

Social Habits in Czech Republic

In this article we would like to introduce social habits in our country. We have a lot of habits, which are different than in other countries. Maybe you think that some are odd, but in Czech they are usual.

Greeting



We mainly divide our greetings into two types – Formal greetings and informal greetings. If we meet person who we don't know, we will use formal greetings. They usually include a handshake, direct eye contact and the appropriate greeting for the time of day.

Good day = Dobrý den

Good morning = Dobré ráno

Good afternoon = Dobré odpoledne

Good evening = Dobrý večer

Good night = Dobrou noc

Using the informal greeting without an invitation may insult the person and may be viewed as an attempt to humiliate them.

If we know this person or they let us make use of it, we use informal greeting. We can hug them, give them a kiss and we greet them with Ahoj (Hello) or Čau (Hi).

If we use formal conversation, we part by saying “Na shledanou” (Good bye). In informal we commonly use Ahoj (Bye).

On a visit



Main principle of decency is come to visit at the right agreed upon time and not late. If you are invited to a visit, you are expected to have decent and clean clothes and you must be well prepared. When you enter to house, you should remove your shoes and hand your coat on a peg. You can bring a little present – flower (just make sure there's an odd number of them), box of chocolates or something else. You should remain standing until invited to sit down. You may be shown to a particular seat.

If you are invited to eat, you sit down around the table. You mustn't begin eating until the host starts. You should praise the meal while you are eating. This allows the host to discuss the food and the preparation, which usually makes for a really good talk. Indicate that you have finished eating by laying your knife and fork parallel to the right side of your plate.

Behaviour in public



The core problem is smoking, I'd say. In our country a number of people smoke, but many people have problem with the fumes and stink associated with it in general. In most places smoking is allowed. However somewhere there is a sign with an inscription – Zákaz kouření (ban of smoking). These signs are in restaurants, in bus stations, in train stations and on many other sites. If a person wants to smoke in these places, he will have to go outside (or somewhere else, taking exterior signs into consideration). It is widely understood, that people mustn't smoke in theatres, schools, or on visits etc.

Many people like to chew gum, but they might not realize that chewing in public is very demeaning. If they are with their friend, it is accepted, but when they sit in a theatre or at school/work and they chew, it is really horrible. It is disturbing and socially awkward.



Costumes

To be frank, Czech Republic doesn't have some united costumes. But in different parts of country people wear different regional costumes, which they use for the people's celebration and they inherit them. Every year we can see it on big festivals.

Even in schools we don't usually have uniforms. Children normally wear T-shirt and jeans or a skirt. Teachers wear the same clothes as us. If we go to a theatre or some bigger celebration we will wear formal clothes. Women have a dress or a skirt and a blouse and men have a suit.

Dance school



We have a very beautiful tradition – when children are 15 years (generally around this age, but they can start whenever they want), they start going to the dance school. There are masters who present and teach the dances. Lessons also includes teaching etiquette. Participants are dressed in social and festive clothes. Beside classic lessons there are longer lessons (in our language Prodloužená) and then, at the end, we have the final lesson (Věneček). For those who find the basic courses interesting continue by taking advanced lessons. Dances such as mazurka, polka, waltz, wales, slow waltz, tango, blues, jive, cha-cha are all included in the curriculum.