Savvy Trip GUIDES

PRAGUE / SELF-GUIDED WALK

Prague Castle & Hradčany

Courtyards, gardens and views over Prague



WALKING DISTANCE

About 3 km

ALLOW

2–3 hours

Information last checked: 23 October 2026

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Prague Castle & Hradčany

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Explore Prague Castle’s courtyards and gardens, then walk through Hradčany to the vineyard viewpoint beside Strahov Monastery. Along the way, see St Vitus Cathedral from several sides, step out onto terraces overlooking Prague, and discover the palaces around Hradčanské Square.

The walk focuses on outdoor sights, with no sightseeing ticket needed for the main route. You can easily combine it with visits to the Castle interiors, rejoining the walking route after each visit. Allow around another 2½ hours for the interiors. After the Castle, continue along Loretánská towards Pohořelec and Strahov. Extend the walk through the small streets of Nový Svět if you wish, or add a detour to Loreta. Church interiors, museums and galleries are optional visits requiring extra time.



St Vitus Cathedral and Mihulka above the Deer Moat.

About 3 km · Allow 2–3 hours

Before you start

Tickets: No sightseeing ticket is needed for the outdoor route. To visit the interiors, the Prague Castle Main Circuit ticket covers St Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, St George's Basilica and Golden Lane. The cathedral's Great South Tower requires a separate ticket, available at the Prague Castle Information Centre or directly at the tower. See **official ticket information** for current prices and purchasing options.

Season: March-October. **Recommended start:** 10:00 or later, when the Royal Garden and South Gardens open.

Garden hours: March and October 10:00-17:00; April-June and September 10:00-19:00; July-August 10:00-20:00.

Latest recommended start: Aim to begin by **14:00** for the outdoor walk, leaving time to enjoy the South Gardens before the earliest seasonal closing time. This is a suggested start, rather than a strict cutoff. Start in the morning if you also plan to visit the Castle interiors.

Footwear: Wear comfortable shoes with a good grip for cobbles, steps and sloping paths.

Water: Bring a bottle of water, especially in warm weather.

Toilets: Free toilets are available inside the Castle grounds, including near the cathedral's west front and at the foot of the Bull Staircase. Locations are noted along the route.

Weather: Much of the walk is outdoors, with exposed viewpoints and limited shelter. Bring sun protection or a waterproof layer to suit the forecast; cobbles and steps can be slippery when wet.

Food and drink: Vikárka Cafeteria, beside the cathedral on Vikářská, serves good-value canteen-style meals daily, **11:00-15:00**. The route passes it later, but you can visit earlier - for example, before heading down to the South Gardens. Later in the walk, Café Melvin on Pohořelec is an option for coffee, while the Strahov brewery restaurant offers a meal or beer near the end.

Changing of the guard: A ceremonial changing of the Castle Guard, with music, takes place in the **First Courtyard at noon**. If you would like to watch, allow for it when planning your walk.

Distance: About 3 km. **Estimated time:** 2-3 hours, including looking around and photographs. Meals, interior visits and the Nový Svět extension are additional.

Mapy.com route map

Open the link to view or save the route in Mapy.com. For offline use, download the map for the area in the app before your walk.

Open the main walking route in Mapy.com →

Route overview

Main route: Follow the numbered stops 1–10 in order; between stops 7 and 8, continue directly along Loretánská. All lettered detours are optional.

Optional detours: Nový Svět: **7** → **A** → **B** → **8**. Short Loreta detour: **8** → **B** → **8**. **B marks Loreta**, which is included in both options; you only need to visit it once.

View whole-walk map (M1)

1 The bridge over the Deer Moat

2 The Second Courtyard

3 St Vitus Cathedral and the Third Courtyard

4 The Bull Staircase and South Gardens

5 Jiřská and St George’s Square

6 The Fourth Courtyard and Garden on the Bastion

7 Hradčanské Square

A Optional extension: Nový Svět

8 Loretánská and Pohořelec

9 Strahov Monastery

10 The vineyard viewpoint

1

The bridge over the Deer Moat

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Royal Garden viewpoint opens at 10:00.

