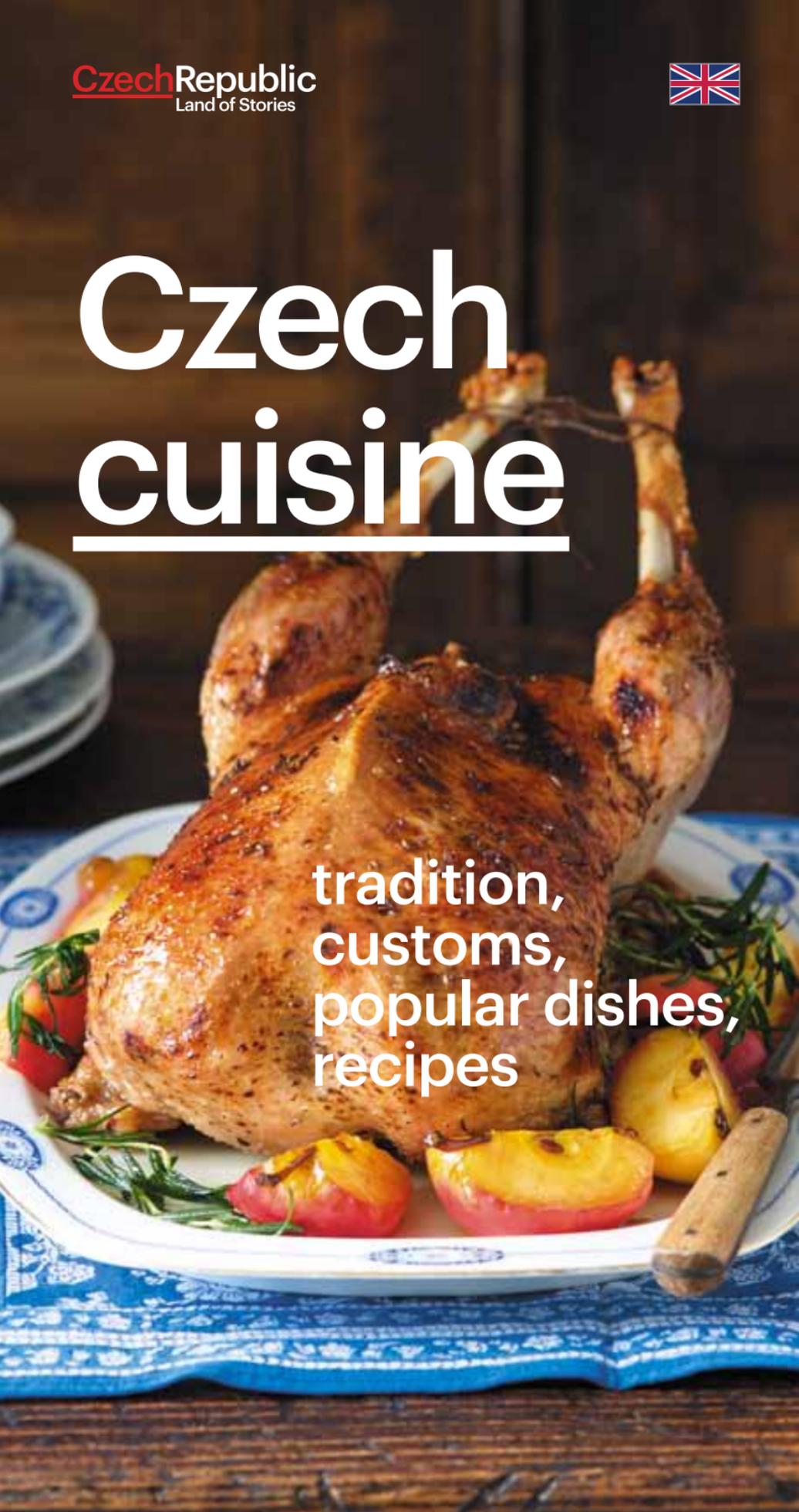
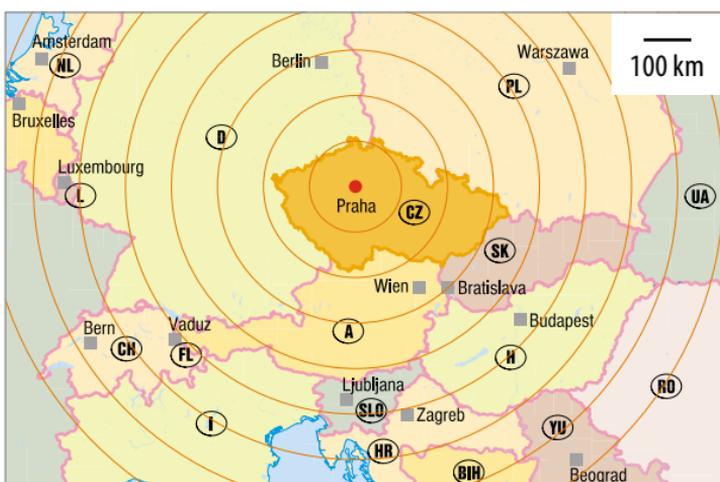


# Czech cuisine



tradition,  
customs,  
popular dishes,  
recipes





*Two foods without which it's impossible to imagine Czech gastronomy: sweet rolls with plum stew. . .*

## CZECH CUISINE



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*...and roast goose*



Magdalena Dobromila Rettigová (1785–1845)

## INTRODUCTION

I put lots of thought into how to acquaint you with our cuisine in a brief but concise way. Even though our country is very small with only ten million people, every region and corner has something special and interesting about it. That's why I've approached our gastronomy from a folk perspective and arranged everything into eleven chapters. I've tried to present you with the specific qualities of Czech cuisine as they tie into the individual seasons as well as how they are related to important social and family events that take place throughout the year.

This is why I first take you to the butchering of a hog, since pork has always been very important for Czech cuisine. We'll visit a brewery pub together, because beer is certainly the most typical drink here; we often even call it "liquid bread". I'll try to explain what good things we prepare during the Easter and Christmas holidays and what a wedding banquet looks like. I'll tell you about our long and glorious fishpond



**Petr Stupka** (\*1956) — a professional chef and hotel school graduate, he has held various positions in gastronomy and the hotel trade for more than 20 years. He has recently worked as an educator and expert consultant as well. He regularly publishes cookbooks and appears on radio and television as a chef and presenter all in one.

cultivation traditions, how popular wild mushroom picking is in my homeland, and how we cook with potatoes.

Alongside the introductory information in each section, you'll also find the characteristics of the selected foods and dishes as well as many recipes you can use to try your hand at making our traditional dishes yourself.

I hope that this book will give you an idea of Czech cuisine, and that the pages that follow will be a guide to you as you learn about (and taste) the food of the Czech nation.



**Did you know that...**

The best-known author of cookbooks was the writer and revivalist **Magdalena Dobromila Rettigová**. In addition to cookbooks, she also wrote many poems, plays and works of fiction. Rettigová's most famous work is her **Home Cookbook** published in 1826; the book was reissued many times over the following century.



