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# Moon Prague & Budapest (Moon Handbooks)



## Synopsis

This full-color guide to Prague and Budapest includes vibrant photos and helpful planning maps. Journalist Tom Dirlis offers a one-of-a-kind view of two remarkable European destinations, from the majesty of Prague Castle, through the picturesque countryside of Bohemia, to the romantic ambiance of the Danube Embankment with its breathtaking view of Buda. Dirlis provides unique trip ideas for a variety of travelers, such as a plan for "the Perfect Night Out" in either capital, and suggestions experiencing "Prague Like a Local." Complete with tips for letting off steam in Budapest's thermal baths and reveling in the superior symphonies of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at Prague's Rudolfinum, Moon Prague & Budapest gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tom Dirlis arrived in Prague in the spring of 1999 and fell in love with the city's charm and mystique at first sight. He felt compelled to stay and began supporting himself by writing numerous travel and opinion pieces for local publications, as well as marketing copy for multinational corporations. In 2000, he traveled to Budapest and fell in love all over again. More than a decade later, Tom continues to write articles, editorials, and copy, as well as plays and short stories. He was a finalist in Prague's first playwriting competition in 2007. His most recent play was performed in New York in the summer of 2013. He is currently working on his first novel.

Prague Like a Local Everybody knows what the main sights, bars, and restaurants are, but what if you'd like to live like a local? Eat, drink, and stroll where they do; here are a few local tips.

**Day 1** Start your day with an affordable breakfast and bottomless cup of coffee at Bohemia Bagel by Charles Bridge. Pick up an extra bagel or two if you like because you'll be doing a lot of walking. Start with the streets of Malá Strana (Lesser Town) and work your way through Kampa Island over to Petřín Hill. Take the funicular or do as the brave do and make your way slowly up the hill on foot, resting and admiring the view below as often as you like. When you get to the top, stroll through the large grounds and, if you have the energy, climb up Petřín Lookout Tower for an excellent panoramic view. Grab a delicious and healthy lunch at Malá Buddha, then continue on to the castle. When you're done there, leave the tourist hordes behind and head on over for more peaceful walking through both Wallenstein Gardens and Vojan Park, and say hello to the peacocks in the latter. Enjoy a delicious Balkan dinner at the unbeatable Gitanes, and when you're ready to rock and roll with the local contingent, start drinking at Klub Jízda, where anything goes. If something a little more upscale is to your liking, get on over to Blue Light for cocktails and impromptu conversations. Both bars stay open until very late, so dig in and get ready to party like a Bohemian.

**Day 2** Enjoy breakfast at the charming Café Louvre, then make your way to Stromovka Park, one of Prague's more serene getaways, where you can breathe in the fresh air and clear your head among laughing children, playful dogs, and the fortunate locals who don't have a day job. Come out on the end where Stávková is located and take your pick from amusement rides, the Lapidarium, or Sea World. Have lunch at one of the local restaurants and walk it off with a romantic stroll through Letná Park before grabbing a picnic bench at its popular beer garden for informal drinks and excellent views of the city below. Have a fun dinner at local favorite Hostinec na Starém Kovárne before moving a couple of doors down to Fraktal, where free-form conversation comes more naturally than you might think. Order a beer. Drink. Repeat.

**Day 3** Take your pick from the countless restaurants along Wenceslas Square and have breakfast while watching the people go by. Next, it's shopping along Na Příkopě Street whose boutiques, malls, and specialty shops will easily keep you busy till lunch. For a real local experience, break bread at U Govindy Vegetarian Club. Spend a few hours browsing the myriad of shops lining both Celetná and Parížské Streets, picking up gifts and mooning over outfits you can't afford. Have a cup of coffee with local artists and students at Café Montmartre, then explore the back streets of Staré Město (Old Town) while asking yourself if a downtown core can really be this beautiful. An exotic dinner at Zebra Asian Noodle Bar will provide the sturdy base you'll

need for drinks at the always fun and rowdy Harley's Bar. If cocktails and the in-crowd are more your speed, then a night at M1 Secret Lounge should do the trick.

