



# Pre-Departure Information

FROM BRATISLAVA TO PRAGUE



# Table of Contents

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## TRAVEL INFORMATION

- Passport
- Visas
- Money
- Tipping
- Special Diets
- Communications
- Electricity

## MEDICAL INFORMATION

- Inoculations
- Staying Healthy

## HELPFUL INFORMATION

- Photography
- Being a Considerate Traveler

## PACKING LIST

- The Essentials
- WT Gear Store
- Luggage
- Notes on Clothing
- Clothing
- Equipment
- Personal First Aid Supplies
- Optional Items

## READING LIST

- Essential Reading
- Also Recommended

# Reminders Before You Go

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## WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

## PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Trip Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.

## PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Extra Services:** Request any Extra Services (hotel nights, transfers, extensions) with your WT office contact using the Extra Services Request Form sent with your confirmation packet.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

## QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** ([www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com)) or e-mail us at: [info@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:info@wildernesstravel.com).

# Travel Information

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## PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for three months after your date of exit from Czech Republic. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. The service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** (<http://www.passportvisasexpress.com/?affId=2120>). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

## VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for countries visited on this trip. If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

## MONEY

The currency in the Czech Republic is the koruna (crown). For Vienna, we recommend getting Euros at the airport in Vienna to cover the cost of your transfer and any extra time you may be spending in Vienna. There are ATM machines in Vienna.

On the morning of Day 2, we depart for the Czech Republic, so you will not need much money in Euros. We stop just past the border in Valtice, Czech Republic, where you can obtain Czech koruna. Foreign exchange is also available in some hotels in Cesky Krumlov and Prague. Travelers checks are only changeable at banks in the larger towns so we don’t recommend them. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops in cities and larger towns.

There are ATM machines everywhere in the Czech Republic, even in the smaller towns. Carrying a small amount of US cash is useful for minor expenses. If you plan to get cash this way, it’s wise to get a list of ATM locations in advance online or from your bank. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, meals not included in the trip itinerary, international and domestic airport departure taxes, and personal items such as beverages. Meals can be expensive. Dinners in a middle-range restaurant can easily cost \$30 per person.

## TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. A range of reference would be \$90-110 USD per trip member for each Trip Leader, and \$40-50 for the driver, which can be given in US Dollars or local currency. The Trip Leader takes care of gratuities for luggage handling, waiters at restaurants, and guides or drivers who are with the group for only a short time.

## SPECIAL DIETS

We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **Telephone**

The international dialing code for the Czech Republic is 420. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

### **Email & Internet Access**

Internet access is available at most of our hotels.

## ELECTRICITY

The Czech Republic has 220-volt current. Plugs usually have two or three prongs.

# Medical Information

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The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>)  
Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** (<http://www.travmed.com>) and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**. (<http://www.magellans.com>)

## INOCULATIONS

No inoculations are required. However, it is easy to get a small cut, so a tetanus booster is strongly recommended (good for 10 years). If you take prescription medicines, be sure to bring enough for the duration of your trip.

## STAYING HEALTHY

You can reduce your risk of getting a cold on the trip by washing your hands often and not touching your face with unwashed hands. If you arrive on the trip with a cold or feel the symptoms of a cold, avoid close contact with others and move away from people before coughing or sneezing. The CDC recommends coughing or sneezing into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow or upper sleeve, not your hands.

# Helpful Information

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses** (<https://www.borrowlenses.com/discount/wildernesstravel>), with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

### Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

### Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to [wtphotoblog@gmail.com](mailto:wtphotoblog@gmail.com) or tag us **@WildernessTravel** on social media.

### Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

## BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

# Packing List

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## THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Expense money

## WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** (<http://wildernesstravel.newheadings.com>).

## LUGGAGE

- Soft-sided rolling suitcase, with small padlock (must be unlocked for air travel).
- Daypack, large enough for a jacket or rain gear, water bottle, camera, and items you want on the trail.
- (Optional) Small roll-up bag to carry home purchases.

## NOTES ON CLOTHING

Bring clothes you find most comfortable for walking. Until the end of September, the weather may be warm enough for shorts on some days, but we recommend including long pants for protection from long grasses and cool weather. We ask that you pack everything in one piece of luggage as this simplifies transportation of luggage en route. You'll want a change of clothes for the evening, but nothing dressy is necessary. Casual wear is fine, and coats and ties are not required.

Although airline service to Europe is generally reliable, it is best to wear or carry your hiking boots with you on your flights in the event that your luggage is lost or delayed. Likewise, don't pack valuables, such as travel documents, camera gear, or prescription medicines in your checked luggage.



## CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only.

- Lightweight rain gear, such as a Gore-Tex rain/wind shell jacket with hood
- Fleece jacket or nylon windbreaker (essential for fall departures)
- Light fleece sweater or sweatshirt to layer for added warmth
- Long-sleeved shirt. Quick-drying “travel” fabrics like nylon are recommended.
- T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts
- Hiking pants. Lightweight cotton or synthetic hiking pants are a practical choice. Jeans are not recommended because they can be hot and they take a long time to dry if they get wet.
- Hiking shorts, mid-thigh length (not running shorts).
- Shade hat with wide brim—preferably a waterproof one you can use as a rain hat as well
- Sturdy walking shoes or lightweight hiking boots
- Texas or running shoes for sightseeing in towns
- Hiking socks. Some people like thick Thorlo-type socks with padded toes and heels, or an outer sock and synthetic liner sock.
- Underwear/sleepwear. Synthetics dry faster.
- Casual city/hotel attire

