

## Tour Central Europe

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# Jewish Heritage & Cultural Tour: The Czech Republic

With Frank Fristensky, Durango, Colorado, and Mike Zeman, Prague, Czech Republic

- Departure:** TBD  
From your point of departure in the USA for Prague.
- Pick-up:** TBD  
At Prague's Vaclav Havel Airport (PRG).
- Returning:** TBD  
From Prague.

**Join Tour Central Europe on an unforgettable excursion, guided by two sons of Holocaust survivors. This tour is unlike any other available. Allow us a moment to explain the inspiration behind it:**

**The stories of Holocaust survivors** fill millions of pages and thousands of hours of recorded interviews. Relatively few texts, however, have been devoted to the impact the Holocaust has had on the children of survivors. We, the children, call ourselves “The Second Generation.” We were born into a safe, post-Holocaust world but nonetheless shared our families’ experience. We will offer presentations by noted authors and lecturers who have devoted their lives to researching and writing about the Second Generation.

**On the Jewish Heritage Tour**, we will have the rare privilege of hearing presentations by survivors of the Theresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp. It is important to note, though, that this is not a Holocaust tour. Instead, it is an all-encompassing adventure into the European Jewish experience. You will discover the richness and complexities of European Jewish history and will witness the renewal of European Jewish life.

Throughout the trip, you will enjoy the wonderful food and music of the Jewish and Czech cultures. You will marvel at the natural splendor of the Czech Republic, a land of magnificent forests, rivers, lakes and mountains, adorned by fairy tale castles, medieval villages and Renaissance chateaux.

## **DAY 1**

Arrival in Prague, pick up at the airport and check into our hotel.

**"The Mother of All Cities"** reads the ancient coat of arms of the capital of the Czech Republic. **Prague** is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Largely undamaged by WW II, Prague is all magic and romance - red roofs, cobbled streets, centuries old bridges and historic synagogues, charming old beer halls, and street musicians. It is also the home of the richest and best known Jewish histories on the continent. The city is known for Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the Talmudic scholar and mystic who is the subject of the legend of the Golem of Prague. Franz Kafka, Max Brod, and Franz Werfel made Prague their home, producing works that would become mainstays of the western literary canon.

Depending on your arrival in Prague, you will have leisure time for some initial exploration.

### **Overnight in Prague**

## **DAY 2**

With a professional guide, we will tour some of the most historic sites of Prague, including the Prague Castle District, located on the top of Hradcany Hill, which offers spectacular views of the town below. Next, we will walk down the hill toward the Lesser Town (Mala strana) and will stroll amidst its picturesque streets and baroque houses. We will walk through the area below the Charles Bridge, where many artists and musicians used to live. It now houses small inns, restaurants and galleries. The Old and Lesser Towns, the historic Charles Bridge, and other relevant sites. We will cross the historic Charles Bridge, which is flanked with statues of saints and a beautiful view of the Vltava River and the Hradcany Hill. Crossing the Charles Bridge, we will reach the Old Town Square with its Astronomical Clock Tower. We also walk along the Vltava River, passing by the National Theater and other historical sites. We will then enjoy lunch at a classic local restaurant.

After lunch, we will have a presentation on the Jewish history of Europe and the Czech Republic.

In the late afternoon, we will return to hotel and enjoy leisure time before gathering for a welcome dinner with musical entertainment.

### **Overnight in Prague**

(B-L-D)

### **DAY 3**

We will dedicate this day to the Jewish history of Prague, beginning in the Jewish Quarter, also known as Josefov. The Czech Republic and Prague was spared most of the heavy bombing and destruction during the WW II,. In addition, Hitler decreed that Prague would serve as a post-war "museum of an extinct race." Consequently, the Jewish Town and its synagogues are completely intact. We will stroll the streets and visit the Maisel, Spanish, and Pinkas synagogues. Further, we will visit the Ceremonial Hall, and the Altneuschul (Old New Synagogue), the world's oldest existing synagogue. We will also tour Prague's Jewish Museum and the inspiring Old Cemetery.

A meeting with the local Jewish community members will be organized.

In the afternoon there will be leisure time and opportunities for personal exploration.

