

Prague Institute

HANDBOOK
for students and faculty

Michalska 3
Prague, Czech Republic

WELCOME

Hello all Prague participants!

READ ME!

This booklet is to help you get oriented in Prague and the Czech Republic.

Please bring it with you to Prague, along with the Study Abroad Office orientation materials.

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Preparing to go to Prague:

1. **Passport** - Make sure that your passport is valid for the entire period that you are traveling abroad. ***US citizens do not need a visa.*** Non-US citizens check with the Czech Embassy if you need a visa. Make at least 4 copies of your passport photo page and leave: one with a relative, one with your professor, one with Director in Prague, and one for yourself.

2. **Medical Insurance** - You will be provided full medical insurance during your participation in the program. I suggest that you purchase from Study Abroad additional medical insurance for any time that you are traveling abroad before or after the program dates. The cost is approximately \$2.22 per day (check with Study Abroad to verify this amount). Also, make sure that you are covered by insurance in the US prior to your departure (between your regular semester and your departure abroad) and upon your arrival to the US after the end of the program (between your arrival in the US and the beginning of the following semester). The program insurance does NOT cover you in the US even if you have been injured abroad and return to the US for follow up procedures.

3. **Medical Conditions** - Consult your doctors about any reoccurring or permanent medical conditions which will need attention or may arise while in Prague (diabetes, depression, skin allergies, ear infections, etc). Bring appropriate medications and a prescription with scientific names of medication rather than brand names. Diabetics or those with allergy injection syringes need to carry a doctor's prescription to be allowed to carry these through airport security and customs. If you are prone to ear infections or other conditions which require antibiotics, it is best to carry a supply just in case, or you can get them here.

4. **Money** - It is best to have a charge card (either credit or debit) from which you can withdraw money at an ATM (Bankomat). But also carry some cash (dollars or Euros) just in case the card doesn't work for some reason (suggested \$300). Make sure you contact your credit card company and inform them that you are traveling abroad, and list the countries with dates of arrivals and departures. This is for your protection. Copy your credit

card information (telephone numbers) for lost or stolen cards; ask them for a telephone number which you can use in the Czech Republic (and other countries which you may visit) to call them collect. Keep these numbers in a safe place. You can also use American Express Travelers Checks; there are two locations in Prague. You can change about \$50 at any of the Change places at the airport (US dollars) to pay for the shuttle from the airport-about \$20-and then I will show you a good place to change money or you can get money at the Bankomat at the airport.

5.Contact from the US to Prague - Tell your relatives and friends that a letter from the US to Prague costs about 80 cents and a postcard 70 cents (check on this; it can go up anytime).

To call from the US dial 011-420 first, from Europe dial 00-420 (and in Prague leave out the 420 country code).

Email is probably the best way to keep in touch frequently.

Mail takes either way from 5 days to 14 days. Packages are very expensive to send either way.

Mailing Addresses:

- Your name, Hotel Jana-Domov Mladeze, Dykova 20, Prague 10, 101 00 Czech Republic OR
- Your name, NC State University Prague Institute, Michalska 3, Prague 1, 110 00 Czech Republic

Telephone Numbers:

Hotel Jana/Domov Mladeze: 001-420-222511777

Prague Institute office: 001-420-224210106, Fax 001-420-224210111

Director mobile: 001-420-723645350

Professor: mobile: 001-420-720542120

There is no way to get in touch via telephone except for emergencies (the dormitory/hotel has a telephone at the reception and the Prague Institute has a telephone). The Director and/or professor can be reached via mobile phone 24 hours for emergencies only.

I recommend that you purchase a mobile phone while you are here (we have used phones for sale by previous students ranging from \$35-50). A new one costs around \$80-100 plus credit. Calling to the US from a mobile phone costs around 50 cents a minute. You can also purchase global calling cards with varying costs per call. Ask your phone carrier if they have any special deals calling FROM the Czech Republic. 800 numbers for calling toll free in the States DO NOT work here. You will need to get a special access number from AT&T, Sprint, etc.

