
An exploration of Hradec Králové

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Hradec Králové is a lively city situated in the region of Bohemia in the Czech Republic. Just a comfortable two hour train journey away from the centre of Prague, Hradec Králové is perfectly situated for people who want to travel around the Czech Republic and beyond. Home to one of the faculties of Medicine and the Faculty of Pharmacy of Charles University also makes this a student city where something is always happening. Brimming with history but also adapting to modern city life, Hradec Králové has plenty to offer to all.

With prices cheaper than in Prague there is no reason not to sample local Czech cuisine when exploring Hradec Králové. In the city centre there are dozens of restaurants to choose from which offer an array of food from Mexican to Indian to Italian and more! Most of these restaurants can be found in the historic centre of the city in the main square, where you can eat looking out at the Church of the Holy Ghost, the City Hall and the White Tower. If you're feeling energetic you can climb up the White Tower, which has recently been renovated, providing a view over the whole of Hradec Králové. Running through the city centre are the rivers Orlice and Labe which provide very relaxing and charming walks along its banks. These paths offer a perfect place for jogging or cycling enthusiasts, stretching for miles in both directions.

Shortly before they join, a small park can be found between the two banks, which offer picturesque views across the rivers and a place to relax and enjoy the summer weather. Many more parks can be found throughout the city and are worth spending some time in, particularly Šimkovy sady. It is also possible to hire small boats or rowing boats on the rivers giving you a chance to see the city from a different angle! If this isn't for you, there are various seasonal boat trips along the river in paddle steamers, which won't require so much hard work!

Being the fourth largest city of the Czech Republic means Hradec Králové is the perfect host for multiple festivals each year. Throughout June you can enjoy the Czech Film Festival which lasts over a week and brings many people to the city. Whether you fancy the cultural side of the event or just a relaxing drink in the park there's plenty going on! At the beginning of July Hradec Králové hosts Rock for People, which is enjoyed particularly by many students. Across the weekend a number of acts play the stage creating a buzz throughout the city. If these types of events are up your street, due to the ideal location of Hradec Králové, you can discover plenty more festivals throughout the Czech Republic including Colours of Ostrava and České hrady.

Hradec Králové also features an outdoor water park just a five minute walk away from Hotel Garni (the main block of student accommodation in Hradec Králové). Particularly attractive in the summer months, this is a great way to enjoy the weekends. If the weather's not so good there is an alternative indoor aqua centre which offers similar facilities along with a fifty metre olympic style pool for more serious swimmers.

Other points of interest in the city include the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in the city centre which is worth a visit when living in Hradec Králové and offers a discounted rate of entry for students. Close by is an aquarium that houses a variety of fish and plants displayed in multiple tanks, including an underwater tunnel. Perhaps the best way to see all the species is to visit at feeding time when staff give a short talk about the fish. Also worthy of a mention is the Futurum shopping centre just outside of the city centre (although it is on multiple bus routes). With a wide variety of shops you'll be able to find everything you need and more here, along with a cinema showing a wide variety of current films.

Although this has just been a brief description of some of the attractions in Hradec Králové perhaps now you can understand why Charles University felt this would be a good location for two of its faculties and may even sway you to consider studying here! There are plenty more things to do here than I've mentioned above and there's always somewhere new to explore. This diverse city offers a great mix of bustling city life along with a more relaxed mentality allowing you to really absorb the atmosphere and culture here.



Fiona Smith is a second year student from Cardiff University where she studies Pharmacy. She is undertaking an Erasmus traineeship for two months in a laboratory environment at the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Hradec Králové campus of Charles University. She is using this opportunity to gain an insight into laboratory work whilst exploring the Czech culture. Her interests include music, travelling and dance.