View map M2a

Take **tram 22** and get off at **Pražský hrad (Prague Castle)**. The stop is also announced in English.

Use the pedestrian crossing to cross the road and tram tracks, then follow **U Prašného mostu** towards Prague Castle.

Just before the bridge leading to the Castle gates, turn left into the **Royal Garden** for a view of **St Vitus Cathedral across the Deer Moat**.

From here, St Vitus Cathedral rises above the Castle buildings, with the round Mihulka Powder Tower below. The wooded hollow between you and the Castle is the Deer Moat.

Continue to the Second Courtyard

Return to **U Prašného mostu**, cross the bridge and pass through the Castle entrance into the **Second Courtyard**.

Back to route overview

2

The Second Courtyard

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Main Circuit tickets available here.

View map M2a

The palace buildings surrounding the Second Courtyard owe their unified appearance to an eighteenth-century rebuilding under Empress Maria Theresa. Their façades give this part of the Castle the character of a royal residence.

The ornate stone fountain dates from 1686 and takes its name from the sculptor Jeroným Kohl, who created its decoration. It once formed part of the Castle's water supply. Nearby is a separate well, recognisable by its decorative metal cover.

The eighteenth-century Chapel of the Holy Cross projects into the courtyard from the palace buildings.

Tickets and optional interior visits

The ticket office is on your right as you enter the Second Courtyard from the bridge. No sightseeing ticket is needed for this outdoor walk.

If you would like to add interior visits, the **Prague Castle Main Circuit** is a combined ticket covering:

- **St Vitus Cathedral**
- **The Old Royal Palace**
- **St George's Basilica**
- **Golden Lane**

You can visit these sights as you reach them along the walk, then rejoin the outdoor route. Allow extra time for the visits and any queues.

Optional tower climb

The cathedral's **Great South Tower** is a worthwhile option if you would like to add one paid visit without doing the full interior circuit. Its viewing gallery offers sweeping views over Prague and the Castle grounds, reached by climbing **287 steps**. The tower requires a **separate ticket**, available at the **Prague Castle Information Centre** or directly **on the ground floor of the tower**; allow approximately **30-45 minutes extra**, plus any queue.

Official ticket information

> **Continue to St Vitus Cathedral**
>
> Take the passage on the **left-hand side of the courtyard as you entered from the bridge**. It leads into the **Third Courtyard**, directly in front of **St Vitus Cathedral**.

Back to route overview

3

St Vitus Cathedral and the Third Courtyard

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: The entrances to St Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace and the cathedral's Great South Tower are all in this courtyard.

View map M2a

As you emerge from the passage, the cathedral's western front appears suddenly at close range. The twin towers, rose window and decorated bronze doors fill the view above you.

Construction of the Gothic cathedral began in 1344, but the western front and its twin towers are much later additions. They were built in **Neo-Gothic style** during the cathedral's final completion between **1873 and 1929**, reviving the forms of medieval Gothic architecture. The bronze doors depict episodes from the cathedral's history and legends of Czech saints.

Continue around the cathedral

Once you have finished admiring the cathedral's western front, continue around to its **southern side**, into the wider part of the **Third Courtyard**.

Southern side and courtyard

From here, the Great South Tower, with its Renaissance gallery and Baroque roof, presents a different profile from the western twin towers. Above the Golden Gate is the **Last Judgement mosaic**, created in **1370-1372**. Christ appears as judge above the scenes of judgement, with Charles IV and his wife, Elizabeth of Pomerania, among the kneeling figures.



The Last Judgement mosaic above the three arches of the Golden Gate.

Across the courtyard is the presidential balcony. From here, Václav Havel addressed the crowd on **29 December 1989**, shortly after his election as president of Czechoslovakia.

Optional interior visit: The entrance to the Old Royal Palace is near the Bull Staircase. Admission is included in the Prague Castle Main Circuit ticket.

Continue to the South Gardens

Find the **Bull Staircase (Býčí schodiště)** in the corner near the entrance to the **Old Royal Palace**. Its low green roof is supported by bronze bulls.



4a · The Bull Staircase is beneath the low green roof on the right.

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The Bull Staircase and South Gardens

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Steps down via the Bull Staircase; gardens open at 10:00.

