



What to do in Prague

*when it's
November 2023*

Original photo by Xuan Hoa Le

Stuff everybody knows
but nobody tells you

The season of the uncanny

With the trees nearly bare, and crumpled leaves marinading in the cold mud beneath, the year bends toward its conclusion. Too early for true Adventuous anticipation of Christmas and too late for nature's autumnal splendor, the world pauses in The Grey Zone.

This is when Pragueness is at its strongest.

Morning mists pour over the narrow cobblestone streets, sunlight desaturates and loses its edge. Shadows grow long and there, in the corner of the square surrounding the gothic church... you are suddenly looking through the eyes of Josef K.

„Listopad” ”November”

Literally the month of falling leaves. Nature's colors fade, trills of birds and chirps of insects go silent. All overt signs of life are suspended until next spring.

The festival of the dead, with tradition possibly stretching back to the actual Celtic Samhain, doesn't arrive here until the beginning of November, bringing the true time of Prague otherworldliness.

Weather *or not*

„Svatý Martin přijíždí na bílém koni.”
”St. Martin rides in on a white horse.”

While this folk belief concerning the first snowfall no longer holds most years (excepting the most exposed mountain regions of the country) November still pulls no punches. Brace yourselves for grey clouds, rainy days and bitter, wet cold. (Though in this crazy year, who can tell? 28°C in October? Inconceivable!)

Mud, rotting leaves and wet cobblestones pose a slippery challenge (to say nothing of the occasional morning frost) and you should start favoring winter practicality over summer fashion in your attire.

On average:



2–7°C
35–45°F



2–3 rainy days
per week



50 hours
of sunshine

Dawn: 6:50 → 7:35

Dusk: 16:40 → 16:00

***Reasonably warm (15+ °C,
60+ °F), sunny days may still
occur.***

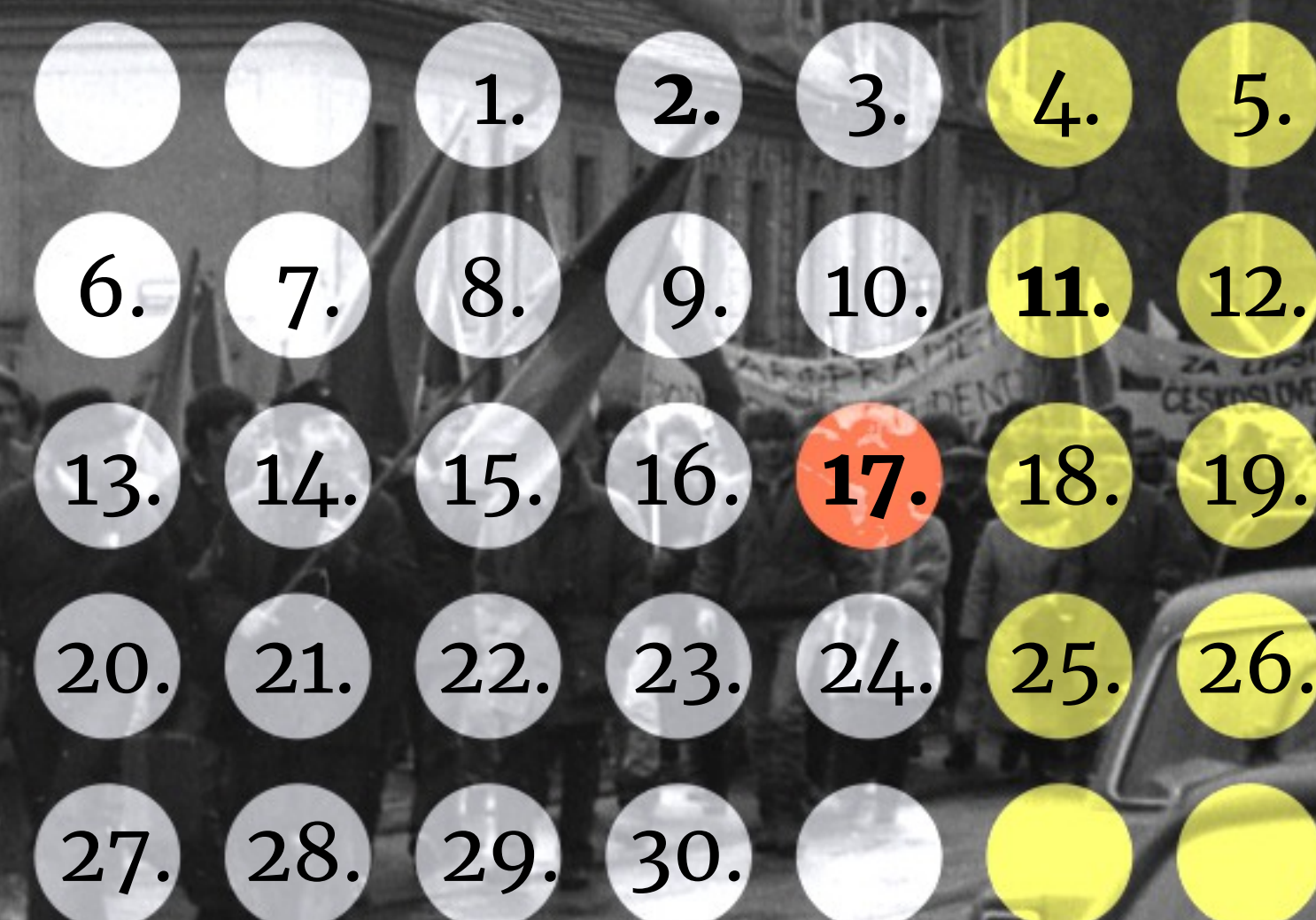
***Carpe diem. It's not going to get
better for a while.***

