

WHAT TO SEE IN PRAGUE Organizers' Top Eight Tips

1. [Anežský klášter](#) (Convent of St Agnes)



The convent in Na Františku Street, historically valuable monasterial edifice and one of the oldest Gothic structures in Prague, bears the name of its foundress, the Premyslid Princess St Agnes of Bohemia (canonized 1989). Agnes the Premyslid (probably 1211–1282) founded this convent/monastery of the Orders of Poor Clares and Friars Minor with the support of her royal family in the 1230s. She even exchanged several letters with the founder of the Order of Poor Clares, St Clare of Assisi, about spiritual care of nuns and devotion to suffering Christ.

Today, the complex hosts a permanent exhibition of the National Gallery Prague, Medieval Art in Bohemia and Central Europe, 1200–1550. The best works from the collections include those

dating from Luxembourg era – that of King John of Bohemia and, especially, his successor Emperor Charles IV and his sons. Under the patronage of Charles IV, the so-called Bohemian school of the visual arts flourished in and around Prague, attracting many foreign artists and local masters. Although it was heavily exposed to the artistic traditions of France and northern Italy (mainly through the importation of illuminated manuscripts), Prague nevertheless produced a vital Bohemian tradition in architecture and a distinctive independent style in painting that had an important influence on 14th-century late Gothic art, especially that of Germany.

The garden of the monastery offers quiet places for a pleasant repose away from the hustle and bustle of the city, and a nice cup of coffee or tea in a cosy café U Anežky.

The opening hours of the exhibition is Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun 10:00am –18:00pm; Wed 10:00am –20:00pm.

2. [Betlémská kaple](#) (Bethlehem Chapel)

Bethlehem Chapel is a place closely related to Jan Hus (1372–1415), Czech theologian and church reformer, whose work became inspiration for Hussitism, a crucial predecessor to Protestantism, and, a century later, to Martin Luther. The foundations of the Bohemian Reformation were laid in the Chapel, as well as at Charles University, founded in 1348 by Charles IV in Prague, where Master Jan Hus was master, dean, and rector.



Bethlehem Chapel was founded in 1391 by the burgher Jan Kříž and the courtier Hanuš of Mühlheim. In the Charter of 24 May 1391, both donors stipulated that the chapel should be reserved for sermons delivered in Czech. In 1402, Jan Hus started preaching there, his sermons addressing many of the same questions previously discussed by Milič of Kroměříž, Matěj of Janov



and the English reformer John Wyclif. Hus served in Bethlehem Chapel up to 1412 when he had to leave Prague and was, finally, excommunicated and executed for heresy by the Council of Constance in 1415.

The chapel can be visited every day 9:00am – 18:30pm; entrance fee is 60 CZK.

3. [Bazilika sv. Jiří](#) (St. George's Basilica)

St. George's Basilica originated as the second church at Prague Castle, after the St Vitus' Basilica (turned to the present Gothic cathedral in 14th century). The basilica was prominent at the beginning of the spread of Christianity in Bohemia. The first convent of Benedictine nuns in Bohemia was founded in its vicinity in 973, and the basilica served as an abbey church.



Throughout the Middle Ages, the convent was one of the most prominent local religious, political and cultural centres. A prestigious institution for women from noble families, the convent had its own scriptorium that produced some of the most exquisite illuminated manuscripts of its time, e.g. the collection of mystical and affective treatises, the so-called *Passional of Abbess Kunigunde*, named after one of the Abbesses, Kunigunde of Bohemia (1265–1321), a member of the royal House of Přemyslids.

In the Convent of St George originated an extensive collection of liturgical scripts for the dramatic office of the *Visitatio Sepulchri*, as well as other texts intended for public performance, e.g. several Marian and Magdalenian laments.

The Basilica can be visited every day 9:00am – 17:00pm; admission to the Basilica is included in the ticket for the Prague Castle Circuit (comprises the Basilica, St Vitus' Cathedral, Old Royal Palace, and the Golden Lane) – 250 CZK.

4. [Petrská čtvrť](#) (The Petřská Quarter)



The Petřská Quarter is situated between the right bank of the Vltava and Hybernská, Revoluční and Těšnov Streets. At first glance, it catches the eye with its strange combination of narrow winding streets and picturesque little squares. In the past, it used to be flanked by the city fortification lined with wide moats and trade routes connecting the Old and New Prague Towns with the rest of the country. Founded as a settlement of German merchants, The Petřská Quarter saw the coming of the Order of German Knights around 1200, who established its headquarters and a hospital there, later replaced by the Knights of the

Cross with the Red Star, a Bohemian religious order established by St Agnes of Bohemia at the same time as the above-mentioned convent of Poor Clares.