View map M2b View map M2a

The view over Prague begins as you descend the covered **Bull Staircase**. At the bottom, go straight ahead to the terrace viewpoint, marked **4b** on the map.

Toilets: Free toilets are around the corner on the left at the foot of the stairs.

The terrace and gardens

The terrace is a good place for photographs over the roofs of **Malá Strana**, including the green dome of **St Nicholas's Church**.

The terraces and framed views owe much to **Jože Plečnik**, who reshaped the South Gardens for President **Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk** in the 1920s.

Continue through the gardens

Follow the garden path east towards **Na Opyši**, leaving the gardens at their eastern end.

At **4c**, leave the gardens and return through the eastern Castle entrance, then follow **Jiřská uphill**.

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Jiřská and St George's Square

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Optional lunch on Vikářská: 11:00–15:00.

View map M2a

Along Jiřská

As you follow **Jiřská uphill**, you pass **Lobkowicz Palace**, with courtyards opening off the street on your right. A little further uphill, a right turn leads towards **Golden Lane**, where there is another ticket office. You can explore this area before continuing uphill to **St George's Square and the basilica**.

St George's Square and basilica

St George's Basilica stands out with its red Baroque façade and pale stone towers. Founded around **920**, the church took on much of its present Romanesque form when it was rebuilt after a fire in **1142**. Its twin towers date from that rebuilding, while the red façade received its Baroque appearance in the **seventeenth century**.

The square is also bordered by the **New Provost's Residence** and **All Saints' Church**, the palace chapel. The rounded roof above a columned entrance marks **Rosenberg Palace**, later home to the **Institute of Noblewomen**.

Lunch along the way

Vikárka Cafeteria, on Vikářská beside the cathedral, is a good-value lunch option serving canteen-style meals. It is open **daily, 11:00-15:00**.

> **Continue to the Fourth Courtyard**
>
> From St George's Square, follow the narrow **Vikářská** street along the **right-hand side of the cathedral** until you reach its western front again. Return through the passage into the **Second Courtyard**, then cross towards the passage **ahead on the right**, which leads into the **Fourth Courtyard**.

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The Fourth Courtyard and Garden on the Bastion

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Steps into the garden; benches available.

View map M2a

An unusual staircase designed by **Jože Plečnik** leads from the Fourth Courtyard into the **Garden on the Bastion**.

Beside the palace, broad, shallow steps rise towards an arched passage - a popular spot for photographs. The garden also offers an outlook towards the **Deer Moat** and benches where you can rest before continuing.



Plečnik's staircase, viewed from the garden towards the Fourth Courtyard.

Continue to Hradčanské Square

Leave the **Fourth Courtyard** through the exit leading onto **Hradčanské Square**.

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Hradčanské Square

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: The main walk continues directly to stop 8. The Nový Svět detour is optional.

View map M3

From **Hradčanské Square**, the **Gate of the Giants**, flanked by fighting figures and guarded by Castle sentries, frames a view into the **First Courtyard**. Beyond it stands **Matthias Gate**, which leads into the Second Courtyard. The Gate of the Giants is an exit, so you cannot re-enter here.

The palaces around **Hradčanské Square** reflect the wealth and influence of the aristocrats and church leaders who lived close to the Castle. Beside the Castle stands the **Archbishop's Palace**, the residence of Prague's archbishops.

On the opposite side, **Salm Palace** and the adjoining **Schwarzenberg Palace** now house exhibitions of the **National Gallery Prague**. Schwarzenberg Palace stands out for its patterned façades, decorated using *sgraffito* - designs scratched through contrasting layers of plaster.

At the far end, **Tuscany Palace** has a grand Baroque frontage crowned with statues. Towards the centre of the square stands the **Marian Column**, topped by the Virgin Mary and surrounded by saints, dating from **1724-1736**. Near Salm Palace stands a statue of **Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk**, the first president of Czechoslovakia.

Main route: continue directly to stop 8

With the Castle behind you, leave **Hradčanské Square** at its **upper left-hand corner** and follow **Loretánská** to **Loretánské Square**. You do not need to follow either lettered detour.

