Travel Guide: Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic

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Cesky Krumlov

Cesky Krumlov is one of the most beautiful historical towns of Europe. A day in this town is a crash course in European history, architecture, and art - a definite must-visit when in Central Europe.

Just walking around the old town can take up a whole day, and most day trippers from Prague leave the town regretting that they didn’t plan to stay at least a day more. While the town is indeed compact, Cesky Krumlov is not a place you can blitz through on your way through central Europe. Despite the popularity of day tours, Cesky Krumlov deserves at least two or three days – and the early start you get from staying in the town allows you to beat the day-tripping crowd to the town’s most popular sites.

Cesky Krumlov is also a great base and gateway to South Bohemia’s charming small villages and hiking spots. Exploring the region gives you a more intimate experience of central Europe – acquainting you with its well-preserved historical towns, the art, cuisine, and philosophies it has inspired, and the old castles and ruins that tell the story of Europe’s majestic past.

This comprehensive and easy-to-follow travel guide will help you create your own trip to Cesky Krumlov.
Planning your trip

Getting there

- **Airports**: The nearest international airports are Prague (180 km), Linz (70 km), and Munich (300 km).

- **Public transportation**: The closest major transportation hub is Ceske Budejovice, a stopping station of international express trains on the line Prague-Zurich and Prague-Vienna. From Ceske Budejovice, you can ride the train or bus to Cesky Krumlov. You can find more information about local transportation here.

- **Find and book your routes here**: Ceske drahy for train travel around the Czech Republic; Student Agency for comfortable and convenient buses.

- **Shuttle buses**: This is especially a good option for travelers short on time. More information here. Or try private transfers with DayTrip.

- **Self-drive**: From South Moravia, we drove 200 KM through beautiful towns like Znojmo, Telc, and Trebon. From Prague, the fastest way to reach Cesky Krumlov is via the E55.

Staying

Cesky Krumlov caters to all kinds of budgets. If you want to splurge on a romantic weekend, I’d suggest looking into hotels in the Cesky Krumlov Old Town. Ideally, you’d also want to avail of shuttle services and your hotel’s tour offerings, so you can just sit back and leave the driving and logistics to the pros.

- **Hotel Bellevue** – This hotel is perfectly located near the castle and the chateau and houses the gourmet restaurant Le Jardin. If you’re planning something extra special, the hotel can also arrange your event for you. Otherwise, an ordinary romantic weekend getaway will be made much sweeter with sauna and massage facilities, amazing views of the Old Town, and romantic walks in the area. Rooms start at CZK 1,600.
• Other highly-rated hotels in Cesky Krumlov include: Hotel Ruze (rooms start at CZK 3,000), Hotel Arcadie (rooms start at CZK 2,600), and Hotel Mlyn (rooms start at CZK 1,300).

• If you’re a backpacker and plan to arrive to Cesky Krumlov via the train or bus and looking for a cheap and comfortable place, here are some hostels to check out: Hostel 99 (beds start at CZK 340), Hostel Havana (beds start at CZK 270), and Travel Hostel (beds start at CZK 250)

• If you’d like to combine your trip to Cesky Krumlov with a road trip and hikes in the surrounding forests (like we did!), you’d want to get a rental car and get an accommodation just outside the Old Town. Make sure they provide free parking and that it’s not too far from the historic center. We recommend Penzion Panorama (rooms start at CZK 1,100).

**Eat and drink**

• Some restaurants we liked were Papa’s Living Restaurant (if the weather is nice, grab a table by the river) and the Restaurant Konvice.

• If it’s peak season, make reservations. There weren’t a lot of people when we were there and yet we had to go from restaurant to restaurant to look for a place with an open table.
Old Town: Walking Tour

Spots covered:
- Old town square
- Castle grounds
- Monastery
- Egon Schiele Centrum

Time to allot:
- Fast-paced travelers can cover this itinerary in one day
- For a more leisurely pace, allot at least two days

Get acquainted with the town’s medieval magic

There are several entrances into the old town.