*A common Czech side dish – celebrated dumplings*

## CZECH CUISINE

Czech cuisine originates from the ancient traditions of how people ate in central Europe. For many centuries, our ancestors had to rely on what they grew or raised on the land where they lived. It was only during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that great changes came in the ingredients and how dishes were prepared. This was strongly due to the development of potato farming, since potatoes became a main food staple alongside rye-wheat bread, as well as the development of trade in the growing towns.

The period of communist rule in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1948–1989)

had its own impact on Czech cuisine, since restaurants, pubs, and all public eating facilities came under state control, thus unifying the recipes and rules in gastronomy. This also had a negative effect on normal menus and the eating habits of Czechs in general. Since the beginning of the 1990's, our country has been re-integrating itself among the democratic countries of Europe,

**Did you know that...**

*As a habit, Czechs eat very **small amounts of fish, legumes and vegetables**, but fortunately this trend is changing to a healthier style of eating.*

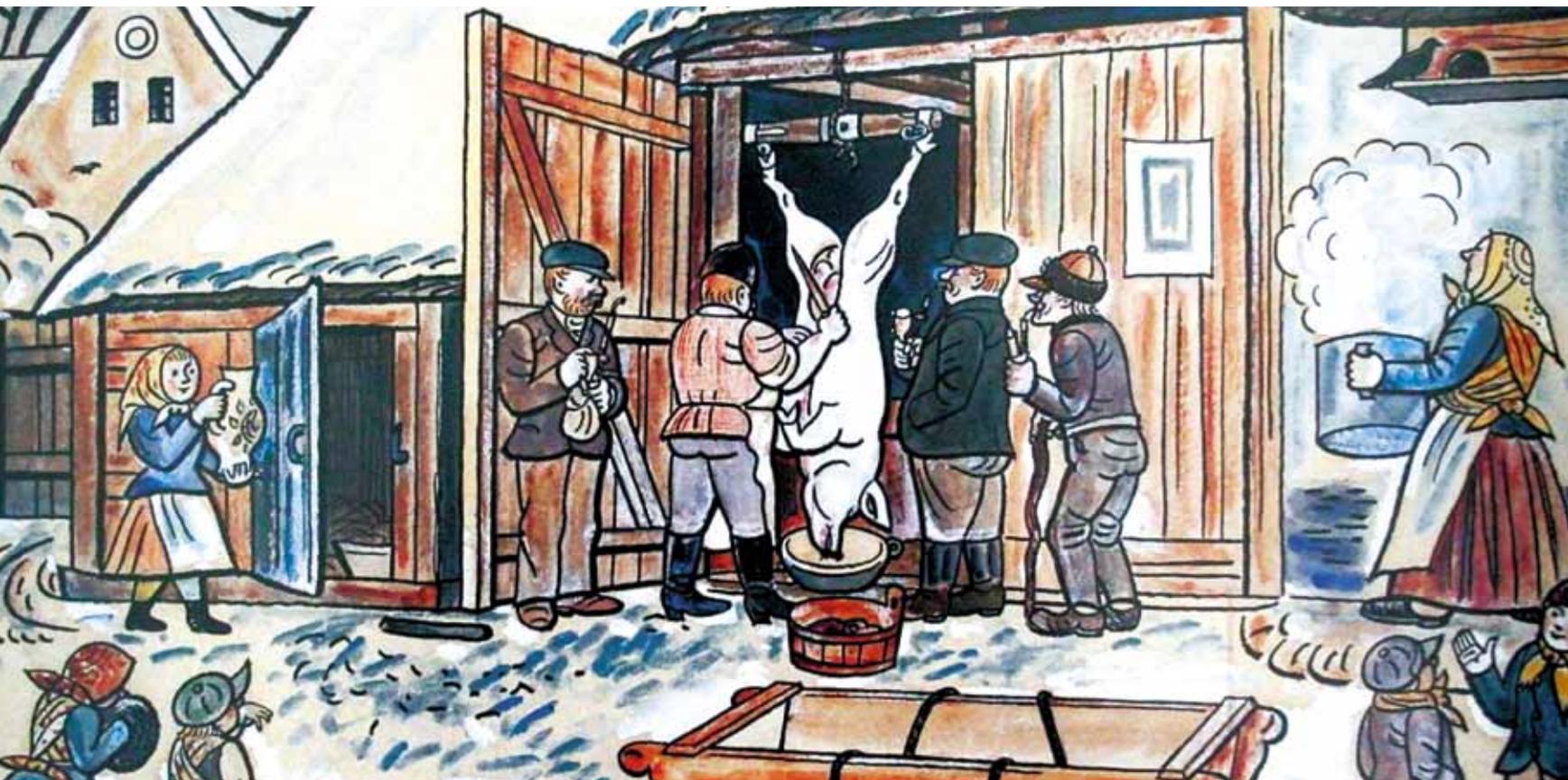
which also reflects in its cuisine – our meals have become more varied and richer, the variety of food available on the market has increased, and most of us strive to eat more healthily due to better information about nutrition.

In this book, we would like to acquaint you with what is specific for Czech cuisine and what we like to eat. Czechs generally eat three main meals during the day. Breakfast usually consists of various kinds of rolls and bread with butter, cheese, smoked meats, jams, and honey, and is usually accompanied with coffee or tea. Lunches generally consist of two or three courses – soup and a main course, usually a meat dish with a side order.

The third course tends to be a sweet dessert. Dinner consists of one main course and is sometimes even served cold. The afternoon snack is most often coffee and a sweet bread or other pastry.

It can generally be said that Czechs consume a fairly large amount of meat, primarily pork, poultry and beef. As far as side orders go, these are usually the renowned Czech dumplings and potatoes, and less often rice and pasta. Recently, not even Czech cuisine has avoided the fast food trends of French fries, hamburgers and other similar “goodies”.

But let's get back to tradition.



Depiction of a typical village hog-killing (Josef Lada, 1887–1957)

## HOG-KILLING TIME (ZABIJAČKA)

### **Pork sausage (recipe from 1826)**

*Mince the pork, season it with salt, and add the zest of half a lemon and half a pint of breadcrumbs soaked in beer for each pound of meat. Mix well and stuff the mixture in well-washed lamb intestines.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

Since long ago, hogs have been an important source of quality ingredients and were raised in villages, in towns and on castle farms. Families nowadays are no longer

dependent on swine fed in a domestic pigsty for their food, but swine breeding is still alive and well, particularly in the countryside. During the slaughter of a fatted pig, an event known as a zabijačka, family and friends gather to enjoy good times and good food.

Hog-killing starts with the slaughter of a hog, which is then scalded and cleaned. After it's hung and gutted, the processing starts. Certain parts of the meat are cooked and all innards are processed with them. The individual products that the butcher prepares are listed below.

Earlier, high-quality pork from hog-killing was preserved through salting and

smoking. This has made smoked pork very popular here today. The last phase of processing the hog generally consists of rendering the fat, when the fat is fried from the fatty tissues – the resulting lard is then put into cold storage and is used during the preparation of many dishes.

