

Livingprague Newsletter

December 2023



Me with some modern "cat" art

In the December newsletter we'll take a look at one of our "National" drinks called Slivovice. I'll tell you about the unusual story of the Prague Castle Obelisk and there's a description of a visit to the Museum of Decorative Arts. Finally, I published a video "short" showing David Černý's Pissing Men.

The Activity Spotlight is a look at the Prague O2 Arena. Blast from the Past includes updating information about the 2023 Prague Christmas Tree and another picture added to the ST Nicholas Church (Old Town) post.

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

Featured New Content

Slivovice – Plum Brandy
Prague Castle Obelisk
Museum of Decorative Arts
Video – The Pissing Men

Blast from the Past

Prague Christmas Tree
ST Nicholas Old Town

Comment

Fair Pay
Rude

In The News

Trivia and Odd Statistics

Walking Tours

Activity Spotlight!

Prague O2 Arena

Social/Surveys/Contact

Featured New Content



Food and Drink - Slivovice

There's a very famous drink in this part of the world called Slivovice or you may see bottles with Slivovitz outside of Czechia. It's Plum Brandy and it's a popular shot at celebrations of birthdays and namesdays. It's also an acquired taste so I've written about what to expect, some of the processes involved and a place to try it. [Read more....](#)



Prague Castle Obelisk

Not just another memorial to people killed in World War One. This one involved hundreds of tons of granite to be mined. There's an accident. It took 7 years from the first idea to the finished item and even then it was not installed in the originally planned location. [Read more....](#)



Art and Culture – Museum of Decorative Arts

For people interested in design then this place has to be top of your list. It contains many examples of day-to-day objects used in homes over the centuries. It hosts the Czech National Design collection so you'll find things by famous Czech designers. [Read more....](#)



Video – Prague's Pissing Men

While I'm preparing a couple of Christmas Market videos I thought I'd publish a "short" i.e. a 1 minute video of David Cerný's Prague Pissing Men taken at night whilst it was snowing. [See more](#)

Blast from the Past (Updated Old Content)



The winner of the annual Prague Christmas Tree competition had his tree cut down and transported to Prague's Old Town Square where it was installed on November 28th and will be lit on the first day of the markets on December 2nd. Post updated with tree details. [Read more....](#)



I'm in and out of this church a lot and I have many pictures both of the interior and exterior. On this day I'd noticed the sun was casting beams of light into the church so I nipped in and took this picture which I have uploaded to the post. [Read more....](#)

Comment

Fair Pay

Another communist-era effect rises to the surface. A former Czech dissident i.e. somebody who lived in Czechoslovakia who opposed the Communist regime (1948-1989), went on hunger strike in November to highlight something which happened during communism but was never corrected. As well as murdering thousands of judicial, political and military opponents, if you survived then the communists punished dissidents by deliberately reducing their pensions. More than 25 years has passed and yet only now is this being addressed. I'll add this to my list of "things to talk about with communists" before the next election takes place. So petty. Why would you vote communist knowing the track record.

Rude

I probably offer a unique tour service in Prague in that it's a maximum of 6 people AND if only one person books a scheduled tour place I will still run the tour. So why is it that some people just don't turn up? The confirmation has the details and the "read this carefully" section. You get a reminder. The website tells you the booking process for why you might not receive a confirmation and how to correct that. I'm contactable by phone, SMS, Whatsapp, Signal, email and Facebook Messenger. So no excuses for not taking a minute of time to let me know that circumstances might have changed. I just think it's rude.

In The News

The Disciplinary Committee of UEFA levied a record high fine of 91,000 Euros against Slavia Football club in punishment for offensive chanting, throwing objects, setting off fireworks and other things during a home match against Italian club, Roma. It wasn't stated what the "other things" were but they must have been pretty bad!

The Czech School Inspectorate is recommending that the second foreign language taught in schools should not be compulsory. Seems like a bit of a shock but they report that although pupils are motivated to learn the first foreign language (usually English), the motivation reduces for the next language. 60% of foreign language teachers agreed with the study which suggested that the time be better spent on core subjects.

A lady called Vera Čepelova died in November aged 88. She was one of the last survivors of the Lidice massacre of June 10th 1942. Aged 7 at the time she was sent to a German family and renamed. In 1946 she was reunited with her mother who had herself survived the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp. They moved back to Lidice in 1951 where she spent the rest of her life.

The deputy Minister of Health announced on a Sunday discussion TV program that the Czech healthcare system is set for "major changes" that may be "unpopular" with an overhaul of hospitals and forms of care provided. And there's not even an election planned!

On October 18th Austria introduced additional border control checks for 10 days, that was extended to a month and has now been extended again. The Austrian Interior Minister Gerhard Karner stated it was necessary "as part of the fight against terrorism in the context of the Middle East crisis". I mean. Really!!

Trivia and Odd Statistics

In Q3 2023, Czech households reduced their gas consumption by 28% compared with Q3 2022.

