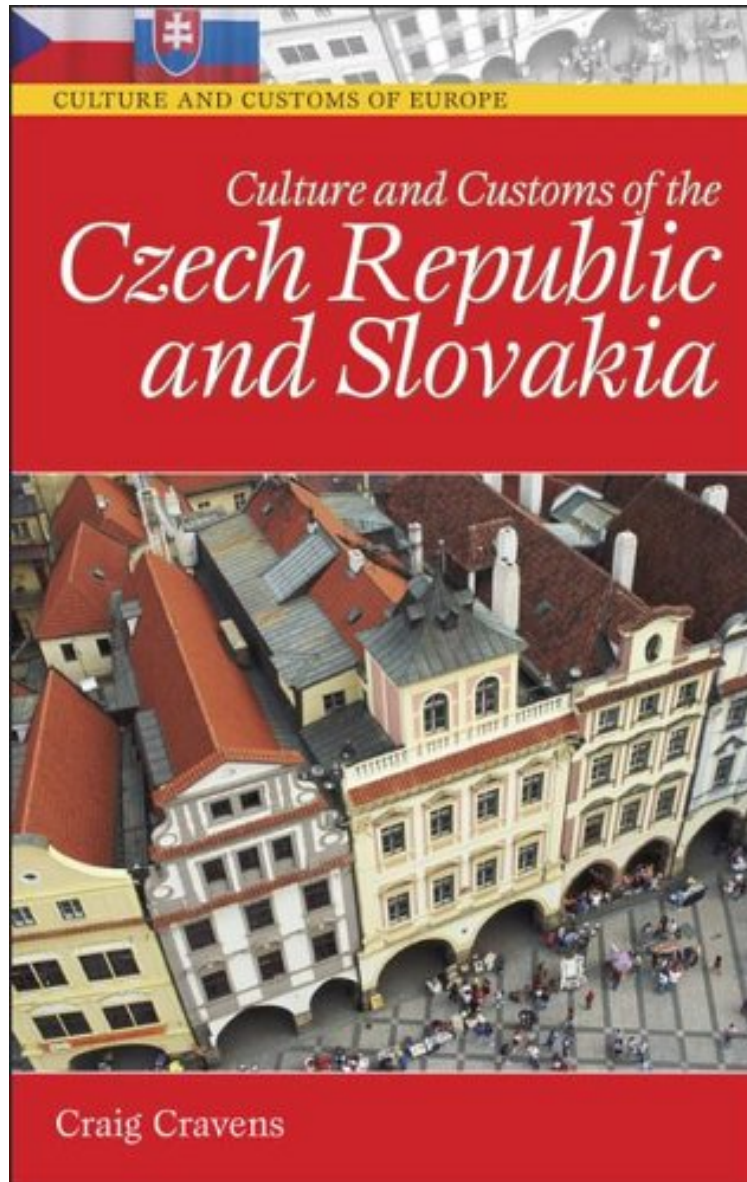


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## Culture and Customs of the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Cultures and Customs of the World)

*Craig Cravens*

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**Craig Cravens : Culture and Customs of the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Cultures and Customs of the World)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Culture and

## Customs of the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Cultures and Customs of the World):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. For the Serious Czechophile By Sierra Girl While I expected some historical grounding for the "culture and customs" of the title, the history of the area was more detailed than anticipated. This was probably necessary, given the fact that Czechoslovakia and Slovakia have been passed between various European power players for centuries, each of which left its mark. The book has more of an academic bent than a "here's where to go and what you'll see" travel orientation. It is extremely thorough as regards literature, art, architecture and the like, hence I wouldn't describe this as a weekend's cursory scan, rather a resource for readers who have a serious, possibly intellectual, interest in these countries.

The Czech Republic is a red-hot European destination, and the charms of Slovakia are slowly being discovered by Westerners as well. The two countries share fundamental similarities in language and culture, but they never really managed to create a common national Czechoslovak identity, after being merged in 1918 when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed. With the lifting of the Iron Curtain in 1989 through the Velvet Revolution and the final breakup of Czechoslovakia in to two countries in 1993, this up-to-date, substantive insight is much needed. This volume overviews the current social, cultural, and political scene of both countries, so that general readers come away with a solid understanding of where the Czechs and Slovaks have been and where they are going. The land, people, and history chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the narrative. In the chapter on religion and thought, the reasons for the widespread atheism of the Czechs and the contrasting religiosity of the Slovaks are explained. Both peoples are shown to have relaxed attitude toward life and a love of celebrations, with a strong beer culture. The state of women and family and feminism in the post-Soviet era is also discussed and readers will learn about the role of romance novels and the Czech Cosmopolitan. The literature chapter emphasizes the Czech sense of humor and the lack of translations of Slovakian works. The crises in journalism and cinema are other important topics. Finally, the strong traditions of theater and music, which have always been part of the Czech national consciousness, are seen to be as alive and vibrant as in any place in the world.

"Aimed at students and general readers, this volume explores the contemporary culture and customs of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Cravens begins with a brief exposition on the geography, language, and population of the two countries, followed by an overview of their intertwined histories. Subsequent chapters discuss such topics as religion, marriage, holidays, cuisine, literature, performing arts, and architecture." - Reference Research Book News About the Author CRAIG CRAVENS is a Fellow of Czech Studies at the University of Texas, Austin.