A characteristic feature of the area today, as in the past, is its proximity to the Vltava River. Before 1900, an archipelago was spreading here in the Vltava riverbed, consisting of several larger islands and a whole tangle

of smaller ones. Rows of mills flanked the riverbank, together with tanneries, a card factory and other manufacturing plants. The regulation of the banks of the Vltava between 1915 and 1917 changed the character of the area once for good. The mills were removed, embankment walls were built, and the blind arms between the islands were filled in. In the 1920s and 1930s, a large part of the district was demolished in connection with the so-called Prague Rehabilitation, one of the most extensive transformations of historical city centres in contemporary Europe, during which many historic houses and large parts of whole districts were destroyed in order to allow for the modernisation of the city.

5. Exhibition “Prague of Charles IV – medieval city”

The exhibition presents the ideas and reality of the transformation of Prague under the rule of Emperor



Charles IV during the 14th century, who strived to render the city a second Jerusalem by an unprecedented building activity and artistic patronage. Virtual and physical models of important Charles foundations give an idea of the scope and character of Prague agglomeration in Charles's time, with the everyday life of the city and its inhabitants during the Luxembourg era illustrated by numerous objects and other media.

Virtual presentations show the mechanisms of medieval city administration, atmosphere of the city, as well as the construction of the Stone Bridge, today known as Charles Bridge. Dramatic video sequences tell the story of Charles's life and its most important events, such as his birth, his arrival in Prague, his coronation and funeral. The video mapping on the model of the whole Prague suburb and the model of Charles Square with its surroundings presents the construction and urban development of the city during the 14th century.

The exhibition can be visited every day 9:00am – 18:00pm except Mondays; Muzeum města Prahy, Dům U Zlatého prstenu, Týnská 6; entrance fee is 180 CZK.

6. Kampa Island

Recently voted one of the most beautiful city islands in the world, Kampa is located in the Malá Strana (the Lesser Town) neighborhood of Prague. Here you can find great views of the Prague Castle and Vltava River, some incredible art, and a few surprises.

One of Prague's most unique museums, [Museum Kampa](#) is dedicated to modern European art. The museum houses a significant collection of works by František Kupka and by Otto Gutfreund, one of the country's most renowned artists. In addition to paintings and sculptures, expect huge red dogs, a giant chair over the river, and other very unique displays.



The canal that runs under Charles Bridge and through Kampa is known as “Čertovka,” Devil's Stream. The surrounding houses among the stream are extremely picturesque, with the channel separating Kampa from the Lesser Town. The houses and the winding water gave the channel its other nickname, “Prague Venice.”



The history of the channel dates back to ancient times, when the Knights of Malta in the Middle Ages needed to regulate the water flow for the mills in the area.

To take a rest and a coffee/tea and snack, visit [Kavárna MLÝNSKÁ](#), located in the heart of the Kampa park in the former mill house.

7. [Petřín Hill](#)



Petřín Hill is one of the largest green areas in the centre of Prague, its slopes offering an opportunity for a nice stroll and unforgettable views on the Prague Castle, Vltava River, and both Old and New Town. You can take a walk up the hill from the Újezd Street, or reach the top of the hill by [cable car](#) (stop Újezd). Any way, take your time to stop at the Rose Orchard or Rosarium, in the Nebozízek Garden in the place of a former vineyard, or the Seminary Garden with more than 2,100 fruit trees.

The focal point of the park is the [Petřín Lookout Tower](#), built on the occasion of the Jubilee Exhibition in 1891. The area was known as a pilgrimage site from the Romanesque era. In the Baroque period, the Church of St. Lawrence (now Old Catholic), the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre (1737), the Chapel of Calvary (1735) and 14 Stations of the Cross were built here as a prominent devotional site. In 1891, a [mirror maze](#) was constructed in the pavilion of the Czech Tourist Club for the Jubilee Exhibition, with a panoramic image of the Prague citizens fighting the Swedes on Charles Bridge in 1648.

[The Petřín Lookout Tower](#) can be visited everyday 9:00am – 21:00pm; entrance fee is 150 CZK.

[The Mirror Maze](#) can be visited everyday 9:00am – 20:00pm; entrance fee is 150 CZK.

[The Petřín funicular](#) operates everyday 8:00am – 23:00pm in the interval of 10–15 min; tickets are the same as for other public transport.

8. [Letenské sady \(Letná Parks\)](#)

Letná Park is one of the largest parks in the centre of Prague, which offers a magical view of the Vltava River and the historical city centre. The bridge over Chotkova Street provides smooth access to Chotkovy Sady and further on to Prague Castle.

Due to its strategic location, Letná plateau and its slopes served in the past as a rallying point and camping ground for armies. Since the 1860s, the area was gradually bought out of private hands by the Prague municipality in order to be transformed into a public park. In 1863, the architect Ignác Ullmann built there the so-called Letenský zámek (Letná Chateau), a building in the style of an Italian suburban villa, which has served as a restaurant. In the vicinity of the chateau there is a historical rarity – a 100-year-old floor carousel from 1891 that has been currently under renovation. In the 1950s, however, people came to Letná mainly to see the so-called “meat queue”, a 65-metre high monument to the dictator J. V. Stalin, the largest of its kind in Europe. When Stalin’s crimes came to light, the monument was blown up in 1962. Today, a metronome made by sculptor Vratislav Karel Novak counts down the time in its place.

