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Great Places To Visit: Prague Cafes And Castles

By Gerald Mason

Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic is an extraordinarily beautiful city. Standing on the banks

of the river Vltava (the locals generally use the German name for it the Moldau). Few wars or natural disaster ever reach here and the architectural heritage has been beautifully preserved. It is also know as the "Hundred Spired City" due to the many churches that adorn the city streets.

Much of the street plan, in as much as there is one, is medieval. And will come as a surprise (hopefully a pleasant one) to anyone used to living in a grid pattern North American city.

The city still boasts many beautiful buildings dating from the baroque period; a sight lost to much of Europe, that suffered so much in the devastation of two world wars. The canter of the city is a pleasure to walk around. Much of it is dating from the 14th century, when Charles IV started the university and built the "New Town" area of the city.

Prague only established itself as the capital in 1918 with the creation of Czechoslovakia. It remained under Soviet control until 1989, when the "Velvet Revolution" gently broke the grip of the failing Soviet Union.

Nowadays the city has thriving cafes, clubs and shops, where the newly wealthy and the inspirational window shopper can keep themselves amused for hours on end. The boulevards contain everything from traditional Czech souvenirs to the latest hi tech modern electrical gadgetry.

Must See Prague:

· Charles Bridge: built in the 14th century, it was believed at the time, that odd numbers were lucky. The builders started work at 5:31 on the day 9/7/1352 very odd, but maybe effective, as the bridge is still standing today!

· St.Nicholas Church: When building work finished in 1756 Prague had one of the finest Baroque churches in Europe and it still retains that position today. There is a huge painting of St. Nicholas in the nave and a wonderful bell tower. Mozart gave a recital here and there are still frequent classical

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concerts throughout the week

- Prague Castle: Now the home of the president, it was previously the seat of the Czech royal family. It is surrounded by palaces and features an army museum. The changing of the guard takes place every hour and, as with some other European Capitals it is quite a spectacle. Bring a camera.

- The Old Town Square: Built before the 12th century this is the oldest and most historic square in Prague. It is made up of many interesting buildings including many from the baroque period. Many of the buildings are brightly colored and there are many pavement cafes, where you can relax and watch the world go by.

- The National Technical Museum: Although unimaginatively (though accurately) titled, this is a fascinating collection of all things technical. With everything, from a railway carriage belonging to the Archduke Ferdinand, (whose assassination sparked the outbreak of the first world war), to a working

reconstruction of a working coal mine.

- Vhsyrad Castle: Over a thousand years old and a former home of the Czech nobility, this castle has an impressive pedigree. Take a stroll on top of the ramparts for a great view of the city and river. There is a wonderful gothic church, a museum and a cemetery, where the composer Dvorzac the Author of the "New World Symphony" is buried.

- Petrin Park: One of the hidden gems of Prague There is a rose garden, a maze and a gate to a well cultivated garden, but the real sight is from the tip of the hill. Take the short cable car ride to the top and there is the Petrin tower, basically a smaller copy of the Eiffel Tower. It is an outstanding viewpoint and well worth the effort.

Food and drink in Prague are both hearty (as you would expect in Eastern Europe) and affordable. You must try the dumplings and the beer is some of the finest on the continent. It is also the original home of Budweiser and they still make their own, some would say superior version.

The hotels are more expensive than they used to be, but are still affordable. Look around for the best bargains. The transport, mainly buses and trams, is very good. Although English is not as common as in many parts of Europe, a lot of the locals speak a few words. It is always worth asking directions, as they are polite and friendly people. A visit to Prague will not disappoint but don't go in winter unless you have a good coat.

Gerry Mason loves to travel and visit new places and pass his experience on to others. To receive free air travel please visit:

<http://www.flyfreeasacourier.com>

German Castles -- 4 of the most incredible ones -- Part II

By Marcus Hochstadt

German Castles --- 4 of the most incredible ones --- Part II by Marcus Hochstadt

German Castles --- 4 of the most incredible ones - Part II

Welcome to the second part of my special report of 4 awesome German castles! As I already have told, we have a long history here in Germany and very medieval castles. You can find them all over the country, but those four I have focused on South Germany, so that you do not have to travel hundreds of kilometres/miles and lose valuable time.

I am sure you are hot to get to know them now, so I go straight forward to them:

3. Stuttgart

Stuttgart area has, believe it or not, seven (yes 7!) castles and palaces. I only explain one of them, the new castle, because it is sooooo huge, awesome and one of the most beautiful German castles.

The New Stuttgart castle was built in 1746 as a representative baroque residential palace for "Duke Carl Eugen von Wuerttemberg" (long silly name, isn't it). After over sixty years of construction with repeated interruptions, the interior and exterior were completed in 1807. So much to the history.

When you are finished with the visit of this castle, downtown is not far away and you can explore this too. You will find many interesting restaurants, pubs and cafés.

4. Rastatt

This town is located close to the city Karlsruhe, 70km in the south of Heidelberg (I mention Heidelberg, because it's one of the most known German city).

The Rastatt castle is huge too and you have lots of things to explore there. It is the oldest baroque residence on the Upper Rhine River and has been completely preserved since being built from 1700 to 1707 (yeah, in the year 2000 it had its 300th Anniversary!).

The area is very beautiful and the town spends lots of money in this incredible castle. After your walk through this residence you have a really short way to downtown and to its nice pubs and restaurants.

I hope you enjoyed this special report of 4 of the most beautiful and incredible German castles. If you want to get to know some more insider tips of Germany or more of the rest of our TOP 40 German castles, go to my website and sign up for my monthly special report at

. It's free but with high valuable

content.

You'll also find some photos of those castles on my site:

I also really look forward to your experiences and discoveries you have made here in Germany. Send me a message and when they are valuable I will post them on my website, so that the world can participate on them too.

I appreciate you and wish you a great day!

Marcus Hochstadt

www.smart-travel-germany.com

Marcus Hochstadt travels extensively to countries, continents and Germany itself as a sales manager and entrepreneur since more than 14 years. He knows in almost each German city the points of REAL interest. Watch out for his free monthly special report with more valuable insider tips at

www.smart-travel-germany.com/smart-travelogy-germ.html.

German Castles --- 4 of the most incredible ones --- Part II

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German Castles --- 4 of the most incredible ones - Part I

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