The best deal is if you bring headphones with microphone for your laptop (cost about \$20-or you can buy them here), download and open a free Skype account (www.Skype.com) and you can either buy credit with a credit card and call anyone in the world for about 3 cents a minute, OR if whomever you are calling also has a computer, internet, and headphones with microphone and downloads Skype, you can talk for FREE! Remember Prague is 6 hours ahead of North Carolina.

Packing Tips

1. Dress for comfort and travel (cotton knits, stretchy material, darker colors to be able to wear a little longer than usual).
2. Don't over-pack. You can wear things a few more times here than you are used to. The Laundromat is quite expensive. I recommend 10 days worth of underwear and socks, 3 pairs of pants, 3-5 tops varying sleeve length, seasonal outer wear, either rain jacket or umbrella, one set of nice clothes for opera, clubs, etc., 2 pairs of shoes - broken-in walking shoes and another pair that looks a bit better to wear with the nice set of clothes. If you want to join a gym while here, bring workout clothes.

For summer: sandals, sun hat and swimsuit, shorts. Flipflops, bathrobe, 2 PJ's. Dress in layers (often it is warmer in the daytime than at night so it's good to wear a t-shirt with a light jacket/sweater that can be tied around the waist and then worn in the evening).

For winter: boots with tread, thermal underwear, warm slippers, layered clothing (short and long sleeved T-shirts), sweaters,

fleece jackets or sweatshirts, heavy winter coat, scarf, gloves, hat. There are also indoor pools if you want to swim in winter. Those who want to ski, bring ski clothes.

3. A good pair of walking shoes that are already broken in by the time you come to Prague with good tread, no slick bottoms.

4. Flipflops for the shower, any special toiletries that you prefer (otherwise many American brands are here: L'Oreal, Dove, Crest, etc), a travel towel if you are doing a lot of traveling (the super absorbent thin type). You can "borrow" towels at the dorm for \$2 which is returned to you when you leave. A house robe since the showers are in the hall, and perhaps a handy waterproof carry case for toiletries, plastic travel case for soap, toothbrush.

5. Prescriptions: eyeglass or contact lens (in case you break or lose), contact lens cleaner, any medication which you are either taking or anticipate needing. If you are prone to any conditions (ie. skin allergies or easily get chest infections, ear infections, etc, then bring a spare dose of antibiotics, or the type of medication you may need-such as hydrocortisone cream, ExLax, Immodium, allergy pills, eye drops, asthma inhaler, etc.).

6. Electrical gadgets (electrical shavers, toothbrushes, etc) require a converter which you CANNOT purchase here so if you need these gadgets bring the heavy converter (not recommended just from convenience standpoint when traveling). Some travel gadgets have a flip switch for 220 volt. All you will need then is a plug transformer which you can buy here. Check with your camera battery charger and other computer accessories if you can operate on 220 volt; you may just need to buy a cord with the European plug-two round prongs (different in England).

7. Camera, laptop computer, with cables, adapter plugs, cards. Alarm clock.

8. Paperback books for reading on plane, trains. We have a few here but you may want to also read ahead some contemporary Czech authors. See Suggested Reading List.

9. Bags: Book bag or carry bag for carrying materials to and from studio; small backpack for short trips or going to the gym, water bottle carrier, good sketch book at least 8 x 10, fanny pack or neck bag for carrying money, handy carrying bag/basket for toiletries, travel cases for toothbrush/soap/gel, travel sizes of shampoo, conditioner, etc for short trips/excursions.

10. Documents: Passport, credit cards (ATM card), prescriptions, significant phone numbers and addresses (address book) including travel agent, airline, doctor, parents, friends.

Other recommendations:

11. Pack light. Either bring a rolling suitcase or easy backpack especially if you are traveling before or after. Don't stuff a suitcase, leave plenty of room to bring back things you'll buy here. I put a few rolls of my favorite toilet paper or cookies/snack food which will then be consumed over here and leaves me room to put in bought items.