*With blankets of lead
Over your head
There's something you should remember:
The shoes you choose
Will make the bed
When you step right into November*

Mass support for the '89 Velvet Revolution protests expressed by the various worker collectives was one of the major indicators that the regime had no more legs to stand on.

"ČKD Tatra
is here with you!"

Dates of note



21 workdays, 8 weekends, 1 holiday

Note that the Czech week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday.

Thursday, 2nd

All Souls' Day – „Dušičky”

In contrast to jaunty Halloween, the atmosphere is sombre. Candles-in-dark-rooms-on-gloomy-days kind.

An afternoon walk through the Olšany Cemetery, as the light is fading and the flames of candles flicker among the fresh wreaths and bouquets...

Not an official holiday, but a good opportunity to remember those no longer with us. The usual Czech occasion to visit graves of the beloved passed.

Saturday, 11th

St. Martin's Feast

Historically the formal conclusion to the farming year, currently revived as a festival of food & wine, modeled upon the French celebrations of new Beaujolais.

Friday, 17th

Day of Struggle for Freedom and Democracy & The International Day of Students

Not a market holiday (shops mostly remain open) but people in normal professions should get a day off.

First as a tragedy: On 17th of November 1939, Nazis shut down Czech universities, executed nine leaders of student organizations and sent 1.200 more to concentration camps.

A secret agent played the corpse for a while and the rumored identity spread among the crowds was chosen for belonging to two actually existing students – so even when one of them was verified to be alive, the doubts concerning the second one persisted long enough to send masses of already fed-up people into the streets.

Then as a farce: On the 1989 anniversary, communists violently suppressed a remembrance/protest march. As a provocation, the secret police orchestrated a rumor of a killed student, (probably unintentionally) radicalizing the populace and sparking the mass demonstrations of the Velvet Revolution.

„Sametová revoluce”

Against all reasonable expectations,
you can have a bloodless uprising
that improves nearly everything.

The Velvet Revolution

November of
1989



Original photo by MD

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In tow of the radical events unfolding throughout the Eastern Bloc, the Czechoslovak population peacefully but unambiguously expressed its desire to see the ruling Party dumped into the garbage bin of history. Communists, to their credit, obliged, through a negotiated transfer of power by the year's end and a declaration of free, open elections for 1990.

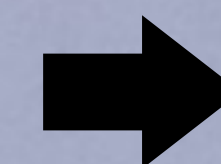
Origin of the name is disputed, but it immediately took off for its 'smooth and soft' metaphor. Any connection with the Velvet Underground (who did have previous relations with Václav Havel and other dissidents) is likely a post-hoc invention.

