiet, and blanketed in snow, it’s like a winter wonderland.

Getting there: take Metro Line A to **Dejvická**, then trams 20 or 26, or bus 119, to stop **Divoká Šárka**.

Museum Night & European Heritage Days

Prague’s historic buildings, museums and galleries are part of its charm. While there are a range of genres for every interest, one fun way to do a marathon tour is during the annual **Museum Night** (**Muzejní noc**, www.muzejninoc.cz). Usually held in mid-June, 2008 saw the fifth annual one throw open the doors to more than 75 sites. Most places are free to enter (another bonus) while some request a symbolic donation. Hours usually run from about 19:00 to 01:00, so with a well-coordinated schedule you could cover quite a number of cultural offerings. The event is coordinated by the **National Museum**, and nearly all of the “biggies” participate, as well as many smaller museums and galleries. Besides the opportunity to see permanent collections and ongoing exhibits, often the museum or gallery will present a special program only for Museum Night or showcase a part of their collection not normally on display. The event is well-coordinated, with special maps and brochures as well as free bus transport between some of the more spread-out sites.

Another opportunity to get a glimpse of something culturally different is **European Heritage Days** (**Dny evropského dědictví**, www.ehd.cz). This is coordinated under the auspices of the Council of Europe, and the Czech Republic has been participating in it for some time now. While similar in some way to Museum Night (event is free, access to numerous buildings) the European Heritage Days’ hook is that the open buildings are of architectural or historic interest and not normally accessible to the public. The event is staged on a weekend in September; some buildings are open only on the Saturday, some on the Sunday, or both. Again, like Museum Night some buildings offer accompanying events, like exhibitions or guided tours. What’s nice about this event is many smaller towns throughout the Czech Republic participate, so it’s a good excuse to go see different parts of the country.

Visit www.expatz.cz/events for complete event listings

Sightseeing by Tram

Maybe it is raining; maybe your legs are tired from participating in our Tower Tour. Either way, sightseeing by tram can be a fun and relaxing way to get out and see the town. Not only can you go further, you’ll also get off the tourist track and see parts of Prague not normally visited.

Barrandov to Výstaviště: Start your journey at **Anděl** and catch the 12, 14, or 20 trams. This ride will take you up the hill to **Barrandov**, home to **Barrandov Film Studio**, one of the largest in Central Europe. The neighborhood surrounding it is Prague’s version of the Hollywood Hills. Many of the homes date back to the 1920’s and the early, prosperous days of film. Take the tram all the way to the **Geologická** stop. Exit here, enjoy the view and then catch a tram going back the way you just came.

Decision time: Trams 12, 14 and 20 all take the same route back into town, offering wonderful Prague views. Try to sit on the left side of the tram, and you’ll be treated to an ancient bridge and the home of the **Folklore Dinner in Hlubočepy** as you are coming down the hill. Upon arriving at **Anděl**, the trams take their separate routes, each worth exploring.

Tram 12 will take you through **Malá Strana**, along the river and up into Letná to your final stop at **Výstaviště**. Tram 14 takes you over the river and through the city, crossing Wenceslas Square and winding through New Town, across the river again and to **Výstaviště**. Tram 20, which runs less frequently, will take you through **Malá Strana**, **Dejvice**, and finally to **Divoká Šárka**. Whether you end at **Výstaviště** or **Divoká Šárka**, if the weather is cooperative go green and hit one of the two parks. You can’t miss either of them: **Divoká Šárka** at the **Divoká Šárka** stop, or **Stromovka** at the **Výstaviště** stop.

Hradčany and Břevnovský Klášter: catch Tram 18 at **Národní Trída** on the side nearest Tesco and get a nice ride along the river, over **Mánesův Most**, past the **Rudolfinum** and to the border of Malá Strana. This trip takes you near the castle and among the beautiful homes of Hradčany. Hop off at **Hradčanská** and catch Tram 15, heading in the same direction to **Břevnovský Klášter**. Exit here, cross the street towards the large grassy area and explore the Romanesque Benedictine monastery.

One could spend several hours in the grounds and then enjoy an excellent, old-fashioned meal in the wonderfully rustic monk-run restaurant.