Continue on the main route to stop 8 →

Optional detour: Nový Svět (A)

To add the narrow lanes and historic houses of **Nový Svět**, follow the separate directions for **A**. This detour leaves here at **stop 7**, passes through **Nový Svět (A)** and **Loreta (B)**, then rejoins the main walk at **stop 8**. If you take this detour, you do not need the separate Loreta detour at stop 8.

Take the optional Nový Svět detour →

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8

Loretánská and Pohořelec

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Steps through the passage beside Café Melvin; a longer route via the monastery's main gate avoids these steps.

View map M3

Continue along Loretánská

With the Castle behind you, leave **Hradčanské Square** at its **upper left-hand corner** and follow **Loretánská** to **Loretánské Square**.

Main route: To continue directly to Strahov, skip the optional Loreta detour below and follow

the onward walking directions

.

Optional short detour: Loreta (B)

This is a separate, short detour from **stop 8 to Loreta (B) and back to stop 8**. It does not include Nový Svět. If you arrived via the Nový Svět detour, you have already passed Loreta; continue towards Pohořelec.

A short detour into the square brings you to **Loreta**, a Baroque pilgrimage complex known for its bell chimes. At its heart is the **Santa Casa**, a replica of the Holy House venerated in Loreto, Italy.

Opposite stands the enormous **Černín Palace**, built for the aristocratic Černín family and now the home of the **Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs**.

View Loreta on the map — marker B →

After the detour, return to **stop 8** and

continue towards Pohořelec and Strahov

.

Main route: continue to Strahov Monastery (stop 9)

Continue uphill to **Pohořelec**, keeping to the **left-hand side** of the wide street. Look out for **Café Melvin**. Just next to the café, a signpost marks the entrance to a passage through the building. Follow it up the steps into **Strahov Monastery**.

Alternative avoiding the passage steps: For a longer route to the monastery, continue uphill past the passage to the monastery's **main entrance gate**. You can also use this entrance if you miss the passage.

Coffee stop

Café Melvin, on the left-hand side of Pohořelec as you walk uphill, is a recommended stop if you feel ready for a coffee.



The passage beside Café Melvin, with the Strahov Abbey sign on the left.

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Strahov Monastery

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Church entrance area accessible when open.

View map M3

Explore the monastery

Strahov is still a working Premonstratensian monastery. Spend some time looking around its courtyards and buildings before continuing to the viewpoint. When the **Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** is open, you can step into its entrance area for a look inside.

Optional library visit

For a visit to the **Strahov Library**, buy a ticket at the information centre in the **Church of St Roch**, near the main monastery gate. The standard visit lets you admire the decorated library halls from their doorways; it does not include walking into the halls themselves.

Food and beer

If you are hungry or fancy a beer, **Klášterní pivovar Strahov**, the monastery brewery restaurant, is a recommended stop for a meal or one of its own **St Norbert beers**.

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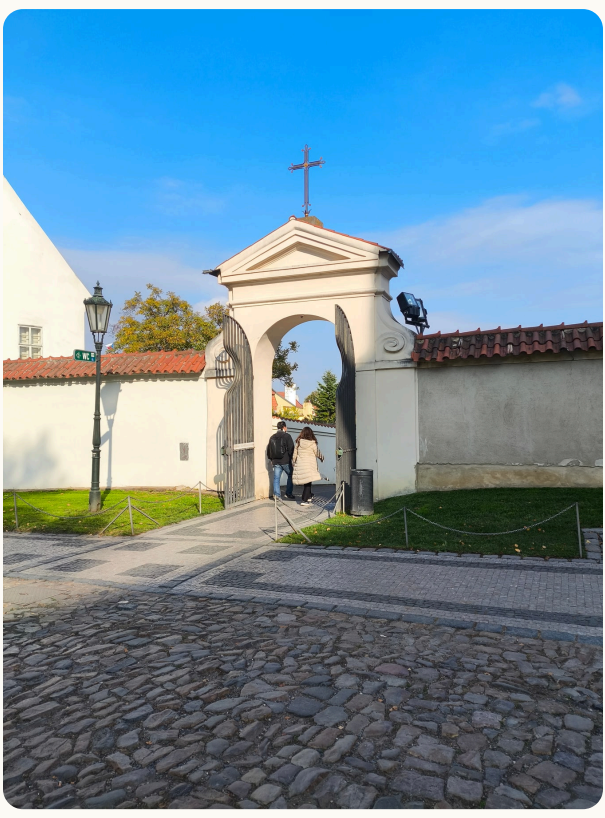
10

The vineyard viewpoint

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Downhill paths or return to Pohořelec for tram 22.