## EQUIPMENT

- Reusable water bottle, 1 qt. capacity.
- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair is handy if your first pair gets lost.
- Toiletry kit
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Stuff sacks or plastic bags to compartmentalize items in luggage, zip-lock style bags to carry small items during the day
- Money belt or neck pouch

## PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member must bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher and lip balm with sunscreen. We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headache, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Voltage converter and a plug adapter kit for appliance use in hotels
- Collapsible walking stick or trekking poles
- Camera, spare batteries and memory cards
- Lightweight binoculars
- Bandannas
- Bathing suit (for pools at some hotels)
- Reading/writing material
- Travel clock
- Small umbrella
- Biodegradable laundry soap for hand-washing clothes
- Wash cloth, if you like to use one (most European hotels do not provide them)

# Reading List

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## ESSENTIAL READING

### **The Coasts of Bohemia, A Czech History**

*Derek Sayer*

2000, 408 PAGES

A sensitively written and lively portrait of the highs and lows of Czech history over the past century with special attention to the fate of Prague in war and peace.

### **Prague, A Traveler's Literary Companion**

*Paul Wilson*

1996, 256 PAGES

This anthology of 24 vivid stories by Czech writers, both contemporary and well-known, brings the city, history, spirit and people to life.

### **Eyewitness Guide Czech and Slovak Republics**

*Eyewitness Guides*

2013, 448 PAGES

An illustrated guide to the history, culture, people and nature of the Czech and Slovak Republics in the popular series, with dozens of excellent maps and color photographs.

## ALSO RECOMMENDED

### **Birds of Europe**

*Lars Svensson*

2010, 416 PAGES

Featuring 3,500 glorious paintings by Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom, the second edition of this exquisite guide features updated text and maps.

### **Eyewitness Guide Prague**

*Eyewitness Guides*

2015, 272 PAGES

This superb guide features color photography, dozens of excellent maps and a district-by-district synopsis of the celebrated city's attractions. Handsome, convenient and up-to-date, this is the guide to carry.

### **Lonely Planet Czech Phrasebook**

*Lonely Planet*

2013, 256 PAGES

A palm-sized guide to pronunciation, basic grammar and essential vocabulary.

### **Rough Guide Czech Republic**

*Rob Humphreys*

2009, 464 PAGES

A comprehensive, practical guide for the traveler to the sites and attractions throughout the Czech and Slovak republics. With helpful local maps, and a good survey of the region's culture and history.

**Open Letters, Selected Writings: 1965 - 1990**

*Paul Wilson*

1992, 405 PAGES

This inspired anthology of writings by the Czech poet-president Vaclav Havel collects 25 essays, letters and speeches written between 1965 and 1990, including those that directly influenced the Polish Solidarity movement.

**Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II**

*Joseph Rothschild*

2008, 274 PAGES

An opinionated, well-written and clear political history of the region, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and the Balkans.

**The Cathedral Builders of the Middle Ages**

*Alain Erlande-Brandenburg*

2010, 175 PAGES

This pocket-size encyclopedia of the art, architecture and culture of the Middle Ages features hundreds of drawings, color illustrations and a brief chronology.

**A Traveller's Companion to Prague**

*Jan Kaplan*

2005, 252 PAGES

A portrait of the city, its neighborhoods, architecture, society and culture as seen through the eyes of writers over the centuries, including Petrarch, Hans Christian Anderson, Graham Greene and Patrick Leigh Fermor.

**The Book of Laughter and Forgetting**

*Milan Kundera*

1999, 312 PAGES

Kundera strings together loosely related short stories to form an original and entertaining look at Czech culture.

**Prague in Black and Gold, Scenes from Life in a European City**

*Peter Demetz*

1998, 352 PAGES

Both a history and an accessible guide to the neighborhoods and architecture of the city.

**The Haunted Land, Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism**

*Tina Rosenberg*

1996, 437 PAGES

In this groundbreaking book, a journalist reports on how the newly democratized people of East Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic have confronted the horrors of their former governments.

**On Foot to the Golden Horn**

*Jason Goodwin*

2003, 278 PAGES

Goodwin interweaves history, incident and reflection in this excellent portrait of Central Europe. With chapters on Cracow, Slovakia, Budapest, Transylvania, Brasov and Bulgaria.

**Life with a Star**

*Philip Roth*

1998, 208 PAGES

A fictional account of the Holocaust told through the story of a young Czech Jew.

**The Complete Stories**

*Franz Kafka*

1995, 486 PAGES

All of Kafka's stories, including The Metamorphosis, A Hunger Artist and In The Penal Colony.

**The Golem**

*Gustave Meyrink*

2010, 190 PAGES

The famous mystical, terrifying novel of the supernatural set in Prague's Jewish Ghetto in 1890.

**The Good Soldier Svejk and His Fortunes in the World War**

*Cecil Parrott*

2006, 752 PAGES

The deeply funny story of a hapless Czech soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army, dismissed for incompetence only to be pressed into service by the Russians in World War I, then captured by his own troops.

**The Unbearable Lightness of Being**

*Milan Kundera*

1999, 320 PAGES

Kundera's intriguing novel, praised for its meditations on the nature of men and women, and on the fearful emptiness of life in Prague under Communist rule. We also carry Kundera's collection of short stories *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*.

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