



BRNO

LOVE FOR LIFE

Bored in Brno? Not a chance!
You might skip some lectures, but you definitely won't get bored.
Concerts, theatres, festivals, exhibitions, parties, pubs, cafés,...

CONTENTS



Is it possible
to survive in Brno if you
don't speak Czech?
1

Becoming a local
or how to integrate
as a foreigner in Brno
5

Living the Czech lifestyle
9

Discover Moravian folklore
and traditions in Brno
13

Cultural diversity of Brno
17

Theaters and cinemas
of Brno
21

Museums, exhibitions,
and the heritage
they reveal
25

The city of music
29

It's all about sports
33

How Brno celebrates
festivities and holidays
37

Where to meet
your friends:
restaurants and pubs
41

Where to meet
your friends:
cafes, teahouses
and confectionaries
45

Where to meet
your friends:
Brno at night
49

Take a walk through
the Brno's main
attractions
53

Choose your
sightseeing
perspective
of Brno
57

Take a tour outside
of the city center
61

Transportation
in and around Brno
65

Nature in the city
69

In an hour from Brno:
ideas for a one-day trip
73

Brno in the center
of Europe
77

Is it possible to survive in Brno if you don't speak Czech?

If you dream of studying abroad, you for sure take into account the language spoken in the country where you plan to go. Whatever place you choose, you find yourself in one of the two possible situations – either you speak the given language (at least a bit) or you don't.

If you've learned the language before, then you're in a comfortable position. But if you've never had a chance to get familiar with the language, it's worth checking what to expect.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Coming to Brno to study in English means you're already equipped with the language that will make your daily life a pleasant one. You'll find yourself in an international, multicultural environment where English

serves as a link language. It will cover your studies, some of the administration, your first friendships and hanging out in the afternoon. But what if you leave your bubble and you don't speak any Czech?

Foreigners in Brno

Brno is the second biggest city of the Czech Republic. It offers good quality education and interesting working opportunities both for locals and foreign guests. This creates an open environment where multicultural contacts become more and more numerous. As a result, more and more people speak various languages on a daily basis, with English being the most popular one.

According to the statistics of the Czech Ministry of Interior, the number of foreigners registered in Brno is constantly growing, reaching 36 thousand people in mid-2020. That

More and more people speak various languages on a daily basis, with English being the most popular one.



number doesn't cover Slovaks who have a special status in the Czech Republic as they used to form one country, Czechoslovakia, which split in 1993. Today, the number of Slovaks in Brno reaches 29 thousands and together with other foreigners they constitute over 17% of the city's population.

It's enough to go for a walk, especially in the city center or popular parks, to hear English here and there when you pass by other walkers. And based on the people's behavior, you can be sure they're not tourists but locals and local foreigners.

Where is English enough?

It's naturally the easiest to communicate in English in the parts of the city where foreigners are numerous. Restaurants, bars and cafes are the places where you don't have to worry if you speak Czech or not. Shops in the city center usually hire staff that you'll be able to communicate with, and there's quite a lot of places with self-service too.

When it comes to the cultural offer, it includes proposals for non-Czech speakers. Cinemas and theaters present programs where a combination of sound and subtitles allows everyone to find something for themselves. Museums and exhibitions also have solutions in place inclusive for their foreign guests.

Sports centers are not lagging behind, so you'll be able to train various sports in a comfortable way as many places offer courses and activities for English-speaking clients. You'll be also able to get to them either with public transportation or with taxis as both options are easy to use for non-Czech speakers.

Shops in the city center usually hire staff that you'll be able to communicate with. Museums and exhibitions also have solutions in place inclusive for their foreign guests.



And where to find all the information about the city and its offering in English? Of course the Internet is the number one source. Many local portals publish local news in English and there are various free paper newspapers that contain a section with translated texts.

The situation might get more challenging when you need to use services in official institutions. While banks or phone services are usually not a problem, then the post office or any other city or state office might not offer support in other languages. In that case it's best to get help from a Czech-speaking friend or use professional assistance for foreigners.

Photo: BUT, Jan Prokešius





Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Learning Czech

Although it's possible to live in Brno without speaking Czech, it's good to learn at least some basic words. It will make many situations not only easier but also nicer as locals always appreciate efforts made by foreigners in their not that easy language. As Nelson Mandela once said: „If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.“

You can memorize a couple of expressions your friends could teach you. But you can also decide to learn Czech more in depth in one of the many language schools. It's usually taught through English as students come from all corners of the world. You'll for sure meet there also people from other

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Slavic countries, so if you're not one of them, don't get discouraged by their ability to learn Czech quickly. Always keep in mind Kató Lomb's words that the "language is the only thing worth knowing even poorly".

And once you learn some Czech, lose yourself in a new adventure of speaking Czech to Slovaks. Although they speak Slovak, which is a different language, it's quite easy for them and Czechs to understand each other.

So, which language do you choose?

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Becoming a local or how to integrate as a foreigner in Brno

Same as travel broadens the mind, living abroad expands the network of contacts. And Brno gives you a perfect opportunity to meet interesting people from both the Czech Republic and many other countries.

The 2020 statistics confirm that foreigners living in Brno come from 145 countries, with the top 10 being Slovakia, Ukraine, Vietnam, Russia, Romania, India, Bulgaria, Turkey, United States, and Kazakhstan.

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Integrating with the community of foreigners

At the beginning, it's always the easiest to get to know the people with whom you study, and if you study in English, your first friends will most probably be also foreigners. What's more, the communities most open to newcomers are those that focus on supporting foreigners and bringing them closer to other people so that no one feels left behind.

To start with, you can reach out to Brno Expat Centre and Foreigners.cz. Both of those organizations offer help to foreigners in all aspects of life, for instance administration related to arrival and stay, finding suitable accommodation, health care, organizing your studies or looking for a job, learning

Such supportive institutions don't only work with people individually, but also organize group events so that foreigners can meet each other and find new friends.



the language and many more. Such supportive institutions don't only work with people individually, but also organize group events so that foreigners can meet each other and find new friends. Those might be lectures on a chosen topic with networking time afterwards, thematic fairs, evening leisure meetups in a bar, or trips over the weekend.

Another popular option are the events organized by the community itself. To find them it's best to ask people around or look them up on the Internet. Most of those activities use Facebook groups where members not only organize themselves but also simply stay in touch. Just keep in mind that because those are volunteers who build them, some of those groups disappear over time and new ones come up in their place.

Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius





Photo: Depositphotos.com, Veklymvdobrot

What community events can you come across? Among the most popular ones you'll find one-day weekend trips. As an example, the ones named "Call of the woods" gather from a dozen to a hundred of hikers during each trip. They walk around 15 km in the nature visiting the most interesting places in the region. Other category form meetups grouping people around a given language that they want to speak. And it doesn't matter if they're beginners or advanced – everyone is welcome. The most frequented ones are of course in English and Czech, but you'll find also German, Russian, French and many more. Worth mentioning is that those events attract not only foreigners but also Czechs who'd like to meet new people from different corners of the world.

Brno finds it important to integrate its non-Czech citizens, no matter if they stay here just for a couple of months or for life.



Integrating with Czechs

One of the key factors allowing foreigners to feel well in the city is the approach of the city itself. Brno finds it important to integrate its non-Czech citizens, no matter if they stay here just for a couple of months or for life. That's why in September 2020 the city approved the new strategy for the integration of foreigners for the years 2020–2026. The goal is not only to make it easier for the citizens from abroad to organize their life after arrival, but also to become a well appreciated part of the daily life that gets involved in shaping the city's presence and future.

To make that happen, it's crucial for the Czech citizens to understand who their new neighbors are. The key event building such awareness is the annual festival Babylonfest which presents national minorities living in Brno, with their culture, music, food and a bit of history. Also, many of the local media help by regularly mentioning diverse traditions and specific needs connected to the multicultural communities. As an example, Czech Christmas traditions are always accompanied by the description of how local foreigners celebrate that time.

However, still the best way for Czechs to get to know their neighbors from abroad is by getting to know them in person. And still the best way for foreigners to achieve that is to be present where Czechs are, spend time with them in a way they do and simply live like locals do. But what does that actually mean?

Czechs enjoy spending time with their friends in pubs, bars and cafes, and they do that all week long. They also practice a lot of sports with weekend trips.



Czech are a relatively sociable nation. They enjoy spending time with their friends in pubs, bars and cafes, and they do that all week long. They also practice a lot of sports with weekend trips being a very popular way to relax and energize before the upcoming week. If you want to be part of that, invest your time in your interests and join courses or organized sports groups where you can meet Czechs as well. With time you could go for a beer together and that's how your Czech network might grow.

Just remember that Czechs need time to get to know you before you become friends (and not just people who know each other from school, work or a pub). Depending on the culture you come from that might feel natural to you, too slow or too quick. Don't get discouraged and accept their pace. With experience brought by the relations you build, you'll learn what the natural Czech style is and you'll become much more local yourself.



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Living the Czech lifestyle

“What are Czechs like?” – you probably ask yourself when planning to study in Brno. There are some common observations that people coming from abroad usually make about the locals, although it’s clear that not everyone is the same and that those observations should not be taken for rules nor serve as stereotypes.

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Restaurants and pubs

The first thing you'll surely notice after arriving to Brno is the number of typical Czech pubs in all parts of the city and how often people sit there. They enjoy meeting their friends over a beer just after work or in the evening. And it doesn't even have to be a pub. Depending on the hour and what they want to eat, they spend time in restaurants as well as in cafes.

Many Czechs visit restaurants also during the working day. It's very common to eat lunch outside and most places offer daily menu at an affordable price. Such meals are usually available from 11:00 till 14:00, but as most people go to eat at 12:00, they're often sold out much sooner.

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You're probably aware that Czechs are known for how much beer they drink, but if you come to Brno don't get surprised by their love of wine. Brno is situated in the wine region of South Moravia and winemaking is essential to its culture and traditions. If you go south from Brno, you'll notice how quickly beer loses its overwhelming predominance in favor of the fresh taste of Moravian wines.

More than just drinking and eating

Believe it or not, what Czechs drink is only secondary to how they value spending time with others. It's enough to go for a walk in any park to observe many other reasons to gather. Moms with strollers enjoying company and fresh air, dog owners chatting while their pets are playing together, various sports practitioners training in groups – the park is never empty. And what you'll also see there, especially in summer, are picnics where all the best combines: gathering, chatting, sport activities, running around with kids and dogs, playing music, singing, eating, and drinking.

Knowing how often and for how long Czechs sit chatting over food and beer, you might be surprised by how much time they also dedicate to sports. Almost everyone practices some sort of sport regularly and their training looks seriously even if it's an occasional recreation.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, peus



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Weekend time

For many, sports is a way to spend their weekend, so they go with their families and friends for cycling or hiking trips outside of the city. Others prefer to focus on sightseeing and visit all possible, not just the most popular locations. And as Czech Republic is not very big, you'll surely notice how well Czechs know their region and the whole country. They also enjoy spending time in cottages close to the nature where they stay not only for weekends but also for summer holidays.

Those who choose not to leave the city are mostly active too, enjoying cultural offer, walks around the city and, of course, meeting friends. However, bear in mind that Sundays are reserved to family time which often means staying at home. It's the calmest day of the week in Brno with many restaurants and cafes being closed and a much lower number of people hanging around.

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Rules of the game

Many foreigners comment the Czech service and approach to customers. It seems to them that Czechs are unhelpful and unfriendly, but the reality is that Czechs value a very specific way of playing by the rules.

The very first place to experience that is usually a restaurant or a pub. If you order the place's specialty, you'll be seen as someone who knows what's good. If you have your coaster ready on the table when the waiter brings your beer, you naturally follow an expected habit. But if you behave in a less typical way and simply don't play by the unspoken rules for guests, you disturb the rhythm of the game.

Another situation when playing by the rules impacts the service is handling any official matter. If you go to an office and your case requires a non-standard step, don't ask for it straight away. Allow the officer to explain you what the standard

procedure looks like, confirm you understand, and only then ask for recommendation on what to do in your less typical case. It quickly appears many cases aren't that hard to solve.

From small talk to friendship

Czechs usually seem reserved and relatively quiet, but their love for gatherings proves that in fact they're very sociable people. And once they're in their well-known group, they launch themselves in lively and emotional discussions. Just check out pubs where they sit in groups at big tables talking, laughing, and even singing.

When you then meet your neighbors in the courtyard, you might be surprised that they barely say a word. That's because they're reserved and formal towards strangers, and changing that status requires a lot of time and patience, especially if you come from a more open and direct culture.

A simple exchange of "good morning" might last for months until people feel comfortable to move to the next step which is... small talk. Usually it starts with holding a door for one another or wishing happy holidays, but that's not always a case. Sometimes even getting a response to "hello" might require patience, for instance when your neighbor doesn't have a good opinion about rented flats.