WHAT NOT TO MISS

Cannafest

Weekend 3rd-5th
PVA EXPO LETŇANY

One of the largest European congregations of all things hemp. From fertilizers to vaporizers, from brownies to wart emulsions.



Havasi

Mon. 6th, 20:00

O2 ARENA

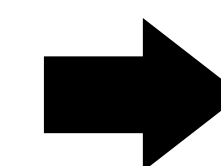
A concert of all-original works by the piano virtuoso Havasi, accompanied by world-class soloists, a symphonic orchestra and a rock band.



Prague Sounds

All of the musics

1st-18th at multiple locations



Jean-Claude van Damme

In person, answering questions

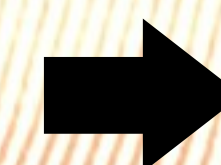
7th at SaSaZu



Mint Market

Fashion and design fair

24-25th at Holešovická tržnice



Flavors of the season

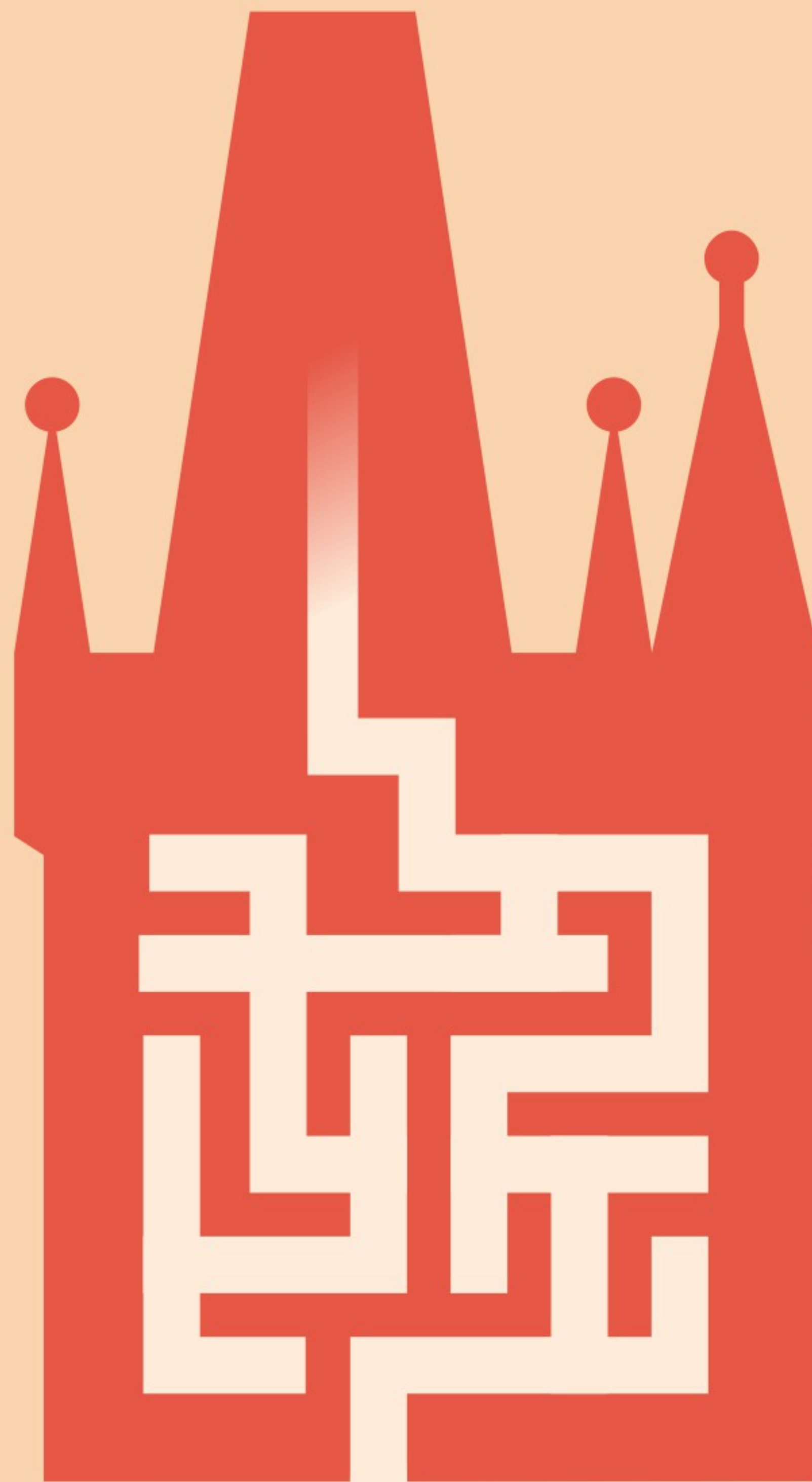
Roasted goose & young wine

Let it be said that St. Martin is not a popular figure in the bird world. The medieval tradition of the feast has been maintained in Germany, France and the Low Countries, but got forcibly suppressed under communist regimes. The gradual top-down renaissance has been going on for about 20 years now, mainly propelled by the wine industry, as an opportunity to market their earliest bottled product of the year. To earn the St. Martin appellation, the wines have to satisfy demands on procedure, timing and grapes and pass a panel tasting test.

Historically, St. Martin's day signified the end of the agricultural year and thus the conclusion to annual contracts. The landlords would receive their yearly share from the harvest of their tenants (often including a fattened goose clause) and the work agreements between farmhands and heads of homesteads either would or wouldn't be renewed, with long-keeping pastries provided for the road should the ways part. Today, you will encounter a number of local festivals revolving around food, wine and reenactments.

PSA: It is now high time to switch to canned tomatoes. Once the summer season is over, the "fresh" fruits become a bit like custom leather boots: Unreasonably expensive for how poorly they taste.

Is Prague getting too confusing?



”The bureau *only speaks Czech?*”

”What does the official letter say?”

”Can the landlord actually do *this?*”