**Boiled pork** – This is usually the first dish served at a hog-killing, made from the boiled pork meat from the head and lobe, possibly also the knee, flank and shoulder. The larger pieces of meat are boiled in salted water with onions, garlic and spices (bay leaf, whole black peppercorns and allspice).

The cooked pieces of meat are then cut into smaller pieces and served with a bit of broth poured over it. The boiled pork is eaten with mustard and grated horseradish and with a side of bread. In some regions,

**Did you know that...**

*Typical spices, not only for hog-killing, but for all Czech cuisine include ground black pepper, marjoram, caraway seeds, and also crushed garlic with salt. Hog-killing spices also include ground all-spice and ginger.*



*Headcheese – excellent with roughly chopped onions and drenched in vinegar*

apple horseradish is served with the boiled pork – freshly grated horseradish is scalded with the hot boiled pork broth, peeled and grated apples are mixed in, and everything is lightly flavoured with vinegar.

**White pudding** – Cleaned and rinsed small intestines are stuffed with a mix of ground cooked meat (boiled pork) and raw liver, and light rolls soaked in the broth are added. This is seasoned with salt, ground pepper, allspice, crushed garlic, and marjoram. The white pudding (shaped like a sausage),

with its ends skewered, is then cooked in the broth from the boiled pork.

**Black pudding** – This is similar to the white pudding, but it's dark because pork blood is added to the mix that's stuffed into the intestines, along with rendered internal fat. Depending on the local custom, boiled pearl barley, rice, or fried onions and the like are added.

**Hog-killing soup** – This is a strong soup in which the boiled pork, and then the white and black pudding, along with everything else, was cooked. Usually boiled pearl barley is added to the soup. More popular, though, is a certain “prdeláčka” (blood soup). This soup is dark because in the end, pork blood is cooked into it, and it can be seasoned with garlic, marjoram and pepper.

**Lard and crackling** – Large cubes of white pork fat are rendered in large cast iron frying pans. The tissue that remains after rendering is called crackling, and this is a popular delicacy all by itself, simply salted. It's also added to spreads, salted rolls, and



*Hog-killing soup*

the like. Rendered pork fat (lard) is stored in stoneware or in glasses and is used to prepare dishes and bakery products.

**Smoked meat and bacon** – Larger pieces of pork are first thoroughly salted and then marinated for two or three weeks – steeped in a container. When the salt pervades the tissue, the pieces of meat are hung and preserved with smoke from smouldering wood from deciduous trees (most often beech or cherry). Strips of pork fat are also smoked the same way, which after smoking are called bacon or also fat (špek).

**Headcheese** – The boiled meat and pork offal is cut into pieces and bound in

congealed hog-killing soup. Two varieties are made: light, and dark with pork blood.

**Jellied meat** – This is essentially aspic from the strong broth cooked from the skin, knees and legs. The skin is ground, the meat is cut into small pieces, then finely chopped onions are added along with a little bit of vinegar. Everything is boiled and allowed to congeal. The cold jellied meat is then served with vinegar and onions, just like the headcheese.

**Pudding meat** – This is the mix that is stuffed into white and black pudding. It is often served on its own.

## WHITE PUDDING MEAT

- pork neck 400 g
- pork flank 400 g
- pork liver 200 g
- onion 100 g
- breadcrumbs from a white roll 350 g
- garlic 50 g
- pork lard 60 g
- marjoram, ground pepper, ground caraway seeds
- bay leaf (2), allspice (3), whole pepper (10)

1. Cut the pork neck and flank into smaller pieces and place in boiling water. Add salt, the whole spices (bay leaf, pepper and allspice), and simmer until the meat is almost tender. You must be careful not to overcook the meat to mush.

2. Use half the lard to brown the finely chopped onions, and at the end pour the breadcrumbs from a white roll onto the onions and remove from heat.



*White pudding sausage*

3. Allow the boiled meat to cool and then grind the meat with the pork livers, or chop in a food processor. Add crushed garlic, the breadcrumbs with onions, a spoonful of marjoram and a pinch of ground pepper and ground caraway seeds to the meat and pork livers. Stir everything thoroughly, thin with the meat broth if necessary, and add salt.

4. Thoroughly grease a baking pan with the remaining lard and pour some breadcrumbs into it. Place the stirred pudding meat in the prepared baking pan. Level the surface and bake at 180–200 degrees Celsius for approximately 30 minutes.



Goulash

## GOULASH

You can find goulash both in Bohemia and in Moravia, in various varieties, in all folk cafeterias. My favourite goulash is called hog-killing goulash, which contains the innards as well as the pork. Here is its exact recipe:

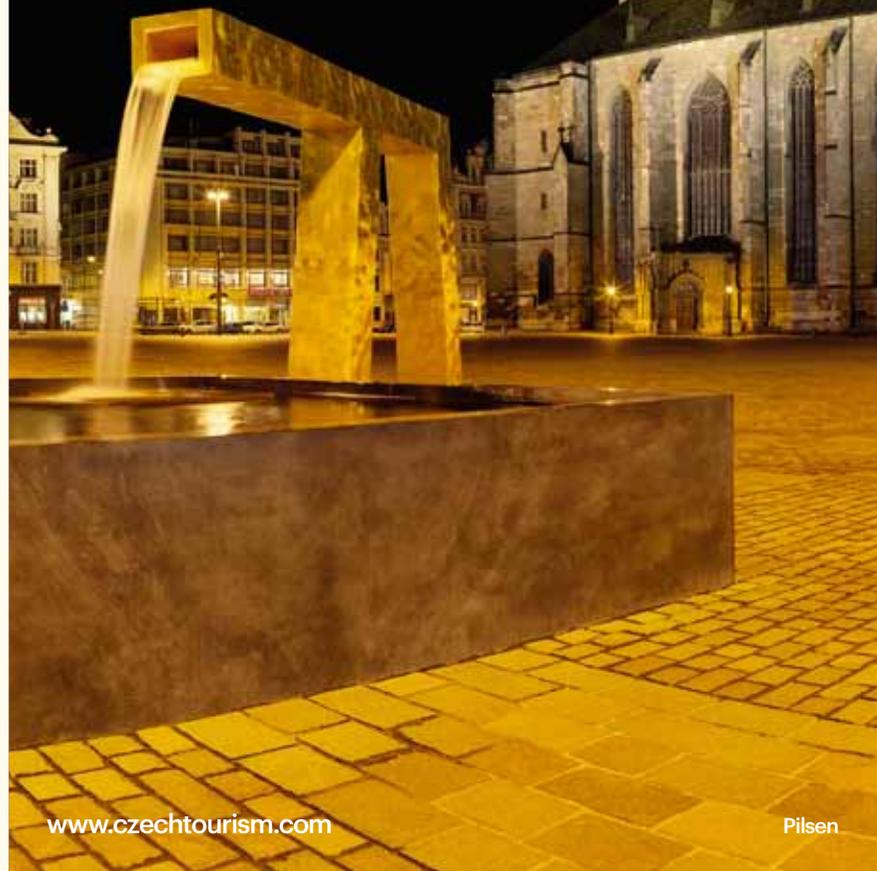
To make four servings you will need the following:

