

Livingprague Newsletter

December 2021



ON MY OWN IN GOLDEN LANE DURING THE PANDEMIC

For the December Newsletter as well as the most recent Coronavirus status, for my featured new content I explore the Prague Castle Golden Lane, I'll give you some tips for eating at Bakeshop Praha, I'll tell you why the centre of Prague is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, plus if you are driving in the west of the country we'll take a look at the town of Cheb.

The Activity Spotlight is the Boccaccio Ballroom. Blast from the Past includes an updated picture for the Lesser Town and a link to a Lidice Survivor Story from a local magazine.

Just before you launch into the newsletter take a few seconds to think if your friends or colleagues might find it interesting. If so please consider forwarding to them and they can [subscribe to the newsletter](#) separately if they want.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Covid-free New Year.

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Golden Lane

Just your regular 14th Century street with various mini-houses on one side that give you a peek into what life was like through the years. Normally crowded but when I visited during the pandemic, Golden Lane was completely empty. [Read more....](#)



Prague Cafes – Bakeshop Praha

Bakeshop Praha has a couple of locations in Prague. This post is about the one closest to the Old Town Square. Perfect either as a coffee/pastry stop for breakfast or with more savoury options for lunch. [Read more....](#)



UNESCO in Prague

These relatively invisible street signs tell you that you are entering the Prague Monument Reserve but what you may not realise is that this covers the entire historic centre of Prague and has been inscribed onto the UNESCO world Heritage List since 1992. Learn why it was included. [Read more....](#)



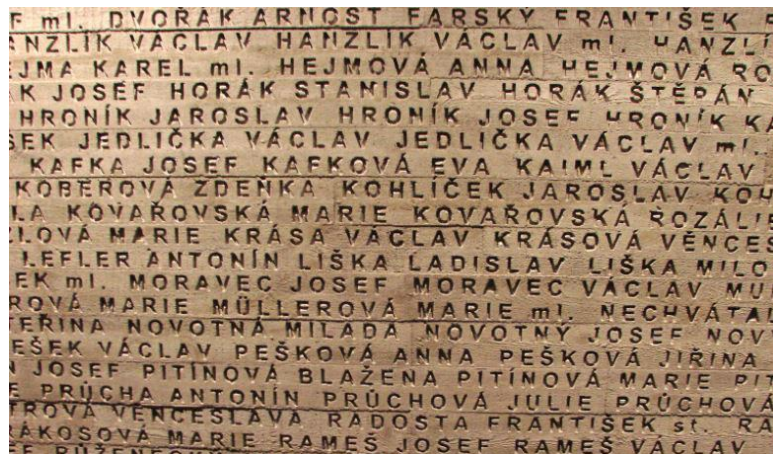
The Spalicek Buildings in Cheb

Cheb in the far west of Bohemia sits in the area that many will know as the Sudetenland. In 1938 Hitler gave a speech from the house on the right pictured. You'll find a very Bavarian feel to the architecture and there's a lot of history in the town going back to Gothic times. Worth a stop if you're passing. [Read more...](#)

Blast from the Past (Updated Old Content)



Up early on a beautifully sunny day I took the opportunity to get some shots back from Charles Bridge to the Castle. The picture also captured the area directly beneath Prague Castle which we call the Lesser Town so I updated that post with it. [Read more....](#)



Václav Hanf, one of 105 children taken when the Nazis destroyed the village of Lidice, saw his family murdered and himself made a victim of forced adoption. He survived and eventually returned to the rebuilt village but problems remained. Czech magazine Novinky recently published his story. [Read more....](#)

Comment

Coronavirus Life

From November 22nd you must either be double-vaccinated or show proof of recovery from Covid-19 in the last 6 months to be able to stay inside a venue like café/restaurant/theatre etc.

Lateral Flow or PCR test results are no longer accepted.

It took a little time to get used to showing café/restaurant staff a Covid-19 vaccination status (you have to remember a 6-digit PIN to open the app) and it caused a few queues in places but from the middle of the month people were prepared and the process is fast and painless. Sometimes when tourists try to use their own app from their own country it's not obvious what the vaccine status is so my advice is to print any Covid-19 certificate which has your name and a big green tick etc. Remember, staff have to ask for your vaccine status, not actually check if what you show them is correct.

