

Few tips to speak Czech 😊

PRONUNCIATION

Most guidebooks will give you some basic Czech vocabulary along with an English phonetic pronunciation. This can be helpful if you've got the book in front of you while attempting to communicate - if you plan on learning any amount of Czech, however, the first thing you'll want to learn is the proper pronunciation

It's relatively simple - letters generally sound the same despite the words that contain them. There are some exceptions, but unlike English, they follow fairly strict rules, and there aren't many of them.

Czech alphabet: a, á, b, c, č, d, d', e, é, ě, f, g, h, ch, i, í, j, k, l, m, n, ň, o, ó, p, r, ř, s, š, t, ť, ú, ů, v, y, ý, z, ž.

The letters q, w, and x typically exist only in foreign words.

Vowels are short (unaccented) and long (accented), and can be simplified thusly: pronounce the accented vowels the same as the unaccented, just hold them twice as long. Guide:

A: makes an 'ah' sound (as in 'bus')	u : makes an 'oo' sound (as in 'book')
e : makes an 'eh' sound (as in 'red')	y : is pronounced the same as i
i : makes an 'e' sound (as in 'bee')	ě : makes a 'ye' sound (as in the ye in 'yes')
o : makes an 'o' sound (as in 'hot')	

The following consonants sound the same in Czech as they do in the English examples:

b (as in 'bed')	m (as in 'meat')
d (as in 'dog')	n (as in 'not')
f (as in 'film')	s (as in 'sad')
g (as in 'game')	v (as in 'van')
h (as in 'hot')	z (as in 'zone')
l (as in 'lit')	

Consonants k, p, and t are pretty much the same as in English, just softer - never with the 'aspiration' that they may have in English.

The others:

c makes a 'ts' sound (as in the 'ts' in 'its')

č makes a 'ch' sound (as in 'cheese')

ch makes a 'huh' sound like in 'Loch' - with a bit more phlegm

j makes a 'y' sound (as in yes)

r is rolled, making a 'rrr' sound (same as the Spanish r)

ř is the rolled r combined with a ž to make a 'rzuh' sound

š makes a 'sh' sound (as in 'she')

ž makes a 'zhuh' sound (as in 'measure')

d', ť, and ň are pronounced slightly different than their counterparts d, t, and n. They're softer, and sound somewhat like 'dyuh', 'tyuh', and 'nyuh'. When these three letters are followed by an ě or an i, they lose the hook but are pronounced the same.

As I said before, all the letters will generally sound the same throughout the Czech language. A few exceptions:

When ě follows an m, a mňe ('mnye') sound is produced

Double vowels: 'au', 'eu', and 'ou' are pronounced fluidly; all other double vowels are pronounced with a very brief pause in-between them.

This is the toughest - paired consonants: occasionally, one consonant is written when another is pronounced. Sometimes b changes to a 'p' sound; g to k; v to f; d to t; z to s; h to ch; d' to ť, ž to š. It happens when one of the letters from the first group (b, g, v, d, z, h, d', or ž) ends a word (led is pronounced 'let') or starts a cluster of consonants that ends in one from the second (p, k, f, t, s, ch, ť, š) group (vstup is pronounced 'fstup'). It also happens vice-versa when the last consonant of a cluster is from the first group (kdo is pronounced 'gdo'). Only exception: if the cluster ends in v, there is no change.

Sorry to complicate things, but the pairs usually sound similar enough that people will still understand you if you don't switch them

BASIC VOCABULARY

Once you've got the pronunciation down, it's time to move on to vocabulary. Here are some basic words and phrases that you'll likely need to get around town:

English	Czech	Phonetic
1/Social Interaction		
Yes	Ano	Ah-no
No	Ne	Neh
2/Greetings		
Good Morning	Dobré ráno	Do-breh rah-no
Good Day (formal hello)	Dobrý den	Do-bree Dehn
Hello (informal)	Ahoj	Ahoy
Good evening	Dobrý večer	Do-bree veh-chehr
Good-bye (formal)	Na shledanou	Nah skledah-noh
Good-bye (informal)	Čau	Chow
Good night	Dobrou noc	Do-brooh nots
2/Meeting People		
Nice to meet you	Těší mě	Tye-shee Mye
How are you? (formal)	Jak se máte?	Yak seh mah-te
How are you? (informal)	Jak se máš?	Yak seh mahsh
I'm well	Mám se dobře	Mahm se do-breh
What is your name?	Jak se jmenujete?	Yak seh ymenooyete
My name is	Jmenuji se	Ymen-oo-ye seh
3/Communication		
Do you speak English?	Mluvíte anglicky?	Mloo-veeteh ahngleetskee
I don't speak Czech	Nemluvím česky	Neh-mloo-veem cheskee
I don't understand	Nerozumím	Neh-rozoo-meem
Excuse me; forgive me	Promiňte	Promeenyuh teh
Thank you	Děkuji	Dyekooyee
Please; you're welcome	Prosím	Proseem
To your health (cheers)	Na zdraví	Nah zdrah-vee