- pork shoulder 500 g
- pork liver 250 g
- pork kidney 200 g
- onion 400 g
- pork lard 100 g
- ground sweet paprika 20 g
- salt 20 g
- garlic 50 g
- fine flour 80 g
- marjoram, caraway seeds, ground black pepper
- pork broth

1. Cut the pork into smaller pieces, add salt, pepper and garlic, stir thoroughly and allow to mellow, pressed, till the next day.
2. Chop the onions into even-sized pieces and sauté them in the lard. When the onions start to brown, add cubes of homemade bacon. Once the onions become brown add the sweet paprika, and after brief foaming, add the broth. Add the soaked meat and caraway seeds and slowly stew while covered with a lid.
3. When the meat starts to become tender, add the cleaned and chopped liver and kidney. Stew everything, and after stewing, thicken with roux (page 36). This is also commonly thickened with dark bread breadcrumbs.
4. Finally, season it with ground dried marjoram, and pepper according to taste. During hog-killing, often boiled heart, tongue, spleen, etc. are added to the goulash.

**Heads up! Ordinary beer is not consumed here!**

Had you been a medieval merchant, you certainly would have known this city – an important trading crossroads. You would have quaffed beer while watching a cathedral being built with the tallest towers in the Czech lands. The city still has soaring ambitions – it won the title of European Capital of Culture for 2015. Come savour Plzeň for yourself!





Scene from classic Bohemian pub (U Pinkasů, Prague)

## IN A BREWERY PUB

### **Caraway seed rolls (recipe from 1826)**

Cut four tablespoons of fresh butter into four cups of flour, and thicken the dough with two large cups of warm cream and three teaspoons of yeast. Add the zest from half a lemon, half a tablespoon of powdered sugar and a pinch of crushed ginger. Let the mixture rise, or if you are in a hurry, salt the dough, place it on a floured board and make either rolls or buns. Place them on a baking sheet with greased paper, brush with egg, sprinkle with salt and caraway seeds and bake until golden brown.

**M. D. Rettigová**

Brewing beer here has a very strong tradition and goes back to pagan times. We have written records dating back to early medieval times about brewing beer in our territory. Medieval rulers granted the citizens of chartered towns the right to brew beer, and these documents granting subjects “brewing rights” are among the oldest preserved clerical records in the country. The ingredients for brewing this golden drink are barley, which is germinated and dried to make brewer’s malt, and pure water from deep wells. The hops give Czech beer its distinctive bitter taste. Hops are a climbing

plant that grows abundantly, primarily in northern Bohemia. The last ingredient that goes into beer is brewer’s yeast. The obvious essentials include brewing cauldrons, fermenting vats and tanks, lagering barrels, and especially the craftsmanship and skill of the brewery’s brewers. You can find more information about Czech beer in the special annexe (pages 20–21).

But let’s go and visit a brewery pub. Imagine a grill holding a pork knee, with the publican bringing “half-litres” to our table of glasses full of the golden brew with a thick cap of white foam. This is just the way we like it here.

Just like it’s a custom to nibble on quality

cheeses when drinking noble wines, drinking Czech beer naturally goes with the taste of some traditional gastronomic titbits:

**Did you know that...**

*The best proof that beer knows no political or ethnic barriers is the **statement by the publican Palivec** from Jaroslav Hašek’s classic novel **The Good Soldier Švejk**: “A patron is a patron, even a Turk. Pub owners aren’t interested in politics. Buy a beer, take a seat and say whatever you like. That’s my view.”*



*A Czech specialty – pork knee with beer and bread*

**Drowned man** – Drowned, because a pork sausage is sliced in half, stuffed with onion, piquant sweet pepper, seasoned with pepper, and steeped (“drowned”) in a mixture of water, vinegar and salt. The vinegar is generally in a 2/3 ratio. After being chilled for several days, the smoked meat becomes a piquant delicacy.

**Cream cheese and butter** – At one time, this was regularly offered at holiday taverns. Its main ingredients are fresh curd cheese, butter or sour cream, salt, ground caraway seeds, and green herbs – most often chives, parsley or onion tops. The mixture is spread onto a slice of bread and garnished with herbs.

**That’s that** – This is ground blue cheese. In our country, this is cheese from southern Bohemia and is usually called “Niva”. All you need to do is grate it and spread it with a little butter and season it with chopped onions, or possibly with grated horseradish and ground paprika. This piquant spread is best on a piece of toasted bread.



*Pan-fried bread*

**Garlic cheese** – This is made from creamy processed cheese with a little whipped cream, with a little fresh crushed garlic mixed in.

**Czech topping toast** – This is a slice of bread pan-fried in lard or oil, salted and rubbed with garlic, and is a part of many delicacies. This is essentially the Czech version of toast. You can enjoy

Czech toast with scrambled eggs and grated cheese or topped with a meat mix, but I like it best with steak tartare.

### CZECH CHEESES THAT GO WITH BEER

**Genuine “olomoucké tvarůžky” curd cheese** – This bears the folk name of “small cakes of cheese” (syrečky). This is a one-of-a-kind cheese made in the small town of Loštice, not far from the town of Olomouc in Moravia. For many centuries, and according to a special recipe, small cakes of cheese or sticks of cheese have been made from low-fat curd cheese that mature to the point that they acquire an unbelievably strong



*Another Czech “invention” – Olomouc “tvarůžky” cheese*

taste and aroma. Eaten with butter and fresh bread, they’re considered to be the a gem of Czech cuisine. But be careful! I probably wouldn’t venture to eat them without a good beer to chase it down.



*The “drowned man” pickled sausage*

I would also recommend my favourites Romadúr and Monastýr, ripening cheeses produced by Madeta, the largest producer of dairy products in the country.

Another renowned speciality on the menu at many taverns and pubs is a marinated type of camembert known as Hermelín. This cheese bears a white mould rind and is marinated in oil. Onions, garlic, hot peppers, and spices are also marinated in the oil.

**Salted baked goods** – Of course, various types of salted baked goods are a natural part of drinking beer here. Pretzels are among the most traditional. I prepared this recipe for you:



*Did you know that...*

#### **The Hop and Beer Temple in Žatec**

*is the “Mecca” of all hop and beer lovers. This is an authentic centre of the largest and oldest hop-growing region in the Czech Republic, producing Žatec hops, the key ingredient in the best Czech and foreign beers. The area containing the monuments for technical hops production has been nominated for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.*



Marinated “Hermelín” cheese

### **BEER PRETZELS**

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| • medium flour   | 500 g  |
| • milk   | 200 ml |
| • fresh yeast  | 30 g   |
| • hardened oil or grease                                   | 120 g  |
| • one whole egg  |        |
| • half a spoonful of salt and half a spoonful of sugar     |        |
| • poppy seeds, sesame seeds and coarse salt for sprinkling |        |
| • possibly caraway seeds, ground pepper, etc.              |        |

1. Pour and stir sugar and salt into warm milk. Add the yeast and a third of the flour. Stir everything into a smooth dough and allow it to rise while covered.
2. Beat the eggs in melted oil or grease and together with the remaining flour mix this all into the leavened dough and knead it into a smooth (not sticky) dough.
3. Roll long thin cylinders from the dough and then arrange it into shapes, such as circles, figure eights, spectacles, etc.

