

# Brno

**Brno** (German: *Brünn*) is a major city of the Moravia region in the Czech Republic. It is the largest city in South Moravia, the second largest city in the Czech Republic by population and the third largest city by area. The city celebrated 750 years of "city status". It was founded around year 1000. Brno is the cultural and administrative center of South Moravia. The Supreme Court of the Czech Republic is situated here as well as many other important authorities. Its population is around 380,000 people.

## Talk

**Hantec** is a specific slang previously spoken among lower classes in Brno. Hantec is a mix of various languages that was spoken in the city before WWII, most importantly Czech, German, and Yiddish. Today, only few people spoke Hantec in its full form, but many words and expressions have become a part of Czech spoken in Brno. These words can be confusing not only for a foreigner learning Czech, but also for Czech people not familiar with Brno and its culture. Examples of common Hantec words include: *šalina* (tram, 'tramvaj' in standard Czech), *love* (money, 'peníze' in standard Czech), *zónčna* (sun, 'slunce' in standard Czech), or *štatl* (city, downtown, often used for Brno specifically, 'město' in standard Czech).

Because Brno is a big and university town, knowledge of foreign languages, especially English, is common.

## Get in

### By train

From Vienna (Austria - 156 km), Prague (*Praha* - 250 km), Ostrava (172 km), Bratislava (Slovakia - 140 km) and also from a number of smaller local towns as Česká Třebová and Jihlava. The Brno Central Station is located close to (10min walk) the center of town, with Náměstí svobody (Square of Freedom), Petrov (old town with cathedral), Vaňkovka (large shopping center) and other attractions just within a few minutes walk. Brno is an important stop on the Prague to Vienna / Bratislava railway line; all Eurocity and Intercity expresses stop here.

### [By car

Using highways - Ostrava, Bratislava, **D1** highway from Prague or using any of a national roads.

200km from Prague airport

## By coach

There are coach services from various European destinations including Prague.

Czech Airlines has a coach service from Prague to Brno.

Timetable for all buses including international you can find on. Page is in Czech, English and German. <http://jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusy/spojeni/>

Student Agency is based in Brno and is probably the most comfortable service. There are more than 24 buses per day between Prague and Brno.

## By air

There's an international airport at **Brno-Tuřany** with regular international services to Barcelona-Gerona (Ryanair, every second day), London-Stansted (Ryanair, 1 flight/day), Moscow-Vnukovo (Atlant-Soyuz Airlines/SmartWings, only on Sun) and domestic service to Prague (Czech Airlines(CSA), 3-4 flights/day). There is a frequent (every 30 minutes from aprox. 4:30AM to 11:30PM) public transport service (bus Nr. 76) connecting the airport with the regional and national bus station and the main train station in the center of the city. Buy ticket beforehand in the information centre or ticket machine in the airport. <http://www.airport-brno.cz/>

## By boat

A unconventional, but beautiful way how to get to Brno (from it's periphery) is to take a cruiser at Veverská Bitýška village, which would take you (in summer season only) on a trip across Brněnská přehrada (Brno dam lake) to Brno-Bystrc.

## Get around

The **Integrated Transport System of the Southern Moravia Region** (IDS JMK) operates all over the city and in the major part of the Southern Moravia Region; it includes **trains, trams, busses** and **trolley busses**. You can travel around the city using a single ticket, the price differing depending on the number of zones you cross and time of expiration (10, 60, 90 minutes tickets are most common, - <http://www.idsjmk.cz/en>). In most places you can get transportation within 15 minutes (daytime). A number of **taxi** companies are operating in Brno city too. After 11pm the trams stop and the night buses start. Catch any of night buses at the main station on the hour.

There are yellow ticket vending machines at the larger bus and tram stations. All kinds of tickets you can buy at the railway station offices too. You can buy short-term tickets, but also 1, 3, 7 and 30 days passes. The vending machines accept coins only (some of them

do not accept 50 CZK coin). In the non-working days the 1 day pass is valid together for 2 adults and 3 children up to 15 years.

If you experience any difficulties, visit one of the Tourist Information Centres located in city center, i.e. at Radnická Street or Nádražní Street. The Public Transport Information Centre is located near the Main Train Station at 18, Novobranska Street (open Mo - Fr 6 am - 8 pm).

## See

- The **City center** is full of historical buildings, old churches, theaters, fountains, sculptures, clubs, restaurants, etc. It is very compact, so one could just walk around most of the places of interest.
- **Špilberk Castle**, the famous fortress used as prison. Many people have been tortured here from all around Europe, mostly during Austro-Hungarian Empire times. Currently, it's museum with restaurant and nice park around, free for walks and beautiful sightseeing.
- **Petrov Cathedral**, 10 minutes walk from city center. Its silhouette is the defining feature of the Brno skyline.
- **Old Town Hall**, between the Cathedral, nám. Svobody, and the main station. See beloved Brno symbols the Drak (dragon) and the Wheel. Also notice the lopsided tower above the entrance. Legend has it that the city council stiffed the mason who built it and he made the crooked ornament in a fit of pique.
- **Náměstí svobody** (Freedom Square) forms the heart of the city. It's shaped into big reversed "A". Many of cultural events take place here and there are always a lot of people here. This place is closed for most cars and trams run through the middle. Also most of the interesting places at city center are within 10 minutes walk from Freedom Square.
- The **Tugendhat Villa**, Černopolní 45, 613 00 Brno, +420 545 212 118, 20min walk from the town center, is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is seen to be a classic example of Bauhaus architecture, and was also the location of the meeting that decided upon the *Velvet Divorce* that separated the Czech and Slovak republics in 1992. It is possible to visit the Villa by guided tour; tours are led hourly and can be booked by arriving at the gate.
- **Vaňkovka Gallery**, a really large shopping centre converted from an old industrial center dated to the beginning of 19th century. Many of the historical industrial buildings were saved and implemented into the new shopping center.