#### **Overnight in Prague**

(B-D)

### **DAY 4**

This morning, we will depart for **Terezin** Ghetto, also known as Theresienstadt. This former fortress and city was transformed during the war into notorious "model" concentration camp, intended to promote Nazi propaganda. At Terezin, Jews for the Czech Protectorate and elsewhere in Europe lived under inhuman conditions while waiting to be transported eastwards to be murdered, mostly at Auschwitz. Despite the camp's horrible conditions, creative artists, musician and other prisoners produced and performed theatrical plays, music, poetry, and literary works. Frank's mother, and uncle, their parents, grandparents and other family members were imprisoned in Terezin from 1942-1944. Only Frank's mother and uncle survived. Late afternoon return to Prague. Free time. In the evening Opera or concert performance.

#### **Overnight in Prague.**

(B-L-D)

### **DAY 5**

After breakfast, we will travel to **Karlovy Vary**, also known as Carlsbad, a world famous hot springs town. It is literally built on water. There are fifteen hot springs housed in or near five colonnades along the Tepla River. Karlovy Vary was an internationally famed spa town for the gentry of Europe, including notables like Freud, Kafka, and Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president. With a tour guide, we will stroll the promenade while sipping therapeutic spring water and will enjoy the grand buildings along the Tepla River. Later on, we will enjoy a meeting with members of the local Jewish community.

Karlovy Vary is also home of the world famous **Moser Glass Factory** that was founded in 1857 by an engraver Ludwig Moser from a proud local Jewish family. Moser glass has been sought out ever since for its outstanding quality and artistry and is known worldwide as the “glass of kings”. All products are made by hand in an array of shapes and Moser signature colors.

Karlovy Vary, also produces a popular herbal liquor called **Becherovka** (sometimes also referred to as "the 16th spring"). This bittersweet classic among Czech liquors is based on a secret recipe, which was first put together by Jan Becher in a Karlovy Vary pharmacy (now the Jan Becher Museum) in 1807 and which, it is said, is only known to two people today. The ingredients are simple and purely natural: Karlsbad water, alcohol, sugar and a mixture of herbs and spices.

### **Overnight in Karlovy Vary**

(B-L-D)

## **DAY 6**

This morning, we continue our travel to **Plzen** (Pilsen), the capital of the western Czech Republic that was liberated by General Patton’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Army in 1945. In 1295 A.D., the city of Nova Plzen (New Plzen) was founded by Czech King Wenceslas II on the confluence of the Radbuza and Mze Rivers, 6 miles northwest of the original Old Plzen. Plzen is an important cultural, economic, transport, commercial and industrial center, known primarily for the products of Plzen Brewery (**Pilsner Urquell Beer**) and Skoda Engine Works.

We will visit the Pilsen's synagogue, the **Moorish Revival Great Synagogue**, the second largest in Europe (after the Dohany Synagogue in Budapest). Plzen was also influential in the life of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who later traveled to America and founded Hebrew Union College, vital to the Jewish Reform Movement.

Following the visit of the Great Synagogue, we will proceed to the nearby **General Patton's Museum**. The museum includes more than a thousand exhibits from private collections. It documents the advancements of the US Army in what was then Czechoslovakia, and the deployment of US soldiers until November 1945.

Later on a meeting with the members of the local Jewish community will be organized.

### **Overnight in Plzen**

(B-L-D)

## **DAY 7**

This morning , we will continue due south to the town of Cesky Krumlov. On the way, we will make a stop in small town of **Klatovy** (23,500 pop.), located in the Plzen Region. The King Premysl Otakar II founded Klatovy during 1260-1263. We will explore Klatovy's central old square with its important historic sites such as the Black Tower, reaching a height of 81 meters (245 feet) and built between 1547-1557 of unplastered ashlar blocks; the Baroque Pharmacy, "U Bileho jednorozce" (At the White Unicorn), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in business from 1776 to 1966, complete with rococo furnishings and apothecary supplies; and the Catacombs where 30 mummies are preserved.

**Cesky Krumlov** is a small ancient city in the South Bohemian Region (UNESCO World Heritage Site). Construction of the town and the castle began in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century at a ford in the Vltava River. The core of the old town, full of preserved medieval history and architecture is within a horseshoe bend of the river. The famous Krumlov **Castle** contains a preserved **Baroque theater** (dated at 1776), complete with original stage machinery, scenery and props. We have dinner with a musical entertainment at a local restaurant.