4. Place the pretzels on a greased baking pan, or on baking paper, spread on some milk and sprinkle with poppy seeds, sesame seeds or salt. Bake in an oven set on medium for 15–20 minutes (according to the size of the pretzels).

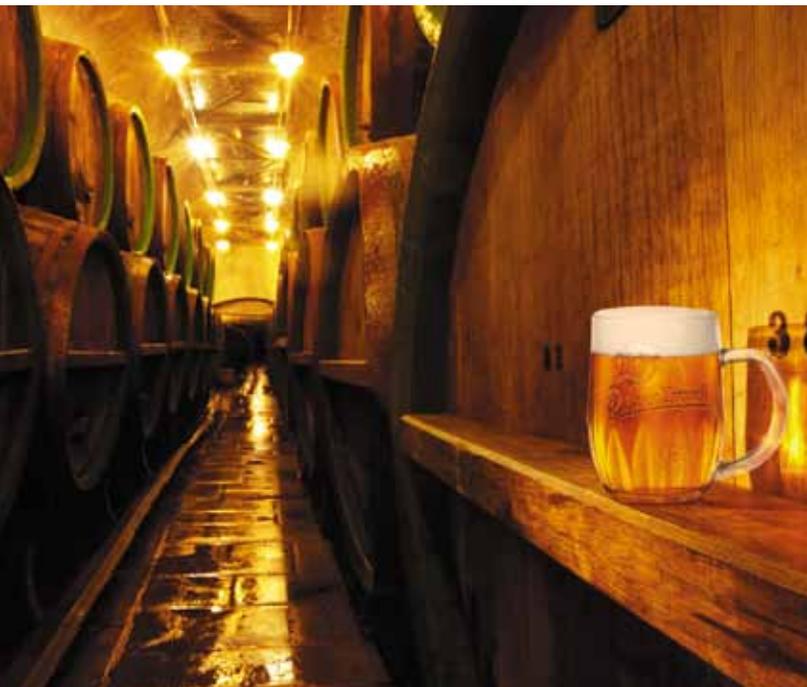
### **ROAST PORK KNEE**

*This, served with mustard and fresh grated horseradish, along with pickled vegetables and soft, fresh bread, is a renowned delicacy for many of us. It's easy to prepare:*

1. First simmer the entire knee in salted water with bay leaves, whole peppercorns and allspice.
2. After allowing it to cook for about an hour remove it, smear crushed garlic with salt on it, sprinkle with caraway seeds and roast it for another hour while basting it with the pork broth. During the first phase of roasting you can cut the skin into strips or squares.
3. Finally, roast the knee at a high heat or grill it. If you are going to prepare this delicacy, don't forget the fresh cold beer.



Roast pork knee



## BEER: PAST AND PRESENT

The tradition of brewing beer dates back to ancient times when the Celts occupied central Europe. Beer production experienced a great boom during the founding of royal towns. The foundations for traditional Czech beer made of barley malt and hops were laid in the Middle Ages.

Light bitter beer from **Plzeň** garnered Czech beer worldwide acclaim. Many brands of beer similar to the original **Pilsner Urquell** produced since 1842 are labelled "pils" or "pilsner" after the name of this city.



### Did you know that...

Beer is most commonly tapped and served in **half-litre** glasses (almost a pint), or in 0.3-litre glasses if you order a "small beer".

- a **Tuplák** often referred to a 1-litre glass.
- Most beers are tapped with a firm thick cap of white and bitter **foam**.
- Most often you'll encounter tap beer, called "desítka" (a tenner) containing up to 4% alcohol, a stronger type of beer "lager" called "dvanáctka" (a twelver), containing approximately 5.5% alcohol, and occasionally with special beers with a higher alcohol content.
- Most brewed beers are blonde and clear, ranging from the bitter pilsner type to the slightly sweet Bavarian type. Dark beer tops off the selection.
- A mixture of light and dark beer in a glass beer is called "cut" beer, popularly called "řízek".



Another world famous beer name – "**Budweiser**" – comes from the city of **České Budějovice** in southern Bohemia, where Budvar is traditionally brewed using water from deep underground, Moravian malt, and Žatec hops: purely Czech ingredients.

The total annual production of beer in the Czech Republic is nearly 20 million hectolitres, and per capita consumption is more than 150

litres, ranking the country among the largest producers and consumers of beer in the world.

Czech breweries supply the market with more than 470 brands of beer. The Czech Republic has nearly 50 large and medium-sized breweries, and recent years have witnessed a large increase in the number of microbreweries, including those brewing specialty beers.





*Carnival (masquerade parade in the Hlinsko region)*

## DURING SHROVETIDE AND EASTER

### *The Moor of Venice (recipe from 1826)*

*In a bowl, mix a quarter pound of fresh butter and a quarter pound of clarified butter. Mix in four whole eggs and four yolks, one at a time. Add three tablespoons thick yeast and three tablespoons cream, and thicken the mixture with one cup of flour to make a light dough similar to cake batter. Grind a cup of poppy seeds and mix into the dough with a half pound of powdered sugar and the zest from half a lemon. Add a little salt and pour into a cake form.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

Shrovetide (Masopust) is a folk holiday associated with masked parades, hog-killing, dances, and balls. It's celebrated before Ash Wednesday, the day when Lent starts, which lasts six weeks until Easter. The Christian faith prohibits eating meat and using animal fats during this period. Only the meat from fish was an exception, and many people lived on sauerkraut, potatoes, bread, legumes, etc. Today, this is no longer true; very few people here respect the rules of Lenten times.

There's probably not a single family today that does not decorate their Easter table with multi-coloured Easter eggs (kraslice)

and a braided willow switch (pomlázka) for the Easter whipping of girls. Special kinds of pastries, a special meatloaf, egg dishes with herbs, and also roast young goats and lamb all belong to the Easter holidays.

This is why I'll first show you Shrovetide doughnuts, then simple Lenten dishes, and finally Easter treats.

Scones (vdolky) are also made from this dough, but they aren't filled. A finger is pressed into the middle of the cut-out and leavened circles of dough right before frying, to make a depression or opening in the middle after frying. The scones are then garnished with marmalade or plum jam,

whipped curd cheese, whipped cream, etc.

**Grog** – This favourite hot drink is made from the popular Czech rum named "Tuzemák". One part alcohol is mixed with

**Did you know that...**

*Besides Christmas, **Easter** is the most important Christian holiday. It commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and because we also associate the Easter holidays with the end of winter, we also call them the "spring holidays". We still celebrate these holidays today.*

## SHROVETIDE DOUGHNUTS

Made from soft leavened dough and fried in hot oil or grease.