But don't get discouraged by the pace in which Czechs open up to other people. They like to

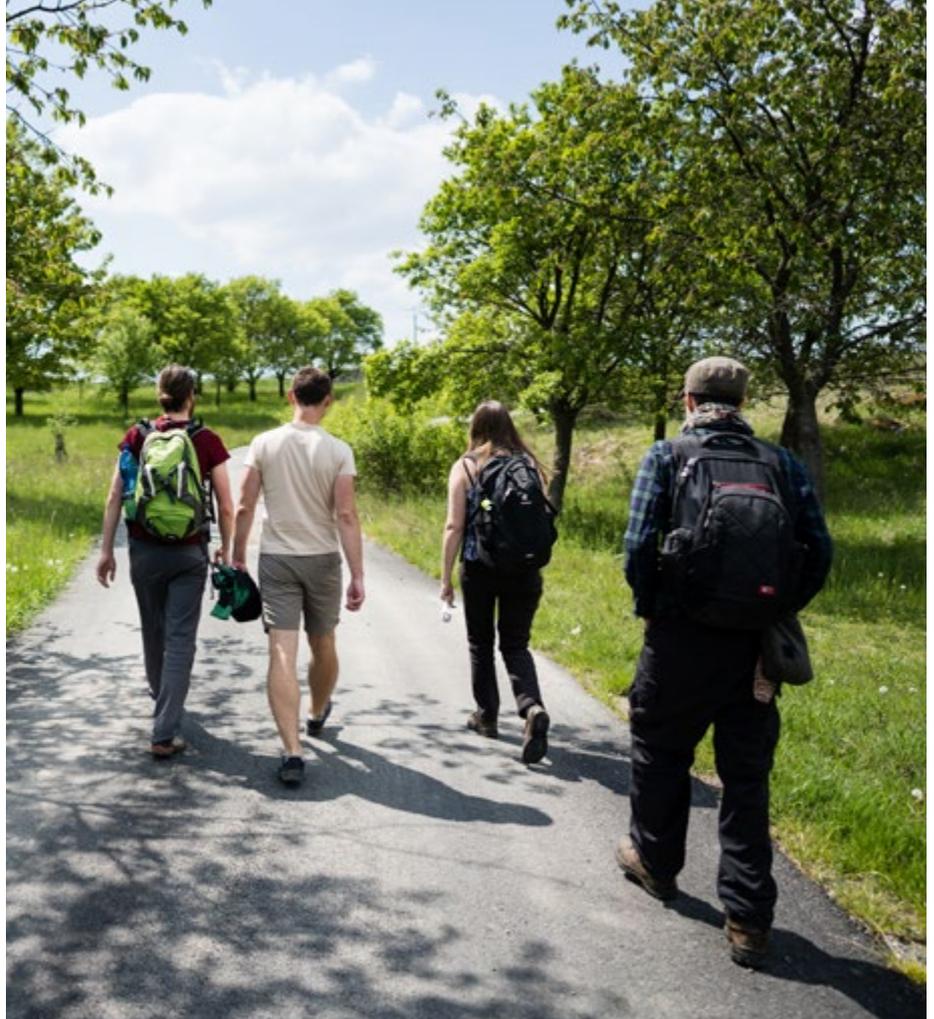


Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

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protect their privacy, and they don't share too many details from their lives before they feel the relationship is mature enough for that. They might not be the fastest in the world in that matter, but once they do it can become a deep, rewarding and long lasting friendship.

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Discover Moravian folklore and traditions in Brno

Situated in the South Moravia, which is the Czech Republic's renowned wine region, Brno witnesses traditions and customs based not only on the cereal-related yearly cycle but also on the one resulting from the production of wine. Throughout the ages, all local celebrations and activities have been aligned with the Christian calendar which influenced not only their character but also the exact dates when many of them take place.

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In vino veritas

The most important wine festival of the year is organized just after the harvest of the grapes and is a joyful celebration of wine. In the Czech Republic it falls in September. During the whole month you can take part in many events in various parts of the region and the city. You'll enjoy music, food and wine, and you just have to taste the specialty of the region, burčák, which is a partially fermented must from the current year's grapes.

Later in the year, when the new wine is ready, locals celebrate the St. Martin's Day falling on November 11. On that day, Czechs traditionally eat roasted goose and open the very first bottles of the young wine.

You'll enjoy music, food and wine, and you just have to taste the specialty of the region, burčák.



Those that follow the regional standards are marked with a special label confirming that their quality has been approved by a dedicated commission.

Following the seasons

Many traditions and customs that reflect the yearly cycle of nature have developed numerous variations across Central Europe or even the whole continent. However, a lot of them have already disappeared or managed to survive only in a form of a reconstruction. Here, the folklore is continuously alive.

One of its key elements is music. Whatever traditional celebration you'll join, you'll



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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

for sure hear the one that is characteristic for the Moravian region. It's called cimbálka after the cimbalom which is the key instrument of the musical ensemble. It either plays instrumental music or is accompanied by a vocal and usually performs folk songs.

All regional customs are also bound with the aesthetics of traditional decorations and patterns. Intense and clear colors, rich flowers, original fabrics, and crafted materials are all at the heart of traditional items such as ceramics, home decorations or folk costumes.

Both music and colorful patterns cannot be missed during vivid festivities that celebrate the passing of winter and the

All regional customs are also bound with the aesthetics of traditional decorations and patterns.



coming of spring. The local Masopust which has similar origins as many other carnivals in the world culminates in the last three days which are called Fašank. During those days unmarried man wander through the streets singing and visiting unmarried girls inviting them to dance together. If you're lucky enough you might come across them even in the city.

Another event you cannot miss takes place on April 30. It recalls burning witches and warding off evil to protect the people. Pálení čarodejnic, as it's called, concentrates around an immense bonfire where a puppet of a witch is being burnt. People dance, sing and have fun together around the fire till the late evening hours.

The second half of the year also brings its festivities, and not just the ones connected to wine. When the winter approaches, you might come across the term *zabijačka*. Traditionally, winter was the time to slaughter pigs as low temperatures allowed to preserve obtained meat for a longer time. Today, even though pork is available on a daily basis throughout the whole year, *zabijačka* is still present in the Czech culture and offers the possibility to taste really fresh products such as various sausages or head cheese.

The highlight of the show

The most impressive folk event is called *Hody* and takes place on very different dates, depending on the day of the patron saint of the local parish church. The traditional festivities last a couple of days with the main activities happening on Sunday. On that day, the local youth dressed in traditional folklore costumes march through the village (or the district) in a colorful and joyful parade, led by their two representatives, a young man and a girl called respectively *stárek* and *stárka*. The day is full of music, dancing and of course good food, and is a must be event for those who want the experience the clue of the Moravian folklore.

If you feel attracted by the local colorful and joyful traditions, and want to see more, you should definitely visit the region of *Slovácko* that is a part of

If you feel attracted by the local traditions, and want to see more, you should definitely visit the region of *Slovácko* that is a part of Moravia on the border with Slovakia.



Moravia on the border with Slovakia. Apart from admiring beautifully painted houses and wine cellars or purchasing some of many traditionally crafted products, you should definitely take part in local celebrations. The most renowned ones are *Jízda králů* (the ride of the kings) and the contest for the best *verbuňk* dancer. They have both been awarded the title of the UNESCO Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Students' time

There is one folk tradition that in Brno has been passed into the hands of students. It's erecting of the maypole, called *májka*, which according to the custom usually takes place on May 1. This very tall wooden pole, with branches and decorations kept just on the top, is being placed on the main city square as a celebration of spring, youth, fertility and love. In Brno those are the students that lift it using traditional methods. This act opens the students' festival *Majales* in which students from all universities take part.

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Cultural diversity of Brno

The number of foreigners living in the Czech Republic is constantly growing and in Brno, its second biggest city it reached over 17% of the number of citizens in 2020. It's also estimated that 5–10% of the Czech population of the city is of Romani origin. These figures bring two important information for any foreigner coming to live here. On one side, the population in the Czech Republic is ethnically quite homogenous, on the other side, Brno is an attractive place to live for foreigners who come here in bigger and bigger numbers every year.

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Diversity awareness

What's worth highlighting is that most of the foreigners that you can meet in Brno actually live here. While it's quite typical to hear foreign languages in the centers of bigger cities, Brno is especially popular as a place to stay in than just to visit. The tourism isn't as high as in Prague and those who benefit from the city's offer are the locals themselves.

The reasons why foreigners decide to move in here are numerous, with work, studies and quality of life naturally taking the lead. What keeps the interest growing is the approach of both the city officials and locals who are more and more welcoming towards the newcomers and offer them the support they need. As a result, Brno has become a new home for people from 145 countries with the top ones being Slovakia, Ukraine, Vietnam, Russia, Romania, India, Bulgaria, Turkey, United States, and Kazakhstan.

The range of this diversity is visible even among children. One of the public schools that



Photo: Depositphotos.com, Vynikil

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follows an integration program for foreigners recently celebrated its anniversary with an event for parents and friends. The kids welcomed their audience in all languages that they speak which gave 29 variations of "hello" from all over the world.

The awareness of the cultural variety and the benefits it brings is supported each year through festivals such as Babylonfest, Ghettofest or Meeting Brno. The events present traditions, customs as well as world views of ethnical and cultural minorities that live in Brno. They're full of music, art, lectures, food, and fun, but mostly create occasions to meet people from other cultures in person, talk to them and exchange ideas. And if you want to get to know those cultures even better, most of them have their associations in the city so you can stay in touch. The one you shouldn't miss for sure is bringing closer the Romani people, their history and traditions through a thought-provoking exhibition in the Museum of Romani Culture.



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius



Photo: Depositphotos.com, Sargun Park

Culinary travels

There's no better way to start the journey through the cultural diversity than by getting to know what and how people eat. And happily for local palates, many foreigners decided to share with others their culinary heritage by opening restaurants, bistros and grocery shops. Next to typical Czech restaurants, you'll easily find here various Asian offerings, for instance Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Laotian, Indian, and Nepali. Cuisines from other parts of the world are represented, among others, by places serving Mexican, Italian, Greek, Arab, Russian, Ukrainian, or British food.

If you're an avid cook yourself, you'll appreciate specialized grocery shops located in different parts of the city and often run by resident foreigners. They usually focus on a specific region and sell products needed to prepare traditional meals from that given part of the

If you're an avid cook yourself, you'll appreciate specialized grocery shops located in different parts of the city and often run by resident foreigners.



world. The most typical ones offer merchandise from Asia and Middle East, and there are also those that focus more on Latin America or specific parts of Europe.

If you fancy Vietnamese food and would like to experience the atmosphere of an Asian market, the Brno's Vietnamese marketplace in Olomoucká Street is a mandatory place on your go-to map. After you enter the area, you'll definitely have an impression that you've just left the Czech Republic. Starting with the language spoken all around, through the products being sold, to the smells coming from numerous food corners, the place brings together everything that the local Vietnamese community has to offer. And don't forget to check your closest small grocery shop around the corner. If it's run by a Vietnamese, for sure you'll find there some Asian goodies, too.

More than just food

The cultural diversity enriches not only possible culinary experiences. It goes further, into the areas of leisure and education. If you care about being physically active, you might appreciate the variety of available sports, including those less typical for this part of the world such as cricket, capoeira or headis. And if you're focused more on the mental development, you can immerse yourself into the rich artistic program. Among the many events to choose from, the theater festival Divadelní svět or the International Biennial of Graphic Design are certainly worth your attention.

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One of the ways to get to know a different culture is through another language. In that matter Brno doesn't stay behind and allows to study many languages, including some non-Indo-European ones. And if you choose to learn Czech, you can be sure that you'll quickly find out how varied this language is from region to region, what words are the typical Brno ones and what cultural influence brought them to life.

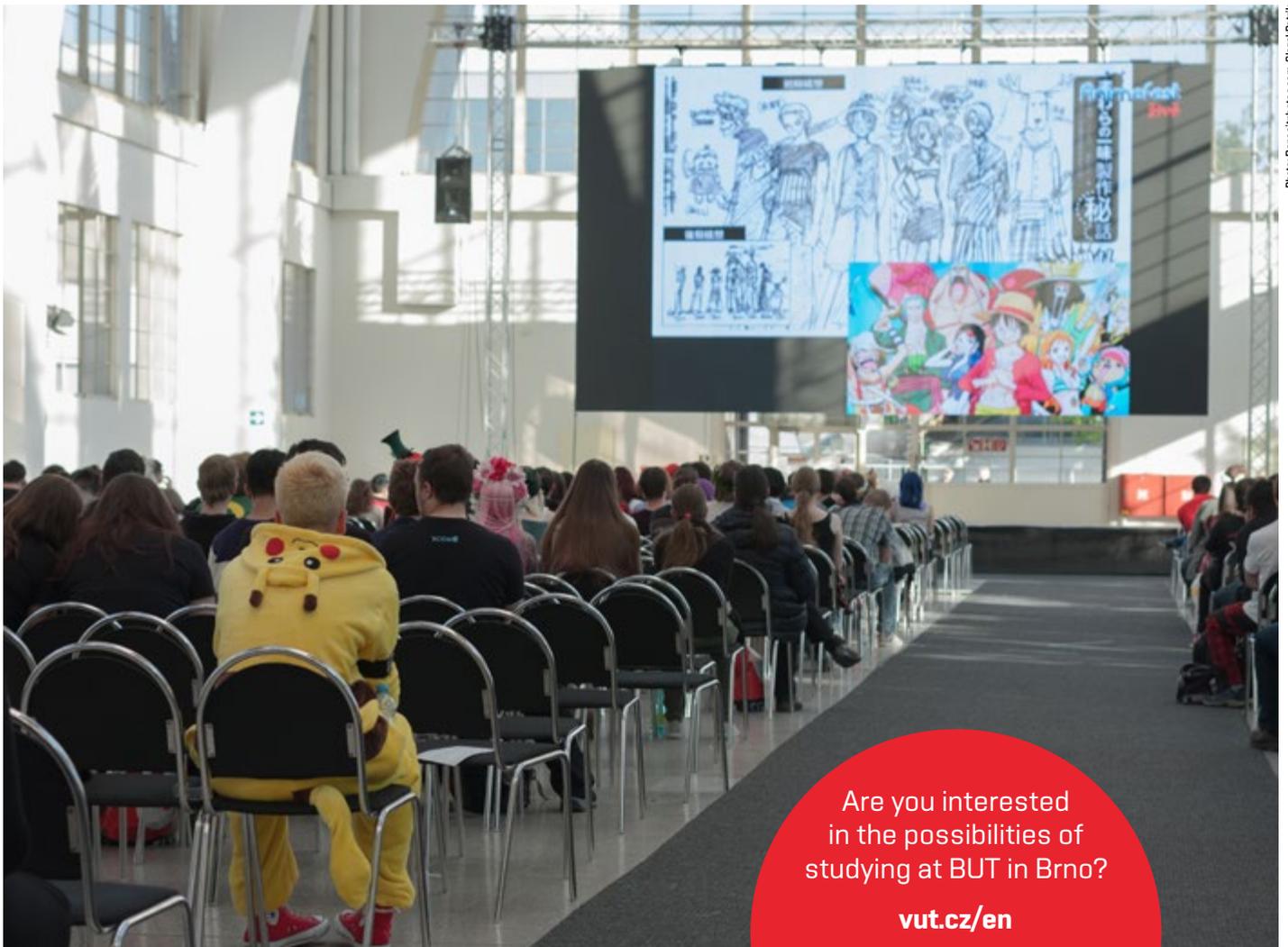


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Theaters and cinemas of Brno

Brno is definitely a city of cultural events, especially the theatrical ones. The number of groups and stages can be counted in dozens, and a simple walk through the city center makes you quickly realize that there's a theater around every corner. It's not surprising after you see the interest of the Brno society in the exhibited plays. Every day of the week you can meet elegantly dressed couples or groups of all ages going into or out of theaters. And if you want to join them, you'd better book your tickets weeks in advance. They usually go like hot cakes.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

From high art...