12. Don't bring: valuable jewelry, tons of cash, electrical gadgets without a converter or adapter, too many clothes.

13. Customs and security: If you are bringing your favorite Swiss Army knife or tweezers or Exacto knives, make sure they are in your check through baggage. No plants or meat allowed either way. Check with airline for allowable weight and number of suitcases.

14. Budget for other travel-Berlin,Vienna, Budapest, Krakow, Salzburg, Graz, Dresden, other Czech towns like Cesky Krumlov, Kutna Hora, etc. I recommend for cities outside CR at least \$200 per trip. Budget gifts and items you may want to purchase for yourself.

15. Make sure you've paid all your bills, forwarded your mail, and let anyone who needs to know how long you will be away.

TELL YOUR PARENTS, LOVED ONES THAT IF THEY DON'T HEAR FROM ME, THAT YOU ARE OK.

Recommended Reading List

- Look at all books on Bartelt/Prague Reserve Shelf.
- Know who the following are: Alphonse Mucha, Ladislav Sutnar, Karel Teige, Josef Plecnik.
- Get a Prague/Czech Republic guide book

FICTION: (many of these in NCSU libraries)

- Contemporary:

Milan Kundera – The Unbearable Lightness of Being, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, Ignorance, Life is Elsewhere, Identity

Vaclav Havel – The Garden Party (play), The Beggar's Opera, Summer Meditations, Open Letters: selected writings, Largo Desolato

Pavel Kohout – The Widow Killer, I am Snowing: confessions of a woman of Prague, The Hangwoman, Poor Murderer (play)

Bohumil Hrabal – Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age, Too Loud a Solitude, Closely Watched Trains

Ivan Klima – My Golden Trades, Lovers for a Day, Between Security and Insecurity, The Ultimate Intimacy, My First Loves, My Merry Mornings (stories from Prague); The Spirit of Prague (non-fiction)

- Classic:

Karel Capek – Cross Roads, The Makropoulos Secret

Jaroslav Hasek – The Good Soldier Schweik, The Red Commissar

Franz Kafka – The Metamorphosis, The Trial, The Castle, In the Penal Colony, Collected stories

Jan Neruda – Prague Tales

Rainer Maria Rilke – Two Stories of Prague

Bill Granger – The Infant of Prague

Hanna Demetz – The House on Prague Street

Zdena Salivarova – Summer in Prague

MOVIES:

Loves of a Blonde, Amadeus, Closely Watched Trains

Shop on Mainstreet, My Sweet Little Village, Kolya

Czech New Wave:

Daisies, Fireman's Ball, Martyrs of Love

Recent:

Divided We Fall, Up and Down

Films made in Prague:

Mission Impossible I (with Tom Cruise)

From Hell (with Johnny Depp)

From the airport to the hotel:

Step 1. Go through passport control first, pick up luggage at the appropriate baggage carousel (carts are free), then through customs. You should have "Nothing to Declare."

What to do if your luggage is lost: The good news is that you do not have to lug it to the hotel. Go to the baggage office in baggage claim. Describe your bags and fill out all the required forms. They will want to know where you are staying, give them the address of the hotel and they hopefully will deliver it to the hotel in a day or so.

Hotel address:

Hotel Jana-Domov Mladeze

Dykova 20

Prague 10

Step 2. Exit baggage claim and change dollars to Czech crowns (approximately \$50-100) at the Change tellers anywhere in the airport.

Step 3. Two transportation options to the Hotel.

Option One (recommended!):

Go by CEDAZ mini-bus which delivers you to the door of the hotel for 480 crowns plus 20 crown tip for a total of 500 crowns (\$20).

