TOUR CODE

CZ1

ADVENTURESABROAD

CZECH REPUBLIC

'The Heart of Europe'

9 days

Updated 05/01/2013

Day 1 *Arrive in Prague*

Today we arrive in Prague and transfer to our hotel.

Prague lies on the seven hills flanking the banks of the Vltava River with the most outstanding views being from Prague Castle. Sometimes it is called Prague the Golden, sometimes Prague the City of 100 Spires. It is compared with Florence and Rome in its beauty. Thomas Mann said it was one of the world's most magical cities; Goethe called it the prettiest gem in the stone crown of the world. Virtually untouched by war, its architecture is Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassical, Empire and Art Nouveau.

Overnight in Prague. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Prague: Prague Castle & Old Town*

Our morning sightseeing tour of Prague travels through the city centre to Prague Castle. We begin our WALKING tour near Pohorelec Square before the Cernin Palace. As we head towards the castle we will pass the following: Strahov Monastery, the Loreta, the Cappucin Monastery, and the Archbishop's Palace. Before entering the castle, we will pause by the wall for a city panorama and orientation before our 2-hour visit of the castle.

We enter into first courtyard with its famous fountain and walk over to the Chapel of the Holy Cross. We continue to the St. Vitus Cathedral and visit the choir and crypt before heading to the third courtyard. Here we enter the Old Palace from St. George Square and then continue toward the Golden Lane (Kafka's House) where we pause for a break and refreshment, and then carry on the Old Castle Steps with photo stops along the way.

We will stop at Nikolas Church before crossing the ancient Charles Bridge (Karluv Most), an artistic masterpiece famous for its vendors and artists. For over four hundred years, this work of art, built by King Charles IV in 1357, was the only link between the two halves of Prague. We admire the many sculptures as we walk across. We finish the formal part of our tour in the Old Town, an excellent spot for lunch. The afternoon is free to further explore this amazing city.

Overnight in Prague. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 *Prague: Old Jewish Quarter & Wenceslas Square*

Our WALKING tour today takes us to the Old Jewish Quarter and the old Town Square with its famous town bell and astronomical clock.

The Old Jewish Cemetery is an incredible sight. The second oldest in Europe, it was established in the 15th century. Burials took place from 1439 to 1787. Today there are 12,000 tombstones jammed together, leaning one on another, every one at a different angle and size, the whole creating a graphic and surreal image. We also visit the museum/memorial and the Klaus Synagogue with a permanent exhibition called "Jewish Customs and Traditions"

highlighting the significance of the synagogue and Jewish festivals.

We continue to the Old Town Square. The 15th century designer of the astronomical clock located here was master clockmaker Hanus of Ruze. According to legend, he was blinded by Prague's town councilors for fear that he would make another like it for another town; so magnificent and applauded was his creation. One day toward the end of his life, he asked a friend to lead him to his great creation. As the figure of Death tolled the hour, Hanus thrust his hand into the clock's apparatus; the clock stopped, and it was centuries before a craftsman could be found who was skilled enough to make it work. In World War II, the clock is said to have stopped again after the Nazi murder of hundreds of citizens of Prague.

We finish our walking tour at Wenceslas Square in time for lunch (your own account). The balance of the day is at leisure. Prague is famous for its concert halls: The Municipal House, Rudolfinium, Mozart Theatre, National Theatre, The State Theatre -- all of them close to the center of the city with performances almost every night. Your Tour Leader can help organize optional evening activities.

Overnight in Prague. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Prague - Konopiste - Karlstejn - Karlovy Vary*

After our morning departure from Prague we visit the Renaissance chateau of Konopiste and its priceless interiors. Set in a hilly wooded park, this castle was built as a stronghold at the end of the 13th century, the present appearance dates from alterations made at the turn of the 19th to 20th century by the last owner, Franz Ferdinand d'Este.

After a lunch break we enjoy a tour of the Karlstejn Castle, a Gothic fortress and home to the imperial crown jewels. After our visit we continue east toward the famous spa of Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad). This town is beautifully located in the valley of the Tepla River and is famous for being one of the oldest and largest health spas in Europe. The hot medicinal spring water is famous the world over.

Overnight in Karlovy Vary. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Karlovy Vary*

This morning we have a half-day WALKING tour of Karlovy Vary, an elegant spa town, and favourite retreat of crowned heads and international celebrities. "When the disorder becomes a disease, doctors prescribe the hot waters of Carlsbad." Our walking tour will take in all the sights, including the many springs and the graceful Mill Colonnade. A ride up the nearby funicular provides us with great views of the surrounding landscape of beech and oak forests.

The afternoon is at your leisure in this charming town.

Overnight in Karlovy Vary. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Karlovy Vary - Marianske Lanze - Cesky Krumlov*

This morning we depart for Marianske Lazne. The historic centre of the town stretches along the spa colonnade with its unique singing fountain and the main avenue lined with pastel coloured Art Deco facades. Most of the old state spa buildings date from the second half of the 19th century and are set amidst thickly forested hills. After our visit we depart for Southern Bohemia, where many towns have a Bavarian or Austrian flavour. In the late afternoon we arrive in the town of Cesky Krumlov.

Medieval arcades and etched Renaissance facades in apricot, beige, and pea-green shades; rust-red, pink, and golden Baroque buildings surround this cobble stoned square with a Plague Monument (Morovy sloup) in its centre. Here you can explore the square, the side streets, and the winding River Vltava that separates the Old Town from the towering castle. This is undoubtedly one of the most exquisite towns in the Czech Republic.

Overnight in Cesky Krumlov. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Cesky Krumlov: Castle Tour*

Cesky Krumlov is undoubtedly one of the most exquisite towns in the Czech Republic, and always a favorite among travellers. Today we will visit the mighty Renaissance castle of Cesky Krumlov, once the seat of the powerful Lords of the Rozmberks and the Schwarzenbergs. The castle houses a rich collection of period furniture, tapestries and historical weapons. The present castle complex is one of the largest in Central Europe and was recorded on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1992

The great castle complex dominates the town of Cesky Krumlov. Under the Castle Complex lies the old town with its winding alleys and venerable Gothic and Renaissance houses. The historical centre of the town is on the UNESCO Heritage list, and after our castle tour the rest of your day will be free to stroll in this historical city centre. Explore the backstreets, visit the small shops and cafes, and wander the pathways along the river.

Overnight in Cesky Krumlov. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 8 *Cesky Krumlov - Prague*

This morning we transfer back to Prague via private coach with the balance of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Prague. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 9 *Departure*

Departure from Prague.

STASTNU CESTU! Meal plan: Breakfast.