

2022:

Czech Traditions

Traditions Specific Fact Sheet

The world we experience today is undeniably shaped by the traditions of the past. In the Czech Republic, these deep cultural roots often date back centuries, but manage to survive by evolving to find their place in modern society. Traditions don't have to be summarized in history books or encased in glass to maintain their importance (though many of them are). Czech traditions are alive and thriving throughout the country in all kinds of forms for visitors to see, hear, try, taste, and experience.

2022: The International Year of Glass

The United Nations has declared 2022 the "International Year of Glass", making this a perfect time to shine a spotlight on Czech glass traditions. The North Bohemian region is home to Crystal Valley, the center of everything from glass costume jewelry to sparkling chandeliers since the 12th century. Today's visitors can admire both past and present shapes of these delicate designs at the **Portheimka Museum** in Prague, the **Jablonec Museum of Glass** in North Bohemia, or the **Moser Museum of Glass** in the western spa town of

Karlovy Vary. Multiple showrooms and glassworks studios are also open to visitors interested in seeing the traditional art form in action – or learning it themselves!

The Politics of Puppetry

Puppet shows can sound like silly entertainment for children, but this traditional art form deserves some of the credit for the actual existence of modern Czech culture. When the Czech Republic was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under Hapsburg rule, daily life was generally conducted in German. However, travelling actors helped to maintain the local cultural identity with hand-carved, wooden marionettes. These travelling puppet shows were allowed to speak Czech while putting on performances across the region. The seeming innocence of puppetry helped the Czech people maintain their Slavic language long enough to also reclaim their independence in the early 20th century. Visitors can learn more about this influential art form at the **Chrudim Puppetry Museum** (east of Prague) or the **Puppet Museum** in the beer-lover's city of Pilsen. Visitors can also get a hands-on experience with workshops via **Puppets in Prague**.





Blueprint (modrotisk)



Blueprint (modrotisk)



Blueprint (modrotisk) Danzinger

Local Traditions in Textiles

Some historical Czech traditions can appear in more subtle ways. For example, the UNESCO-recognized tradition of **blueprint** (a 16th-century textile printing process) is currently being kept alive by fifth-generation knowledge using 300-year-old blocks. The distinctive indigo-blue with delicate white flower designs also shows up in **modern clothing and home décor**. In the summer of 2020, **the Czech Olympic team** wore blueprint-inspired uniforms in the opening ceremonies. Traditions in textiles have woven this region together for centuries, from prominent Central European textile centers in Liberec and Brno to 21st-century Czechs sewing facemasks to share with their communities in the early pandemic days. Visitors can also admire the textiles used in traditional Czech folk costumes at the **Ethnographic Museum** in the peaceful Kinsky Gardens located within Prague's Petřín Park.

Centuries of Expertise in Every Sip

Traditional knowledge enhances every delicious sip of local beer enjoyed throughout the Czech Republic. The beginnings of Czech brewing date all the way back to the year 993, with the founding of **Břevnov Monastery brewery**. Fast forward a few centuries, and the mid-1800s bring the birth of a golden-colored, bottom fermented pilsner, still available to taste straight from the source at the **Pilsner Urquell Brewery** in Pilsen. In the 21st century, a new generation of Czech brewmasters with deep knowledge of traditional techniques have found the freedom to experiment beyond pilsner. This creativity has launched more than **400 microbreweries and craft beer producers** throughout the country, as well as **beer spas** to bathe in therapeutic blends of hops, herbs, and water (while sipping a beer, if you like). We've got certified tour guides, beer trails, and recommendations on request.

Czech Spas: Pampering and Preventative Care

Spa towns are a staple of European culture recognized by UNESCO in 2021, with more than 30 scattered throughout the Czech Republic. The **West Bohemian spa triangle** of three towns — Karlovy Vary (or “Carlsbad”), Mariánské Lázně (or “Marienbad”) and Frantiskovy Lázně (or “Franzenbad”) — has attracted English kings and international aristocrats, like Peter the Great, since the 18th century. The town of Teplice holds one of the **oldest spas in all of Europe**, while Jáchymov holds the title of the **world's first radon spa**. European spa towns are less about fluffy white robes and manicures, and more focused on spa hotels with specialized treatment plans (think relaxing baths, spa caves, therapeutic massages, healthy meals, and structured exercise plans) designed to relieve specific ailments. These plans often incorporate the natural mineral waters that flow underground in this region. **Porcelain spa cups** double as excellent souvenirs to taste the waters from free-flowing taps housed inside gorgeous, columned architecture.



Mariánské Lázně Spa

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