BASIC VOCABULARY

4/ Restaurant

How much is it?	Kolik to stojí?	
Bill, please	Účet, prosím	Oocheht, proseem
Bon appetite	Dobrou chuť	Do-brooh khutye
Cheese	Sýr	Seer
Bread	Chléb	Khlehb
Beer	Pivo	Pee-vo
Wine	Víno	Vee-no
Water	Voda	Vo-dah
5/ Other		
Where is the...?	Kde je...?	Gdeh ye
Restroom	Toaleta	Toh-ah-lehta
Restaurant	Restaurace	Rehs-tau-rahsteh
Shop	Obchod	Ob-khod
Street	Ulice	Oo-leetseh
Police	Policie	Poletsee-eh
Hospital	Nemocnice	Neh-mots-nitseh
Train Station	Nádraží	Nah-drazhyee
Airport	Letiště	Leh-teesh-tyeh
Help!	Pomoc!	Po-mots
Fire!	Hoří	Horzyuhee
Thief!	Zloděj	Zlo-dyeh
I want to speak Czech	Chci mluvit česky	Kh-tsee mloo-veet cheskee

To go further.....

Transportation

Where is the bus station / bus stop?	Kde je autobusové nádraží / autobusová zastávka?
Where is the train station?	Kde je vlakové nádraží?
Where is the subway station?	Kde je stanice metra?
Where do I buy tickets? (<i>for public transportation</i>)	Kde je stanice metra?
Next stop: Náměstí Republiky	Příští zastávka: Náměstí Republiky
What is the rate per kilometer?	Jaká je sazba za kilometr?
Please stop here.	Prosím zastavte tady.

Getting Directions

Excuse me, where is the theater?	Prosím vás, kde je divadlo?
Turn right / left.	Zahněte doprava / doleva.
How far is it?	Jak je to daleko?

To go further.....

Accommodation

I would like a single room.	Prosil bych jednolůžkový pokoj.
I would like a double room.	Prosil bych dvoulůžkový pokoj.
I would like a room for one night.	Chtěl bych pokoj na jednu noc.
I would like a room for two nights.	Chtěl bych pokoj na dvě noci.
How much is a double room?	Kolik stojí dvoulůžkový pokoj?

Sightseeing

Where is the town square?	Kde je náměstí?
Do you have a map of the city?	Máte mapu města?
Do you have any brochures / guidebooks in English?	Máte nějaké brožury / průvodce v angličtině?

At the Bank

Where is a bank?	Kde je banka?
I need to exchange money.	Potřebuji si vyměnit peníze.
What is your commission?	Jakou účtujete provizi?
Where is a cash machine?	Kde je bankomat?

To go further.....

Eating Out

What will you have?	Co si dáte?
I'll have	Dám si
I'll have a beer please.	Dám si jedno pivo prosím.
Check please!	Zaplatíme!

Emergencies

Help!	Pomoc!
Fire!	Hoří!
Thief!	Zloděj!
Call an ambulance / a doctor!	Zavolejte sanitku / doktora!
Call the police!	Zavolejte policii!
Where is the police station?	Kde je policejní stanice?
I have lost my passport / bag.	Ztratil jsem pas / tašku.

To go further.....

At the Doctor's Office

I'm not feeling well.	Není mi dobře.
I have a headache.	Bolí mě hlava.
I have a stomach ache.	Bolí mě břicho.
I have a sore throat.	Bolí mě v krku.
I have a fever.	Mám horečku.
It hurts here.	Bolí mě tady.

<https://www.expats.cz/prague/article/czech-language/basic-czech/>

http://www.myczechrepublic.com/czech_language/czech_phrases.html

Great dictionary: <https://slovník.seznam.cz/>