



ONE DAY, ONE CITY

Prague

No matter how long you're stationed in Europe, there is not enough time or money to see it all. But with a game plan and some stamina, you can conquer a city in just one day. Keep reading to capitalize on 24 hours in Prague.

See

Old Town Square: In former times, residents flocked to the Old Town Square to shop at the market for produce, household goods and more. Today, tourists crowd the bustling epicenter, eager to see the historical quarter's churches and town hall.

Venture to the square early in the day, before the crowds thicken, to get better photos and take in the beauty with a bit of breathing room. At the Gothic **Old Town Hall**, watch as the 600-year-old **Astronomical Clock** announces the hour with ringing bells and an appearance by mechanized figures of the Twelve Apostles. Admire **St. Nicholas Church's** exquisite frescoes and gold-encrusted stucco ornamentation, indicative of the lavish Baroque style. And glimpse the imposing spires of one of Prague's most iconic buildings, the **Church of Our Lady Before Týn**.

Jewish Quarter (Josefov): Before crossing over the Vltava River to western Prague, observe the trials and triumphs of the Jewish community. In the 11th century, public policy required that all Jews reside in a small walled neighborhood. Six synagogues, including the oldest in Central Europe, and a 15th century cemetery still stand.

Charles Bridge: Gaze at the "City of 100 Spires" as you walk amid peddlers, pedes-

trians and towering statues on the 14th century Charles Bridge. If permitted by your schedule, rent a kayak or paddleboat to meander along the river and further appreciate the magnificent cityscape.

Prague Castle: You'll need several hours to explore the 750,000 square feet of churches, residences and gardens inside Prague Castle. In addition to earning the title as the largest continuous network of fortified buildings in the world, the castle is significant because of its role as a royal and presidential residence and exhibition center chronicling hundreds of years of Czech history. Before exploring, learn about the fortress's past at the **Story of the Prague Castle** display in the **Old Royal Palace**.

Visit **St. Vitus Cathedral**, constructed from A.D. 925 and expanded a century later to house religious relics. You'll be astounded by the cavernous interior's architecture, massive stained-glass windows, gilded metal works, preserved frescoes, and splendid sculptures.

In the 16th century, the northern courtyard was transformed into housing for castle employees. Travel back to medieval Europe with a trip down the **Golden Lane**, and don't miss the well-preserved cottages at numbers 13 and 22.

Watch the traditional hourly **Changing of the Guard**. The entertainment is best at noon, when soldiers in pristine uniforms march in unison to the sounds of trumpets and tubas.

Take a break in one of six **gardens**. Photograph the city below from the **Rampart Garden**, or traverse the perimeter of the castle grounds in the **Southern Gardens**.

Do

Spend: **Havel's Market** (or Havelske trziste) on Havelska Street operates daily. Located near Old Town Square, the market features a variety of regional products, including brilliant Bohemian glass, hand-carved marionettes, dainty lace and reprints of Czech artist Alphonse Mucha's art nouveau masterpieces.

Toast: Pilsner originated in nearby Plzen or Pilsen, and you'll find the purest **pivo** (beer) at a **tankovna** (tank pub). Toast a foamy brew at the **Prague Beer Museum** — it's a bar, not an exhibit. For a colorful experience, descend underground to reach the **Bunkr Parukarka** nightclub, a former Soviet bomb shelter that blares funky techno and other electronic beats.

Taste: When you stop to eat, enjoy the filling foods of the Czech Republic. Though **ovocné knedlíky** seems perfect for dessert, order like the locals and have it as your lunch entrée. These doughy spheres are dunked in powdered sugar, butter, cinnamon or chocolate and have a surprise center of berries, stone fruit or jelly. A heartier option is **svíčková na smetaně**, beef in a pureed vegetable sauce with cream, bread dumplings and cranberry relish. Also sample the Czech version of goulash, **guláš**.

Lace up your comfy shoes, pack survival snacks, charge your camera and download an offline city map to your smartphone to help you hit the ground running in Europe's exciting cities. Prague is only a warm up for your travel adventures! ■