



# CZECH REPUBLIC

## Short Facts

**Official Name:** Czech Republic

**Political System:** Parliamentary Democracy

**Official Language:** Czech

**Currency:** Czech Koruna

**Capital City:** Prague (Population 1,286,000)

**Geography:** Total Area: 78,866 square kilometres. The Czech Republic includes the regions of Bohemia, Moravia and parts of Silesia.

**Population:** 10,501,000

**Neighbours:** Slovakia, Germany, Poland, Austria

**Ethnicity of the population:** Czech (94.24%) Slovak (1.89%), Romany (0.11%), Ukrainian, Russian, German, Polish, Vietnamese and others (1.8%)

**Population by religion:** Roman Catholic (26.8%), Protestant (2.5%), undetermined (11.7%), atheist/agnostic/non-believer (59%)

## HISTORY

The independent Republic of Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918, following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire after World War I. After the Munich Agreement, German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the liberation of the major portion of Czechoslovakia by the Red Army, the Communist party won 38% of the vote in the 1946 elections.

In a 1948 coup d'état, Czechoslovakia became a communist-ruled state. In 1968, the increasing dissatisfaction culminated in attempts to reform the communist regime. The events, known as the Prague Spring of 1968, ended with an invasion by the armies of the Warsaw Pact countries (with the exception of Romania); the troops remained in the country until the 1989 Velvet Revolution, when the communist regime collapsed. On 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully dissolved into its constituent states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

## ECONOMY

The Czech Republic possesses a developed, high-income economy. One of the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states, the Czech Republic has seen strong economic growth of over recent years.

## CLIMATE

The Czech Republic has a temperate continental climate, with relatively hot summers and cold, cloudy and snowy winters. The temperature difference between summer and winter is relatively high, due to the landlocked geographical position. In winter the lowlands of the South Moravian Region, the average temperature is as high as 10 °C. The country's capital, Prague, has a similar average temperature.

The coldest month is usually January, followed by February and December. During these months, there is usually snow in the mountains and sometimes in the major cities and lowlands. Temperatures on average vary from below 0 degrees C and about 10 degrees C. The warmest month of the year is July, followed by August and June. On average, summer temperatures are between 20 and 30 degrees C.

## RECREATION

Sport plays a large part in the life of many Czechs. The two leading sports in the Czech Republic are football (soccer) and ice hockey. Tennis is also a very big sport in the Czech Republic. Other popular sports include basketball, volleyball, team handball, track and field athletics



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## **FOOD**

Czech meals have a strong emphasis on meat dishes. Pork is quite common; beef and chicken are also popular. Goose, duck, rabbit and wild game are also served. Fish is rare, with the occasional exception of fresh trout and carp, which is served at Christmas. Kofola is a non-alcoholic domestic cola soft drink which competes with Coca Cola and Pepsi in popularity.

## **FAMILY LIFE**

Their family is very important to Czech people. They see their first responsibility as being to their family. The extended family is important to all Czech people. They are always polite if a little reserved until they get to know you then they are very warm and supportive. They try not to purposely offend and will often go out of their way to protect someone's feelings. Meal times in the family are rather formal.

## **SCHOOLS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Education in the Czech Republic is free and compulsory from ages 6 to 15. Primary education lasts for nine years divided into two stages of five (Grades 1 to 5) and four years (Grades 6 to 9) respectively.

Secondary education (Grades 10 to 13) comprises three main types of schools: secondary general schools (gymnasium), secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools. Gymnasiums prepare for study at higher education institutions and for professions. The secondary technical schools and 4-year courses or three-year follow-up courses at secondary vocational schools prepare students for a wide range of professions, as well as for studies at higher education institutions. The 2-year and 3-year courses at the vocational schools prepare students for professional activities.

The school day in a Gymnasium is from 8am to 2.15pm. A typical school day is divided into seven 45 minutes periods with a 20 minute break in the middle. Subjects studied include Czech language, English, History, Mathematics, Sciences, Geography, German and Computing.

## **YFU IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

In 1993, a YFU national organization (YFU Czechoslovakia), which operated both in Slovakia and the Czech Republic was created. YFU Czech Republic (YFU CZ) was officially founded in early 2006. Its members work on a voluntary basis and have all spent a year abroad.

The office staff in Prague and the volunteers throughout the country support students during their exchange.

## **EXCHANGES WITH**

Australia, New Zealand, USA, Germany among others