

From a bird's eye perspective

The gothic tower dating from the 14th century constitutes the dominant feature of the Old Town Hall and indeed the entire square. When it was established, it was the highest structure in all of Prague. A watchman's dwelling was added to the top of the tower, from where the watchman monitored the town's environs and warned the townsfolk in case of danger.

Nowadays, the tower's viewing gallery offers the most beautiful views of the city; it is possible to see the Týn Cathedral or Saint Nicholas' Church from a bird's eye view, while you can also admire Prague Castle in the distance or be astonished by the multitude of towers, spires and domes arrayed in Prague's diverse architecture.

The town hall tower is the only medieval tower in Prague which offers full wheelchair access; **a modern glass lift takes visitors up to the viewing gallery.** The designers of the lift received the 2000 Interior of the Year award for its realisation.



The Old Town Hall with its tower and astronomical clock

The town hall in dates

1338 – the establishment of the Old Town Hall
The Old Town Hall is one of the oldest town halls in the world.

The 14th century – the construction of the town hall tower
The Old Town Hall's tower is 69.5 m high.

1381 – the first consecration of the town hall chapel
The chapel has been consecrated a total of five times over the centuries.

1410 – the establishment of Prague's astronomical clock
The Old Town's astronomical clock is now the oldest functioning astronomical clock in the world.

1458 – the election of George of Poděbrady as the King of Bohemia
This event is also depicted in one of the paintings in the Assembly Hall – the monumental canvass has dimensions of 5×7.3 m.

1621 – the execution of the participants in the Estates Uprising in front of the town hall
This is now recalled by 27 white crosses set in the square's paving.

1838–1848 – the neo-gothic renovation of the Old Town Hall
The town hall acquired a new north-eastern wing designed by the architects Nobile and Sprenger.

1910 – the modification of the Assembly Hall
The Assembly Hall was renovated in the late Art Nouveau style according to a design by the architect Josef Chochol.

1945 – the shelling of the town hall
A large part of the town hall was destroyed during an attack by the Nazis during the fighting which took place in the Prague Uprising.



The Old Town Hall's Assembly Hall

In the footsteps of the famous

The Old Town Hall has been visited by many interesting and famous personalities. These have included Lech Wałęsa, a Polish politician and dissident who subsequently became the president of Poland, Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, and Princess Diana, the famous French actress Annie Girardot, the American actor Tom Cruise or the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli.



Prince Charles with Princess Diana in the Council Hall

We look forward to your visit!

The historical interiors are open daily:
Mon **11:00 am – 6:00 pm**
Tues – Sun **9:00 am – 6:00 pm**

The town hall tower is open daily:
Mon **11:00 am – 10:00 pm**
Tues – Sun **9:00 am – 10:00 pm**

Evening tours of the Old Town Hall:
Fri – Sat **8:00 pm**

Special tours for children:
Sun **2:00 pm**

The procession of the twelve apostles:
daily **9:00 am – 11:00 pm**

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The Old Town Hall in Prague

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The Old Town Hall in Prague

The Old Town Hall is the most beautiful monument in Prague's historical centre. It was created from the 14th century onwards by means of the gradual purchasing of individual burgesses' houses and their integration into a single unit. Nowadays, it consists of a set of five historic houses which bear the characteristics of almost all the ensuing architectural periods.

The town hall has played a significant role in the history of both Prague and the Czech state more than once. George of Poděbrady was elected the King of Bohemia in the town hall and Jan Želivský, a radical Hussite leader, was executed in its courtyard. Later, the town hall witnessed the mass execution of the participants in the Estates Uprising. At the end of the Second World War, it was attacked by the country's occupiers and a large part of the building was completely destroyed.



The Old Town Hall at the end of the 19th century

A closer look at the apostles

Prague's famous astronomical clock, which has adorned the façade of the Old Town Hall since 1410, has attracted the attention of passing Prague citizens and visitors alike for centuries. A special stone annex was built on the southern side of the town hall tower to house the mechanism. Despite the fact that older astronomical clocks existed elsewhere at that time, none of them achieved the degree of perfection of the astronomical clock in Prague's Old Town or engendered as much admiration.

The astronomical clock consists of several parts; as well as the astronomical and calendar faces, it is also equipped with a mechanism consisting of statues of the twelve apostles which appear at two small windows on the hour. **The chapel on the town hall's first floor also enables visitors to view the apostles from the inside of the clock.**

Other figures on the sides of the astronomical clock also come to life during the procession of the apostles; Death rings a bell, turns over an hourglass and indicates to the Turk standing next to him that his time is up. The Turk shakes his head in rejection of this premise. The Vain Man and the Miser also behave similarly.



The apostles in the Old Town astronomical clock – a view from the interior

The historical and ceremonial halls

No visitor to Prague should miss the opportunity to take a tour of the town hall's interiors. The rooms on the various floors date from a number of different historical periods and they document the remarkable development of the town hall complex. Nowadays, they are mainly used for the ceremonial purposes of the City of Prague.

The **Chapel of the Virgin Mary** constitutes the core of the Old Town Hall. It was established soon after the construction of the town hall



The gothic chapel

tower and it was consecrated as early as in 1381. Church services were regularly held in the chapel every day before council meetings, as well as for prisoners who were being held in the town hall or for convicts who had been sentenced to death before they made their way from there to the executioner's block. Masses for the welfare of the sovereign were frequently held there and it was also often a venue for funerals.

The town hall chapel is one of the most precious architectural monuments in the Czech Republic. It includes a pentagonal oriel window which has been decorated on the outside with statues of the Czech patron saints and stone emblems. The chapel's architect was Petr Parléř, who also designed the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert in Prague Castle.



The Old Council Hall on the second floor of the Old Town Hall

The **Old Council Hall** is also the work of Petr Parléř. The original appearance of the most beautiful room in the entire town hall has been preserved since the beginning of the 15th century. This gothic hall mainly stands out thanks to its richly carved beamed ceiling which is borne by gilded chains. A number of rare wooden statues, the best known of which is the gothic statue of Christ the Sufferer, decorate the interior. The statue of Christ was a symbol of justice for the town court which formerly sat in the hall.

The largest hall in the Old Town Hall is the **Brožík Assembly Hall**. It occupies the entire floor of one house and extends to the height of two floors. The hall's main decorations consist of two large paintings by the famous painter Václav Brožík. The paintings depict important moments from Czech history; Master John Huss at the Council of Constance in 1415 and the election of George of Poděbrady as the King of Bohemia, an event which took place in the Old Town Hall in 1458.

The medieval underground

The tour of the Old Town Hall includes the area located beneath the town hall complex. The complicated system of **Romano-gothic underground cellars** is older than the town hall itself. The complex

of medieval halls, corridors and tunnels is also the largest of its kind in Prague.

The town hall cellars reveal how the interiors, wells and portals of the houses in Prague's Old Town looked in the 12th and 13th centuries. These areas were later used as a feared town prison. The underground areas also include a place of remembrance which recalls the last days of the Second World War with a cross made of burnt beams.



The Romano-gothic underground area beneath the town hall