Although the phrase “young Czechs” was not defined, research by the HateFree Culture group says 50% of young Czechs would not rent their apartment to a Roma (Gypsy) family.

14% of Czech children experience direct or indirect domestic violence.

Czech Food Inspectors from the Ministry of Agriculture have banned the “Hot Chip Challenge” from Czech shops. Two of the warnings on the packaging included “possible loss of voice” and “blurred vision”.

92% of Czech Secondary school pupils would volunteer to learn English as a third language even if it was not compulsory.

6000 doctors in Czechia did not sign an overtime contract for the month of December 2023.

The highest annual rent in Paris Street is 2,700 Euros per square metre which makes it the most expensive in Europe and 11th most expensive in the world.

Czech football team head coach Jaroslav Silhavy resigned minutes after the team qualified for Euro 2024 by beating Moldova 3-0.

An oil painting called Fusion of Souls by Max Svabinsky sold at auction in Prague for CZK15.8 Million.

A Czech Institute of Health report found that more than 4000 people aged under 19 were admitted to an “acute” hospital bed in 2022 for mental health issues. This is almost twice the 2012 figure.

The green jacket worn by Vaclav Havel on the balcony of the Marks and Spencer building on November 21st 1989 sold for CZK2.7 Million.

Walking Tours

Here we go. The Christmas holiday period is a whole week shorter than last year so that means the markets will be working overtime to shift their goods. People like me will be explaining what's on offer, best places to go, tips on eating/drinking and the avoidance of bad business practice! The chance of snow blowing in the wind will be quite high but we don't expect anything laying on the ground until New Year. Always a pleasure to explain to people about our various interesting and fun Christmas traditions.

People might be interested to know that despite the Covid-19 pandemic and the high rates of inflation since then, my scheduled tour prices have stayed the same.

Review

In November 2023 I reached 500 Trip Advisor Reviews of which 492 are "Excellent" and 8 are "Very Good". "Sarah H" describes several of the things that you learn about on the Old Town and Jewish Quarter Tour but I picked this review because it's an example of somebody who went to the trouble of creating a Trip Advisor account to be able to leave their first review on the platform. I'm grateful to people who make that little bit of extra effort just to help me.



Sarah H
1 contribution



Really informative – good value for money

Sep 2023 • Couples

Jason is an excellent guide and conveys a lot of historical information in a lively and accessible way. (In fact, he covers a lot more than the history of the area - other topics included the life of Franz Kafka, Prague building names, insights into the so-called 'Velvet Revolution' and tips on how to buy Prague ham!) The tour is at a leisurely pace and provided a really good introduction to the area before we visited the interiors of the synagogues the following day. He pointed out lots of details that we would have missed on our own, such as the small commemorative plaques to victims of the Holocaust and people deported from Prague by the Nazis. Communication prior to the walk was first rate and it's great value for money – we'd thoroughly recommend it to anyone visiting Prague.

[Read less](#) ^

[Review of: Small Group Prague Old Town and Jewish Quarter Walking Tour](#)

Written October 31, 2023

Gift Vouchers

Read about the Gift Voucher system on the [Gift Voucher page](#). You can buy individual tours as a gift for somebody and by contacting me the recipient of the gift will have options to swap tours or use the credit to upgrade to a private tour etc. Vouchers are valid for 1 year.

Tours and Card Payment

For any Private Tours or for any Scheduled Tours booked directly through a tour calendar, clients can pay the full cost of a tour in advance by card payment with the understanding that refunds are maximum 96% (cost of tour minus any card transaction fee which is out of my control). In this case you first receive a payment request which has to be completed within 48 hours. Then you receive the booking confirmation.

Tours and Cash Payment

If you prefer to pay for a tour either scheduled or private in cash then you need to contact me. We will agree the tour details and I will quote a price in CZK and your own currency equivalent. You will then receive the booking confirmation and payment is made on the tour day at the agreed amount so in this case there is no advance payment and cancellation is free.

Tours:

[Private Tours](#) are arranged as required.

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

[City Walking Tour](#) is running normally.

[World War Two](#) is running normally.

[Architecture Tour](#) is running normally.

[Czech Food and Beer Tasting](#) is Suspended. The option of food/drink is now only on Private Tours.

[Christmas Markets](#) has restrictions: "tour-only" in 2023 with time for people to buy food/drink as required.



Activity Spotlight! – Prague O2 Arena



Prague O2 Arena – Hauser Concert November 2023

Getting out of the cold and finding interesting things to do can be combined with a trip to the O2 Arena.






There are concerts, cultural and sporting events held here throughout the year. The nearest metro station is only a hundred metres away, you can get here by tram or a taxi from the centre should take less than 15 minutes if you're lucky.

Buying tickets for the O2 is really straightforward now. Pick your event, pay by card, get QR codes with gate info. Show your codes and in you go.

Check the post about the [Prague O2 Arena](#)

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/>