

CZECH REPUBLIC CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Most greetings include a handshake, direct eye contact, and the appropriate greeting for the time of day.

When strangers meet or when a young person greets an older person, they shake hands firmly and say their last names, followed by a verbal greeting, such as *Těší mne* (Pleased to meet you) or *Dobry den* (Good day).

To say good-bye, one uses the formal *Na schledanou* or the informal *Čau* (Ciao). *Ahoj* is an informal “Hi” and “Bye.” One responds to *Děkuji* (Thank you) with *Prosím* (Please), meaning “You’re welcome.”

Gestures:

Maintaining eye contact while conversing is important to Czechs.

They may also look at or even stare at other people in public, but usually with no ill intentions.

People often gesture with their hands to emphasize their meaning in conversation.

Holidays:

Public holidays include New Year's Day, Easter Monday, End of World War II (8 May), Cyril and Methodius's Day (5 July), Jan Hus Day (6 July), Founding of the First Republic in 1918 (28 Oct.), Velvet Revolution Day or Fight for Freedom and Democracy Day (17 Nov.), and Christmas (24–26 Dec.).

Cyril and Methodius are honored for introducing Christianity and creating the Cyrillic alphabet (used before the current Latin alphabet).

Christmas Eve is the most important part of Christmas, and people eat carp for dinner in honor of their Catholic heritage. They also eat *vánočka*, a fruit bread, in the days leading to Christmas and during Lent. Small marzipan candies or paper cards in the shape of pigs are given in the New Year for good luck.

All Saints' Day (1 Nov.) and St. Nicholas Day (6 Dec.) are celebrated but are not days off from work.

Each village or town also celebrates a day for its patron saint with fairs, dancing, feasting, and Mass.

Name days are personal holidays commemorating the saint after whom a person is named. On this day, a person receives gifts, greetings, and toasts from friends and family.