- fine flour 500 g
- egg yolks 3 pcs
- butter 50 g
- coarse sugar 50 g
- yeast 30 g
- milk 250 g
- salt, lemon peel
- "Tuzemák" Czech rum, 2 spoonfuls
- fruit marmalade or jam
- oil for frying
- powdered sugar for sprinkling

1. Put the sugar and two pinches of salt into warm milk. Stir in the yeast and add two handfuls of flour. Thoroughly stir everything and allow to rise while covered.

2. Pour the melted butter with beaten egg yolks, the grated peel from half a lemon,

and the rum into the leavened dough. Gradually stir in the flour and knead it into soft dough, which after a while should stop sticking to the side of the bowl.

3. Dust the dough with flour and allow it to rise. After it doubles its volume, knead it again and press and roll it into a sheet almost one centimetre thick. Cut out circles from the sheet with a pastry cutter or glass.

4. Make the doughnuts by putting a spoonful of marmalade on one cut-out circle and covering it with another circle of dough. Squeeze the edges together, trim them into circles, and allow to rise.

5. Fry them slowly in hot oil, first covered and then, after being turned over, without a lid. The finished doughnuts are sprinkled with powdered sugar.



Shrovetide Doughnuts



Decorated Easter eggs

three parts boiling water, then sweetened, and lemon juice is added. Czech domestic rum is also added to coffee and tea.

**Celestial Crusts** – This is a sweet pastry prepared during Shrovetide. It's made from fine wheat flour (150 g), butter (30 g),



**Grog** needn't be made only with rum – this ingredient can be replaced by whiskey, gin, brandy or other spirits. Use these to make brandy grog, gin grog and other drinks. You can also experiment with the ratio of alcohol and hot water: 1:3, 1:2, 1:1 . . .

sugar (30 g), egg yolks (3 pcs), sour cream (2 spoonfuls), and rum (1 spoonful).

Mix the ingredients to make the dough, lay it aside for a while, and then roll it into thin sheets. Cut out various shapes from the dough and fry them in hot oil or grease. While still warm, sprinkled them with powdered sugar containing cinnamon or vanilla.

**SOUPS** – These play a very important role in our cuisine. In earlier times, they were routinely the main meal of the day together with bread. Dairy soups with rolls were prepared in the morning, then vegetable, potato, legume, cereal, and rarely, meat soups were prepared during the day. Of all the various soups, I offer you two very well-known ones here:

**Cabbage soup** – This soup, made from sauerkraut, served our ancestors as a basic source of vitamins during the long winter, which is why it's still a part of many dishes in our cuisine. The sauerkraut is

## POTATO AND MILK SOUP WITH DILL (KULAJDA)

This is an excellent soup made from potatoes, mushrooms and spices. This is an original South Bohemian recipe for four servings:

- potatoes 400 g
- fresh mushrooms 250 g (dried 40 g)
- butter 50 g
- sour cream 150 g
- fine flour 60 g
- eggs 4 pcs
- caraway seeds, bay leaf, whole black peppercorns, salt, sugar, vinegar, dill – the top parts

1. Slice the potatoes into cubes and boil in salted water with the caraway seeds and the spices wrapped in a piece of gauze.

2. Sauté the chopped mushrooms in butter in a frying pan and then pour in a little water, add salt, and stew. If you have dried mushrooms, then boil them in salted water, and add butter, and when soft, cut into pieces.

3. When the potatoes are half cooked, remove the gauze with the spices and thicken the soup with the sour cream mixed with wheat flour. While constantly stirring, simmer until done.

4. In the end, add the stewed or boiled mushrooms, chopped dill tops, and season with a little vinegar, in which you have heated a little bit of sugar. The soup should be slightly tart.

5. Add eggs, broken and boiled in vinegary salted water, or just hardboiled eggs.



Potato and milk soup with dill



Easter stuffing

seasoned with salt and caraway seeds. This cabbage soup can be prepared in many ways. I personally make it the way my grandmother made it. I first cook pieces of potatoes with salt and caraway seeds in a pot, then I add chopped sauerkraut. In a separate frying pan, I fry onions in lard. When they start to brown, I add a little fine flour and allow it to bind with the oil or grease for a short time.

I then add a little ground sweet paprika and I remove the frying pan from the heat. I use the resulting paste, called onion roux, to thicken the sauerkraut and potatoes. In the end, I adjust the consistency of the soup with sour cream and sometimes add pieces of roast paprika sausage.

**EASTER IN THE KITCHEN** – These are celebrations of the coming spring, which signifies new life, and all this is reflected in the menu. An old custom says that on Easter's Green (Maundy) Thursday one should eat something green, such as herbs, spinach or stinging nettle shoots chopped and added to a dish, and one should also eat a spoonful of honey. A strict fast is set for Good Friday, but nowadays there are few people who wouldn't eat anything all day. The faithful Christians might not

eat meat. On Saturday, Easter meatloaf (velikonoční sekaná) is prepared which contains several kinds of meat, plenty of eggs, and again, spring herbs. On Sunday, festive roast (slavnostní pečeně) of lamb, young goat, or another kind of meat is served for lunch. Monday is the day of "pomlázky", when boys and men whip the girls and women with braided willow switches, and the women in return give them Easter eggs and other gifts.



Did you know that...

Without a doubt, no Easter is complete without the cake known as **mazanec**, a pastry loaf made from sweet leavened dough with raisins and almonds. The Easter hot cross-bun (**jidáše**) is made from different leavened dough, and in commemoration of Christ's sacrifice, a sponge-cake lamb is baked in a form and decorated with sugar frosting or chocolate frosting and colourful ribbons. Just as in other countries, sweet Easter comes with chocolate eggs and rabbits and other delicacies.



*A gala wedding table setting*

## AT A WEDDING BANQUET

### **Sauerbraten (recipe from 1826)**

*Take about four pounds of eye of round roast (the piece of lean meat below the kidneys), trim it and salt it. Pour about two cups of wine vinegar in a saucepan and add one sliced onion, twelve whole peppercorns, four pieces of ginger and a little thyme; bring to a boil. Lard the salted meat with bacon and place it in a clay pot. Pour the hot vinegar mix over the meat and let sit for three or four days (longer in the winter), turning the meat once a day. Roast it slowly (like hare), glazing with sour cream until nicely browned.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

The wedding feast is definitely one of the largest of family banquets. Just imagine that about an hour ago, the engaged couple exchanged their vows and tied the knot. The owner of the local hotel has just broken a plate in front of the door so that the shards from it bring the newlyweds luck and happiness. The bride and groom must sweep them up together, then the groom carries the bride in his arms over the imaginary threshold of the house, and the banquet can begin. I will show you a wedding menu, but of course different wedding

banquets will serve different dishes. Please consider the following order of dishes as just one of many possibilities.

**Ham roll** – with whipped cream horseradish. A cold starter is not a part of lunch or dinner in the everyday Czech cuisine. During festive banquets, however, starters are served. A popular one is a slice of stewed ham rolled into a tube and filled with sweet whipped cream and freshly grated horseradish. Fresh or preserved vegetables are served with the rolls.