If you’re coming from the train station, you’ll be entering via the northern side, passing through hotels and restaurants along Latran. If you drove to Cesky Krumlov and used the parking lot near the castle (along Chvalinská), you’ll be coming in from the northwest and you’ll be treated right away to the impressive stone gate leading to the castle grounds. If you chose to stay in the pensions just outside the old town, you would be coming in from the southern entrance.

Wherever you’re coming from, the town’s twisted and narrow streets designed to follow the meanders of the Vltava river will entice and surprise you at every turn. You can’t see far ahead, as the tall imposing buildings rise up to the sky. This keeps the scenery fresh – one moment a row of architectural wonders, another a view of the river and the many lovers holding hands on its banks.

If you are keen on visiting the top museums in the old town, stop by the Information Center at the old town square to get your Cesky Krumlov card. This
Start the day with romance at the castle grounds

One of the most amazing bird’s eye views of the town is right within the castle grounds.

The Krumlov castle was built in the 14th century, originally the dwelling place of the royal families of the Rosenbergs, then the Schwarzenbergs, before it became a property of the state. Since 1992, the castle complex has been designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage monument.

If you have the Cesky Krumlov card, you can visit the castle museum and go up the castle tower for an amazing view of the town.

Afterwards, walk further west towards the castle’s gardens and pond.

Reflect on life (or rest your feet) at the monastery gardens

From the castle grounds, retrace your way back to Latran to visit the monastery.

The Minorite Monastery in Cesky Krumlov was first established in 1350 by the Rosenbergs, with the main aim of weakening the Walden movement, a Christian movement gaining popularity in Europe at the time. The Waldensians promoted apostolic poverty, which of course didn’t fly with the Rosenbergs. The royal family loved their indulgences, including religious ones. The monastery was then used by the royal family to accumulate relics and eventually they started to compete with Prague in terms of festivals and religious relics.

The monastery grounds were designed for reflection. Shaded benches and grassy lawns in a peaceful courtyard invited guests to take a moment and slow down.
The Cesky Krumlov Card will grant you access to two exhibits in the monastery, which allows you a glimpse of how the Minorite monks have been conducting their duties and their lives throughout the centuries. There is also an entire room dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi, with panels of illustrations depicting his life and how he came to be a saint, as well as an audiovisual presentation. It’s all in Czech, though, so either come with someone who can translate everything for you, or just enjoy the illustrations and animations then read up on St. Francis afterwards.

**Sample the town’s wares**

From the monastery, exit to Latran once more. If you’re looking for souvenirs, turn right on Latran and you’ll immediately see Cesky Pernik – you won’t miss its bright bohemian storefront. This is a perfect place to pick up traditional gingerbreads, mead, chocolates, and other regional specialties.

The Czech Republic takes great pride in its regional products. There are the Czech beers that you will hear every Czech rave about; the Moravian wines that every Moravian could discuss for hours; and in Cesky Krumlov, they have “certified regional” gingerbreads that come with centuries’ worth of artisanal history. The way they elevate their products to national heritage status is actually enviable – now that’s a unique selling proposition you can’t compete with.

**Meet the resident bad boy**

From Latran, go back through the old town square (or venture into the smaller side streets) and make your way to Egon Schiele Art Centrum – a tribute to Cesky Krumlov’s resident bad boy.

Egon was definitely “edgy” before it was cool. I’m no art expert but one look at Schiele’s bold strokes and erotically-charged motifs and I knew this guy was bad news – in a dangerously intoxicating way. Think: leather jackets, motorcycles, the guy your mother warned you about. He’s even got the brooding pout down pat.