”Is that covered by the insurance?”

”What if I... *didn't* register?”

”OSVČ with ČSSZ what now?”

”How do I get my bike back?”

We'll get you through.

Contact us for on-location help
with all your Prague problems



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Monument of the month

Franz Kafka ➡ Memorial

50.0901169 S
165.5792711 W

Previous claim of this periodical, that Prague only has two bronze statues of humans riding horses, is the best kind of correct. Behold: The king of the morbid absurd himself. Based on the short story "Description of a Struggle" and cast by Jaroslav Róna in 2003, Kafka is riding right through the very heart of the Old Town and its medieval Jewish quarter, Josefov ("Josephtown" – in this case referring to the Hapsburg emperor Joseph II).

Loosely quoting Christopher Hitchens:

"I went to Prague in the 1980s, determined to become the first western journalist ever Not To mention Kafka in his report. We attended an underground dissident meeting, somebody held a speech – and suddenly the lights went out and the secret police handcuffed and arrested us.

"What am I charged with?" I asked.

"We don't have to tell you!"

And I just thought: @#\$%&!, I'm going to have to mention Kafka after all... They make you do it."

To spare you much walking, you will find this 1868 Alhambra-inspired temple right behind the aforementioned Kafka statue.

Structure by Vojtěch Ignác Ullman
Interior decoration by Josef Niklas

A hidden gem

The Spanish Synagogue

Administered by the Jewish Museum in Prague



Anatomy of Prague

Introduction

Abandon all hope to perceive the Ageless Lady rationally. The multitudes of overlapping administrative divisions of Kafkatown defy logic, intuition and common sense, steal their drinks and take a dump in their shoes. We have local government districts, overlapping administrative districts, different from police districts, not the same as court districts, imperfectly subdivided into land-register districts. All of which legally operate in a way similar-but-not-identical to the municipality divisions in the entire rest of the country (because Prague has its own, special, non-systematic charter law...)