Covid numbers are increasing with the last published figures showing 1078 per 100,000 but as we are in transition to a new government the incumbents seem not willing to take any difficult decisions on restrictions except shutting the Christmas Markets and the new government can't be fully up and running until our liver-diseased president agrees who will be health minister.

The Czech Health Service is publishing the latest restrictions and guidelines at <https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/coronavirus-information-of-moi.aspx>

Up to date Czech Covid-19 Statistics can be found at <https://onemocneni-aktualne.mzcr.cz/covid-19>

In The News

Czech is not really at the forefront for using “Green” technologies but one of the largest building companies in the country called Skanska has been trialling and testing energy and resource saving options on small-scale developments. It has now had proposals for a full-scale riverside housing development approved by the city which will be the first large residential project designed to be “Blue-Green” or as sustainable as possible. It’s a start.

The Prague Christmas Tree located on the Old Town Square was this year chosen from 35 entries into the competition. It’s a Spruce from a private garden in the north of the country i.e. Jizera Mountains in the Jablonec region. Before mounting in the square its height was measured at 21.5 metres.

A report on education standards for the year 2020/21 highlighted that 36,500 Elementary-level students had not reached the grades expected of their age and that this would need an entire academic year to correct. This has triggered a wider discussion about the longer term effects of relying on “online learning”.

As well as Tourism, one of the other hardest hit professions has been the teaching of foreign languages. Prague has always been a centre for language learning for students who want to study abroad and live in a lively city. With people not travelling, the foreign demand for language teaching was hit hard with most schools now concentrating on the limited “home” market.

People are having to get used to increased prices across a spectrum of goods as inflation hit 4.1% in 2021 Q3 but salaries went up over the same period so it means that people are earning more but also having to spend more.

Trivia and Odd Statistics

The Uranium ore used by Pierre and Marie Curie to discover Radium and Polonium was from the Jáchymov mine in Bohemia.

If you bought a Rolls-Royce you'll find the bottle/glass set is made by a Czech company called Května.

The first Prague restaurant to receive a Michelin Star was Allegro at the Four Seasons Hotel in 2002.

The Czech death rate in the first half of 2021 was 33% higher than the previous year but an increase in the birth rate meant that overall the national population increased by 1200 people.

In the Time Out index of cities worldwide (largely based on nightlife, culture and food), Prague was ranked the 7th best city to live.

A UNICEF report stated that the pandemic had forced 20,000 Czech children into poverty but overall the Czech Republic still has one of the lowest child poverty ratios in the EU.

Radio Prague broadcasts programs in Czech, English, German, Russian, Italian and French.

Between January and August 2021, Czechs imported 118,593 used cars into the country.

2021 Q2 results show that the average monthly wage increased by 11% from the same period in 2020 to CZK38,275.

Czech Travel Agencies have made approximately 70% of their staff redundant since March 2020.

The Czech Republic contains 2% of the world's Lithium reserves.

In Czech, June 26th is the official "Day of the Departure of Occupying Forces".

Walking Tours

Well, I'm getting used to the feeling of being kicked in the head as I've been quietly optimistic of a Christmas season having watched all four Christmas Markets get constructed and the tree positioned on the Old Town Square. Then the government effectively closed the Christmas Markets from 6pm on November 26th which was just 24 hours before the official opening night. So that's another round of tour cancellations not only for Christmas Markets tours but also trip cancellations affecting other tours. I started reading a biography of Dr Martin Luther King Jr and the American Civil Rights struggles of the 1950s and 60s to remind myself that my troubles are trivial.

As far as November normally goes with a general drop in tourism before it normally ramps up again for Christmas, it was not a bad month overall for my tours. More Germans, Swedish and Americans plus, unusually for me, Spanish and Italians. I even had an English guy on one tour, only the second UK booking of the year. Hopefully there'll be some kind of season for the "Vaccinated Ones!"

Discounted Jewellery

As my Recommended Jewellery Shop reopened last month any of my tour clients can request a voucher worth at least 10% and if you qualify for a Tax-Free purchase then it's a whopping 21% off. Or if you are not doing a tour then just save/print the voucher and use it as you want. See the [Prague Garnet page](#) for details.