As it turned out, Egon was the James Dean of the early 1900s Cesky Krumlov. Born in Austria surrounded and influenced by the great (and rebellious!) Viennese minds
of Freud, Mahler, and Klimt, he spent a considerable amount of time in the widely conservative town of Cesky Krumlov (his mother’s birth town), doing bad boy things like entertaining a slew of lady “visitors” in his studio and producing defiant erotic artworks, earning the ire of the burghers and elitist artists dominating the art scene in those days. He was a lot more bohemian than this Bohemian town could take.

He died at 28 of Spanish flu (one of the 20,000,000 lives claimed by the pandemic throughout Europe) but not before significantly influencing the art climate with his audacious style that challenged all the norms of his time.

End the day with a glass of beer

When in Czech, there’s no way beer couldn’t be involved. With Cesky Krumlov’s near proximity to Ceske Budejovice, the home of Budvar, a glass of the regional specialty is the best way to round up your trip.

Try to get a table in one of the riverside restaurants, like Papa’s Living Restaurant, to watch the sunset.
Beyond Cesky Krumlov: Day Trips Around the Area

The South Bohemian region of the Czech Republic is an amazing place to explore. There are many hiking trails around the area. You can refer to the map below to find the general location of each of the sites listed here, but it’s best to follow the marked trails when hiking around the forest.

Klet’

The Klet’ mountain is the highest peak of the Blansky natural reserve. On a clear day, the observation tower at the top can give you amazing views of the surrounding countryside.
There’s also a restaurant beside the tower: have a bowl of goulash, česnečka (Czech garlic soup), and the region’s beer (the Czech Budweiser Budvar) before moving on to your next stop.

**Ways to get to and from Klet’**

- **Hike:** Follow the marked trails starting from just outside the castle grounds in the Cesky Krumlov Old Town
- **Cable car:** From Krasetin station near the village of Holoubov, ride a cable car to the top of the mountain. [More information here.](#)
- **Foot bikes:** From the top, you can ride back down to several nearby locations using a foot bike. [More information here.](#)

**Divci kamen**

These are the ruins of a Gothic castle built in the 1300s. The best way to reach it is by going to the Trisov village just 9 KM north-east of Cesky Krumlov. [Read about the history of the castle here.](#)

**Holasovice**

The Holasovice Historical Village is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a well-preserved example of a traditional central European village. [Find out more here.](#)

**Hluboka castle**

Hluboka castle has been called the “most beautiful Czech castle” and one of the most visited sites in the Czech Republic. [Find out more here.](#)
Cesky Krumlov Tourist Map

Click the map to open it on Google Maps

Or go to: http://bit.ly/ckrumlovmap

Further Reading

- Cesky Krumlov’s medieval magnetism by Barbara Frye

  "This is a town that changes everybody's plans. [...] It basically ruins everybody's itineraries, changes everybody's plans and makes them switch directions pretty quickly. And that's kind of the way the river runs. The river runs in on itself."

Although not at the level that it changed Carolyn Zukowski’s life, Cesky Krumlov did have that effect on us. This is an interesting look into the life of a tourist-turned-local and her life along the Vltava’s riverbank.

- Not Far From Prague, a Czech Village Worth Rhapsodizing About by Roger Toll

A crash course on Cesky Krumlov’s history told through buildings and beer.
Cesky Krumlov is more than just a pretty postcard-perfect town. You can best appreciate its beauty by reading about its history and the structures that have stood the test of time.

On Egon Schiele - Cesky Krumlov’s resident bad boy:

- **The Art Story’s Biography** gives a brief on Egon’s life and important works
- **Five Things You Might Now Know About Egon Schiele** details the juicy bits
- **The Radical Nude Review** celebrates Egon as a feminist artist ahead of his time
- **Egon Schiele: Life and Work** by Jane Kallir gives an overview of his art while providing an account of his life – bohemian lifestyle choices and sexual escapades included.

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**About this guide**

Thank you for downloading this guide! I hope you find the information here useful and I wish you happy travels to Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic. Feel free to forward it to your friends!

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If you have more questions about travel in the area, send me an email (hello@littleholidays.net) and I’ll be happy to help you!