Historical center

Mostly tourist town. Formal extent of Prague until the 1920s expansion

Extended center

Residential and office districts, mostly 19th+ century structures

Outer city

Suburbs, industrial parks and former independent villages

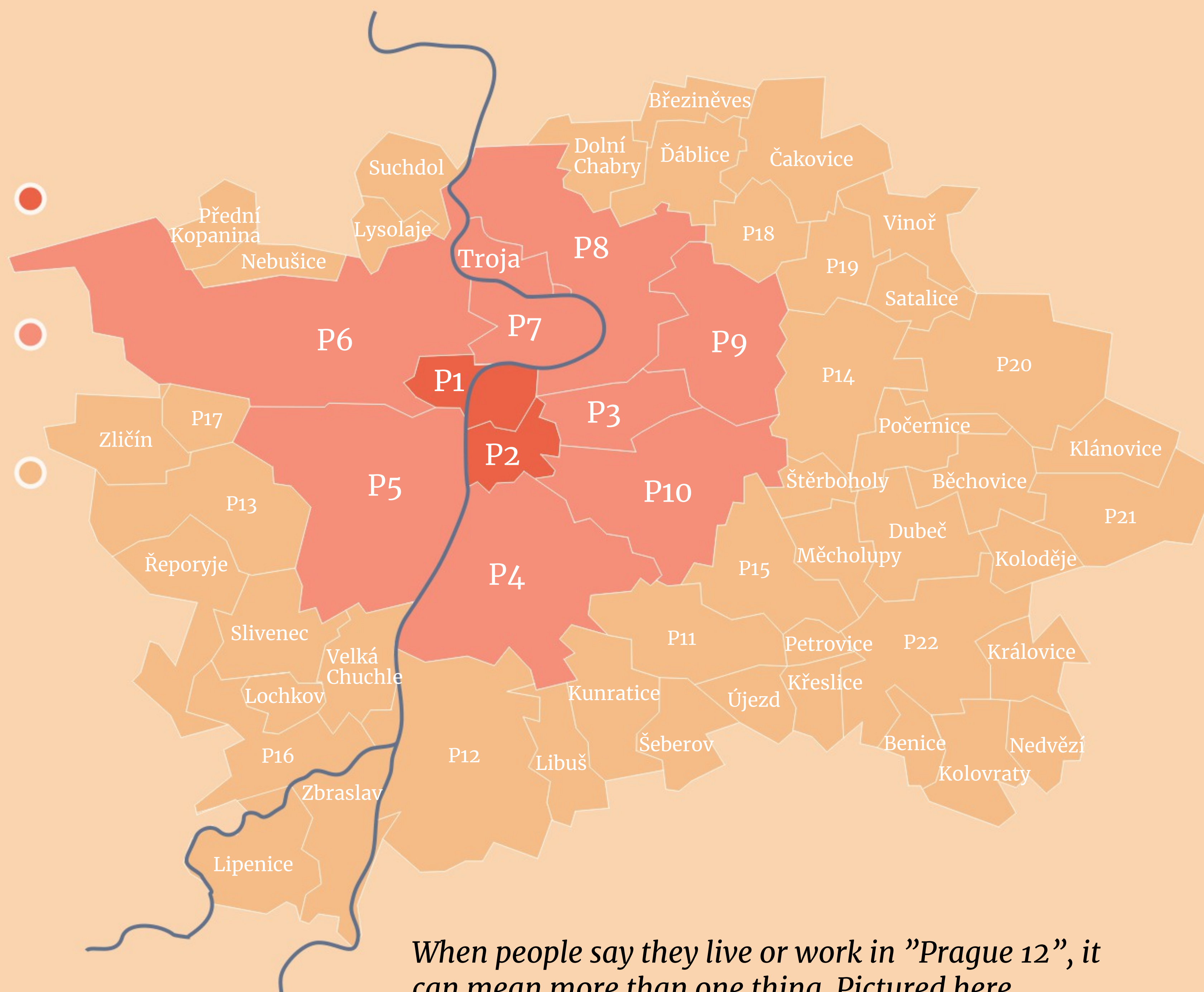
The far edges of Prague 6 and 8 are definitely fading into the outer city character as well, with large logistics centers, small factories and suburban residences – and the airports (of which the Václav Havel Airport at Prague 6, Ruzyně, is but one).

What does "Ruzyně" mean?

I hear you ask.

Is it Prague 6 or not? I'm not seeing any "Ruzyně" on the map!

Ah you see, those are land-register districts („katastrální území” probably the most ancient component of the national registry system, because land) and a typical city district has several, though the borders don't match.



When people say they live or work in "Prague 12", it can mean more than one thing. Pictured here specifically is the division into 57 city districts („Městská část”) of political representation. These are roughly equivalent to small, self-governing towns and villages (as most originally used to be). Of interest to EU citizens, as you may be eligible to vote for the local council/mayor according to your official residence.

