

# Český Krumlov

**Český Krumlov** (German: *Krumau*) is a fairly large town (cca. 15 000 inhabitants) located in Southern Bohemia in the Czech Republic. Its setting and the town itself has a lot of character and is certainly worth a stay. The historical center, added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1992, is notable for its well-preserved Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque architecture. The Český Krumlov Castle, built in the 13th century, is the second largest castle complex in Czech Republic after Prague castle. The Vltava River snakes through the town, making the inner historical center an island unto itself.

## Get in

### By bus

From **Prague** (and other nearby cities or towns of Bohemia), getting to Český Krumlov by public bus is easier, faster, and cheaper than the train. Prague has three major bus stations: **Na Knížecí** (near the Anděl metro station), **Florenc** (metro lines B and C), and **Roztyly** (metro line C). A one-way journey takes around three hours, and costs 172 Kc (as of September 2007). Depending on its route, you will also pass through some interesting towns such as Písek, Tabor and almost certainly České Budějovice. Upon arriving in Český Krumlov, there are two bus stops: one first is north of the castle; the second is the main terminal and is located east of the main square. Both stations are about a five to ten minute walk from the main square--from the north, walk down Latrán Ulice, from the east, head westward and look for Horní street off the main road.

### By train

You can take a train to Český Krumlov from Prague at the **Hlavní Nádraží** train station (**Praha hl.n.**) for about 224 Kc (and for two or more people, group rates or *sleva pro skupiny* are available). The trip takes about four to four and a half hours in total, and usually requires a transfer at České Budějovice, as direct trains to Český Krumlov are not common. To transfer by train, take a local train toward Volary, which will take an hour to make the sluggish but beautiful 28 km trip. Alternatively, you can transfer by bus; the main bus terminal in České Budějovice is just 300 meters down the street from the train station. A bus takes around 45 minutes, not including transfer time that can vary.

The train station in Český Krumlov is located north of the main square and the castle, about a 15-20 minute downhill walk away. Taxis often wait in the parking lot for tired travelers--it may be worth the 100 to 130 Kc ride into town, especially at night.

### From Destinations South

If you're looking to travel to Cesky Krumlov from any points to the south of the Czech Republic, its easier and faster to use Linz, Austria as a jumping off point. Linz is on the main rail line and has high speed trains coming and going on a regular basis, so getting there is fast and easy. From that point you can make arrangements with Shuttle Lobo <http://www.shuttlelobo.cz/> to drive you through to Cesky Krumlov. The Shuttle service is inexpensive and comfortable and saves you plenty of time. The train line from Cesky Budovice is slow and crowded, and will take much longer should you choose to come from that direction.

## Get around

Ambling around the town's crooked ulices is the best way to get lost in Český Krumlov's 750 years of history. Bring solid walking shoes for the uneven cobblestones.

In the summer months, a great way to see the town is from the river. Rent a comfortable raft at Maleček Boat Rentals on Rooseveltova, or take their historical wooden raft tour with guides and commentary in English.

For the adventurous, an inner tube ride around the town is just the thing. Many of the local hostels supply these rubber rings free of charge, or you can rent one directly at the Vltava Travel Agency on Kajovská Make sure you get proper instructions on how to navigate the weirs through town, or you could end up with some small injuries as a souvenir of your visit.

Many good biking paths lead you to and from Český Krumlov, but you're not encouraged to ride through the streets once you get here. Park and lock your bike and enjoy not pedaling for a while.

