

## Discover a fairy-tale Christmas in the Czech Republic

*Prague, 10th October 2011* Christmas carols sound through the streets, stars of Bethlehem shine from town squares, and fresh snow crunches underfoot. The scent of evergreen trees, mulled wine and incense permeates city streets. It's Christmas time in the Czech Republic. Visit the Czech Republic and see the most beautiful Christmas fairy tale with your own eyes. Christmas fairs and markets with unique gifts await you in towns and cities as well as at castles and chateaux

### Buy your presents at fairs

The Christmas markets in **Prague** are considered to be the largest and most beautiful markets in the Czech Republic. They will be open on **Old Town Square** from 26 November 2011 to 1 January 2012. Stands selling Christmas decorations, gift items, sweets, nativity sets and jewellery can be visited every day from 9:00 AM till 7:00 PM. On Saturday, 26 November 2011, you can witness the ceremonial lighting of the Christmas tree – you need only to be at Old Town Square at 5:00 PM. You can also visit the Christmas market at **Wenceslaus Square** from 27 November 2011 to 1 January 2012. <http://www.praha.eu/jnp/en/home/index.html>

You can also experience the wonderful scents of Christmas at the markets in the Moravian metropolis of **Brno**. These will take place from 25 November to 23 December on **Náměstí Svobody (Freedom Square)**, **Zelný trh (Vegetable Market)** and **Radnická (Town Hall street)**. Stands will be selling Christmas presents, decorations, fish, cheese, "trdelník" (sweet pastry made from rolled dough usually topped with sugar and walnuts), and roasted chestnuts. You can expect to see plenty of interesting goods, a rich cultural programme, as well as demonstrations of traditional crafts. The Christmas tree in Brno will be ceremoniously lighted on Freedom Square in the early evening on 25 November 2011.

<http://www2.brno.cz/index.php?lan=en>



The Christmas fair in the picturesque Wallachian village of **Rožnov pod Radhoštěm** in the foothills of the Beskids will begin on 10 December 2011. Don't miss the offer of traditionally crafted gifts, rich folklore programme and animated exhibit. <http://www.roznov.cz/the-town-of-roznov-p-r>

The Christmas markets in **Český Krumlov** in South Bohemia are also certainly worth visiting. Here the markets will be held from 27 November 2011 to 6 January 2012 on **Náměstí Svornosti (Square of Concord)**. A rich cultural programme, Christmas concerts and demonstration of gingerbread decorating also will feature in Český Krumlov. <http://www.ckrumlov.info/docs/en/kaktualita.xml>

The markets in the Southern Bohemian metropolis of **České Budějovice** also should not be missed.

At the České Budějovice **exhibition grounds** you can buy Christmas decorations and gifts or enjoy a cup of grog. The programme at the exhibition grounds begins on 2 December and lasts until 4 December. Markets will be open between 12 December and 18 December 2011 on **Náměstí Přemysla**

**Otakara II (Ottokar II Square).**

<http://www.c-budejovice.cz/en/stranky/welcome-page.aspx>

### Christmas romance at castles and chateaux

#### Kuks

Why not discover the charm of Czech Christmas and its traditions at a castle? The **Kuks Hospital** in Southeast Bohemia has prepared a traditional pre-Christmas fair for you, taking place during **12–13 November 2011 and again on 19–20 November 2011**. <http://www.hospital-kuks.cz/en/>

#### Hořovice

A picturesque chateau situated on the border between Central Bohemia and the Pilsen Region welcomes visitors to its tours even during Advent. Visit the Hořovice chateau any weekend in December to see its chambers and discover all its romantic nooks and crannies. Guided tours will be held almost every weekend in December (**3–4 December, 10–11 December, 17–18 December**).

<http://perseus.gc-system.cz/mesto-horovice.eu/>

#### Horšovský Týn

Straddling the banks of the Radbuza River in West Bohemia lies the town of Horšovský Týn. A true **Old Bohemian Christmas fair and demonstration of a unique live nativity scene** will be held here on 18 December. The programme commences at **9:00 AM** on the main square and continues into the next day. <http://www.horsovskytyn.cz/>

#### Český Krumlov

The city of Český Krumlov has prepared a rich programme for you for the Advent and Christmas season. The time of Advent will be filled with many splendid events, commencing with the communal lighting of the Christmas tree, singing of carols, giving of gifts from St. Nicholas, and sending of letters to the Infant Jesus. The magical culmination of the pre-Christmas period is the **live nativity scene** in

which the Biblical story will be acted out in song and dance along with beautiful music. <http://www.ckrumlov.info/docs/en/atr176.xml>

## Hrubý Rohozec

Near the North Bohemian town of Turnov stands the Hrubý Rohozec chateau. The chateau will again be holding Christmas tours of its chambers this year. Here you can enjoy a truly noble Christmas atmosphere, experience how chateau owners celebrated Christmas in the old days, and see historical gifts. <http://www.hruby-rohozec.eu/en/>

## Czech Christmas



Traditions and customs are an inherent part of Christmas, and a great many are observed in the Czech Republic. The sweetest of these traditions is baking **Christmas pastries**. "Beehives", "bear paws", Linzer cookies and vanilla crescents have all been baked in Czech households since long ago.

Many more Christmas customs are maintained in the Czech Republic. On Christmas Eve, a strict **fast** is observed until the evening. Impatient children are promised to see a golden piglet if they hold the fast. Everyone gathers for family supper when the first star appears in the sky. Czech Christmas supper characteristically includes **a fish soup, potato salad and fried carp**. Several **carp scales** are traditionally placed under the plates to bring everyone sufficient wealth for the coming year. One extra plate is prepared on the table for a chance guest. Many households maintain the tradition that no one may leave their place at Christmas supper because whoever may do so will die within a year. A popular and mysterious custom is **apple cutting**. According to the pattern of the seeds after cutting, we will learn of the health we will enjoy in the coming year. The shape of a star denotes good

health, while a cross symbolises illness.

In the Czech Republic, presents are given by the Infant Jesus, who leaves them under the Christmas tree in the evening on 24 December.

## Welcome the new year in the Czech Republic

Here it comes! For some, the end of the year means an appraisal of the past. Regardless of its level of success, it is certainly worth celebrating it in grand style. On most town and city squares, all-night programmes full of music, entertainment and celebrities, culminating in large fireworks, are held.



But there are many more ways to celebrate the coming of the new year.

### In steam or on snow

Spending winter at a spa also has its unforgettable charm. Savour the winter atmosphere at **Luhačovice** as you enjoy the last days of the year. The spa procedures will contribute to your relaxation and rejuvenation. Celebrate New Year's Eve 2011 in the pleasant company of spa guests and step into 2012 with renewed energy. <http://lazneluhacovice.cz/en/>

A truly unique package is available for you at the **Priessnitz Jeseník Spa**: pleasant accommodation located close to the mountains, high-quality gastronomic services, and the traditional helpful and attentive care of the local personnel. What's more, you will undergo a comprehensive purification of body and soul in the final days of the year.

<http://www.priessnitz.cz/de/>

Are you one who loves the romantic atmosphere of mountains? Then spend the end of the year there. The offer of mountain chalets for lease and hotels in the Czech Republic is extensive. Welcome the New Year in the highest mountains of Bohemia, the **Krkonoše** (<http://www.giant-mountains.info/>). You can also visit such other mountain ranges as the **Jizera** (<http://www.jizerky.cz/en/about-region/>), **Šumava** (<http://www.sumava.cz/domu/>) or **Jeseníky** (<http://www.jeseniky.net/index.php?lang=en>).

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