
Living in the Czech Republic

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The Czech Republic is one of the most developed and industrialised economies in Central Europe. That the country is not only a popular tourist destination, but it's also growing as an expat destination is something expats moving to the Czech Republic will find. The Czech Republic which is a small land-locked country is the western part of the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (Czechoslovakia), which split to form two separate states in 1993.

The country's commercial, social and cultural capital, Prague attract tourists in their hundreds who flock to marvel at its historical buildings and natural beauty, the central focus of which is the city's imposing castle. There are more historical landmarks to be seen outside of the capital; there are over 2,000 castles, keeps and ruins, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The Czech Republic's population consists of a majority of Czechs. other ethnic groups include Slovaks, Germans, Romanis, Vietnamese and Poles. The main language is Czech. The older generations may be unable to converse in English, especially outside the larger cities, while many of the younger Czech population are able to speak English, as it is taught in most schools. Prague, which is the site of the European headquarters of many international companies is where most expats will find themselves living in.

Politics in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the President is the head of state and the Prime Minister is the head of government and the Czech Republic itself is a unitary parliamentary constitutional republic. The Government of the Czech Republic exercises executive power and reports to the lower house of Parliament. With the Chamber of Deputies (Poslanecká snemovna) consisting of 200 members and the Senate (Senát) consisting of 81 members the Legislature is bicameral. The Parliament of the Czech Republic is made up of both houses.

The Czech Republic's political system is a multi-party system. The two largest parties were Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) and Civic Democratic Party (ODS) since 1993. In early 2014 this model changed with the rise of a new political party ANO 2011 which led to weakening of both major parties. The Czech Republic was rated as "flawed democracy" in 2016 by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

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Economy of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic with a per capita GDP rate that is 87% of the European Union average, possesses a developed, high-income economy. While the Czech Republic is the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states, it saw growth of over 6% annually in the three years before the outbreak of the recent global economic crisis. Exports to the European Union, especially Germany, and foreign investment have led growth while domestic demand is reviving.

Including the banks and telecommunications, most of the economy has been privatised. In 2013 foreign owners were paid dividends worth CZK 300 billion.

Since 1 May 2004, the country has been a member of the Schengen Area having abolished border controls, completely opening its borders with all of its neighbours (Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia) on 21 December 2007. On 1 January 1995, the Czech Republic became a member of the World Trade Organisation.

Buying and Renting Property in the Czech Republic

Rather than buy apartments, single expats or young expat couples usually opt to rent accommodation in the Czech Republic. Expats can choose from a wide variety of rental options and apartments and houses alike can be found in a variety of styles from contemporary to baroque and beyond. Communist-era apartment buildings are available but these are best avoided as many are in a state of disrepair as a result of poor maintenance and being built from inferior materials.

In the Czech Republic, there is furnished, semi-furnished and unfurnished accommodation with a variety of properties available in Prague especially. Although couples, families or groups of friends may prefer to rent bigger apartments or houses for themselves, many single expats choose to rent rooms in shared flats or houses.

While accommodation should ideally be secured in person and in advance it can be found in newspapers, online, or through an agent also.

Visa and Immigration

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Schools in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the education and schools sector is largely considered to be in a healthy state. Provided that they are EU nationals or legal residents, even better news for expat parents is that their children can attend public school at no cost. This is the situation for education from pre-primary school up to and including university. Usually for the sake of continuity, there are nevertheless many expat parents who choose to enrol their children in private or international schools instead. From the ages 6 to 15, schooling is compulsory. The school year starts from early September and runs to late June the following year.

In the Czech Republic's public schools, teaching is conducted entirely in the Czech language. This includes university. While it can be discouraging to some expats, there are advantages to expat children being taught in Czech – namely, it's a good way for them to learn the language and thus assimilate into the new culture more easily, which is especially important for expats planning a long stay in the country.

In the Czech Republic, private schools are partly funded by the state and partly funded by fees paid by parents.

Weather of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic, with warm summers and cold, cloudy and snowy winters has a temperate continental climate. Due to the landlocked geographical position, the temperature difference between summer and winter is relatively high.

Temperatures vary greatly within the Czech Republic, depending on the elevation. At higher altitudes, the temperatures decrease and precipitation increases in general. In the Czech Republic, the wettest area is found around Bílý Potok in Jizera Mountains and the driest region is the Louny District to the northwest of Prague. The distribution of the mountains is another important factor; therefore, the climate is quite varied.

Usually January is the coldest month, followed by February and December. There is usually snow in the mountains and sometimes in the major cities and lowlands during these months. The temperature usually increases rapidly during March, April and May, especially during April, when the temperature and weather tends to vary widely during the day. High water levels in the rivers also characterize Spring due to melting snow with occasional flooding.

July is the warmest month of the year followed by August and June. Temperatures during summer on average are about 20 °C (36 °F) – 30 °C (54 °F) higher than during winter. Rain and storms also characterize summer.

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