Prague

**Basic information:**

* the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic
* 14th largest city in the EU (area - 496 km2)
* 1,3 Million inhabitants
* political, cultural, and economic centre
* President of the Czech Republic and government have seats here
* Prague is considered one of the most beautiful cities in Europe
* visited by many tourists

**History:**

* the capital city of the Czech state for 11 centuries
* originated as settlement around the Prague Castle (founded around 880)
* In 1348, Emperor Charles IV founded the New Town of Prague - created one of the biggest cities in medieval Europe
* 1583-1612 Rudolf II Habsburg chose the Prague castle for permanent residence – art boom
* 1618-1648 Thirty Years' War – end of boom
* In 1784 the Emperor Joseph II joined independent Prague cities -Old Town, New Town, Lesser Town and Hradcany -into a single capital city.
* In the 19 century - the centre of the Czech national revival
* October 28, 1918 - the capital of the independent Czechoslovak Republic
* In November 1989 Prague was the birthplace of the "Velvet Revolution"
* From 1.1.1993 Prague is the capital city of the Czech Republic.

**Climate:**

* borderline oceanic climate
* winters - relatively cold with very little sunshine
* summers - usually bring fine sunny days with highs being around 25 degrees

**Economy:**

* Prague is in comparison with the rest of the CR strongly richer region
* one of the most important economic centre of the Czech Republic
* a lot of people commute to Prague to work
* Services account for around 80 percent of employment.

**Population:**

* 1,3 Million
* Foreigners – 14%
* The most numerous minorities are Ukrainians, Slovaks, Russians and Vietnamese. The city also has got several Roma communities

**Administration:**

* Prague has 57 municipal districts - managed by an elected council, mayor and district office
* From 1 July 2001 this level of competence in the whole of Prague is divided into 22 administrative districts and they are named Prague 1-22.

**Transport:**

* Prague is a important intersection in the Czech Republic and also in Central Europe
* Public transport - Prague Metro, Prague tram system, buses, the Petřín funicular to Petřín Hill, and six ferries
* The Metro has three major lines and the interesting thing is, that the escalator at Náměstí Míru station is the longest escalator in Europe

**Culture:**

* Prague is the cultural centre of the Czech Republic
* a lot of museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas and various cultural institutions
* hundreds of restaurants, bars and pubs

**Sport:**

* Prague is home of many sport teams (football and hockey - Sparta Praha, Slavia Praha)
* The largest Czech multifunctional hall - O2 Arena
* second largest stadium in the world - Strahov stadium
* Sports events include: Prague International Marathon (PIM), Memorial of Joseph Odložil (international athletics meeting), Mystic Sk8 Cup (World skateboard Cup).

**Main sights:**

* Prague is the sixth-most-visited European city
* Prague suffered considerably less damage during World War II than some other major cities in the region, so most of its historic architecture was maintained.
* contains one of the world's most pristine and varied collections of architecture
* most of the popular sights are in Old Town, Lesser Town or Hradčany.
* Examples:
* Prague Castle with the St. Vitus Cathedral which store the Czech Crown Jewels
* Charles Bridge
* Petřín Hill with Petřín Lookout Tower
* The Astronomical Clock (Orloj) on Old Town City Hall
* Busy and historic Wenceslas Square
* The National Museum with large scientific and historical collections
* The National Theatre, a neo-Renaissance building with golden roof, alongside the banks of the Vltava River
* The Dancing House (Fred and Ginger Building)
* Žižkov Television Tower with crawling babies sculptures
* Vyšehrad Castle with Vyšehrad cemetery and Prague oldest Rotunda of St. Martin