

In the footsteps of Emperor Charles IV



For visitors the charm and magic of Prague can seem like an accumulated effect of chance. However, this is not really the case, one could rather say that Prague largely bears the hallmarks of a man - the Czech king and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV born in 1316. During his reign Prague became the heart of Europe. Get to know the wonderful heritage and the historic testament that he left behind. In Czech Republic celebrations marking the 700 years anniversary of his birth takes place and you have a unique opportunity to take part in the events around the country.

Charles IV absolutely loved Prague and the city flourished under his rule. Many construction projects started during the reign of Charles IV, including St. Vitus Cathedral. In 1348 he founded Prague's New Town (Nove Mesto) and Charles University was established to become the first university in Central Europe. Karlštejn Castle was established to protect the imperial jewels and other treasures. The construction of Charles Bridge began in 1357 on the site where Judith Bridge once stood (which collapsed in a flooding 1342). Charles IV is remembered as the most beloved of Czech kings and "the father of the Czech nation."

Events in Prague and around the country

Prague Castle will in memory of the 700 anniversary of the birth of the Czech king and emperor Charles IV show case seven major exhibitions. A special exhibition of the Czech crown jewels will be displayed in the Vladislav Hall between 15 to 29 May 2016. This only happens when there is a presidential election in the Czech Republic. Charles IV remains are found in the royal crypt in the St. Vitus Cathedral, one of the many buildings he was closely involved in during his live. Take a walk through Prague's beautiful streets and walk over the Charles Bridge that carries its name after the emperor. Everything about its history can be found at the Charles Bridge Museum, which is located at the square Křížovnické, near the tower of the Charles Bridge. Just a few steps from the Charles Bridge tower is a monument of Charles IV, built in 1848, for the five hundred anniversary of the establishment of the Charles University. Then wander towards the New Town whose centre has become today's Charles Square (Karlovo namesti). An exhibition of historical artefacts and documents will be held in the large underground vaults of Carolinum, the oldest college in the vicinity of the Old City. End the promenade in the heart of the historic

centre at the Old Town Square. On the east side of the square stands the magnificent Gothic house Stone Bell House where the future monarch Charles IV was born.

You can see the historical interior where Charles IV spent his early years in life and it will be exhibitions organized by the Prague City Gallery. Then rent a car and drive in Charles IV's footsteps more specifically to the nearby town of Mělník. Charles IV crowned Mělník a royal city and brought in vines from Burgundy and Champagne in France. Its history is closely linked with wine production, a tradition that has lasted more than a thousand years. The vineyards in Mělník produce many well-known wines and each year a harvest festival is held in late summer. The usually tranquil medieval town transforms into one big wine festival. Charles IV's last wife had the chapel in the castle built with Gothic arches. There is no better way to enjoy the unforgettable charm of Mělník than watching the sunset over the two largest Czech rivers by the magnificent castle while enjoying the excellent local wine. Come and experience it for yourself! Do not miss to discover the beauty of the town of Litoměřice, about 45 minutes from Mělník. The royal city of Litoměřice where the rivers Elbe and Ohře flow together is one of the most beautiful cities in the Czech Republic. For centuries Litoměřice was a major trading centre of the Holy Roman Empire. The extensive historic centre has dozens of colourful squares and streets with Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance buildings. You will be mesmerized! The famous wine from the nearby winery Velké Žernoseky will certainly make the walk through the city more enjoyable. Continue the drive towards the spa town of Karlovy Vary, which is famous for its hot springs and golf courses. People from all over the world, who come to the city for spa treatments, consume the spring water in large quantities. Charles IV and his entourage are said to have stumbled upon the spring water one day during a hunt and became fascinated by the warm water they drank. Charles IV is said to have suffered from painful gout, and he claimed that the water had helped him. Therefore, he founded the town of Karlovy Vary and the rest, is as they say, history. Also make a visit to the nearby castle Loket where the Czech King and Roman Emperor Charles IV came to hunt game and rest. The royal palace is said to have gotten its name from the place where the river Ohře creates a charming bend in the form of a human elbow (medallion in Czech). Charles IV is said to have loved the place despite the fact that his father held him captive in force for several months during his childhood. Wrap up the royal route with a visit to the castle Karlštejn. Karlštejn is a fairy tale castle perched on a hill near the river Berounka. Karlštejn is a popular tourist destination and an intact reminder of the time when its founder was in full force. During Charles IV time the Czech crown jewels was kept here. The castle's main event during the year will be an exhibition entitled *The Karlštejn Treasure* showing the culture of the imperial court. It shows medieval objects used to decorate both the noble men and women during the 14th century. The exhibition will be open throughout the season.

Come and take part in the jubilee when the Czechs celebrate their Father of the Nation!

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