View map M3



The arched gateway topped by a cross in the white wall.

Continue to the vineyard viewpoint

If you entered through the passage beside Café Melvin, head back towards where you entered the courtyard. If you entered through the monastery's main gate, continue through the courtyard to the far end. Look for the **arched gateway topped by a cross in the white wall**, shown in the photograph. Pass through it and walk **downhill for a short distance**. The **vineyard viewpoint** is through a gate on your **right**.

If you miss the gate, the paths further downhill also offer lovely views over Prague.

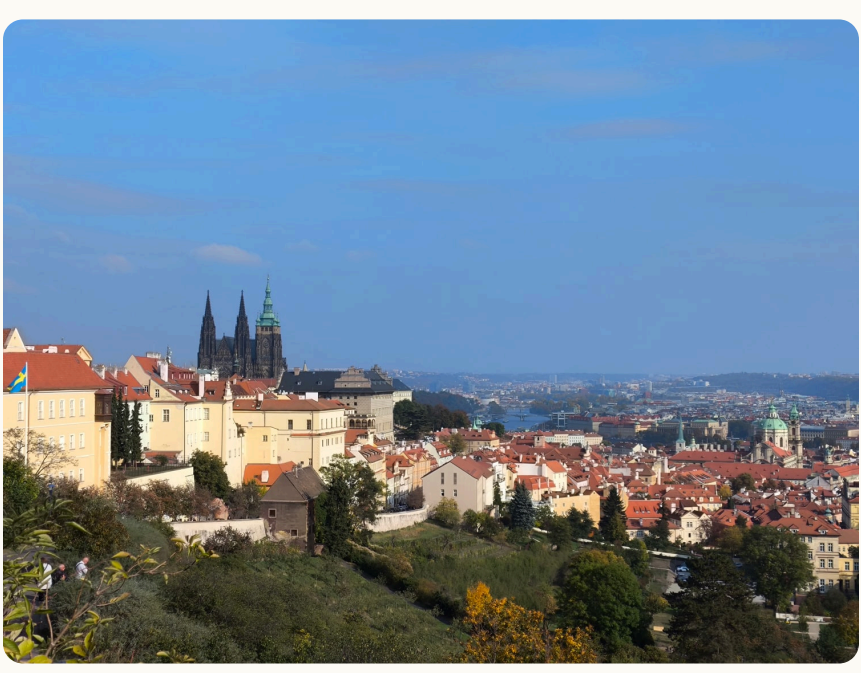
Your walk finishes here, with a final view over Prague's rooftops. Take a moment to enjoy it before heading back or continuing downhill into Malá Strana. For a downhill walk towards **Nerudova and Malá Strana**, return to the path and follow the hillside paths to the **left**.

Alternatively, head back to the **monastery brewery** for a beer, or return through the monastery grounds to the **Pohořelec tram stop**, where you can take **tram 22 downhill to Malá Strana**.

Enjoyed the walk? Explore another part of Prague with one of

our other self-guided itineraries

.



The view over Prague from the vineyard viewpoint.

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A

Optional extension: Nový Svět

STOP AT A GLANCE

Good to know: Optional detour: 7 → A (Nový Svět) → B (Loreta) → 8. Rejoin the main walk at stop 8.

View map M4

Open extension in Mapy.com →

Directions to Nový Svět

With your back to the Castle gates, leave **Hradčanské Square** at its **upper right-hand corner** and follow **Kanovnická**. After about **120 metres**, you reach a junction; follow the street to the **right, downhill**. Then take the **next left into Nový Svět**.



Colourful houses along Nový Svět.

Along the street

Near the beginning of the street, a plaque on **No. 1, U Zlatého noha**, commemorates the Danish astronomer **Tycho Brahe**. The house is traditionally associated with a short stay during his time in Prague.

