



Short stops

SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T TAKE THE TIME FOR A LEISURELY CITY STAY OVER MULTIPLE DAYS. HERE'S HOW TO HAVE ONE GREAT DAY IN...



► CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT
Moscow's St Basil's
Cathedral; visitors
can rent bikes
near Amsterdam's
Vondelpark; Prague
Castle is one of the
biggest in Europe; the
Soviet Star at Berlin's
Checkpoint Charlie.

Amsterdam

Words: Mitch Brook

8am Walk the canals to take in the pretty townhouses and bridges. The three major canals were built in the 1600s. If the weather gets cold enough in winter, Amsterdamers ice skate on the canals.

9.30am The Koffiehuis De Hoek is a popular cafe serving up omelettes, pancakes and quick service. The coffee is decent, too, so fuel up for a big day.

10.30am Head to the Anne Frank Museum, the house where the young Jewish diarist hid from the Nazis. You can see how the Franks lived, with artefacts from that time including Anne's original diary.

11.30am Climb the tower of Westerkerk church for a great view. Nearby is the Homomonument, a tribute to all persecuted gay and lesbian people. It was the first of its kind in the world – testament to Amsterdam's progressive culture.

12.30pm Find a grocer or market (Foodhallen is nearby) for picnic supplies before heading to Vondelpark. This sprawling green space in the city centre is popular for afternoon picnics in the sun.

2pm The Rijksmuseum is packed full of Dutch art and artefacts. You'll see art by masters such as Rembrandt and Vermeer (however, the nearby Van Gogh Museum is better for that artist).

3.30pm Catch a number 10 tram from the nearby Spiegelgracht stop to Hooge Kadijk (you can buy a one-hour ticket on-board) to visit Brouwerij 't IJ, a brewery and bar inside a windmill. It has a range of its own beers and runs tours in English at 3.30pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

4.30pm Time for some Dutch snacks. Try *patatje oorlog* (fries with mayonnaise, satay sauce and onion), *poffertjes* (mini pancakes

with butter and sugar) or *broodje haring* (a raw herring sandwich with onion).

6pm Rent a bike from MacBike in Waterlooplein or near Vondelpark, or Bike4U's multiple locations, and ride along the canals as night falls and the water reflects the street lights.

7pm The Dutch were once a colonial force in Indonesia, which has brought many Southeast Asian people – and their cuisine – to Amsterdam. Try Javanese at Warung Spang Makandra. Often these restaurants have a tourist menu in English, otherwise ask your waiter or a local for a translation; they'll likely reply in perfect English.

10pm Seek out the Dutch spirit *jenever* in one of Amsterdam's bars. It's like the forefather of gin, made from juniper and a range of herbs. Try Café Slijterij Oosterling or De Drie Flesjes. ▶



Prague

Words: Mitch Brook

8am Start in Wenceslas Square. The long boulevard has been the site of important Czech political moments, including protests against the Soviet Union. Pick up breakfast from Studio Dva Café.

9.30am Head to the Old Town Square and discover its old-world charm. If you must, check out the Astronomical Clock that was installed in 1410 for its on-the-hour performance. Be warned that it's been voted as one of the most disappointing experiences in Europe.

10.30am Walk towards the river for an energy boost at TriCafé, a great little source of decent coffee and sweet treats.

11.30am To cross the Vltava River, you can either brace for the tourist crowds and tackle the Charles Bridge, or head a bit further north and cross Manusev Most – look south for a beautiful view of Prague over the river, including the 15th-century bridge and its Gothic tower.

12.30pm Head uphill to Prague Castle, one of the largest in Europe, which includes St. Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, the Golden Lane of tiny houses (one of which was inhabited by Franz Kafka) and Dalibor Tower, which served as a prison for nearly 300 years. You're sure to learn the meaning of the word 'defenestration' (to be

thrown from a window) before you depart – something that has happened more than once in Czech political history.

2pm It's right nearby so check out the Kafka Museum for a look into the life of one of the most celebrated Czech authors. Then, head back across the river to wander the Old Town at leisure. Reward yourself with meatloaf from Naše Maso: a blend of pork and beef that's all flavour.

3.30pm Explore the Jewish Museum of Prague, which holds important historical relics – especially from the destruction of the Prague ghetto, or Josefov, at the turn of the 19th century. Its artefacts were added to during World War II when the Nazis gathered Jewish items from all over Bohemia to be stored here.

4.30pm Seek out a pre-dinner beverage. Czechs are all about their beer – the Czech Republic is said to be the nation that consumes the most beer per capita in the world – and even invented the pilsner style of brewing with Pilsner Urquell in 1842. Try the Urquell but be sure to also taste the range of regional brews at the Prague Beer Museum (actually a pub), with 30 varieties on tap.

6pm For dinner, Café Imperial is as impressive as it sounds, with Art Nouveau

ceramics and mosaics and run by famous Prague chef Zdeněk Pohlreich.

7pm Prague's Rudolfinum is home to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. Dvorak Hall, named for the Czech composer, hosts regular concerts. During the day you can often catch musicians performing a sample of the music that's to come that evening.

10pm Finally, head underground: Prague has a cool selection of cellar bars. Try Nebe Kremencova for cocktails and music in a restored medieval-era cellar, or Kozicka Bar, consisting of a warren of rooms that gets busier and louder the later it gets. 



City daytrips

Visit your local Flight Centre for more advice on short city visits and the latest deals. Go to flightcentre.com.au or call 131 600 24 hours.



CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE

- Berlin's cathedral, found in the central Mitte neighbourhood.
- Prague's Café Imperial serves up impressive dishes that match its beautiful decoration.
- Prague's Old Town Square is a historic beauty, with cobbled streets and a variety of architectural styles.