If you enjoy traditional as well as modern dramas produced by repertory theaters, your cultural journey through the city should start at the National Theatre Brno (Národní divadlo Brno). The choice is wide as it consists of three stages, which offer a variety of genres.

The first one, the Mahen Theatre (Mahenovo divadlo) with its drama ensemble is located in a building from the end of the 19th century. Worth mentioning is that it not only represents the architectural style typical for theatrical buildings of that time in Central Europe, but it was also the very first theater on the

The Mahen Theatre was also the very first theater on the continent with electric lightning, and designed by Thomas Edison himself.



continent with electric lightning, and designed by Thomas Edison himself.

The second drama ensemble of the National Theatre Brno performs in Reduta which has an interesting history, too. It's the oldest theater in Central Europe dating from at least 1608. In 1767 it hosted a concert by 11-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his sister Nannerl. Today, it's one of the most renowned and progressive stages in the Czech Republic.

Last but not least is the Janáček Theatre (Janáčkovo divadlo) opened only in 1965,

and back then being the best-equipped and the biggest theater in Czechoslovakia. Still today it's an impressive building with a nicely arranged square in front of it, crowned with a unique light fountain and used by the locals as one of the main meeting places. The offer of the ensemble is equally unique and attractive, and focuses primarily on opera and ballet. Among its top performances you'll find classics such as Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Carmen, Aida or Nabucco.

...to versatile performing arts...

Another ensemble with a diversified program will welcome you at the Brno City Theatre (Městské divadlo Brno). It includes in its repertoire both dramas and musicals, with the latter consisting both of their own productions as well as the globally popular ones. And if that's not enough for you, check what Divadlo Bolka Polívky has to offer as it exhibits plays from guest ensembles.

The alternative and experimental performances are also there, waiting for you to discover them at the theaters such as Husa na provázku or HaDivadlo.



The alternative and experimental performances are also there, waiting for you to discover them at the theaters such as Husa na provázku or HaDivadlo. Students of JAMU (Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts) invite you to their stages in Studio Marta as well as Divadlo na Orlí which exhibits dramas, musicals, opera, concerts, and multimedia projects. As for the independent stages, you'll find them in Buranteatr, Divadlo Druhý pád, and also Divadlo Feste located in the city's iconic cultural space Kabinet múz.

The offering doesn't exclude kids which can enjoy plays dedicated to them in Divadlo Radost, the oldest children's theater in Brno. The repertoire consists of performances for children of all ages and uses various techniques, including puppets. Another children's theater, Divadlo Polárka, focuses on fairy tales, both modern and classic ones, and adaptations of cult works of the world and Czech literature.



Photo: Depositphoto.com, mduřinik

...to film art

If you prefer to watch actors on the screen rather than on stage, Brno will not disappoint you either. Apart from the multiplex Cinema City offering popular commercial movies in two locations in and outside of the city center, the cinema life concentrates around three venues: Art, Scala and Lucerna.

Lucerna is the city's oldest existing cinema hall opened in 1915, whereas Scala, launched in 1929, is the biggest one. What's more it's currently managed by the Masaryk University and next to film screening it offers courses and workshops in the field of film and audiovisual arts. Both Scala and another cinema called Art are part of the Europa Cinemas network which

Both Scala and another cinema called Art are part of the Europa Cinemas network which focuses on the promotion of the European cinematography.



focuses on the promotion of the European cinematography. Art has been founded in 1919 and same as the other traditional cinemas managed to survive the development of multiplexes thanks to the high quality of its offering and variety of activities such as festivals and cycles dedicated to various audiences.

Brno's interest for movies flourishes in summer with the opening of open air cinemas. They spring up like mushrooms in squares, gardens and courtyards owned by the city hall, theaters, museums, the city castle or even private office centers. You'll definitely enjoy projections under the starry sky, comfortably seated in a sunbed with your favorite drink in hand.

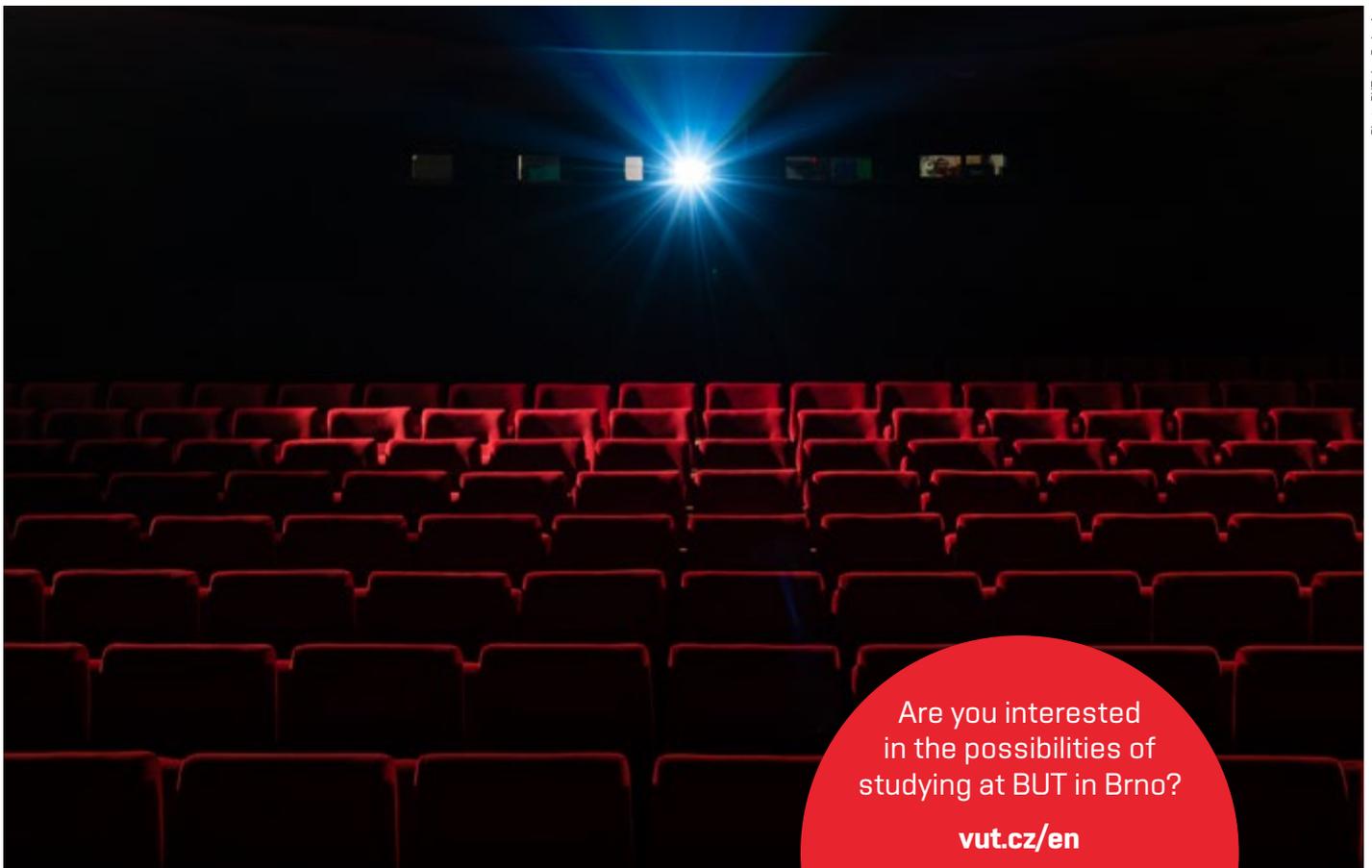


Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

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Museums, exhibitions, and the heritage they reveal

When you visit a new city, how much you'll learn and what you'll see depends on how much time you have to stay there. The fastest tours consist of walks around the historical city center and admiring the main masterpieces of architecture. If you stay for a couple of days, you may have a look inside those beautiful buildings to learn more about the historical, cultural and artistic heritage of the city. If you want to get to know everything that Brno has to show you, well, you should simply move in.

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History and culture

The oldest museum in Brno was the second one opened on the Czech territory. At the same time it's the biggest museum in the region of Moravia and the second biggest in the Czech Republic. It's called Moravské zemské muzeum and is home to over six million objects in the field of natural and social sciences. Many of them are exhibited in various locations in Brno, but to see some of them you'd need to travel across the region.

You certainly wouldn't want to miss the most renowned museum branches in the city: Dietrichsteinský palác, Biskupský dvůr or Palác šlechticů which offer permanent as well as temporary exhibitions. A bit further from the city center, hidden in a park along the Svratka river, you'll discover one more museum location that's nothing like the others. The Anthropos Pavilion presenting the prehistoric life, settlement

The Tugendhat Villa is an exceptional example of modern architecture and technology built in 1929–1930, and listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



and art of Moravia and Europe is appreciated by both adults and kids. One of the reasons might be an impressive life-size reconstruction of a mammoth and its calf.

The history of the city is reflected in the Brno City Museum (Muzeum města Brna) which sits in three historically important buildings. The most prominent one is Špilberk Castle, dated from the 13th century and largely known in the times of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for serving as the toughest jail for political prisoners. The second one is Měnin Gate (Měnínská brána), the only gate that remained from the Brno's five gates and city walls. The third museum branch is located in the Tugendhat Villa, an exceptional example of modern architecture and technology built in 1929–1930, and listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Contemporary art

The love of art, which is visible throughout the history of Brno, has its special place also in the current city's life. The Moravian Gallery in Brno (Moravská galerie v Brně) is by far the most diverse art museum in the country presenting works, trends and history of traditional fine arts, applied arts, graphic design, photography, and architecture. It offers activities for diversified audiences ranging from kids to visually impaired visitors, and since 1963 it organizes the International Biennial of Graphic Design. Being the second-largest art museum in the Czech Republic, it manages five locations, all in architecturally and historically significant buildings.

If you're interested in Central European art from the 20th and 21st centuries, you'll enjoy the private Fait Gallery that has for goal to support contemporary artists from the region. It also makes an effort to strengthen awareness of art among the public by organizing lectures and workshops. The city too supports young artists and promotes contemporary art by offering exhibition spaces across the city center under the name of TIC Galleries.

The contemporary art is at the heart of the Brno House of Arts (Dům umění města Brna). Artists, including the youngest ones, can not only exhibit their works here, but also build and strengthen their network of international contacts with artists and foreign galleries. In one of its locations, the institution offers space for work and stay in



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Mendelianum, which is part of Moravské zemské museum, adds to the story the context of the modern genetics and other disciplines.



order to facilitate the exchange of ideas and opinions between artists from all over the world.

An equally interesting support for artists comes from a more business-oriented organization – KUMST Brno Creative Hub which is a coworking office for artists, designers and anyone else who's involved in creative industries. It offers working spaces, showrooms for artwork or product exhibition as well as business advice on how to turn your passion into a financially sustainable job.



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius



Photo: Depositphotos.com, Zybich

Science and technology

Although largely focused on culture and arts, Brno museums are not just about human disciplines. Worth visiting are the exhibitions that refer to Gregor Johann Mendel, a scientist considered as the father of modern genetics who worked in the Augustinian Abbey in Staré Brno. The main one, Mendel Museum, run by the Masaryk University, is placed in the building of the above-mentioned abbey and presents the scientist's life and heritage. Mendelianum, which is part of Moravské zemské museum, adds to the story the context of the modern genetics and other disciplines.

Technical findings have their dedicated space in the Brno Technical Museum (Technické muzeum v Brně) holding a dozen of permanent exhibitions. It spreads awareness of the historical progress in the areas such as iron metallurgy, aircraft, water, and steam

Having fun with science is the key goal of the VIDA! science centrum which offers more than 170 interactive exhibits that keep the visitors of all ages busy and amused.



engines, optics, or computer technology. To additionally attract its visitors, the museum not only organizes events but also provides an interactive Technical Playroom.

