Tourist in Prague Notes from the perspective of an American study abroad student

How Easy is it to Get Information? How Useful is this Information?

I have bolded the information I have received that I think is most useful for each category.

1. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTERS
   1. I personally use the CEA office as my personal information center, as I know they are used to working with American students. I know most people don’t have this option, so for them I would suggest Prague City Tourism
   2. **Prague City Tourism has locations in Old Town Hall, Rytirska 31, Wenceslas Square, Wenceslas Square, Charles Bridge, and two locations at the Prague airport. I think the locations they have are good, but I think it would be nice if they had locations near the Prague Castle, as that is another spot for tourists, and at the train station for tourists travelling from other parts of Europe.**
2. ATTRACTIONS
   1. The Prague City Tourism website has a tourism portal, which is very practical. <http://www.prague.eu/en> The portal includes information on attractions (and location of these attractions), which are separated into categories. These categories are “Prague for Loves,” “What’s New In Prague,” “The Towers of Prague,” & “Green Gems of Prague.”
   2. Prague City Tourism also offers a Tourist Card, which gives visitors free access to different attractions as well as the public transit. I think it’s kind of a rip off, because most of the tourist attractions are within a walking distance, and I think the cost of going to the attractions probably costs less than the card.
   3. To find attractions before I arrived here, I went to tripadvisor.com, and searched for “Things to Do;” this was helpful for seeing what the main attractions here were, however it was annoying that guided tours kept popping up because I wasn’t interested in doing that
   4. **Another way I researched Prague attractions before I came here was by buying a book The Lonely Planet Prague & The Czech Republic, and I found that to be pretty helpful. This book also laid out an itinerary for a 4-day stay in Prague (with what to do, where to eat, etc.). I think this is a great resource for travellers coming for a short period of time.**
3. EVENTS
   1. **Additionally, the Prague City Tourism website lists events by categories (Exhibition, Festival, Food, Sports, Walk, Music, Theatre & Dance). I’m really excited about the events link, because it’s hard for me to hear about these events since I do not speak the language.**
   2. The book (The Lonely Planet Prague & The Czech Republic) had some festivals, but overall it was difficult to find events from it
   3. There is a Facebook event <https://www.facebook.com/events/922849284446459/> that lists free events in Prague. I haven’t used this, because most of the events are in Czech so I can’t read the description. Additionally, Facebook doesn’t give you notifications when there are new events so I forget about this.
4. FOOD
   1. The Prague City Tourism website lists a lot of different restaurants, broken down into cuisines. However, they list too many restaurants and it’s overwhelming to look at. It might be helpful if they broke it down by neighborhood rather than cuisine
   2. The book (The Lonely Planet Prague & Czech Republic) had a list of restaurants, so I’ll have to take a list at those again. I’m guessing most of them are out of my price range though.
   3. **I met a girl who studied abroad in Prague in the winter, and she sent me a guide of restaurants, things to do, and nightlife, so I’ve ben using that! It’s nice because it’s from a student’s perspective (with a student’s budget!) This is the best guide I’ve found for food**
5. NIGHTLIFE
   1. Many of the bars listed on the Prague City Tour website are restaurants that are well known for their drinks. This is different than the type of nightlife I’m looking for, as I’m looking more for clubs than restaurants I can get a drink.
   2. The girl who gave me a guide on things to do in Prague picked very good places for American students, however I’m interested in going to clubs that locals go to, and most of the clubs she gave me are where the tourists go.
   3. **The best way I think to find nightlife in Prague is from talking to locals. I’m more interested in meeting Czechs than Americans, so if I go to the bars they like I will see less tourists and more locals.**
6. ACCOMODATION
   1. As a study abroad student, I never had to worry about housing. However, the Prague City Tourism has hotels, hostels, and camping grounds listed for people who do. You can even limit your search to hotels that have wifi, allow pets, or have parking.
   2. I know my parents used tripadvisor.com to find a place to stay in Prague when they visited me at the end of the summer. This is probably good for families, but for me this would be out of my price range.
   3. **Airbnb.com is a popular website for students to use for booking places to stay (I just used this for my weekend in Berlin). It mostly lists apartments people rent out throughout the year. I feel most comfortable using this website because I’m scared that hostels have bed bugs.**
   4. However, if you are looking for hostels, hostelworld.com is a great website. The website has reviews on every hostel, including value for money, security, location, staff, atmosphere, cleanliness, & facilities.
7. IMPORTANT CONTACTS
   1. As a study abroad student, my program gave me a card with all of the important numbers I should keep with me at all times. Additionally, I am free to go into the CEA (who sponsors my program) office whenever I would like to ask them questions.
   2. **The Prague City Tourism Website lists the important contacts that you can put into your phone, and where the Embassies are. This would be useful if I didn’t already have this information**
8. LANGUAGE
   1. As someone who came here knowing no Czech, the language is something I was worried about. The Prague City Tourism lists simple Czech phrases and informs tourists where people will speak English or German.
   2. **The most useful thing I’ve found is buying a Czech Language book, Lonely Planet Phrasebook & Dictionary, which has simple phrases in the front that I learned before I came here, but it also has an English-Czech Dictionary if I have trouble translating things**
   3. Lonely Planet & Czech Republic had some basic phrases in it as well, but it was not as extensive as the phrasebook.
9. CURRENCY
   1. The Prague City Tourism website lists places to convert currency, and explains the history behind the currency and why Czech Republic is not on the Euro.
   2. **I downloaded an app from the app store called “Convert” where you can convert any currency to another currency. It doesn’t use the internet which is great for me since I don’t get data in Europe. I walk around the grocery store with this to convert everything to dollars. It also has converter for area, energy, length, power, pressure, speed, temperature, time, volume and weight.**
10. TIPPING
    1. **I was really confused about this when I got here, because I’m used to just leaving my money on the table in the U.S. for the waitress after I’ve already paid my bill. The Prague City Tourism website was super helpful with this; they said to give a 10% tip.**
11. HISTORY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
    1. The Prague City Tourism website has a brief summary of this, but as I tourist I would want more information than the website provides.
    2. **Guided tours are great for this, I know I personally did one for the Prague Castle. This is cool because you are learning the history while you are looking at it!**
    3. The Lonely Planet & Czech Republic had a good amount of history in it, and it was a good way to prepare for my trip to Prague. However, I think it is much more interesting to learn about the history when you are looking at it.

General notes:

Overall, I’ve found that most of the information I’ve gotten about Prague has not been through Prague City Tourism. Almost everything I know about it has been through word of mouth, independent research (internet & buying books on Prague), or through my program. I think a tourist coming here for a few days without a program doesn’t need to use Prague City Tourism to get around because I think online resources are sufficient. However, I think Prague City Tourism does offer a lot of great opportunities that I feel like many tourists would be interested in.