Nový Svět is a longer street than its small entrance might suggest. Follow it all the way to the timbered house at the far end, passing compact houses with colourful façades, small doorways and house signs. These modest buildings give this part of Hradčany a different character from the grand palaces around the Castle.

This was historically a poorer neighbourhood, although many houses have grand “golden” names, including the **Golden Pear**, **Golden Grape** and **Golden Star**.

At the far end stands **U Raka**, meaning **“At the Crayfish”**. With its wooden walls and shingle roof, this rare log-built cottage looks more like a country house than a building in central Prague.



U Raka, the log-built cottage at the end of the street.

Continue past Loreta (B) and rejoin at stop 8

From U Raka, follow **Černínská uphill** to **Loretánské Square**. Here you can see **Loreta and Černín Palace**, described in the main route, before continuing towards **Pohořelec**.

You have now completed the detour via **A and B**. Skip the separate Loreta detour and

continue on the main route towards Pohořelec and Strahov →

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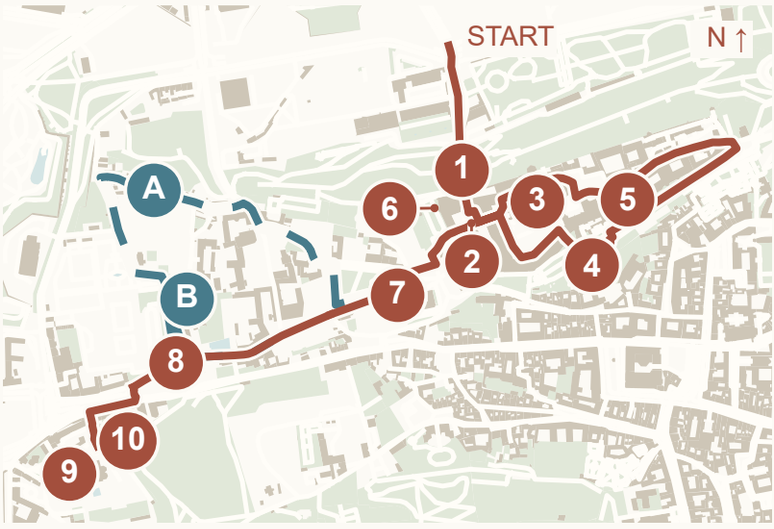
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Route maps

Tap a map marker to open its stop description.

Open the main walking route in Mapy.com →

M1



Select a numbered map marker or a name in the key to read about that location.

1— Bridge over the Deer Moat

2— Second Courtyard

3— St Vitus / Third Courtyard

4— South Gardens viewpoint

5— Jiřská / St George's Square

6— Fourth Courtyard / Bastion garden

7— Hradčanské Square

8— Loretánská / Pohořelec

9— Strahov Monastery / basilica

10— Vineyard viewpoint · finish

A— Nový Svět · optional

B— Loreta · optional

All main stops are shown. Leader lines connect offset numbers to their locations. Use maps M2a and M2b for the Castle details and garden points 4a–4c.

Solid terracotta: main route. Dashed blue: optional detours.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · ODbL.

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M2a



Select a numbered map marker or a name in the key to read about that location.