## See

- **Český Krumlov State Castle and Chateau**

The Český Krumlov castle complex is the most-visited site in town. You can walk through the castle complex for free, or you can pay for either a guided tour of the interiors and the unique Castle Baroque Theater or pay a small entrance fee to walk up to the top of the castle tower. Plan at least two hours for your visit, and buy supplies for a picnic lunch in the castle gardens at the grocery across the ulice from the castle entrance on Latrán. The best approach to the castle is from Latrán. Walk through the red iron gates to the first castle courtyard that houses the Unios Tourist Information center, public washrooms, a souvenir shop, Doxa Galerie, and in the summer months, a tropically inspired mixed drink stand serving up Mojitos, Caprinhas, and Daiquiris. As you approach the castle, you cross the Bear Moat, where the famous Krumlov bears gambol about lazily. Put a few coins in the slot to help keep them fat and happy. The second castle courtyard features the entrance to the castle tower (35 crowns). After slogging up the vertiginous staircase, you are treated to a 360-degree view of the town. Here is also a

small fountain, and the main ticket office where you can book scheduled tours of the interior to the castle and the one-of-a-kind Baroque Theatre. The restaurant Maselnice, across from the ticket office, is a good place to stop for refreshment. Tours of the castle interior begin in the third castle courtyard, where you will find another souvenir store and the entrance to the Wenceslas Cellars (60 crowns), which now houses modern ceramic art pieces. Plaštovy Most, or the “Cloaked Bridge” is covered by a walkway that leads from the Castle to the Baroque Theatre, and affords another sweeping view of the town. Continue to walk uphill and you will find the entrance to the monumental castle gardens. A newly restored fountain, maze of hedgerows, a revolving theatre and a Medieval-style restaurant, Marketa beckon. At the far end of the castle gardens, you’ll find a lush duck pond, situated in a stand of moody, gnarled trees. This is the perfect picnic spot.

- **The old town**

Český Krumlov is a jumble of 750 years of architectural design, and for this reason was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Part of the fun is to get lost in its maze of cobbled ulices, while the Vltava River rushes along from almost every direction, adding to the confusion. Walking the length of Latrán from Budějovická Gate to the town square, Náměstí Svornosti, up Horní and across the bridge to the Barbakán, will take about an hour if you’re interested in stopping and gawping at sites.

## Do

- **Rafting.** On a sunny day you definitely should go rafting down the Vltava River. Load up a raft with beer and other refreshments; wear a swimming suit and go! You can rent rafts on several locations and hostels in and out the town, and near the camping area as well.
- **Egon Schiele Centrum.** Egon Schiele, one of the world’s most famous artists, was a contemporary of Gustav Klimt. He set up his easel for a short time in Český Krumlov, painting the tortured landscapes of his famous Dead Town series, and young girls in compromising poses. The townspeople labeled him a perverted pornographer, and drove him out. Ironically, Český Krumlov has now proudly embraced the genius of Egon Schiele, and has honored his memory with the Egon Schiele Centrum, a museum that houses some of his works, and most importantly, internationally-renown exhibitions of exciting modern artists. Unlike most museums in the Czech Republic, this one is open on Mondays.
- **Horseback Riding.** A 30-minute walk out of town rewards you with the opportunity to ride some beautiful horses through the local fields and forests accompanied by a guide. They provide all the gear you need, including a helmet. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a couple sugar cubes or an apple to sweeten the experience. You must book ahead – ask at your accommodations or at one of the tourist information centers.
- **Krumlov Tours.** This independently-owned company with professionally trained, English-speaking tour guides will take you on an unforgettable tour of the town. Tours run daily, and include: The Eggenberg Brewery Tour (1 hour plus free beer-tasting), Old Town Tour (1.5 hour tour with seasonal focus) Ghost Tour

(1 hour) and Rose Trail (1 hour). Special tours and prices arranged on request. Pick up your tickets at the Infocentrum on the town square or at Unios Travel Service.

- **Regional Museum.** The Český Krumlov Regional Museum features permanent exhibitions of Bohemian antiques, geological fossils, archeological finds from the nearby Celtic oppidum, and interesting rotating exhibits of local interest. On the top floor, check out the ceramic scale model of Český Krumlov at the turn of the 19th century, when eight more towers and spires decorated the landscape.