Riverview via Tram 17: This is probably your best "I'm sick of walking" tour. Start at **Strossmayerovo náměstí** and board Tram 17 headed towards **Modřany**. Once aboard, you will ride parallel to the river with wonderful views of the castle and **Ostrov Štvanice**. A quick cut brings you through Old Town and past the Rudolfinum but then it's all river for the rest of the ride. When you first get on the tram, try to sit on the left side (as you are facing the front of the tram), but if possible switch to the right side while or before you get to Old Town. This will give you the best vantage of the river.

Stay on until you reach the **Dvorce** stop, where you will have your choice of two Middle-Eastern restaurants, and, in warm weather, the beach at **Žluté lázně**. Your choices to return back to town are the 3, 16 and 17 trams, with the 17 returning you to Old Town for more sightseeing, the 3 taking you through the center of town and across Wenceslas Square, and the 16 taking you to I. P. Pavlova or Náměstí Míru.

Tourist Sites



Astronomical Clock & Old Town Hall	www.ghmp.cz
Staroměstské náměstí 1, Prague 1	+420 224 482 751
Břevnovský klášter	www.brevnov.cz
Markétská 28/1, 169 01 Prague 6	+420 220 406 270
Charles Bridge	n/a
Karlův Most, Prague 1	+420 224 220 569
Dancing House (Tančící Dům)	n/a
Rašínovo nábřeží 80, Prague 2	+420 221 984 160
Karolínium	www.cuni.cz
Ovocný trh 3, Prague 1	+420 224 491 111
Lennon Wall	n/a
Velkopřevorské nám., Prague 1	n/a
New Jewish Cemetery	www.jewishmuseum.cz
Izraelská 1, Prague 3	+420 222 317 191
Obecní dům (Municipal House)	www.obecni-dum.cz
Nám. Republiky 5, Prague 1	+420 222 002 101
Old Jewish Cemetery	www.jewishmuseum.cz
U Starého hřbitova 3a, Prague 1	+420 222 317 191
Petřín Observation Tower	n/a
Petřín, Prague 5	+420 257 320 112
Prague Botanical Gardens	www.botanicka.cz
Nádvorní 134, Prague 7	+420 234 148 111

Prague Castle	www.hrad.cz
Hrad, Prague 1	+420 224 371 111
Prague TV Tower	www.tower.cz
Mahlerovy sady 1, Prague 3	+420 242 418 778
Prague Zoo	www.zoopraha.cz
U Trojského zámku 3, Prague 7	+420 296 112 111
Vyšehrad National Cultural Monument	www.praha-vysehrad.cz
V Pevnosti 5b, Prague 2	+420 241 410 348

Lakes



Džbán	www.camp.cz/dzban
Nad lávkou 5, Prague 6	+420 235 358 554
Hostivářská přehrada	www.hostivarskaprehrada.cz
K Jezeru, Prague 10	+420 272 655 546

Bowling



Beer and Bowling - Corinthia Towers (group events only)	www.corinthia.cz
Kongresová 1, Prague 4	+420 261 191 151
Bowling centrum RAN	www.bowlingran.cz
V Celnici 10, Prague 1	+420 221 033 020
Bowling Club 19	www.bowling19.cz
Ocelářská 17, Prague 9	+420 272 108 208
Bowling v Továrně	www.bowlingtovarne.cz
Vlastislavova 11, Prague 4	+420 241 741 230
Modrá Stodola	www.bowling-modrastodola.cz
Spojovací ul., Horoměřice	+420 220 972 051
Planet Bowling	www.planet-bowling.cz
Radlická 117, Prague 5	+420 251 616 562

Ice Skating



Ice Rink Hotel Hasa	www.hotelhasa.cz
Sámova 1, Prague 10	+420 271 747 128
Zimní stadion HC Hvězda Praha	www.hokejhvezda.cz
Na rozdíl 1, Prague 6	+420 235 352 759
Zimní stadion Štvanice	www.stvanice.cz
Ostrov Štvanice 1125, Prague 7	+420 602 623 449

Pool Halls



Billiard Club	www.billiardcentrum.cz
V cípu 1, Prague 1	+420 224 009 235
Café Louvre	www.cafelouvre.cz
Národní 22, Prague 1	+420 224 930 949
Grill Billiard Club	www.pizzasklipek.cz
Kalkova 47, Prague 6	+420 233 338 131
Harlequin	www.slender.cz/harlequin
Vinohradská 25, Praha 2	+420 224 217 240

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