Instructions: After customs, pass through the automatic glass doors out into the main lobby and walk by all the people holding signs and meeting people (do not let one of the taxi people talk you into a taxi ride into the city, it will cost you more than it is worth). Look straight ahead to the set of glass exit doors to the curb side drop off area and exit. There will be taxis and a dispatcher for the mini-buses. CEDAZ mini transport vans are to the right of the taxis. They will ask for the address and you will have it already written and prepared to hand to them. If up to 4 people are traveling to the same address, it still will only cost 500 CZK up to 4 people. If 5 are traveling, it will cost double (but you can split the total 5 ways, to be fair)

Option Two: Riding the bus and changing to the metro and then walking several blocks to the hotel for 80 cents (only for those with a little bit of luggage).

Before you leave the inside of the airport, look straight ahead to the set of glass exit doors to the curb side drop off area, turn your head right and you will see a series of booths along the inside of the exterior wall. The third or fourth one to the right of the exit doors will say "Public Transportation." Go to that booth and buy a single ticket to the city (20 crowns). After you exit the building cross the first traffic lane to the pedestrian island and walk to the extreme right end of the island (you may see other people with bags waiting there for a bus).

Look for the bus stop that lists as a destination Dejvicka. It is bus #119. When the bus comes to the far right stop get on. Look for a yellow box attached to one of the vertical poles in the bus. Insert your 20 crown ticket into the slot on the box, blank end first, and the box will stamp a time and date on the end of your ticket. This step is very important. Inspectors ride the buses and subways and will stop you and ask to see your ticket. If you do not have one or have not stamped it they will charge you a big fine on the spot.

You want to get off at the last stop Dejvicka (DAY-vits-kah). Everyone will be getting off so you can't make a mistake. As you exit the bus look left, you will see stairs going down into the ground and a sign with an "M" on it. That is the metro entrance. Go down and walk through the entrance following the crowd (you do not need to stop or do anything because you have already stamped your ticket and it is good for the entire trip). This metro stop is on the Green Line-A. Since you are at the beginning of the Green Line A, you can't go in the wrong direction. Simply go to the platform where everyone else is standing. The stop to get off is Jiriho Z Podebrad (YIRZH-ee-ho Z POD-yeh-brahd) the 8th stop, right after Namesti Miru.

Get off and go up the escalator, pass through the doors, go left and to the farthest escalators up to the street. You are now on a sidewalk across the street from the square with the strange church. Walking in the direction towards the church, go

two blocks, turn right and go three blocks to where the street dead-ends, look left and you will see the Hotel Jana “Domov Mladeze” inside a fenced-in yard. Tell them you are part of the North Carolina State University Group.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!

From the Train Station to the hotel:

You will either be arriving into “Hlavni Nadrazi” or “Nadrazi Holesovice,” which are both on the Red metro line-C. You can take public transportation or a taxi.

To take a taxi:

It is easier to take a taxi, but you have to be very careful; the taxis that wait at the stations are notorious for overcharging.

Your best bet is to purchase a calling card (telefoni karta), and call the taxi service AAA, which is very reliable. You can usually buy a calling card wherever magazines and tobacco are sold (these stores are usually called “trafika”). The cheapest card will probably be 200 CZK.

You will have to go to a recognizable street address to give the dispatcher, which includes the street name and number (either a blue or red number posted on the side of a building; the street signs are red). Once you’ve found a good address, call AAA from a public phone using the calling card. Dial 14014 and give the address, and your name. They will then give you the car number, and the wait time. Once the taxi arrives, look for the car number, and when you get in, they will expect you to tell them your name. Then give the driver the hotel address:

Domov Mladeze

Dykova 20

Prague 10

To take the Metro:

If you take the metro from either train station, go in the direction of end station "Haje" and change to the Green metro line-A at station "Muzeum."

From "Nadrazi Holesovice" it will be four stops, and from "Hlavni Nadrazi" it will be one stop.

Then go in the direction of end station "Skalka" and get off at the station "Jiriho z Podebrad." When you come up the escalator, turn left, and take the farthest left exit stairs. You will come up on the sidewalk of Vinohradaska street. Walk up Vinohradaska in the direction of the huge interesting-looking church, and take the second right, on Ripska. In three blocks you'll dead-end into Dykova; take a left and the hotel will be immediately on your right.

CONGRATULATIONS!