

Tourism in *Czech Republic*

The Czech Republic enjoyed a tourist boom that became increasingly important to the country's economy for nearly two decades. In 2018 tourism accounted for \$8.2 billion; however, the outbreak of COVID-19 made numbers fall drastically leaving brutal economic consequences in this sector. Visitor numbers have fallen by more than 70% compared, and nearly two hundred thousand jobs have disappeared. "Covid-19 turned everything upside down. I suspect that most of us who love to travel have been affected by the current times" says Jan Herget, Managing Director of Czech Tourism.

More than 21 million tourists came to explore Czechia – country's official short name, one of the major tourist destinations in Europe in 2018. Unfortunately, this boom lasted shortly, and in 2021 the capital city only received 2.4 million visitors, 40% of whom were domestic tourists.

Private businesspeople have improved the Czech capital with new shops, restaurants, and cafés.

"We want to attract a different type of client, as well as families with children, seniors, and trade fair organizers – in essence more sophisticated tourists, who, although fewer in number, will stay in Prague for a longer period and spend more money here than Euro-weekend 'alcotourists'," says Hana Třeštíková, city councilor for culture and tourism.

In mid-October 2021, Prague City Tourism launched the digital campaign *Stay in Prague* in cooperation with Prague Airport and the Association of Hotels and Restaurants of the Czech Republic to promote inbound tourism. The campaign presented a new image of the capital city and targeted clients over 35 years old to help reduce the idea of Prague as a party destination.

With the campaign, Prague has become a much more popular destination than neighboring Vienna or Berlin, but more importantly, it has set the stage for future campaigns that will be much more effective as a result.

What makes Prague special is the small friendly hotels like the *Villa Voyta*. This quiet and architecturally beautiful hotel, built in 1921, has become the first in the country to be accepted into the exclusive Small Luxury Hotels of the World Association.



The most popular site after Prague is the south Bohemian town of *Cesky Krumlov*, situated above the Austrian border. Its castle houses the oldest surviving baroque theater in the world, complete with stage sets, costumes, and a library of opera libretti.

Thousands of such castles and chateaux, many in excellent condition, cover the Bohemian and Moravian landscapes, and many historic towns are renovating their ancient squares.

Those looking for unspoiled nature can explore the Sumava region close to the Austrian and German borders, an area still rich in wildlife.

The Czech Tourism Department is trying to encourage greater investment in facilities outside Prague to try to lessen the strain on the already crowded capital. What the Minister would like most is an even spread of tourism across the whole country rather than the concentration on Prague. Indeed, the city is finding it difficult to cope with the tourists in terms of accommodation, transportation, and the sewage system.

There are several destinations to explore in the Czech Republic, which is busy restoring pre-war greatness. Whether the country gets full benefit from the still growing influx of tourists, it depends on how successful it is in offering more facilities while preserving its old-world atmosphere.

(Text taken and adapted from Evans, V. & Dooley J. (2000) Mission 1 Coursebook, English Publish Press, UK and from <https://www.praguecitytourism.cz/en/media/press-releases/in-2021-2.4-million-tourists-visited-prague-primarily-from-the-czech-republic-18552>)

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Identifying Details > Fill in the gaps using information from the previous text. Use NO MORE THAN FOUR WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER.

1. Czech tourism flourished till _____.
2. Around _____ workers have lost their jobs due to COVID-19.
3. Bringing _____ to Prague is a tourist goal boosted by the city councilor for culture and tourism.
4. *Stay in Prague* is aimed to attract _____.
5. Majestic old constructions can be found in the _____ regions.
6. _____ could be the region for those who enjoy the fauna and flora.
7. The government would look for alternatives to spread _____ and not only on the capital.
8. The tourist success will also depend on how the Czech Republic manages to protect its _____.

Understanding Negative Facts > Choose the best answer to the questions below.

1. **According to paragraph 1 it is NOT true that the outbreak of COVID-19**
 - a. caused severe financial results in the Czech Republic.
 - b. left only \$8.2 billion for the sector of tourism.
 - c. reduced the numbers of tourists since then.
 - d. threw many things into disarray.
2. **It is NOT stated in the text that**
 - a. the Czech Republic used to be an important tourist attraction in Europe.
 - b. the local authorities aim to attract other type of visitors to their country.
 - c. most of the tourists who visited Prague in 2021 were foreigners.
 - d. the open of businesses have helped the local economy.
3. **According to the last paragraphs it is NOT indicated that**
 - a. the country has increased its investment in infrastructure to lure a larger influx of visitors.
 - b. Prague is not the only destination tourists should choose when visiting the country.
 - c. the Czech Republic should keep a balance between its past and modernity.
 - d. tourists may face inconveniences when visiting the capital city.
4. **All the following are true EXCEPT**
 - a. the most well-liked Czech attraction is located near Austria.
 - b. Prague is still facing difficulties to become more popular than Vienna or Berlin.
 - c. the campaign *Stay in Prague* focuses its effort on welcoming more 'mature' travelers.
 - d. several towns are making their squares more attractive to the visitors.

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