



Otázka: The Czech Republic

Jazyk: Angličtina

Přidal(a): Jindrisekfou

The CZ: history, politics, geography, population, places of interest

Geography

- located in Central Europe - “heart of Europe”
- borders with: Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Austria
- land-locked country = there is no border with sea (borders are mostly mountains)
- area: 78 866 km²
- capital: Prague (also the biggest city - in Bohemia)
- landscape:
 - highland: mountains ranges border much of the country (Krušné hory, Krkonoše, Beskydy,...)
 - lowland: plains (valleys) around the biggest rivers (Vltava, Labe, Dyje, Morava,...)
 - rolling hills (western part of the CZ)
- climate: humid continental climate



- warm summers that are sometimes hot, cold winters with snow
- rainfall generally during the summer months
- divided to 3 regions (historical parts): Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia
- the highest point: Sněžka (1 602 m above sea level) in Krkonoše
- rivers: Labe/ Elbe - the biggest river, empties to the North sea

Vltava - tributary of Elbe, numerous **dams** (Lipno, Orlický, Slapy,... - cascades of dams), the longest river, tributaries:

Sázava, Berounka

Morava - tributaries (Dyje, Jihlava), empties to Dunaj - Black sea

- ponds (south Bohemia) - Jakub Krčín; the biggest pond is Rožmberk
- lakes: in Šumava - Čertovo, Černé (deepest and biggest in the Bohemian Forest)
- national parks: Šumava (biggest), Krkonoše, Podyjí, České Švýcarsko
- natural wonders: The Czech paradise, „rock town“ in Prachov rocks, The Boubín virgin forest, Koněprusy caves, Macocha

Abyss, the Jeseník mountains, Šumava mountains - swamps

Population

- population: 10 500 000 (1 000 000 in Prague)
- ethnic groups: Czech - from Slavic tribes (from 5th century) - Bohemians, Moravians (dominant) 94%

Slovaks 2%



Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Germans... 4%

- official language: Czech
- 74% people live in urban areas

History

- **The Celts** – first settlement – 3rd century BC (the Neolithic era)
- **The Premyslids** – the Bohemian state – 9th century
- the Middle ages – important power in central Europe, **part of the Holy Roman Empire**
- religious wars
- 14th century – **Charles IV**: one of the best and most important rulers
- wise and highly-educated person and a culture – lover
- Prague become the royal seat
- he built the famous Charles Bridge, Karlštejn Castle, the first Czech University
- 15th century – Hussite movement marked by the reformation teaching of **Master John Huss**
 - **Hussites wars** (lead by Jan Žižka z Trocnova)
- 17th century – Thirty Years´ War
- 1526 – Bohemia came **under the Habsburg influence** & became a part of Austria-Hungary
- 1620 – Battle of the White Mountain – country was germanized
- **1918 – the independent republic of Czechoslovakia** was established
 - president – **T.G. Masaryk**
 - composed of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Ruthenia
 - **2nd world war** – The German dictator **Hitler** wanted The Czechoslovakia and he succeeded in his plans through the
 - Munich Agreement that gave him the majority of the German speaking **Sudetenland**
 - 1945 – Czechoslovakia was liberated by the Red and US armies



- 1948 – Czechoslovakia came under **Soviet influence – socialist era**
- 1989 – political freedom through the Velvet Revolution
 - end of communist era
 - rebellions
 - January 1st 1993 – the Czech republic
 - May 1st 2004 – member of the European Union

PERSONALITIES

JAN ÁMOS KOMENSKÝ (Comenius)

- o teacher, educator, writer
- o considered as the **father of modern education**
- o **Teacher of the Nations**
- o 1592-1670, born in Nivnice, buried in Naarden, Netherlands
- o lived and worked all around Europe – Sweden, Poland, Transylvania, Holy Roman Empire, England, the Netherlands
- o emphasis on **practical education**, system of schools (kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, college, and university), **45min long lessons**
- o ***Orbis Pictus*** („The Visible World in Pictures“)
- o ***Didactica magna*** („The Great Didactic“)
- o ***Labyrinth of the world and Paradise of the hearth***

KAREL ČAPEK

- o one of the most influential Czech writers of the 20th century
- o born in Malé Svatoňovice
- o intelligence, humour, wide variety of subjects, interesting and precise descriptions of reality, **excellent work with the Czech language**
- o expressing fear of dictatorship, violence, and the unlimited power of corporations
- o inventor of the **word robot** (1st used in **R.U.R.** = Rossum's Universal Robots)
- o *The Macropulos Affair, Krakatit, War with the Newts*
- o anti-Nazi plays – *The White Disease, The Mother*