**Wedding soup** – This is usually a strong beef or poultry broth with homemade noodles, liver dumplings or gnocchi, with

**Did you know that...**

**Becherovka from Karlovy Vary** – this renowned liqueur with a sweetish taste is great for a toast or as an aperitif. Since 1806, when the Karlovy Vary chemist Jan Becher created it, this golden-coloured liqueur has been made from a spirit and thirty-six herbs, all according to a secret recipe.



*Wedding soup needn't always be with noodles*

chopped chives or parsley. Instructions on preparing our traditional both, pasta, and liver dumplings are below.

**Beef sirloin with cream gravy and bread dumplings** – The main reason why I invited you to a wedding banquet is because of the outstanding dishes, the main ingredient of which is larded beef, either roasted or stewed with vegetables. The vegetables are then used to make a thick and creamy sweet and sour gravy. The “svíčková”, as we call this meat dish, is garnished on the plate with a spoonful of cranberry compote on a slice of lemon.

A gravy similar to the “svíčková” gravy, meaning a creamy gravy with a vegetable base, is also prepared for pork and primarily with game in our cuisine. Bacon-larded rabbit is often prepared the same way. A modern version

of this gravy is not thickened with flour but only with the mixed vegetables themselves and mainly with sour cream.

**Wedding cake** – According to tradition, the bride cuts the wedding cake after the banquet ends, so that the first slice is served by the newly married woman. I will try to describe what a wedding cake



*Rabbit pâté is a favourite starter*

looks and tastes like here. This is a sponge cake interlaced with butter cream, and sometimes has a strong fruit jam spread throughout it. The entire, often three-level cake is decorated with butter cream or almond marzipan on its surface and decorated with flowers. The flowers are either real or moulded from marzipan.

Guests who attend the wedding banquet are, as a rule, the relatives and friends of the bride and groom. They bring the newlyweds various wedding gifts, often practical or ornamental, as well as items for their joint household.

At the end of the wedding festivities, the guests are presented with the wedding hamper, usually a box of sweets. Most often this contains several kinds of small teacakes, cream puffs (tubes baked from pastry dough and filled with sweet whipped cream), and small wedding pastries with poppy, curd cheese and almonds. It can also include slices of jelly rolls, cakes and other small desserts.



*Cutting the cake by the bride and groom is an essential wedding ritual*

**BEEF BROTH**

- .....
- beef brisket 500 g
- root vegetables 150 g
- one medium onion, a spoon of salt, whole peppercorns (5)
- 2 litres of water

Cut up the beef into smaller pieces and place it in cold water with the spices, onions and

salt. Quickly bring it to a boil and then lower the heat and simmer for approximately 2 hours. When cooking add cold water to keep the volume constant. About 20 minutes before it's finished cooking, add the cleaned root vegetables – carrot, celery root, parsley root. Strain the finished broth.

**HOMEMADE SOUP NOODLES**

- .....
- coarse wheat flour 150 g
- one egg
- one or two spoonfuls of water

Knead a strong and elastic dough from the flour, eggs and water. Lay aside for 20 minutes in a microten bag in the refrigerator and then roll into a very thin sheet. Allow

this to dry on a dishcloth so that the noodles will not stick together when being cut. Be careful that the dough does not become too dry and crack. Cut the rolled sheet into 4-centimetre-wide strips. Place the strips on top of each other and with a sharp knife cut them into thin noodles. These can then be cooked in salted water or allowed to dry and saved for later.

**BEEF SIRLOIN WITH CREAM GRAVY**

Recipe for ten servings:

- beef round, sirloin or round shoulder 1 500 g
- bacon 200 g
- root vegetables (carrot, celery root, parsley root) 500 g
- onion 250 g
- oil or grease 150 g
- butter 100 g
- fine flour 150 g
- cream 500 ml
- whole pepper, bay leaf, allspice, thyme, sugar, vinegar, salt, full-fat mustard
- lemon and cranberry compote

1. Lard and salt equal-sized pieces of meat. Sauté the salted meat in a frying

pan on hot oil or grease. After removing the meat, prepare the vegetable base.

2. First sauté the slices of the root vegetables. When their edges start to brown, add the chopped onions. As soon as the onions start to brown, add the spices wrapped in gauze and two handfuls of crystal sugar. After a while, the sugar will dissolve and start to caramelize. Add two to three spoonfuls of mustard, sauté for a short time and pour in water or the beef broth.

3. Place the sautéed meat on the base, add half the butter and stew under a lid or slowly bake covered in the oven. During baking turn the meat, and baste if necessary. Remove the tender meat and place it in a warm place. Prepare a light roux from wheat flour and fat for thickening. After it cools, whip it into the vegetable base in which the meat was prepared.

4. Remove the gauze with the spices and thoroughly mix everything (if necessary push through a strainer), season with salt, and refine the gravy with sweet or sour cream. If necessary add vinegar or lemon to make the gravy more tart and pour it over the cuts of larded beef.

Garnish with a slice of lemon and a spoonful of cranberry compote and sweet or sour cream. This is the best kind of gravy to truly know how great our fluffy bread dumplings taste (page 67).



Sliced beef in cream sauce – again with beloved Czech dumplings



*The deep forests of Šumava are rich with mushrooms*

## MUSHROOMS

### **Scrambled eggs with wild mushrooms (recipe from 1826)**

*Chop mushrooms finely and add them to butter; season with salt and stew slowly. Add minced parsley and a little pepper, cooking the mixture until very soft. Whisk as many eggs as you would like; pour into pan with melted butter and make regular scrambled eggs. When finished, make a cross in a bowl (two parts eggs, two parts mushrooms), or if there are more mushrooms than eggs, place the mushrooms in the middle and make a wreath*

*around them with the eggs. Do the opposite if you have more eggs than mushrooms.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

I don't know how it is in your country, but here in Bohemia and Moravia, from the beginning of summer to late autumn, entire families get swept away in the passion of mushroom picking. Understandably, from the wide range of mushrooms that grow here we only pick certain kinds, for example boletus and chanterelle. This is because inedible and even poisonous mushrooms grow in our forests and meadows.

My family also gets swept away in the passion of mushroom picking. Some of the picked mushrooms are eaten right away, and others are dried, frozen or preserved for later. I'll show you several dishes that, as a chef, I cannot imagine without mushrooms.

**Roux** – This “zásmažka”, as we call it in Czech cuisine, is actually fine wheat flour combined via heat with grease or oil at a ratio of 1:1. One can make either light or various degrees of dark roux depending on the dish that the roux will thicken.



*Mushroom picking is a popular Czech pastime*



1/ *Boletus pinophilus*; 2/ *Leccinum aurantiacum*; 3/ *Cantharellus cibarius* (chanterelle); 4/ *Chlorophyllum rhacodes*; 5/ *Lycoperdon perlatum*; 6/ *Leccinum scabrum*; 7/ *Amanita rubescens* (blusher)

**Mushrooms and eggs** – This is a folk delicacy made from a mix of stewed mushrooms that have whipped eggs added to them just before they finish cooking. Generally, only caraway seeds are used as seasoning, and pepper according to taste.