Having fun with science is the key goal of the VIDA! science centrum which offers more than 170 interactive exhibits that keep the visitors of all ages busy and amused. The area of 4600 sq. m is arranged into four sections: Planet, Civilization, Man, and Microworld. And if you want to find out more about the planet and the surrounding outer space, Brno Observatory and Planetarium is a place you have to add to your must-visit list.

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The city of music

Since 2017 Brno is a member city of the UNESCO network of Creative Cities in the field of music. The variety of performed genres, number and type of events, collaboration, inclusion, and access to music education prove that music is one of the pillars of the city's creative and cultural development. What Brno has to offer ranges from the classical music and opera, through musicals, traditional Moravian folk music, jazz, and rock, to different flavors of electronic music, and genres coming from the street, like hip-hop.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Tune in

The undisputed star of Brno music is Leoš Janáček, a composer living at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. He's spent most of his life in the city, and had (and still has) a huge impact on the development and character of the local culture. For instance, the Brno Conservatory has been founded based on the music school brought to life by the composer. Today, you can listen to many concerts and operas, including his, in the Janáček Theatre (Janáčkovovo divadlo), part of the National Theatre Brno (Národní divadlo Brno).

The Brno Philharmonic also derives from an organization founded by Janáček, which was the Czech Symphony Orchestra. Each year it gives around 40 concerts in Besední dům, its main concert venue, another

The Brno Philharmonic also derives from an organization founded by Janáček, which was the Czech Symphony Orchestra.



25 in the Janáček Theatre, and additional ones in various cities across the Czech Republic as well as abroad.

The student interpretation of classical music as well as their more modern performances are open to public both in the Brno Conservatory as well as in JAMU (Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts). The latter presents also musicals, same as the Brno City Theatre (Městské divadlo Brno) which includes concerts in their repertoire, too.

If you enjoy mass music events, have a look at Sono Music Club. It's one of the most modern music clubs in Central Europe with a capacity of 1200 people. Its program, featuring both Czech and world stars, does not shy away from tradition, although it focuses on entertainment. Jazz is equally welcome here as pop as well as various theme parties. Large events are also held in Bobby Hall, especially if they require a complex visual setting. The place has several rooms of different sizes which allows to significantly diversify the offer.

Another interesting place is Melodka, a multi-genre club with a long tradition. Lovers of heavier sounds will surely appreciate it – this is where Madball and Ill Niño played. As for the fans of electronic music and club culture, they'll value the rich offer of Fléda which can be safely called a never-ending music festival. The club is open to diversity so you might easily meet here for instance rock artists too. In search of an alternative music scene go to Kabinet múz, a club in the city center where,



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

apart from music, you can also come across theatrical works, interesting lectures or meetings of a film club.

Celebration of sound

Festivals and series of concerts are a popular way to present music in Brno. To start with, Pop Messe is a promising event that, following the organizer's words, aims at promoting "young, multi-genre music that goes beyond the established concept of pop". It has a big chance to not only become a unique cultural experience but also an opportunity to revive the old city stadium and its surroundings that are still waiting for their second youth.

The key musical event of Brno is the Music Marathon. The variety of genres includes classical music, pop, folk, jazz, electronic, alternative music, and more.



The key musical event of Brno as a member of the UNESCO network of creative cities is the Music Marathon (Maraton Hudby). During a couple of summer days the city squares, streets, courtyards, and balconies turn into various stages hosting dozens of concerts, performances, and happenings. The variety of genres includes classical music, pop, folk, jazz, electronic, alternative music, and more with hundreds of performers from many, not only European countries.

Just a few days later folk connoisseurs have their dedicated International Folklore Festival that presents music from all country's regions – Moravia, Bohemia, and Silesia, as well as from other invited countries. A bit different atmosphere is



Another category of events form jazz festivals. The key one, JazzFestBrno, is a top jazz event in the Czech Republic organized since 2002 and welcoming world-class musicians.



offered by the International Guitar Festival that focuses on classical guitar. Those who prefer to be surprised by various performance styles and genres played in less typical locations will appreciate Festival Uprostřed. And a unique intimate experience is a domain of the multi-genre Ponava Fest taking place in spring in the city's main park. Worth taking a closer look at are also various concerts organized on the scene set in warmer months in the Špilberk castle area.

Another category of events form jazz festivals. The key one, JazzFestBrno, is a top jazz event in the Czech Republic organized since 2002 and welcoming world-class musicians. It takes place in renowned locations

such as Janáček Theatre, Besední dům and Sono Music Club and attracts over 10,000 visitors each year. An interesting event called Groove Festival focuses on groove and funky music with strong international participation of top performers from the field of jazz and related genres.

Out of the festivals celebrating classical music the major ones are Janáček Brno and Moravian Autumn (Moravský podzim). The first one celebrates opera performed by both Czech and

foreign companies. It focuses on the works of Leoš Janáček presenting original versions, new staging concepts as well as inspirations derived from his art. As for Moravian Autumn, the festival attracts the world's top artists, however it doesn't focus just on interpretation but also on the content itself. Over the years it's become a platform to exchange new and interesting ideas, giving space to living composers and young performers.

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It's all about sports

Sport plays an important role in the life of Czechs. Many practice their favorite discipline regularly after work or school, and physical activity is one of the preferred ways to spend the weekend. Also how Czechs practice sport is worth mentioning as even when done for recreation, they treat their training seriously, with dedication and attention to results.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Variety of options

This widespread practice of sport is rooted in the Czech lifestyle from early childhood. It's expected that already in the first years of the primary school kids will choose an additional discipline to train in the afternoon. In September, a special "recruitment day" is organized in one of the Brno parks where kids can try out different sports, see what interests them and choose out of around 50 disciplines and over 100 sports clubs. It's no surprise that easy access to sport is also a priority at universities.

Czechs practice all kinds of team and individual sports – traditional, popular, and also unusual ones. They organize themselves in clubs, associations or simply groups of interested friends. It would be hard to enumerate all disciplines available in Brno, so just imagine you can train here all

You can train here all kinds of ball games, athletics, water and underwater sports, precision sports, martial arts, motor sports, winter sports, and many more.



kinds of ball games (including less typical korfball, headis or cycle ball), athletics, water and underwater sports, precision sports, martial arts, motor sports, winter sports, and many more.

The city's sport infrastructure is well prepared to support the wide range of residents' interests. You'll find here numerous gyms, fitness clubs, sports fields for football, volleyball, basketball, rugby, as well as baseball and cricket, running tracks, tennis courts, swimming pools, ice rinks, climbing walls, a velodrome, boulodromes, and even a river and a lake. Also parks offer a great space to practice sports with friends, so don't be surprised to see there not only runners and street workout amateurs, but also practitioners of slackline and acroyoga, teams of frisbee, quidditch or spikeball, and... dancers.

The top of the top

The most popular sport in Brno is undoubtedly hockey. Its best hockey club Kometa Brno is the most successful one within the Czech Republic and also in representing the country internationally. It has more fans than Brno's football club Zbrojovka and for sure you'll recognize its logo much quicker as you'll find it in many places in the city space, including on a tram. Also many people decide to practice hockey, so the ice rinks offer various training options on different levels and for different age groups.

Another popular sport with many daily practitioners is running. You can meet them all over the city at all times of the day no matter what the weather is. Some people cross the city center running to work, some choose parks or paths along the river, some prefer to train on running tracks, and some go into the nature on the hills surrounding the city. Many train together with their colleagues

Photo: Depesiphotos.com, shock



The most popular sport in Brno is undoubtedly hockey.



from runners' clubs. And if they want to test themselves in competitions, they have many options locally, ranging from various 5 and 10 km runs, through a nearly 15 km run around the lake, to a half marathon in the city center and a trail run called Brněnský masakr (the Brno massacre) with tracks of 30 and 62 km.

Those preferring biking over running, they too have lots of possibilities to enjoy their sport. The city is surrounded by many marked bicycle routes and other paths perfect for cross country cycling with friends or family. The main and well prepared singletrails with different levels of difficulty are located in Mariánské údolí and Pisárky. There's also a velodrome managed by a club that offers not only bike and track cycling, but also BMX, cycle ball and artistic cycling.



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Thanks to its geographic location near Moravian Karst, Brno is a perfect place to practice rock climbing. There are many climbing areas around the city, but if you prefer to practice indoors, you won't be disappointed either. The biggest and the most modern bouldering wall in the Czech Republic is here. It's been created by a world class rock climber Adam Ondra, who himself comes from Brno and still lives and trains here.

Nature offers great training environment also for fans of water sports. The Svatka river and the Brno Reservoir (referred to by locals as Přebrada or

The biggest and the most modern bouldering wall in the Czech Republic is in Brno. It's been created by a world class rock climber Adam Ondra.

Prýgl) are ideal for rowing and canoeing. You can then go to the lake for yachting, water skiing, wakeboarding, paddleboarding, windsurfing and more. In the city there's also a range of indoor and outdoor swimming pools, including a 50 m long and up to 5 m deep one which means you can learn scuba diving there. Other available activities include swimming, water polo, water aerobics or synchronized swimming.

A mandatory group of sports to mention are motor sports. Brno is known for its Masaryk Circuit that hosted MotoGP until 2020. The circuit is open to public during car or motorbike track days when you can take your own vehicle for a ride. To excel your skills, take part in courses such as motoschool or safe driving school. In the city you can also find a couple of locations offering karting.

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How Brno celebrates festivities and holidays

Whatever time of the year you come to Brno, there's always something going on in the city center. There are stands and stages in the squares, people walk slowly in between restaurants, cafes and shops, the music is played everywhere around, and groups of friends chat in front of popular pubs. Nobody is a tourist here, everyone is at home, enjoying the city and living its life that follows the annual cycle of festivities and holidays.

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Photo: Depositphotos.com, SlezakPatrik

The value of tradition

Although today Czechs are seen as a rather atheistic nation, their history and culture base on the Christian tradition with some turbulent happenings taking place in the Middle Ages. Just have a look at the list of Czech public holidays and you'll see how many of them recall religion-related events, figures, and traditions.

The ones celebrated the most in the public space are, same as in many other European countries, Easter and Christmas. Comparing to the attractions offered by the city at the end of the year, Easter is much more modest. Still you'll see the whole city center decorated, with many stands selling handmade products, regional food or other items perfect for occasional presents. Christmas adds to it its special atmosphere of almost a month long festivities

Before Christmas all main squares in the center turn into fairs of joy as stands offer food and warm drinks such as mulled wine or mead.



during Advent. All main squares in the center turn into fairs of joy as stands offer food and warm drinks such as mulled wine or mead. People gather, chat, walk from one square to another, listen to concerts, or ride a Ferris wheel. Most of the Advent-related festivities close on Christmas Eve, however celebrations prolong till the New Year's Eve with evening concerts and a common welcome to the New Year.

Another group of festivities is brought by folk traditions, especially strong in the Moravia region. The typical carnival period celebrated in a wide part of the world is also present here, with its culmination called Fašank when you can expect a colorful parade. Then comes the period of Hody, which take place on different dates in different parts of the region and the city. The celebrations give you a chance to admire traditional folklore costumes, enjoy the music and taste local dishes. Festivities focused on wine and food take place in autumn when it's time for the harvest of the grapes and then with the opening of the first bottles of the young wine accompanied by a roasted goose.

Traditional cuisine is a reflection of the culture of a region, and its importance in a daily life can also tell you a lot about the people and their customs. Brno celebrations will make it clear to you too. A very popular category of events are called Slavnosti (festivities) followed by the term of what they celebrate. The

most popular ones are Slavnosti vína (of wine) and Slavnosti piva (of beer), but expect also others like Slavnosti moře (of the sea) which has for goal to make Czechs familiar with sea food. Such culinary festivities are a perfect way to promote other cultures so you'll often come across events such as Italian Days or Taste Africa.

The power of society and culture

Common celebrations, especially of past happenings important for a given society, develop it and strengthen even more. Such a key event for Brno was a successful defense of the city against the Swedish army in the 17th century. It's celebrated in mid-August during the Day of Brno with historical troops and battle demonstrations usually organized around the Špilberk castle.

The historical celebration, key from the students' perspective, commemorates the Velvet Revolution from November 17, 1989. On that day, which is the International Students' Day, a student demonstration in Prague suppressed by the police gave rise to protests leading to the fall of communism. Today, students together with the rest of the society celebrate those happenings by recalling the events, discussing social and political developments, listening to music, and lighting lanterns.



Photo: BUT, Igor Šefer

Another students-related event, this time a joyful one, is the Majales festival taking place in spring and engaging students from all universities in Brno.



Another students-related event, this time a joyful one, is the Majales festival taking place in spring and engaging students from all universities in Brno. It's full of music, same as many other cultural festivities, especially those that celebrate the music itself. The one that turns the city squares, streets, and even balconies into stages is called Music Marathon and is hard to miss. Theaters don't stand behind and take over courtyards and squares to exhibit selected performances during the theatrical festival Divadelní svět.

The cultural and social diversity is at the heart of many festivals that take place in the city space. The key locations are usually náměstí Svobody which is the main city square, Zelný trh, Dominikánské náměstí, and



Photo: Depositphotos.com, lspace

Moravské náměstí with both its parts, the green one and the one next to the Church of St. Thomas. In case of parades, the main route they follow is the axis mapped out by Rašínova and Masarykova streets. In all those places you can come across events from festivals such as Babylonfest, Ghettofest, Meeting Brno, European Heritage Days, Brasilfest and many more. The festival entitled Uprostřed might surprise you with events taking place in much less typical open air locations, also outside of the city center.