### **Overnight in Cesky Krumlov**

(B-D)

## **DAY 8**

This morning we will have a guided tour of Cesky Krumlov, followed by a spectacular private tour of the castle including the Baroque theater.

The afternoon is reserved for your leisure to visit some of the many galleries, small shops, and museums or just to relax by the river in one of the many pubs overlooking the town and/or taking a stroll through the many mystique small streets.

### **Overnight in Cesky Krumlov**

(B)

## **DAY 9**

Following breakfast, we will depart for Prague (3 hours driving time).

Arriving in Prague early in the afternoon, we will have time to get ready for the next day's departure and for some last minute shopping in town.

There will be an early farewell dinner followed by a final discussion.

### **Overnight in Prague**

(B-D)

## **DAY 10**

Morning departures to Prague airport.

(B)

## TOUR SPECIFICATIONS AND PRICING

Upon signing up for this tour, you will receive a booklet with important and helpful information, including detailed itinerary, money exchange, what to pack, electrical appliances, cell phones, hotel addresses and phone numbers, medical concerns, suggested readings, information on visiting places, and much more.

This trip has been custom-designed specifically for a small group of just 12 to 14 guests to appreciate unique natural landscapes, cultural and historical sites, culinary treats, behind the scene treasures, and authentic encounters. You will never feel like you are a part of a herd. We like to travel light – smaller group causes little environmental and cultural disturbance, which allows you to get closer to the world you are exploring.

We will be traveling in a private air-conditioned mid-size bus. We realize that hotels are not the main reason for you to select a tour. But great accommodation can improve the tour experience. We are selecting hotels according to our previous satisfied experience or hotels that we believe are the best for our particular trip. European hotels are usually smaller than those in the U.S.A. Also, air conditioning isn't as common as at home and in some country setting hotels elevators may not be available (we'll help you with your luggage). Our goal is to select accommodations that will offer you a nice and clean place, with the usual amenities or better, good service and good location. In larger cities, our hotels are usually centrally located so you can get around easily. In rural areas we will offer unique lodging that will provide local ambiance larger groups never experience.

### YOUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Small group of up to 14 guests.
- All accommodations.
- All Breakfasts, **4** Lunches and **7** Dinners as indicated on the itinerary (beverages are not included).
- All land transportation.
- Entrance fees for all planned events.
- Transfer from/to the airport (only on the official arriving and departure day).
- Guided tours and special events.

**Note:** Round trip air-fare from your point of departure is not included.

### All land arrangements as described above:

- Double room occupancy: **\$TBD per person**
- Single room occupancy: **\$TBD**

Deposit of \$700.00 per guest is due with sign up to secure your spot. It is fully refundable if Tour Central Europe cancels the tour.

Limited space reservation to 14 people - first come, first served basis.

The prices are based on minimum of 12 travelers. For a fewer than 12 registered travellers by 95 days prior to departure the tour cost may proportionally increase to compensate for the missing number of travellers. We reserve the right to cancel the tour due to insufficient number of travelers.

We would like to suggest arranging your own round trip air travel from your hometown to Prague and from Prague back home. Please contact us first prior to making your reservation. If you are not able to make your own travel plans we will assist you.

In order to get the full benefit of this trip adequate degree of physical conditioning is recommended due to a good amount of walking and some hiking on our tour. If you need assistance in getting around, our tour may not be appropriate for you. Please contact us prior making a decision on this tour.

We are strongly recommending purchasing a travel insurance to protect yourself and your investment in case you have to cancel or interrupt this tour. In order to provide you with the most effective coverage, the policy exclusion for "Pre-Existing Conditions" will be waived if you purchase a plan within 14 days of making your initial deposit payment for your trip. Please let us help you with securing your travel insurance.

Please consult the "[Reservations](#)" and "[Terms & Conditions/Travel Insurance](#)" sections for more pertinent information concerning this tour.

**In order to secure the best possible air-fair and our reserved hotels please register early! Before securing your flight arrangements, please check with us on the number of registered travelers.**