- **Capuchin Church** is a monastery from 17th Century right in the city center. Tourists love to visit the church, because of its Baroque statues and an exposition of mummified monks.
- **Baroque Parnas fountain** from 16th century, located at "Zelný trh" a square with a fruit and vegetable market above Masaryk Street (central street leading into Freedom Square).
- At the top of the square you can find **The Moravian Museum** - second largest and oldest museum in the Czech Republic. It was founded in 1817 by Emperor Francis I and, today, has collections with millions of objects from different fields of human history.
- **The Moravian Gallery**, The second largest art museum in the Czech Republic. Mainly exhibits Moravian art and applied art through out history. Most recommended is its exhibition of modern Moravian art.
- **The Mendel Museum of Genetics**, The most famous biologist in the history of genetics died in Brno. This interesting museum commemorates his revolutionary research. Information in English available.
- **Museum of Gypsy Culture**, A museum dedicated to the gypsy minority in Moravia.
- **Tourist Information Centres** are located in the city center, i.e. at Radnická Street or Nádražní Street.

## Do

Visit the **City Celebration**, held annually, which includes many family activities, including known as "Brno, the city in the center of Europe".

- Visit **Ignis Brunensis**, fireworks competition.
- Visit **Grand Prix Brno**, the Moto GP event.
- <http://www.automotodrombrno.cz> (Brno Racing Circuit - Masaryk Circuit)
- Visit an exhibition by your choice at **BVV** (Brno Trade and Fair Centre), the largest trade center in Central European region with many important fairs. The largest are Auto salon, MSV (International Engineering Fair), Invex (International Fair of Information and Communication Technologies), IDET (International Exhibition of Defence and Security Technologies and Special Information Systems) and of course a Vinex (International Wine Fair) and Pivex (International Beer Fair).
- Visit one of many theaters in the city. They are well known even by many tourists, who come even just to visit them.

## Buy

Try city center or **Vaňkovka Gallery** for pleasure and common shopping. If you want to do a big shopping, you might wish to visit one of many hyper-sized shopping centers usually located at city periphery.

## Eat

Czech food is mostly based around pork and potatoes. A Czech favorite is smažený sýr, fried cheese, which is available at many restaurants and fast food stands. A good option is to visit one of the many pubs or restaurants that usually offer traditional Czech food all day long. You could easily find a restaurant where you get a meal and a drink for around €5, even in the city center. Many of these places also offer cheaper special (limited, already prepared) menus at mid-day. Kavarnas offer a nice selection of rolls and pastries if you're looking for breakfast food. Visit the cukrárna near the House of the Four Idiots on nam. Svobody and try a rakvička (little coffin). This is the only place in the Czech Republic to find the chocolate ones.

## Drink

The traditional Brno beer is *Starobrno*; traditional non-alcoholic drink is *kofola* (a very different but captivating kind of cola). Both must be tasted in draught form! Anywhere you see a circular green sign with the name Starobrno, there's a decent pub. Dark beer (pivo černý) is sweet and not very common here. There is a small private brewery named Pegas, a block west from the steeple of St James Church (sv. Jakub). The pub is equipped with modern brewing technologies; beer is made right in front of the guest's eyes. For night life try Charlie's (Hat), east on Koblizna Street from the north end of Freedom Square.

## Sleep

There are many hotels all around Brno city.

## Get out

Moravia has a dense cluster of sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

- **Olomouc** fine historic university town, with an impressive Plague Column (1,5 hour trip)
- **Telč** one of the prettiest towns in the Czech Republic (2 hours trip)
- **Lednice-Valtice** is one of the largest artificial landscapes in Europe dotted with Palaces and Follies (1 hour trip)
- **Třebíč** has one of Europe's best preserved Jewish areas (1,5 hour trip)
- **Žďár nad Sázavou** contains a fine pilgrimage church (1,5 hour trip)

- **Kroměříž** a nice Palace and gardens (2 hours trip)
- Beautiful caves near **Blansko** with boat trip inside the cave (0,75 hour trip)

Places near to Brno - trip less than one hour

- **Battlefield Austerlitz** (City Slavkov u Brna)
- **Castles:** Pernstejn, Bucovice, Slavkov u Brna

Other places

- **Vienna** is easily accessible as a day trip by train or bus
- **Bratislava** is less than an hour away

For more info see: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

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