An annual fireworks show and an international competition called Ignis Brunensis lasts around two weeks.

The festivity for which you'll have to leave the city center is the celebration of light that takes place at the Brno Reservoir. It's an annual fireworks show and an international competition called Ignis Brunensis and it lasts around two weeks. The pyrotechnics are fired from a pontoon on the water which not only gives more space and a better view, but also increases the effect by reflection from the water surface. It's absolutely worth it.

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Where to meet your friends: restaurants and pubs

Meeting your friends to have something to eat together is a typical social activity. To do that in Brno it's good to first understand what kind of places offer food and what is their specificity. This might not seem like a challenge at first, but you might soon realize there are some differences between what you expect and what you get.

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Where to eat and when

First of all, what looks like a typical restaurant might not be one. Don't be surprised if during the day it serves different meals at different prices than in the afternoon. Such a daily menu is a typical offer during lunch time, and only then. What's more, many places turn into pubs during evening hours with hot meals being served to a determined hour which is clearly announced by the waiter who collects the last food orders.

There are also places that from the outside and based on their menu might look like a restaurant to you, but they stay closed until afternoon hours and are open long in the night. Many of those would be called in Czech hospoda or pivnice. They might be a combination of a pub and

Many places turn into pubs during evening hours with hot meals being served to a determined hour.



a restaurant as usually they offer something hot to eat to accompany your beer. You might as well visit a place with beer that doesn't serve hot meals at all. But don't worry, they'll never keep you hungry as they usually offer nakládaný hermelín (marinated camembert cheese) and head meat or sausages.

Another category are bistros out of which some work exactly as restaurants and others differ only by the fact that you might need to order your food at a counter. What's even more confusing is that you might also have your lunch menu, a salad, a soup or a piece of quiche in a cafe. What those places have in common is that they usually, but not always, close in the late afternoon.



During the day and if you want something lighter to eat, look around for one of the many bistros that are there.



Let's eat

What you should definitely try out is the typical Czech cuisine. The basis is meat with knedlíky (Czech dumplings of different kinds) accompanied by beer, and if you look for vegetables, they're hidden in the sauce. There are many places that serve such dishes, and most of them offer typical cold dishes that go perfectly with beer too. Which place to chose? Any that you wish as all locations dispersed around Brno have enough guests to always offer fresh food. And if you're still looking for recommendations, visit Lokál U Caipla or Pegas in the very city center, Pivnice U Čápa or První Doubravnická in the closest neighborhood, or Hostinec U Bláhovky still in the walking distance from the main city square.



During the day and if you want something lighter to eat, look around for one of the many bistros that are there. One of the options is Soul Bistro which offers a different menu each day, always including light versions of both traditional and vegetarian dishes. You might also appreciate the offering from places serving Mexican cuisine such as Bistro Bastardo or Blue Demon Bistro. Another option to enjoy lighter meals with vegetables is Asian cuisine with many Vietnamese restaurants in the city. A very popular one is G which not only feeds well but also looks great. And if you want to resign from meat completely, choose Forky's which will amaze you with their modern approach to vegan food.

Another option to enjoy lighter meals with vegetables is Asian cuisine with many Vietnamese restaurants in the city.

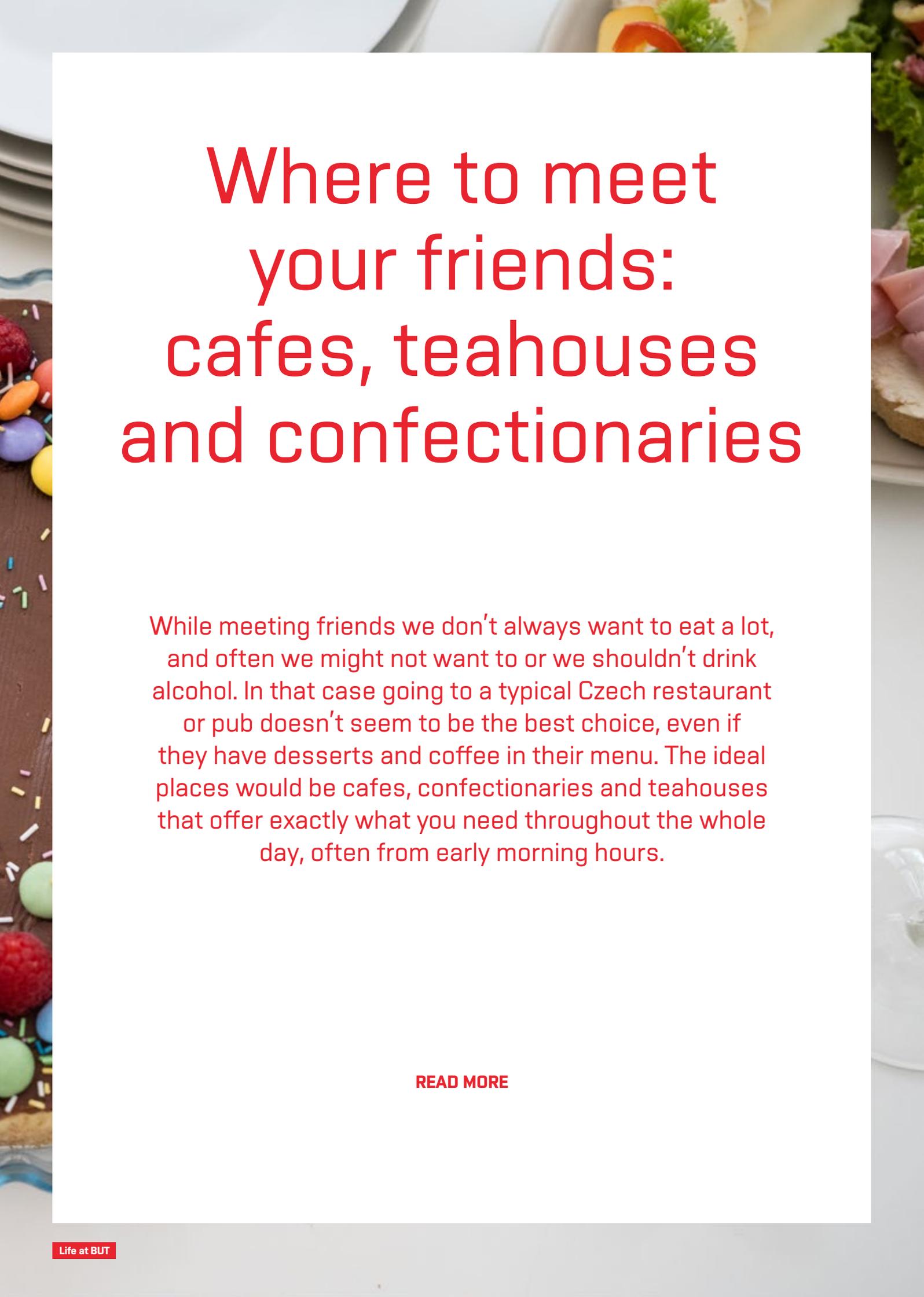


The city is also full of standard restaurants that either focus on the cuisine of a chosen region of the world or mix a bit of everything in their menu. Among the most renowned ones you'll find Kohout NA VÍNĚ, Pavillon or BORGNO AGNESE. Some popular ones include also Jean Paul's, Jakoby, Zlatá loď and many many more. Try them out yourself and choose your favorite one yourself.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, jolopes

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Where to meet your friends: cafes, teahouses and confectionaries

While meeting friends we don't always want to eat a lot, and often we might not want to or we shouldn't drink alcohol. In that case going to a typical Czech restaurant or pub doesn't seem to be the best choice, even if they have desserts and coffee in their menu. The ideal places would be cafes, confectionaries and teahouses that offer exactly what you need throughout the whole day, often from early morning hours.

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Not only for coffee lovers

If you study in Brno you should definitely start your journey through local cafes in Café Podnebi located at the foot of the Špilberk hill. You can both have a great coffee there as well as something to eat, and if the weather permits, enjoy sitting in a beautiful garden. Why start here? Well, it's a well-known student cafe, so your friends might already be there. And if you decide to stay longer, don't worry, it's usually open till midnight. Another cafe that changes into a bar at night is SKØG Urban Hub. But that's just one of its differentiators. It will welcome you in an interesting interior inspired by Scandinavian design and serve great coffee from a local roastery. It's also appreciated by Mac lovers who usually occupy places facing the window.

If you believe coffee is the most important drink of all, you shouldn't miss Mitte which is also a roastery and you can even learn how to roast coffee yourself in one of their courses.



Are you rather looking for a place to enjoy your morning coffee? Discover the area close to the Lužánky park. Coffee Bar MyMiKa will be just perfect if you like intimate, cozy places and should avoid gluten in your diet. On the contrary, if you'd like to taste sweet brioche rolls called buchta, visit Buchta B. You'll enjoy there as well a choice of coffee grains from the best European and Czech roasteries, and an exceptional cold brew coffee "Nitro". Exceptional coffee from Czech and foreign roasteries is also served in Punkt. Additionally you can taste here intriguing vegan and gluten free cakes that go perfectly with your drink. The cafe is hidden in a calm street, a perfect location to cut yourself off from the hustle and bustle of the city.

If you believe coffee is the most important drink of all, you shouldn't miss Mitte which is more than just a cafe. It's also a roastery, so you can be sure of the highest quality of what you drink, and you can even learn how to roast coffee yourself in one of their courses. It's a perfect place to impress yourself and your friends with the coffee aroma and taste. But if the experience you're looking for is more complex and you need your coffee to be accompanied with impressive food and elegant interior, visit Café Placzek. They serve coffee roasted especially for them in Italy, offer the best Benedict Eggs in town and bring to mind the best cafe interiors from the beginning of the 20th century.



Photo: SKØG Urban Hub



Sweet is the new black

No matter if what drives you is a special occasion or a lifelong passion for desserts, confectionaries are another category of places you should try out for yourself. They're not as numerous as cafes, but that doesn't make them less worthy. On the contrary! Czechs are cake-eaters so they really know how to prepare them, and you wouldn't want to miss taking advantage of their knowledge.

To start with, visit a popular and also a typical confectionary in the city center called Aida. You can choose between two locations, a variety of cakes, desserts and ice cream. As your

It's highly recommended that you first taste your own piece of art, and then continue admiring the rest of the gallery.



next stop choose BUKOVSKÝ café cukrářství a bit further from the city center. It offers an exceptional traditional experience, with all desserts prepared with passion from quality ingredients by the father and his sons. To taste a combination of tradition, based on recipes from pre-war chefs, and a modern touch, visit Cukrářství Martinák. The variety of cakes, pastries and desserts made from the finest butter, fresh cream and Belgian chocolate will make you want to come back again and again.

There's one more place that elevates confectionery to the rank of art and its name warns you about it: SORRY – pečeme jinak (sorry, we bake differently). What can you expect? A masterpiece on your plate, a pleasure for the eye, and a rhapsody of taste. You'd better be quick at making your choice, otherwise you might spend hours deciding on what to take out of everything you'd like to have. It's highly recommended that you first taste your own piece of art, and then continue admiring the rest of the gallery.



It's tea time

Sugar and coffee might not be the must-have tastes for everyone, and for them the city offers a different kind of delight. A cup of fresh tea served in an eye-catching pottery is what awaits you in one of the local teahouses called in Czech čajovna. The term is actually quite roomy as apart from a place that focuses on serving tea, it's also associated with hookah and usually also with food.

The teahouses in the city center that are the most popular ones are Dobrá čajovna with an exceptionally wide tea offering and Chajovna that not only will feed you well but also offer an interesting choice of pottery to make your home tea more pleasant. And if you want to combine drinking tea and

For those who prefer enjoying their cup of tea in a more intimate environment, far from additional aromas of tobacco and spices, Literární čajovna Skleněná louka is a perfect place to go.



smoking hookah with the real Indian cuisine, visit Veselá čajovna. They'll know how to spice up your overall experience.

For those who prefer enjoying their cup of tea in a more intimate environment, far from additional aromas of tobacco and spices, Literární čajovna Skleněná louka is a perfect place to go. This literary tea-house reminds of travels to Asia and of your grandma's living room at the same time. You can sit here on a porch, read a book, and watch the time stand still. The owners' offer of handmade pottery completes the picture.