My wife and I travel about 3 months out of the year. I usually start out by reading as many travel guides as I can find and then choose one or more to take with me on the trip. Even with an excellent library just down the street, my shelves are full of Moon Handbooks, Eyewitness Travel Guides, Insight Guides, Lonely Planet, National Geographic Traveler, etc. Very often, my book(s) of choice for the trip includes the Moon Handbook, this was one of the few exceptions. I think the book contains all the right information but, for me, the book was hard to navigate. If I was looking for a particular sight and didn't know what part of town it was located in, especially like a bridge that connected two parts of town, I was forever going to the index and searching for the closest name I could find. If you are going to organize a guide book for a city like Prague and divide it into seven parts (one for each district) then the guide book should clearly indicate which district you are in as you page through the book. Section headings do exist but they are buried in the text and unless you remember that Stare Mesto is "Old Town" or are lucky enough to locate a heading with Old Town in parentheses you will be headed back to the index or will be looking for a hotel in the wrong part of town. It also bothered me that all the section headings used the local language and the English translations followed in parentheses which made them harder for me to locate. Having been to Prague & Budapest I am convinced that book contains all the right information and, like most Moon Handbooks, gives great insight into the area and its culture. Unfortunately, for me, it was just hard to quickly find what I needed.

really just a lousy travel book. i will stick with fodors, frommers, and lonely planet from now on. i only bought this because it had 2 cities that i was going to. horribly organized. i ended up using a free book that i got from a taxi company which was far superior and left this one in the hotel trash!

Maps are pretty good but could be better. I'd like more on subway systems.

Too basic for our needs. We wanted more detail about sites than details about where things were I guess. Just didn't meet our needs.

I travel a lot and typically buy Rick Steve's or the Lonely Planet books. On a recent trip we were going to Prague and Budapest, so this book was the perfect fit covering both cities. I regret buying it

and would have been better off buying both the Prague and Budapest books by a different author. We found much of the information to be incorrect. For example, for a day trip to Terezin from Prague the book sends you the wrong bus station. When we arrived the ticket agent informed us that busses to Terezin do not leave from that station and gave us subway directions to the correct bus station. Many of the opening/closing hours of tourist sites were completely wrong. The book also failed to mention that many of the sites, especially day trips from Prague and Budapest are closed in the winter. Luckily we had great wi-fi in our hotel room and quickly learned to visit the web-site before visiting sites as the book was almost always inaccurate in some way. I'm really angry that this book was so inaccurate. I understand that prices and hours of operation change, so there will always be some discrepancies, but much of this book was so far wrong I really question whether the author ever went to these places. We wasted good vacation time by using inaccurate maps and relying on false information. I will never buy a "moon" book again and stick with the travel books I know I can rely on.

I knew Tom many years ago when he was a young, impetuous reckless star-crossed idealistic Athenian named Taso, a Bacchanalian Brando if you will, declaring war on an uncaring empty cold world trying to stomp on his dreams and extinguish the glory of his destiny. Enfant terrible, at once horrible yet fragile, treading the perilous slopes of wilderlands of genius and madness, forging a bold unique path no man had tread before. How fulfilling it is to know that the fire of this roman candle was not snuffed out but found its art in tour guiding. You can fully trust Tom to serve as your faithful sherpa, dashing you away from feral packs of gypsies and wolves, down lesser known cobblestone roads to the living gems of Czech and Hungarian Bohemia! Tom has arrived. This is his moment...

This book's coverage of Prague is good and helped us organize an enjoyable 3-day visit. I am however convinced that the author has never set foot in Budapest. Several restaurants were misplaced: Fausto's and Abszint. Al Amir and Mandarin were nowhere to be found. The highlighted 'scrumptious, gut-busting pancakes' of Nagyi Palacsintazoja are...crepes! Standard, microwaved, crepes that you can find in pretty much every train station in Europe. (Yes, they were good). This made for a very disappointing tour of the restaurant scene in Pest.

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