Silver of the Bohemian Screen 1969, 95 min

„Spalovač mrtvol“ The Cremator

A Comedy of Horrors

Mr. Kopfrkingl, a sober family man and an employee of the local crematorium, doesn't have a job: he has a Vocation.

Liberating human souls from the burden of their fleshy prison is his true calling. Ever professional, he operates the furnaces of his Temple of Death with fanatical efficiency. How far is he willing to go to get to the top of a brand new system, capable of gassing and cremating people by the hundreds, the thousands, the millions?

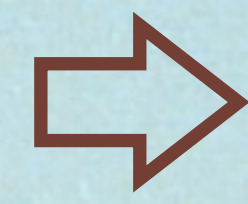
An acid test of your assimilation;
If you can find humor in this film,
you have been solidly Czechified.

Directed by **Juraj Herz**
Story by **Ladislav Fuks**
Soundtrack by **Zdeněk Liška**

Rudolf Hrušínský the eldest, displaying his extraordinary acting range here. From psychopathic omnicidal murderers, through mad scientists and kindly detectives, to clumsy village doctors and stern principals. One of all-time greatest Czech actors.

Beyond the city limits

Kutná Hora



A UNESCO world heritage site. The town was established in the 12th century around a Cistercian abbey. In 1260 large scale mining of the extensive silver deposits in the area had begun. Mining and minting of coins had sustained the prosperity of the local economy for centuries and allowed the historical center to develop into a priceless showcase of Central-European architectural styles throughout the ages.

Original photo by Jerzy Strzelecki



TRAIN: Every 30-ish minutes from the Prague Main Train Station

If you truly wish to lean into the macabre, the famous ossuary in the nearby Sedlec church will provide you with enough skeletons to last you an entire afternoon. Or ten. (Bone Fiesta not pictured, this is the church of St. Barbara, a patron of miners.)

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Murders, Martyrs and Monarchs

*OR: a morbidly amusing
presentation on the
feudal family feuds of
medieval Bohemia*



**18th of November
18:00 at Art-n-Coffee** ➔

CZK 150 at the door
CZK 120 if you pre-sign on FB

Pragueticals

of public transit

Tips:

The voice announcements first give the current stop, followed by the next („Muzeum. Příští zastávka Můstek.”) So don't just get off the first time you hear your destination called.

Technically, any item larger than standard cabin luggage (trunks, skis, spears) should have its own ticket; In practice, this is rarely enforced, unless you are causing trouble.

Bikes and strollers in use are exempt and may be transported for free.

The schedules change both seasonally (summer has lower frequencies, as schoolchildren are not a factor) and in response to road/track repairs and other events. Yellow timetables indicate a change in route, green a curtailed number of daily rides.

The full-year ticket is by far the best deal, if you're here that long.

Etiquette:

Exit first, on-board second.

On escalators, stairs and in corridors, keep to the right side.

Pregnant women and parents with small children, as well as injured or otherwise disabled people are customarily always provided a seat and you are strongly expected to vacate it for them. (Unquestionably the seats marked with a green cross.) With healthy elderly, it's less mandatory, but still expected as a social gesture.

The magic word if you accidentally bump into somebody is „Pardon”.

Loud phone calls and music blaring from headphones are frowned upon. Eating and drinking even more so, alcoholic beverages in particular. You might get forcibly disembarked by the driver for egregious violations.

Classifieds

This space is dedicated to the readers of this publication, with the three individual fields allocated monthly in accordance with the utterly arbitrary decisions of the publication board, based on vibes, order of arrival, reverse order of arrival, inscrutable games of chance, astrological readings, subjective amusement value, irrational emotional appeal, desire to spread chaos, desire to foster world peace and/or sheer crass bribery.

Submissions and replies accepted at
info@pragate.cz

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V Olšínách 1025/29
Mon-Sat 4-11 pm

Uma Haime ⇒

Oops, I'm looking everywhere, but I can't see it. Have we lost the compassion of mankind?

Exhibition opening

7th of November

18:00

Dorado Coffee

Curious about

What to do in Prague

*when it's nearly
Christmas ?*

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group & get your
finger on the pulse ➡