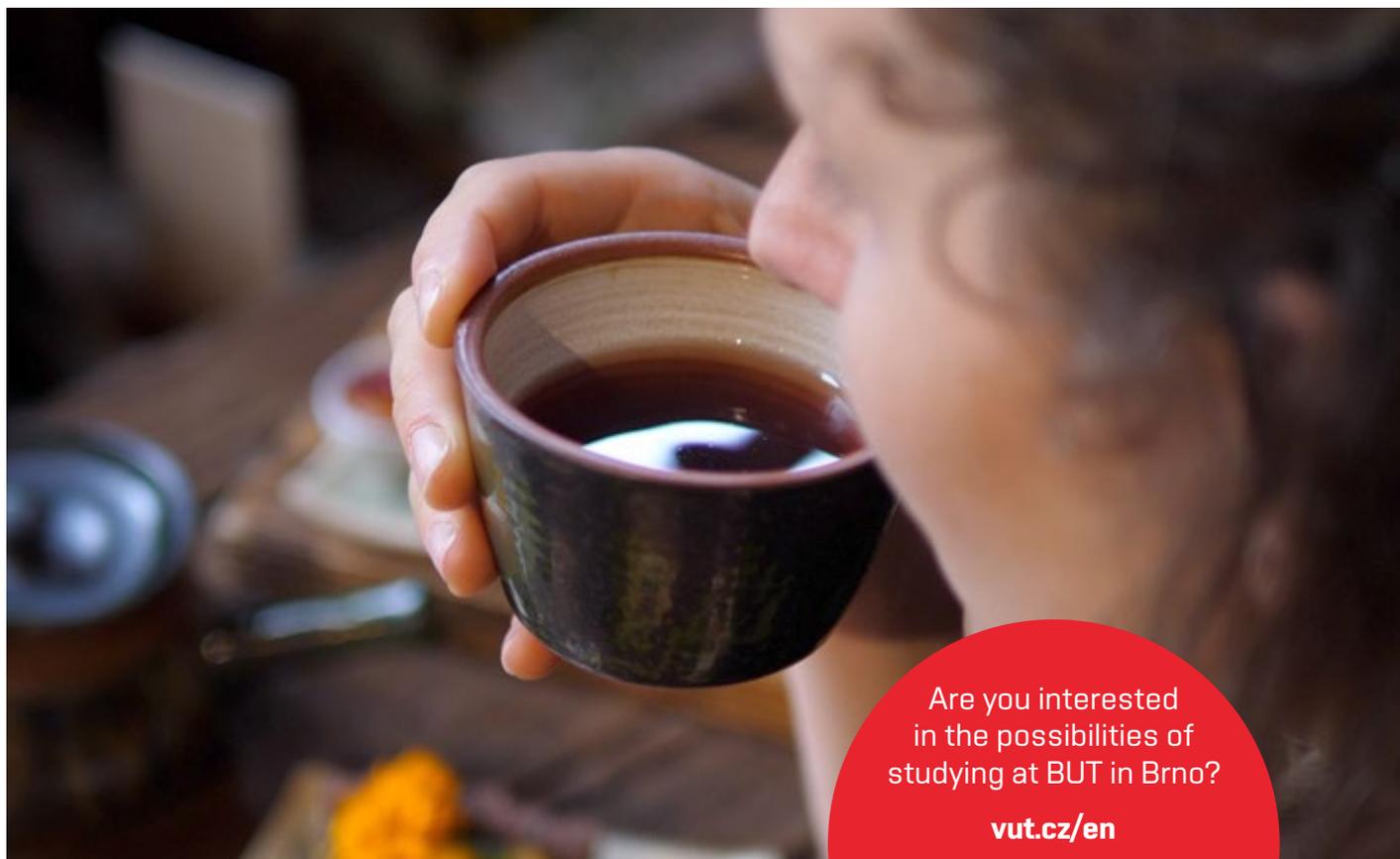


Photo: Depositphotos.com, DL_Media

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Where to meet your friends: Brno at night

When the evening comes, the perfect time to have fun and chat with some friends begins. Those who don't want to be alone choose proven places full of people where life flourishes and time well spent is simply guaranteed. In Brno, especially in warmer months, the entire city center as well as many popular locations in the individual districts become one great open-air venue. In colder months, most of the life moves indoors, inviting new guests with illuminated windows, music and bustle of conversations.

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Photo: Depositphotos.com, milangucci

Let's have a beer

Beer is undoubtedly a key drink in the Czech Republic. What dominates is the lager, in which Czechs are absolute champions. They drink it constantly and passionately, so you'll find it everywhere. They hardly produce anything else, but why would they? Why give up something that is so good? But don't worry if you enjoy different beer styles, too. There are many places with a wider offer of both draught and bottled beer.

The first place to go for your evening beer round is Jakubské square. Right behind the church the area becomes an informal open-air beer house. People sit and stand everywhere enjoying their drinks from all pubs, restaurants and cafes around. The cult place that helped to create this square's exceptional atmosphere is Na stojáka. Even if the queue is long, you'll definitely want to be part of the game and taste their beer coming from Czech microbreweries.

There are many places with a wider offer of both draught and bottled beer.



If you just want to sit down with your friends and chat for long hours, there are many places ideal to do so. Try out for instance Dřevěný vlk or Dřevěný orel which are typical beer houses for this kind of meetings. If you'd like to spice up your evening for instance with singing, you'll enjoy Trojka, an ideal place for a more active meetup.

To focus on good beer, choose either Ochutnávková pivnice that regularly brings the best beer from various places in the world or visit one of the local breweries. The styles they offer vary from one place to another, so you'll be able to find something exactly for you in the wide range of their offering. Axiom, Lucky Bastard Beerhouse, Zelená kočka, and Pegas are just a few of the places that you shouldn't miss.

Wine? Why not!

Wine is a regional treasure in Moravia, also appreciated by many beer lovers. Moravian wines are best drunk fresh, so don't be surprised to see them being poured into PET bottles when you order them to go from wineries. You can take them home, you can drink them on the spot. You can also take advantage of a wide range of wines from all around the world as Moravian winemakers appreciate not only their own wine.

There are different winery styles in the city. All of them sell bottles to take with you, and most of them offer also something small to eat to accompany the wine taste of your

Wineries sell bottles to take with you, and most of them offer also something small to eat to accompany the wine taste of your choice.

choice. JustWINE in all three of its locations resembles a bar, while Vinná galerie invites you to admire each bottle as a piece of art and immerse yourself into tasting like a professional sommelier. A homely atmosphere is what you'll find in many small wineries specializing in local wines poured straight from the barrel. To enjoy such an experience visit Staré hory, Klášterní vinárna, Vinný sklípek Vinárium or any other local winery close to where you live.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, elenathewise

Raising the bar

Night life is usually associated with alcohol, but that's not the real condition to make sure you'll have fun. That truth is well known by an exceptionally creative association Lidi z baru (People from the bar) that brought to life the best bars in Brno. Each place they created is different, following a different concept, and with a different spirit.

If you want to combine your evening with culinary taste sensations, and you're not really sure which time of the day your evening takes place, visit 4pokoje (4rooms). Missing the atmosphere of the City that Never Sleeps? Bar, který neexistuje (Bar that doesn't exist) will bring it back to you enchanting you with their tailor-made drinks. You'd prefer to get lost in the labyrinth of cellar halls to smoke a hookah while admiring art? Slast is a place for

One of the most popular places is Metro Music Bar that hosts nearly 250 concerts per year



you to go. And if you're looking for something new, different from everything you've ever seen in a bar before, find the curtain covering the entrance to Super Panda Circus where instead of a menu you'll get a choice of stories.

But what would a night be without music that stimulates the mind and makes the body move? There are many places that offer musical entertainment or cultural experiences. One of the most popular places is Metro Music Bar that hosts nearly 250 concerts per year and organizes dance nights with famous DJs. Check also Kabinet múz for alternative music performances, Stará Pekárna with niche genre concerts held almost every night, Šelepove No. 1 for jazz, rock and oldies music parties, and of course Fléda focusing not only on electronic music and club culture.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, Fesenko

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Take a walk through the Brno's main attractions

If it's your first visit to Brno, or later if you have visitors coming to see where you live, it's good to have an idea of what to see first to get the flavor of the city.

For sure you don't want to miss the key attractions, so the best option is to choose a route that will lead you along the key locations to visit. One proposal of such a walk is described below.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

To the core

Most of the visitors who come to the city differently than by car arrive to the area of the main train station, and that's where their walk begins. To start with, enter the historic district through Masarykova street and follow it till you get the main square called náměstí Svobody (the Freedom Square). This triangular square is surrounded by many buildings worth noticing, dating from the Renaissance till the 21st century. In the west corner you'll see the plague column from 1689, and on the east side there is a fountain and a controversial clock from black granite which no one really knows how to read.

Next on your way is the church of Saint James and a square called Jakubské náměstí. The church from the Late Gothic era with its 94-meter high tower is definitely worth having a look inside. As for

The square in the front of the Janáček Theatre is a popular gathering area attracting both locals and tourists with a unique light water curtain.



the square, you definitely need to come back here in the evening to enjoy the lively atmosphere of all the cafes, pubs and restaurants around.

Art and greenery

The next stop is Moravské náměstí (the Moravian Square), the largest square in the city, composed of a couple of parts. The first one, next to the church of Saint Thomas and Místodržitelský palác (the Governor's Palace) housing the Moravian Gallery, features the eight-meter high statue of Jošt on his horse. It's called the Courage, after one of Plato's cardinal virtues, and offers a funny view from below. On the other side of the street, just in front of the Supreme Administrative Court, there's another statue, this time an allegory of Justice, which by

some of the locals is compared to a distrainer confiscating a washing machine. The other part of the Moravian Square resembles more to a park and is an area where many concerts and open-air events take place. The area that runs further to the east features another statue, this time a memorial to the victory of the Red Army over fascism.

If you continue your walk along the greenery, you'll face a monumental building of Janáčkovo divadlo (the Janáček Theatre) built in the mid-1960s. The square in the front is a popular gathering area attracting both locals and tourists with a unique light water curtain. Crossing the park along the theater you'll follow the original route of the demolished city walls. It will take you to the monumental building of Mahenovo divadlo (the Mahen Theatre) which was the first theater in Europe fully equipped with electrical lighting. Next to it, closing the park, you'll see Dům umění města Brna (the Brno House of Arts).

Diving into history

From the square called Malinovského náměstí, continue through the short Měniňská street which will take you to the only existing gate that was part of the city walls. Follow the Orlí street and at the first crossroad take a look to the right to see the long facade of the Minorite Monastery, and to the left to see the buildings of the former Ursulines Monastery.

Continue straight, cross the Masarykova street and enter a square called Zelný trh (the Vegetable Market). Depending

On the main square called náměstí Svobody there is a controversial clock from black granite which no one really knows how to read.



on the day, it might be full of stands selling fresh, local vegetables and fruit. In the middle of the square there's a Baroque Parnas fountain, and as for the buildings around, you'll see here the oldest theater in the city called Reduta, a palace and Baroque houses, a monumental hotel facade and a late functionalist building of Městská tržnice (the City Marketplace).

Just meters away stands Stará radnice (the Old Town Hall) with a Late Gothic tower and a passage below it that houses a stuffed crocodile or the Brno dragon, a legendary symbol of the city. Nová radnice (the New Town Hall) where the city authorities sit is located in the nearby, in Dominikánské náměstí (Dominican Square). You'll see here also another church, this time of Saint Michael.

Photo: Depositphotos.com, pfr4



On the tops of the hills

Now follow the picturesque Dominikánká street to get to Šilingrovo náměstí. From here, Biskupská street will take you to the Petrov Hill and the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Paul that is depicted on the Czech 10-crown coin. On the slopes of the hill, below the remains of the city walls, there is a park named Denisovy sady (Denis Gardens) with a beautiful view of the south and south-west part of the city, including the Špilberk Castle, the next destination of your walk.

The castle, surrounded by a park hiding the castle walls offers a stunning view of Brno in almost all directions. Founded in the 13th century, since the 18th century it served as the toughest jail in Europe. Today it's one of the key cultural and touristic locations in Brno.

To visit this exceptional example of functionalist architecture and unique technology, you need to book your tickets 3–4 months in advance.



The queen of all villas

Last but not least is the famous Tugendhat Villa, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. To visit this exceptional example of functionalist architecture and unique technology, you need to book your tickets 3–4 months in advance, but the garden and the view from the outside are available daily.

To get there from Špilberk, come back to Dominikánské náměstí, follow Česká street which is one of the liveliest streets in the center with interesting buildings and top international shops. Once you arrive at Moravské náměstí, enter Milady Horákové street to soon turn into a green alley called třída Kpt. Jaroše. Cross the Lužánky park (or stay here for a while) to then climb the unique Schodová street. The Tugendhat Villa is just around the corner.



Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

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Choose your sightseeing perspective of Brno

Have you already visited most of the main attractions in the center of Brno? Then it's about time to see more and maybe also from a bit different angle.

The city is packed with lots of interesting places, and you can easily choose between them for instance depending on the weather.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

From the top

If you like distant views or checking from the top where you've already been and how those places are situated in relation to each other, then you'll enjoy visiting the city's towers and terraces. Not all floors and roofs that you might fancy visiting when you see them from the bottom are publicly available, but you shouldn't be disappointed with what's open to you.

Many of those places are close to Zelný trh (the Vegetable market). The first one that will give you a taste of what else awaits you is the terrace of Městská tržnice (the City Marketplace). It will offer you a detailed view of the square, the promise of the view from the towers of Petrov, and a checkup of your next goal which is the tower of Stará

Not all floors and roofs that you might fancy visiting when you see them from the bottom are publicly available, but you shouldn't be disappointed with what's open to you.



radnice (the Old Town Hall). This old tower will invite you to admire the very center of the city as well as the Špilberk Castle. The Castle itself also includes a tower to look around, but the highest viewpoint is of course from one of the cathedral towers on Petrov.

Like eating while watching the view? There's also an option for that. On the roof of Dům pánů z Lipé there's a bar, and next to it a restaurant. And if you enjoy moving views, in December Moravské náměstí (the Moravian Square) opens a Ferris wheel as part of the Christmas market.

If you've been to the key city attractions, you already know the views from the Špilberk hill, Denisovy sady (Denis Gardens) or even the street above the

Tugendhat Villa. And as for sure you've noticed how hilly the city is, you won't be surprised that some amazing views are awaiting you on their tops. The very first hill to go to is Kraví hora, but just afterwards you should visit also Hády and Bílá hora in the east. A view from the west opens from a recently built observation tower on the Holedná hill.