## Eat

There are no bad places to eat in Český Krumlov, but some are better than others. A good rule of thumb is to stay away from the tourist restaurants that charge more than 40 crowns for a half-liter of beer. The following restaurants are a good value (listed alphabetically):

- **Hospoda and Deli 99,** At Věžní with Latrán (*adjacent to the Budejovicka Gate - main entrance to the old town*). Whether you are staying at the adjacent hostel or not, Hospoda 99 makes it a perfect spot to sit, relax, drink and enjoy some of the best Czech and American-inspired dishes in town. Join the locals and guests on the lovely terrace or inside with a lounge, good food, good service (staff speaks english)... and all at reasonable prices. The kitchen closes at 23:00 but the bar does not... Right across the street is Deli 99 with great coffee, fresh baked bread, delicious sandwiches combo, bagels and pastries to sate small hungers. Illy coffee available to go or to savor in a comfortable room while reading a newspaper or viewing some locals' photos of their travels.
- **Krčma v Šatlavské,** Šatlavská Ulice (*around the corner from the town square*). This cozy tavern on the site of the old jailhouse is filled with tourists and locals alike, so try going on off-hours to enjoy the ambiance by the fire. Onion soup in a bread bowl followed by some meats grilled on the fire is a good bet.
- **Laibon,** Parkán Ulice (*two blocks from the town square on the right, before you reach the wooden bridge*). Český Krumlov's veggie haven and tea house. Even meat eaters enjoy the healthy departure from fried pork and take a stab at the creatively cooked grains.
- **Maštal.** Tucked away next to the Infocentrum on the town square, this establishment serves up quality food, and lots of it. Standard Czech fare, and a good range of salads. If you're not so hungry, ask for the poloviční porce, or half-portion. Half-portions should be half the price of the normal-sized meal.
- **Na Louži,** Kájovska Ulice. Unlike many other restaurants in the Czech Republic, service here comes with a smile. Reasonably priced fare piled high with fresh vegetables and potatoes makes even the simplest entrée fit for a king.
- **Nonna Gina,** Klačterní Ulice, (*across from the castle gates*). This place is owned by a Sicilian-Czech couple serves the most authentic Italian dishes in town. Here you'll find pizzas, salads and gnocchi to nosh, and even homemade tiramisu.
- **U Dvau Maryi,** Parkán Ulice (*two blocks from the town square on the right, before you reach the wooden bridge*). The building is owned by one of the town's leading experts in historical preservation. Homemade delicacies made from old

Czech recipes and offer a good selection of vegetarian offerings. The best deal is their Bohemian Platter with samplings of almost every dish on their menu for either meat eaters or vegetarians.

## Drink

- **Cikanská Jízba**, Dlouhá ulice. Cold Pilsner Urquell, hot Gypsy goulash, and great atmosphere made by a mix of travelers and die-hard locals. On the weekends, live Gypsy music swells the space, and bodies melt into the bar.
- **Dobrá Čajovna**, Latrán ulice (*across from the castle gates*). For those who would rather sample a list of more than 200 types of teas from all over the world such as one to “drink with slim concubines.”
- **Eggenberg Brewery**, Pivovarská ulice. Locally-brewed Eggenberg beer tastes best here. Try the kvasnice, the yeast beer, if available.
- **Horor Bar**, Másna ulice (*one block from the town square, heading towards the wooden bridge*). Never ending trick-or-treats. Ask the barmaid with the darkened eye sockets for *skoumavky* for your table: little test-tubes filled with blood-red liquor.
- **Travellers' Hostel Bar**, Soukenická ulice. Anything goes, and everyone does. Dancing until the cows come home, and even after they've been put to pasture. On weekends, local Czech bands strum their stuff.
- **U Baby**, Rooseveltova ulice (*next door to Hostel Krumlov House*). A local bar for students, die-hards, and the odd lost traveler. On offer: Gambrinus, Pilsner Urquell, impromptu acoustic guitar jams, and hedonistic, roasted pig knuckle gorge-fests.

## Sleep

The good news is that all accommodation is within an easy 10-minute walk to the town square. The bad news is that accommodations tend to be on the smaller side, so in the busy summer months you will need to book ahead. The Infocentrum on the town square or Unios Travel Service at the 1st Castle Courtyard are happy to book hotels or bed and breakfast accommodations (also known as *pension*) for a nominal fee.