MILOŠ FORMAN

- o born in Čáslav
- o studied FAMU in Prague
- o director – Hair, Amadeus, One flew over the cuckoo's nest

Government

- the CZ consists of **13 regions and the region of the capital city of Prague** (14 in total)
- the currency is **Czech crown**
- a parliamentary democracy (from 1993) with two houses: Chamber of Deputies – lower, 200 members (for 4-year term)

Senate – upper house, 81 members (for 6 year term)

- parliament – legislative power; government – executive power; supreme court – judicial power
- a head of government is the Prime Minister – **Petr Nečas**
- a head of state is the President of the Republic
- was elected by parliament every 5 years, now is chosen by people in direct elections
- the current president is **Václav Klaus**, who is popular for his controversial opinions
- he appoints the PM
- all citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to vote
- the Czech Republic became a member of **NATO in 1995** and member of **EU in 2004**
- **symbols:** the flag consists of two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red with a blue triangle



Czech anthem is **Kde domov můj**

Czech motto: **"Truth prevails/ wins"**

- **interests**: beer, wine (Moravia), cuisine (unhealthy), ice-hockey

ECONOMY:

The Czech economy, after more than 40 years under a state monopoly system, is undergoing changes to reconstruct it into prosperous free market system with the help of privatization. The country tries to follow the principles of democracy.

Industries : the most important part of our economy is engineering, other important branches are metallurgical and chemical industries and tourism.

Natural resources : The Czech Republic is heavily depended on imported oil and natural gas. The country's source of energy is large deposits of lignite and coal (Ostrava, Most, Kladno).

Agriculture : Some 40 per cent of land in the Czech Republic is cultivated. Agriculture plays a small role in the nation's export industry. The principal crops on the Czech Republic are barley, wheat, corn, sugar, beets and potatoes. Typical feature of **south Moravia** is wine farming, which is possible of its moist climate. Almost every house has its wine cellar. In **north Moravia** is an important agricultural region called Haná.

Manufacturing : Manufacturing is a leading component of the CZ's gross domestic product - steelworks, glass industry, jewellery.

Places of interest

"Czech Republic is a country with a nice nature, rich culture and history. The combination of natural beauties and numerous wonderful buildings coming from the past centuries, with cultural heritage make the Czech Republic a popular destination for tourists. Apart from the capital - Prague - the country has many more beautiful towns and places worth seeing."



- many towns have been restored and designated historical town reserves - their **monuments** may include churches, town

buildings, medieval fortifications, town castles, places and chateaux with their own gardens

Prague

- the most visited destination in CZ
- capital on the banks of the Vltava
- the city's origins date back to **the 9th century** ... biggest development - **Charles IV**
- 5 historical districts: **The Old Town**, The New Town, **the Little Quarter** (The Lesser Town) and Hradčany

Český Krumlov

- small city in the South Bohemian Region
- best known for the architecture and art of the **historic old town and Český Krumlov Castle**
- historical centre of town - **UNESCO** world heritage site

Telč

- in southern Moravia
- founded in 13th century as a royal water fort
- renaissance chateau with an English style park



- **town square** - well-conserved renaissance and baroque buildings - **UNESCO world heritage site**

Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně

- west Bohemia Triangle of spa towns

- relaxation, colonnade

- Tábor
- České Budějovice
- Písek
- Domažlice

Monuments:

- **Karlštejn Castle**

- large **gothic** castle, founded 1348 AD by **Charles IV.**

- place for safekeeping the Imperial regalia and **Bohemian coronation jewels (now in Prague Castle)**

- located about 30km southwest of Prague

- one of most famous and most frequently castles in the CZ

-legend: no woman could have visited the castle

The Macocha Abyss



- sinkhole in the Moravian Karst cave system
- located north of the city of Brno
- the **Punkva River** flows through it
- about **138.7 meters deep** and also the deepest of its kind (light hole type) in Central Europe
- it is a popular **tourist attraction** for casual visitors to the region, in addition to cavers and advanced technical

divers

Ještěd

- the highest mountain peak (1,012 meter) of the Ještěd-Kozákov Ridge
- **views into Germany and Poland**
- 1966 and 1973, **a futuristic hotel**, with a 100 meter-high **television tower**, was built that was designed by the

architect **Karel Hubacek**

- a **lookout tower**, transmission tower, hotel and restaurant, two **ski jumping hills**

Říp