Moving across

Not the best weather to admire views? Explore some secret passages instead. They allow you to cross city blocks entering one building and leaving through a gate on the other side without having to walk around the entire block. Many of them are located around shopping centers, usually those housing smaller boutiques, allowing to reach the shops from different streets. However, sometimes their history is older than the current trading feature. Their layout was created as a result of numerous reconstructions, and only then

There are also passages that it's good to know as you might find yourself using them quite often.



did shops, cafes and galleries begin to move in there.

A very interesting one in the city center is the area of Velký Špalíček connecting the shopping center with Dům pánů z Kunštátu, and many other houses around. Thanks to pubs and cafes located there it's a lively area in the afternoons and evenings. The next one, this time dedicated more to shopping is the connection between the modern OC Omega with the functionalist Alfa Palace and Dům U Čtyř mamlasů. On the other side of náměstí Svobody (the Freedom Square), the Renaissance Dům pánů z Lipé includes a passage to Dominikánské náměstí (Dominican Square) as well as to the shopping center Rozkvět and Panská street.

There are also passages that it's good to know as you might find yourself using them quite often. These include getting from the main train station to Josefská street through the shopping center Letmo, or going from Husová street to Dominikánské náměstí (Dominican Square) through Nová radnice (the New Town Hall). A very practical one is also the Typos passage, a perfect shortcut at night when the gate in the building of Moravian gallery is closed and you still want to get from Běhounská street to the square in front of Janáčkovo divadlo (the Janáček Theatre). Other than that, you can also explore passing through Stará radnice or Jalta palace, and checking the area of Františkánská street which is unofficially called Římské náměstí (the Roman square).



Photo: Vojtěch Lunga

Under the ground

During hot days you might appreciate visiting the lowest parts of the city, hidden under the ground. If you're interested in a more distant history and wonder what the cities used to look like and how people lived there, then Labyrinth pod Zelným trhem (the Labyrinth under the Vegetable Market) will give you some answers. Add to it a visit to Mincmistrovský sklep (the Mint Master's Cellar) and you'll also find out more about the area around Nová radnice (the New Town Hall) as well as on how money used to be produced.

For stronger impressions, related no longer to life, but to death, spend a while in Kostnice u sv. Jakuba (the Ossuary at the Church of Saint James) which is the second biggest ossuary in Europe. Kapucínská hrobka (Capuchin tomb) will also show you how bodies can be naturally mummified thanks to an ingenious ventilation system.

The newer history, from the World War II, brings another underground location, a bunker named 10-Z built into the Špilberk hill. It served as a civil defense shelter from American and Soviet bombardments during the Nazi occupation. It was equipped in its own electricity generator and a water supply, and you can visit it even at night.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, markovsky

Kapucínská hrobka (Capuchin tomb) will also show you how bodies can be naturally mummified thanks to an ingenious ventilation system.



If industrial history is what interests you the most, then you just have to check out the underground reservoirs in Žlutý kopec that have been built in the 19th century to expand the city's water supply network. Constructed without the use of steel, wood or reinforced concrete, but with bricks forming numerous arcs, it resembles to a hidden mysterious cathedral. A similarly incredible impression is what awaits you in the underground water tanks on the Špilberk hill which serve as a gallery of gravestones, stone ornaments and sculptures, turning the place into a temple of stone.

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Take a tour outside of the city center

Brno has a lot to offer when it comes to sightseeing, and many interesting spots are scattered around different districts, closer or further from the city center. They also date from various times and perform numerous functions which makes the visiting experience even more enriching.

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Rich in architecture

The neighborhoods closest to the very center have a varied history, different fates and, as a result, different current fame. The one called Staré Brno is a clear example of how a changing fortune can affect the appearance of the district today. It's enough to visit its heart, Mendlovo náměstí to have it all. The good times have brought to life the beautiful Gothic Bazilika Nanebevzetí Panny Marie (Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady), the St Thomas's Abbey and the Starobrno brewery. The rest of the square has undergone many demolitions and changes during and after the World War II.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, unnaugan

On the contrary, the district that seems to have been more fortunate is Královo Pole. Until 1919 it operated as a separate town although it's not really visible in the layout of the urban space today. You'll see there many architecturally significant houses, especially in the area of its central square Slovanské náměstí. Worth noticing are also the Carthusian monastery with the Holy Trinity Church next to it, as well as the Semilasso cultural center.

The district called Veverčí with its main axis along the street of the same name, also offers a lot of pleasant areas for walking as well as amazing buildings to admire. It would be hard to enumerate them all, but for sure the most impressive one, referred to as Tivoli and built in the Art Nouveau style, stands in the triangle square Konečného náměstí.

The district called Staré Brno is a clear example of how a changing fortune can affect the appearance of the district today.



From fame to function

Brno is known for its famous villas with the Tugendhat Villa being the most renowned one. But what are the other ones and where to look for them? The Löw-Beer Villa is just down the same slope and its garden connects to the one of the Tugendhat. To visit others, you need to go to the other side of the city where the hills named Žlutý kopec and Kraví hora are. You'll find there the functionalist Stiasni Villa as well as the Art Nouveau Jurkovič House.

Take your time to walk around the whole neighborhood also going down the hill and checking the villas on the other side of the Svratka river along Veslařská street. Many



Photo: Depositphotos.com, DiemarRauscher

wealthy people used to build their properties in this district in the late 19th and the early 20th century. That's also why there are so many examples of the functionalist architecture on all the streets around.

You can learn more about functionalism following the trails prepared by BAM (Brno Architecture Manual). The buildings are marked with a code on the sidewalk next to them which allows to easily check their details online. You'll find those codes throughout the whole city, for instance in front of many terraced houses in Černá Pole. However, the very special functionalist buildings that you simply cannot miss are located in the Brno Exhibition Center. Last but not least is a bit less usual sightseeing spot, the Crematorium at Ústřední hřbitov (the Central Cemetery).

You can learn more about functionalism following the trails prepared by BAM (Brno Architecture Manual).



Industrial side of life

On the other side of the city there is another cemetery, reminiscent of another part of the city's history. The Jewish cemetery in Židenice is one of the few remaining traces of the population that had an important impact on the development of the local industry. Many of those who worked primarily in textile factories lived in the district called by locals Cejl or even Bronx which summarizes its long-term fame.

What's still visible in Cejl are the exact spots where bombs fell during air raids of World War II. You'll notice many empty spaces between tenement houses that have never been rebuilt, but only turned into parking lots or small workshops.

Just as sad might seem the fate of industrial sites that once bustled with life and produced world-class products. War, communism, and then privatization contributed to their closure, which is why many of those areas are neglected today. They might be perfect for urbex though, at least before they get rebuilt into new office, commercial or residential sites, which is already happening to the former factories of Vlněna or Zbrojovka. It was also in such an industrial district that AZ tower, the tallest building of the Czech Republic, was erected.



Photo: Dapressphoto.com, Egeria

Blended in nature

There are many districts all around Brno that consist just of blocks of flats. Such housing estates were typically built during the communist era, especially in cities with a shortage of housing at that time. As Brno is surrounded by hills, many of them have been built on their slopes and offer an amazing view on the city or the greenery outside of it. The one that is considered the most attractive is Lesná where architecture meets nature and the center has been left to the Čertova rokle forest park.

Another interesting example of a housing estate blending in the nature is Kamenka, built into the former quarry in the north slope of Červený kopec. It consists of 130 small houses glued to each other along the tangle of narrow

Nature is an important part of the Brno's area, so if you get tired with walking through the streets, take a tram and go to the lake.

streets. It was established illegally in 1925 as a colony of poor workers, and attracted many artists in the 1960s and 1970s.

Nature is an important part of the Brno's area, so if you get tired with walking through the streets, take a tram and go to the lake. The Brno Reservoir lies within the official borders of the city. Same does the Veveří Castle located on the other end of the lake and to which you can go by ferry enjoying the water and the fresh breeze on your face.



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Transportation in and around Brno

Knowing how to move around the city is crucial for a comfortable life in a given place. So if you consider studying in Brno, make sure you seize the basics of the local transportation soon enough in order to travel smoothly between your target locations. There are different approaches to the organization of transportation across the world, so depending on where you come from some solutions might be intuitive to you, and some may not. Have a read to find out what to expect once you come.

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Photo: Depositphotos.com, SangaPark

In the city

Brno has a very well organized public transportation which serves not only the city itself but also municipalities around. Its core is formed by trams (called with a Brno-specific word *šalina*), completed by trolleybuses and buses. Altogether there are more than 70 lines between which you can change freely using the same tickets. The whole area is divided into a couple of zones, so the tickets have both a certain time and zone validity. There are several ways to buy tickets, including by card, by SMS, from a machine, in a point of sale, or, if needed, from the driver.

The public transportation system includes night lines which makes it very practical

Brno has a very well organized public transportation which serves not only the city itself but also municipalities around.



if you're a fan of the night life. And you can even enjoy it directly in a tram as there's a special beer tram called *Šalina Pub* that goes around the city center on Fridays evening. A bit different experience awaits you in nostalgic lines that offer rides around the city in vintage tram and trolleybus vehicles. And if that's not enough for you, the system of public transportation includes also boats that connect the different shores of the Brno Reservoir.

There are various possibilities to move around the city using shared forms of transportation. A couple of operators offer car sharing services, and a very popular option are shared bikes. Shared scooters also exist but

they're used for fun rather than to cover real transportation needs. You can also use taxis, but very often the best way, especially around the central neighborhoods, is to simply go on foot as distances are not long and the area is nice to walk through and safe even at night.

If you have your own mean of transportation, make sure you check local rules. Especially car drivers have to be careful about where they're allowed to go as some areas are restricted only to vehicles with special permissions. Also parking follows a local system that regulates where, for how long and for what fee you can leave your car. When it comes to bikers, they should also check what's allowed and what not, what kind of solutions are available to them and where, so that they know where they should go on a dedicated path or lane, and where they can mix with other users.

Trains are also perfect for taking your bike with you. They're spacious enough and often have dedicated spaces where you can safely attach your bike.



Time for a trip

If you're going to one of the neighboring municipalities, you might be able to get there with the regional buses of the Brno's public transportation. For travels to locations not covered with the city's network, use buses that leave from the bus station and are part of the integrated public transportation system of the whole South Moravia region. In case you're not sure which ticket you need, the city one or not, simply buy it directly from the driver.

Trains are also a good and comfortable option to travel outside of the city. Many are part of the integrated regional system, but not all of them. In this case it's better to buy your ticket in advance in the ticket office at the train station. Trains are also perfect for taking your bike with you. They're spacious enough and often have dedicated spaces where you can safely attach your bike. Some of the regional buses are also prepared to transport bikes and usually those are the ones that go into the most popular biking areas.

Very similar solutions are available when you want to travel across the whole Czech Republic visiting other regions. First, take a train or a bus to get to one of the main cities in a given region and then use the region's local transportation to move around. If you're a fan of more intimate and adventurous travelling, check online platforms with carpooling offers. And if you want to use your own car, make sure you have a valid vignette so that you can drive on paid roads.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, FaranVideo



Photo: Depositphotos.com, maraan

Going abroad

If you come to study in Brno, travelling abroad will be the first kind of travelling that you'll experience in connection with the city, just in the opposite direction. In Europe, where countries are relatively small compared to the rest of the world, there are various ways to travel fairly quickly and comfortably between them. And as Brno is located not far from the country borders, it's no surprise that train and bus are typical and obvious means of international transportation.

When it comes to flying, Brno has its own airport, but its offer is quite modest.



When it comes to flying, Brno has its own airport, but its offer is quite modest. It's not seen as an issue thanks to the connections with the airports in Vienna, Bratislava and Prague. For some specific directions, people also use flights taking off from Katowice or even Krakow. With the combination of all those international airports, you can travel from Brno to anywhere you want. And you can also come to Brno from anywhere you are.

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Nature in the city

It's more and more common knowledge that the quality of life in the city is influenced by the proximity of greenery. Having an easy access to areas of nature affects people's health, strengthens mental wellbeing, encourages physical activity and supports social interaction. Brno offers it all with the green areas spread throughout various districts and with even more greenery surrounding the city from various sides.

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Photo: BUT, Jan Prokopius

Parks and gardens

Public parks with organized paths, planned vegetation and street furniture are the ones you'll see already on your first visit to the city center. Those are Špilberk park around the castle, Denisovy sady under the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Paul, and Koliště park along Janáčkovo divadlo (the Janáček Theatre) and Mahenovo divadlo (the Mahen Theatre).

Soon afterwards you'll most probably visit the nearby Lužánky park, which is not only the biggest, but also the oldest one in Brno, opened to the public in 1786 as the first public park in Moravia and Bohemia. Many people come here to take a walk, practice sport, meet with

Lužánky park is not only the biggest, but also the oldest one in Brno, opened to the public in 1786 as the first public park in Moravia and Bohemia.



friends for a picnic, play music, and simply hang around in all possible ways.

Another popular public park is located at the top of the Kraví hora hill. It's surrounded by many sports facilities, Brno Observatory and Planetarium as well as allotment gardens. It's also a place where various open air activities are organized be it sports or food related. Other than that, smaller parks of this kind such as Tyršův sad or Schreberovy zahrádky make the urban space more pleasant in different neighborhoods.

Planned and organized nature areas include also botanical gardens. The one closest to the



Photo: Dipestphoto.com, PLY

city center is managed by the Faculty of Science of Masaryk University. One more, owned by Mendel University, covers 11 hectares and encloses also an arboretum. And if you prefer to see some fauna, visit Brno Zoo located on the hill called Mniší hora not far from the Brno Reservoir. The area of over 65 hectares houses 2200 animals of around 400 species.