## Camping

- Camping Area (next to the Vltava River about a 30 minute walk outside of the town center). There is a very large camping area in Český Krumlov. Ask at a tourist information office for directions. A nearby grocery store (10 minute walk) and a couple of local restaurants next to the camping site will keep hunger at bay.

## Hostels

- **Hostel 99**, <http://www.hostel99.com/>
- **Hostel Krumlov House**, <http://www.krumlovhostel.com/>

- **Hostel Skippy**, <http://www.skippy.wz.cz/>
- **Travellers' Hostel**, <http://www.travellers.cz/en/hostels-apartments.php>
- **Hostel Merlin**, <http://www.hostelmerlin.com/>

## Get out

Getting to Český Krumlov can sometimes be difficult. Leaving Český Krumlov requires even more persistence. The **Infocentrum** on the town square has a wealth of information of where to go next, and are happy to provide maps, train and bus schedules and even book you a bed to your next port of call. Do your homework: Sometimes it's a good idea to keep your bed in Český Krumlov and go on day trips to the following places (listed alpha):

- **České Budějovice**. Boasting a massive town square, nam. Přemysl Otakar, is replete with shopping and dining opportunities. Off the town square, you'll find many hidden nooks and special places of interest. It is definitely worth the day trip from Český Krumlov by either bus or rail, but not worth staying overnight, unless you have to make some sort of early train or bus connection. Ask for the schedules at Infocentrum or go to <http://jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusy/spojeni/>
- Hike up **Mount Klet'**. This mountain is the highest point in the region at 1084m. It's a gentle, 4-hour uphill and downhill hike, largely through forest. You can get up the mountain by car if you're not up to the hike. Follow the green marked trail from the Český Krumlov railway station, cross over the tracks and continue up the road, following horizontal green lines painted on trees. Once on top, climb the lookout tower and visit the restaurant and bar, if it's open. You may want to visit the observatory, with its telescope and scientific instruments, though the hours are a bit sporadic off-season.
- **Kramolín Ski Resort**. Open November through April, this small ski resort is perfect for learners and children. At the base of the main ski lift are quite a few shops that rent and sell gear and a few nice restaurants and cafes to while away the time. The ski bus runs to and from Kramolín from Český Krumlov. See their website for prices and ski bus schedules.
- **Lipno Lake Slideland & Aquaworld**. This artificially-made lake harnesses the power of the Vltava River at Lipno Dam. In the summer, there are campsites at Černá v Pošumaví, Frymburk, Horní Plána and Lipno nad Vltavou. In the winter, cross-country ski trails along side Lipno Lake beckon. Aquaworld, next to the Marina, houses an attractive modern swimming pool and aquapark. The bobsleigh track, Slideland, across the road, is a fun for kids and parents alike.
- **Rožmberk Castle**. This idyllic town, featuring a picture-perfect castle built in 1253, was the official seat of the Rožmberk family, whose power stretched over the region of South Bohemia. A tour of the lovingly maintained castle is worth the 30 minute trip by car or bus from Český Krumlov.

- **Šumava.** This is the Bohemian Forest, a spot for nature lovers, and one of the best places in the country to hike, bike, and cross-country ski.
- **Vyšší Brod.** One of the best things to do in the summer months is to rent a boat from Vyšší Brod, visit the monastery, and then navigate your raft for 8-10 hours all the way back to Český Krumlov. This can take one or two days, depending on your fitness level and flow of the river. Along the way, there are a few good camping areas to pitch a tent. To book your boat in the high season, try Maleček Boat Rentals.
- **Zlata Koruna.** 7 km from Český Krumlov, this beautifully-restored monastery is set in a stand of ancient oaks. You can reach the Monastery by rafting from Český Krumlov with the Maleček Boat Rentals, or you can take a local bus from the main bus station.

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

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