V— Viewpoint before bridge

1— Bridge over the Deer Moat

2— Second Courtyard

3— St Vitus / Third Courtyard

4a— Bull Staircase

5— Jiřská / St George's Square

6— Fourth Courtyard / Bastion garden

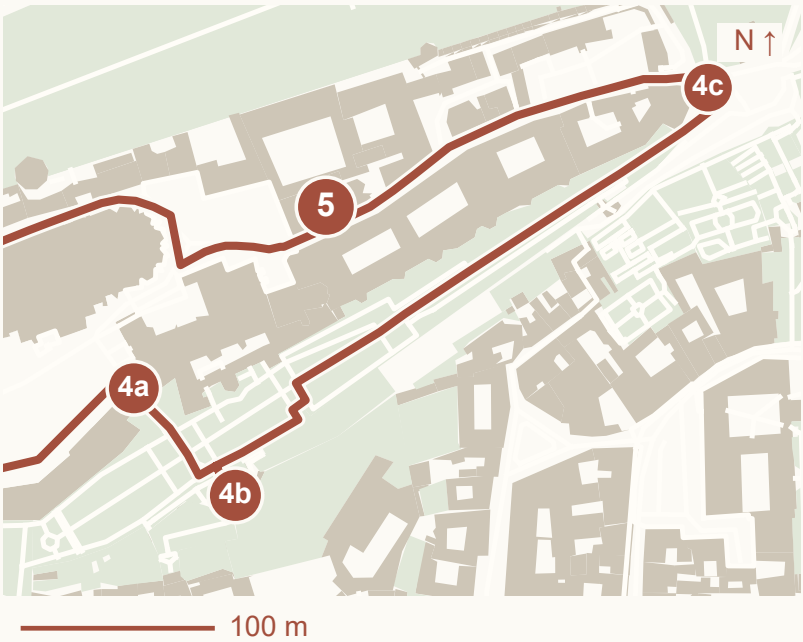
7— Hradčanské Square

Solid terracotta: main route. Dashed blue: optional detours.

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M2b



Select a numbered map marker or a name in the key to read about that location.

4a— Bull Staircase

4b— South Gardens viewpoint

4c— Garden exit / Castle re-entry

5— Jiřská / St George's Square

Solid terracotta: main route. Dashed blue: optional detours.

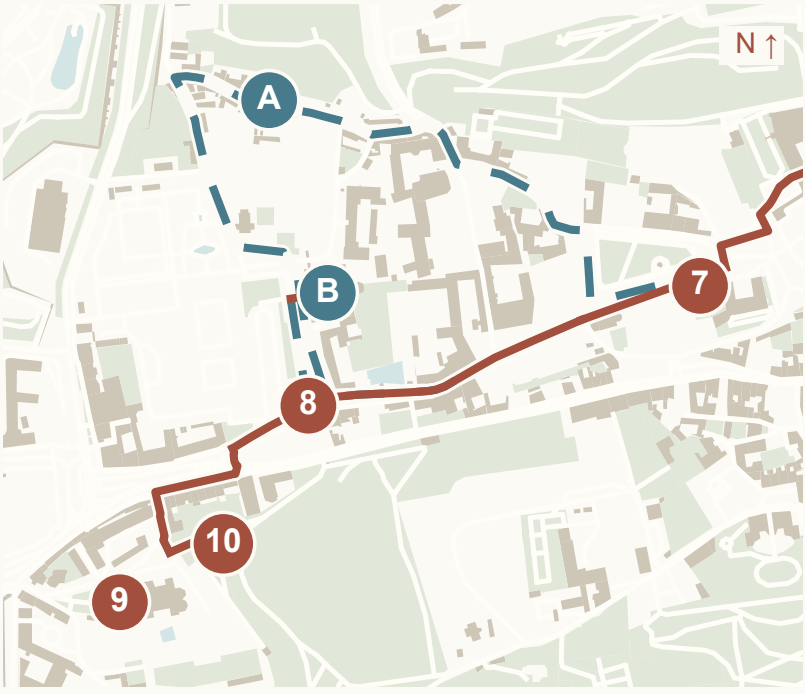
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Open the main walking route in Mapy.com →

M3

Main route: 7 → 8 → 9 → 10. **Optional Nový Svět detour:** 7 → A → B → 8. **Optional short Loreta detour:** 8 → B → 8. B marks Loreta on both detours.



Select a numbered map marker or a name in the key to read about that location.

7— Hradčanské Square

8— Loretánská / Pohořelec

9— Strahov Monastery / basilica

10— Vineyard viewpoint · finish

A— Nový Svět · optional

B— Loreta · optional

Solid terracotta: main route. Dashed blue: optional detours.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · ODbL.

Back to route overview

Open the Nový Svět extension in Mapy.com →

M4



Select a numbered map marker or a name in the key to read about that location.

A— Nový Svět · optional

B— Loreta · optional

Solid terracotta: main route. Dashed blue: optional detours.

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Photographs supplied by the author. The Last Judgement mosaic and Bull Staircase images include previously approved AI-assisted edits.