Where nature has its say

There are many places in Brno where the terrain has determined its purpose. Most often those are slopes too steep to build on them, therefore they have been left to nature. These places have become natural parks, where nature determines their appearance and character making them resemble forests.

To start with, Čertová rokle in the Lesná housing estate is an interesting natural ravine

Slopes too steep to build on them have been left to nature. These places have become natural parks, where nature determines their appearance and character making them resemble forests.



delving in between blocks of flats. Akátky is a forest park lying on the steep slope of Židenický kopec. As for Wilsonův les, it's the largest forest park in the city, covering over 34 hectares on the western slopes of Žlutý kopec and Kraví hora hills. For sure you'll notice there a deforested strip in its center. It's a former ski run that used to operate here in the 1970s and 1980s, and that was covered with very modern at that time artificial turf. Among popular natural areas you'll find also the one that starts in the Anthropos park and continues along the Svatka river towards the city center. It's not an official forest park, but comparing to the other ones it definitely resembles one.

Into the (nearly) wild

A very special place on the green map of Brno is Obora Holedná (Holedná Forest Enclosure). The area of 330 hectares, surrounded by a special fence, shelters wild animals such as fallow deer, mouflons, and wild boars. You can enter it freely through dedicated gates, just remember not to feed the animals when you meet them.

South of the Holedná hill there's even more greenery. You can go around the Kohoutovice housing estate without leaving it and then continue back to the center through Pisárky and along the Svatka river. If you go in the opposite direction, you'll get to the Brno Reservoir where water, hills and forests offer a wide range of natural experiences. In all such green areas you'll

find many marked hiking and biking trails. Follow them and they'll guide you through the richness of the terrain making sure you don't miss the most interesting places.

On the Velká Baba and Malá Baba hills in the north of Brno there is a Natural Park with many trails leading in various directions. From there you can walk back to the city center through smaller hills such as Medlánecké kopce and Palackého vrch from which you'll be able to see the Medlánky sports airport.

To the east from here, the hills, forests and trails around Soběšice open the way to the Moravian Karst, the karst landscape and protected nature reserve, with its numerous caves and rocky walls. But if you want to stay within the borders of Brno, go on the other side of the Svitava river, for instance through a grassy island Cakovický ostrov, to the monumental quarry on the slopes of the Hády hill. For sure you'll notice this quarry on many occasions from the city center as the hill dominates the city from the north-east, and the 50-meter high transmitter station dominates the hill.

There are two more elevations in the east of Brno that are worth visiting sooner or later. One is Bílá hora with a stunning view on the whole city and the other one is Stránská skála, an interesting and important paleontological site in this part of Europe.



Photo: Diposlightphotos.com, phb.cz

**You can enter it
freely through
dedicated gates,
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Tired of climbing peaks? Visit Mariánské údolí, a picturesque valley of the Říčka river with several water reservoirs in between the slopes that you can just walk along as far as you want into the Moravian Karst. And if you prefer to explore more flat areas and check what the south side of Brno looks like, follow the Svitava river which flows into the city from the north and ends up in the Svratka river in the south. Their confluence is a popular destination for walking and cycling, especially on sunny weekends.

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In an hour from Brno: ideas for a one-day trip

Once in a while it's good to change the place where you are, see something new, walk on new paths and do something else. It helps to take your mind off your daily routine and clears your head. So when you have a day off from studies or work, leave the city and visit one of many inspiring locations which you can reach within up to one hour drive from Brno.

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To the hilly north

Out of the most popular trip ideas, the ones that for sure deserve their fame are the walks through the Moravian Karst which is a protected nature reserve of the karst landscape full of caves and rocky walls. The key must-visit location is Propast Macocha (Macocha Abyss). It's more than 138 meters deep which makes it the biggest abyss of this kind not only in the Czech Republic but also in the Central Europe. Other typical visiting points are caves, with Punkevní jeskyně (Punkva Caves) being a very popular one.

The whole area is much larger than the protected reserve and it's covered with a dense network of hiking trails to choose from. For instance, you

The Macocha Abyss is more than 138 meters deep which makes it the biggest abyss of this kind in the Central Europe.



can follow the locations that the family of Liechtenstein chose at the end of the 18th century to create the landscape area enriched with architecture. Starting from the east, their concept included the Marian Temple in Křtiny, caves such as Jáchymka, Býčí skála, and Výпустek, an old smelter near Adamov (Stará huť u Adamova), the town of Adamov, the Nový hrad castle as well as the Tomb of the Liechtensteins in Vranov. And if you extend your trip even more to the west, you can climb the rocky ridge of the Babí lom hill.

If you decide to go for a trip around Tišnov, don't miss the Porta coeli Cistercian convent founded in the 13th century. Another equally old historical attraction you should see in the vicinity is the Pernštejn Castle, picturesquely situated on a hill near Nedvědice.

In the wine south

South Moravia is associated with wine, vast landscapes dotted with vineyards, and deeply rooted folklore. All this is waiting for you south of Brno. You can see the top destination already from the city, just look south from Denisovy sady (Denis Gardens) or the slopes of the Špilberk hill and you'll see on the horizon the humps of the Pálava hills. They rise above the surrounding area, stretching from the Nové Mlýny reservoir to the Austrian border, offering stunning views in all directions. The locations to visit around are for sure Dolní Věstonice, Pavlov with the Archeopark, as well as Mikulov.



Photo: Dipeariphotos.com, cat62



Photo: Depositphotos.com, YATImages

Not far from there is the Lednice-Valtice Area designed by the Dukes of Liechtenstein between the 17th and the 19th centuries, and registered as the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built as a large English landscape park, it covers the area of 300 sq. km and includes not only two castles in Lednice and Valtice but also many smaller buildings, pavilions and follies scattered around forests and ponds. The ideal way to explore the park is by bike, but don't worry if you visit it on foot. You'll be equally amazed.

Biking is perfect to explore also the vast areas with vineyards or fruit orchards. Looking from Brno to the south, typically visited spots along the biking trails are Rajhrad, Židlochovice (especially around the apricot harvest), Hustopeče (don't miss the blooming period of the almond orchards), Velké Pavlovice, and Velké Bílovice.

There are also many vineyards further to the east, but the

The Lednice-Valtice Area designed by the Dukes of Liechtenstein between the 17th and the 19th centuries is registered as the UNESCO World Heritage Site.



region, Slovácko, is especially known for its lively folklore. When you decide to go there, check the calendar of the local folk festivities to best choose your dates. The key locations to visit are Hodonín, Kyjov, Bzenec, Strážnice with the area of wine cellars Petrov-Piže in the nearby as well as Uherské Hradiště and the Baťa Canal.

In the west of the wine region lies Znojmo which offers interesting examples of Gothic architecture as well the Romanesque Rotunda of Saint Catherine, built in the 11th century. The town is also a gate to the Podyjí National Park stretching along the deep valley of the Dyje river.

Further to the west

While exploring the western regions neighboring with Brno, include in your plans Ivančice, Dolní Kounice, and Moravský Krumlov. There's a mixture of everything you might want to have on a trip – beautiful nature

with distant views and rustling rivers, charming historical architecture, and a memory of a famous artist, Alfons Mucha who was born in Ivančice.

Following up the Jihlava river, you'll get to the place particularly interesting for those focused on technology. The Nuclear Power Station in Dukovany is open to visitors, but be sure to book your visit in advance. You can also have a tour of Hydroelectric Power Plants in Dalešice and Lipno.

The towns of Třebíč and Telč deserve a strong place on your list of planned trips too, especially if you want to see more of the UNESCO sites. In Třebíč, visit the Romanesque-Gothic Saint Procopius Basilica and take a walk through the Jewish Quarter. Telč, although a bit more than a one-hour drive from Brno, will amaze you with its historic center surrounded by a unique complex of Renaissance and Baroque houses.

Last but not least, the east

On your trips to the east of Brno, you'll come across many locations related to the Battle of Austerlitz, often referred to as the Battle of the Three Emperors, which took place on December 2, 1805. The most important ones are Slavkov u Brna, called

Photo: Depositphotos.com, Violin



Telč will amaze you with its historic center surrounded by a unique complex of Renaissance and Baroque houses.



Austerlitz in German, and the Peace Memorial (Mohyla míru) near Prace.

This side of Brno is also a gate to two impressive cities: Olomouc, which is the historical capital city of Moravia, and Zlín, which owes its heyday to Tomáš Baťa and his success in the footwear industry during and after the World War I. On your trip around Zlín check the spa town of Luhačovice, and while coming back to Brno don't miss Kroměříž with beautiful gardens and the Baroque castle, both on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list.

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Brno in the center of Europe

Brno and the entire Czech Republic are situated in the center of Europe. It may not be a geographical center measured with mathematical precision, but it's certainly a cultural center born from shared historical, social and cultural experiences. What does it mean in practice? You'll see here features of both Western and Eastern Europe that clash, intertwine and create a new quality. Being too eastern for the West and too western for the East, the Czech Republic together with adjacent countries forms the Central Europe, and Brno lies in the very middle of this central group.

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A dot on the map

Thanks to its advantageous location, Brno has it pretty close to Vienna and Bratislava, capitals of the two neighboring countries of Austria and Slovakia. And although it's only a bit further from here to Prague, which is the Czech capital, the influence of Vienna has always been major. It's no surprise as you can reach all those capital cities within 1,5 to 2,5 hours by train. And what makes Brno's location even more attractive, and central, is a direct train connection with two more capitals – Berlin in Germany and Budapest in Hungary.

If you look at the physical map, you'll quickly notice that the Czech Republic is surrounded by mountains. However, those are not the only peaks Czechs climb, as being central means you have

Although it's only a bit further from here to Prague, which is the Czech capital, the influence of Vienna has always been major.



it close to what's available at your neighbors. For the citizens of Brno it translates into an easy access to the Alps and the Tatra Mountains which they frequently visit to hike and ski.

Being located in the middle of the continent might also bring geographical disadvantages such as lack of direct access to the sea. On the other hand, when you don't have any naturally dominant seaside, you have a wider choice of where to go for holidays. Most Czechs prefer warm water and guaranteed weather which is why the Adriatic Sea has practically become a "Czech sea", but they have it just as far away from the Baltic Sea. What's more, many go to the Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Central Europe.



Photo: Depositphotos.com, canyelin

Riding the waves of history

The geography is just one of the factors that allow a given city or region to see itself as central. What's crucial is to be part of what's going on, and not only as an observer, but also actively contributing to history. And that's exactly the role that the Moravian region played already in the 9th century when it became the cradle of civilization in the Central Europe.

Before that happened, the region has been visited by the Roman legionaries of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the fact confirmed by the residues of their camping site in Mušov, 35 km south from Brno. However, the real growth of the region's importance came later, with the rise of Great Moravia, probably the first major West Slavic state. The key forming influence that it brought was the cultural development initiated by St. Cyril and St. Methodius, Christian missionaries who came from the Byzantine Empire. They not only expanded Christianity, but also introduced literacy by creating the Glagolitic alphabet and using the Old Church Slavonic language as a liturgical language.

A strong factor in creating the Central European identity of the Czech Republic was the period when the Slavic dominant gave way to Germanic influences. In 1526 the country came under the rule of the Habsburgs, the dynasty ruling Austria. Since then, the upper social classes



Photo: Wikipedia.org, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien

A strong factor in creating the Central European identity of the Czech Republic was the period when the Slavic dominant gave way to Germanic influences.



more and more often used German, while Czech as the language of the lower classes served neither administration, science, nor culture. In 1804 the Czech territory, known as the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, became an integral part of the Austrian Empire, and around that time the German influence became so strong that the Slavic culture pushed back. The Czech National Revival helped to revive the culture and the national identity as well as restore the Czech language, which was on the brink of extinction.

The country however still stayed under the Habsburgs and when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was formed in 1867, Czechs were naturally taken as its part. But what they've learned by then was to oppose Germanization while being inspired by the German-speaking culture. They used the opportunities



that being part of such a strong country gave to develop their own group of intellectuals and work towards the emancipation of the Czechs in the Habsburg monarchy.

They got the chance to finally become independent after the turbulent times of the World War I. That's when Czechoslovakia was brought to life. The Slavic identity has regained its voice, but the Germanic interdependencies have not been cut off. Keeping nearly 80% of the Austro-Hungarian industry, Czechoslovakia stayed in economical contact with the neighboring countries, but then got occupied by Germany. The agreements after the World War II restored the country, this time, however, under a strong Eastern, communist influence.

Two major events helped Czechs to regain balance. They've overcome the communist regime in 1989 and peacefully dissolved Czechoslovakia into two separate countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in 1993. Keeping strong relations

After the World War I, the Slavic identity has regained its voice, but the Germanic interdependencies have not been cut off.



with both Germany and Austria, but being fully independent and free to cultivate their culture and their language, Czechs now remain at the junction of the West and the East, the Germanic and the Slavic.

Cultural belonging

The culture that Czechs have developed is not limited by the country's borders. Whichever way you go, you'll see a cultural continuum where differences appear gradually, like shading between colors. The two main shades remain Germanic and Slavic. They influence each other clashing underneath but on the surface they create a smooth new formation.

This continuum and grading of the culture spreads from Silesia to Austria, from Germany to Slovakia, and further into the whole Central Europe. It includes the food that people eat, their customs and traditions, the songs they sing, and the vocabulary adopted into the language they speak. The Czech Republic is in the middle of it all, and same as in other Central European countries, it's most likely that the second foreign language people speak after English is, unsurprisingly, still German.

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