Gift Vouchers

I've now introduced a Gift Voucher system which you can read about on the [Gift Voucher page](#) with options that include redeeming against the selected tour, redeeming against a same value tour and redeeming against a higher value scheduled tour or private tour.

Cold Play

We're in that period now when you look at the weather forecast and it says "partly-cloudy, top temperature 8 degrees". Just a warning that often this will mean 2pm in the afternoon and if you do a tour at 9am it's going to be around 1 degree. So dress warm for the mornings.

Private Tours can be arranged by contacting me and Other Tours can be booked via <https://www.livingpraguetours.com/>. Cash on the day is fine (you must agree this with me in advance) or if paying by card then credit card refunds are 96% (cost of tour minus any card transaction fee which is out of my control). See the scheduled tours status below. If going inside, all clients are required to have a FFP2/KN95 face covering available and you will be asked for proof of vaccination if you intend staying inside. I provide hand sanitiser.

Other Tours:

[Old Town and Jewish Quarter](#) is running normally

[City Walking Tour](#) is running normally (if Prague Castle is closed then the route changes to include John Lennon Wall, Our Lady Victorious if open and the riverside plus there will be no tram ride).

[World War Two](#) is running normally

[Architecture Tour](#) is running normally

[Czech Food and Beer Tasting](#) is suspended due to restaurant/bar closures. Option of food/drink is now only on Private Tours.

[Christmas Markets](#) has restrictions: "tour-only" in 2021 with time for people to buy food/drink as required. The format will be the Old Town and Jewish Quarter tour with the addition of Christmas Traditions.



Activity Spotlight! – Boccaccio Ballroom



The Boccaccio Ballroom

One of the greatest examples of Neo-baroque architecture in the city is the Boccaccio Ballroom.






Originally constructed in the late 1920s city redevelopment project and renovated in 1993 it can lay claim to having hosted almost every notable person in the First Republic political and social elite.

Nowadays it's a venue that can be hired and is frequently used for Mozart Dinner events but it is possible to see the ballroom just for the price of a drink and for free if you stay in the associated hotel. I'll show you how.

Check the post about [the Boccaccio Ballroom](#)

Being Social

Click, Like, Subscribe, Follow, Review. Could I ask you to spend a minute interacting with one or more of the social platforms below that have lots of great content to share. Subscribe and/or follow to stay updated.

	<p><u>FACEBOOK</u>: You can read posts, view short videos, like/share content, follow and message me.</p>
	<p><u>INSTAGRAM</u>: You can view pictures, like/share content and follow me.</p>
	<p><u>PINTEREST</u>: You can view specific genre pictures, save Pins to your boards and follow me.</p>
	<p><u>YOUTUBE</u>: You view full length videos, comment, like/share content and follow me.</p>
	<p><u>TRIP ADVISOR</u>: You can view tour pictures, read and leave a tour review for others.</p>

Surveys – Help me improve!

If you have a bit of time then consider a survey. It's anonymous so I just see answers to questions not who it's from.

It should take no more than 2 minutes on any survey.

The “Quick” survey is an overview. The other surveys are content specific. You do not have to finish the whole survey so feel free to answer as many or as few questions as you want.

Just “Send It” when you're ready. You will be helping me to improve all aspects of the sites.

Quick Survey – 1 minute survey

Accommodation – 2 minute survey

Activities – 2 minute survey

Walking Tours – 2 minute survey

Site Navigation - 1 minute survey

Contact Info – Engage with me!



I've now put so much information, local knowledge, tips and tricks into the Trip Planner that I've now renamed it the Trip Planner and Mini-Guide which you can always [download for free](#).

But even that might not be enough to help. Sometimes all you want to do is ask a quick question, sometimes it's a bit of advice regarding an activity or accommodation etc. You're always welcome to contact me via one or more of the following options. Just keep an eye on your spam folder if using email. I reply within 24 hours.

EMAIL: fun@livingprague.com

CALL/SMS/WHATSAPP: +420 603 187856

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/livingpragueguide/>