A mushroom mix called "smaženice"

**Pickled mushrooms** – These are a favourite side dish to many dishes in households. Simmered mushrooms



Pickled mushrooms

and pieces of vegetables are pickled with various spices in jars.

## BOHEMIAN FOREST POTATO SOUP

A traditional soup made from potatoes, various vegetables and mushrooms.

A recipe for four servings:

• potatoes	500 g
• root vegetables (carrot, celery root, parsley root)	500 g
• kale	100 g
• leek	60 g
• onion	150 g
• fresh mushrooms	150 g or dried 40 g
• garlic	50 g
• fine flour	60 g
• lard or oil	50 g
• salt, caraway seeds, pepper, marjoram	
• lovage, chives	

1. First boil the seasoning vegetables in salted water, and then the potatoes, all cut into even-sized pieces. While cooking, add any other available vegetables – kale, kohlrabi, cauliflower, leek, etc.

2. Sauté the fresh mushrooms, sliced or cut into pieces, in a small frying pan with a little oil or lard and then add

a little water and stew for at least ten minutes. If you have dried mushrooms, then soak them in water and add the cut pieces, right from the beginning, to the vegetables and potatoes to cook.

3. First sauté the finely chopped onions with caraway seeds in the remainder of the oil or lard. Then add flour and prepare a pasty roux. It can even be fried to a light pink. Use this to thicken the soup with the almost cooked vegetables and thoroughly cook.

4. Finally add the stewed mushrooms, crushed garlic and finely chopped lovage. Cook for a short time and season with marjoram, chopped chives, and freshly ground pepper according to taste.

This soup is also prepared differently in various places in Bohemia and Moravia. In some places, cream or sour cream is an integral part of this soup. Elsewhere, they add barleycorn or pearl barley. I've also heard that the best potato soup is made from broth made from smoked meat bones and thickened with semolina fried in lard.



Šumava potato soup with wild mushrooms

**Please tread lightly!  
You are entering  
paradise.**

Enter into a wondrous rocky kingdom unparalleled in all of Europe! Nature has proven to be a brilliant sculptor – from humble sandstone she created a masterpiece which you will marvel at with amazement and awe.

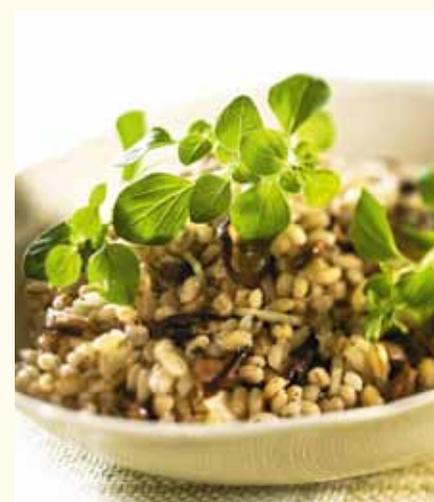
## BARLEY AND MUSHROOMS

*This is a folk dish that's regularly cooked during the Christmas holidays. You can surely cook it according to this recipe, which makes four servings:*

- pearl barley 250 g
- dried mushrooms 30 g
- onion 100 g
- garlic 50 g
- lard 70 g
- salt, pepper, caraway seeds, marjoram

1. Soak the dried mushrooms in a little bit of cold water. Soak the pearl barley in separate bowl. Wash the pearl barley and set it to boil in cold salted water. Cook the soaked mushrooms in the same manner.

2. Sauté the finely chopped onions in half of the hot lard. Add a little bit of the crushed caraway seeds. When the onions start to brown, add garlic and immediately add the dried mushroom broth, then add the cut and boiled mushrooms and stew everything for a short time. Then stir this mix into the cooked



Barley and mushrooms

and strained pearl barley. Season everything with powdered marjoram and ground pepper.

3. Use the other half of the lard to grease a baking dish or pan and place the prepared mix inside it. Bake at a medium heat for about thirty minutes. Serve with a sauerkraut salad, pickle and mushrooms.

## MUSHROOM GRAVY

*This is certainly one of the greatest delicacies in Czech cuisine.*

*Ingredients you will need:*

- strong beef broth 500 ml
- fresh mushrooms 150 g
- onion 80 g
- lard or oil 70 g
- fine flour 50 g
- salt, ground caraway seeds, vinegar
- sour cream 120 g

1. Cut the fresh mushrooms, and together with the caraway seeds and salt, cook in a third of the oil or lard for about ten minutes.

2. Using the rest of the oil or lard, first sauté the finely chopped onions and then add flour. Pour cold broth into this onion roux, stir thoroughly, and cook for at least twenty minutes. Then add the cooked mushrooms, a little vinegar, and simmer for another 10 minutes.

3. Finally refine the gravy with sour cream. Served with boiled meats and fluffy bread dumplings (recipe on page 67).

4. Dill, pickle, horseradish and other gravies are made in the same way as mushroom gravy.



Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) is favourite game

## GAME FEAST

### Wild boar (recipe from 1826)

*Sear the meat and place it in a pot. Add three parts water and one part wine vinegar. Season with salt and cook until soft. Pour one cup of wine over half a cup of dried sour cherries and cook well. Add a small amount of the juices from the meat; mix and strain. Add a little sugar and lemon zest, cloves and cinnamon. Thicken with a yellow roux and bring to a boil. Strain the meat, wrap it in a nicely folded napkin and place it on the table; pour the sauce into a sauce boat. Dried rosehips can be used in place of the sour cherries.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

Because as a chef I really like to prepare game, I didn't hesitate for long in deciding where I would invite you to in this chapter. Imagine a romantic banquet prepared in a hunting chateau, the walls hung with many trophies – game will be served. This most often includes stag, roebuck, fallow deer, wild boar, and hare, all hunted in our forests and meadows, and feathered game includes pheasant and wild duck. So let's go, then, and taste some real delicacies:

**Game pâté** – This is a traditional delicacy here. It's usually prepared from

ground baked meat and raw livers, egg yolks, sweet cream, and a mix of spices. This mince is then baked in a mould lined with streaky bacon or baked in pastry dough.

**Rump of deer with cream** – Very often, game in our cuisine is prepared with a cream gravy. The preparations in the first phase are the same as in the aforementioned recipe, i.e. roasting the meat au naturel with onions, bacon and root vegetables. You then remove the roast meat and press the drippings with the vegetables through a strainer and refine with sweet or sour cream.



Autumn is hunting season

### Roast wild boar leg with rosehip

**gravy** – A hunted wild boar is always a great event. Alongside the typical cream gravy, it's also often prepared with a fruit gravy, sometimes with a rowanberry, but most often with a rosehip gravy. A sweet marmalade is made from the berries of the thorny wild briar rose. This marmalade is then added to browned onions and root vegetables and is stewed in the drippings of the larded meat of the wild boar.



Venison paté

### GAME RAGOUT

.....  
This is prepared from smaller pieces of meat stewed in vegetables and spices together with fruit. Here is a recipe for five servings:

- venison, fallow deer or stag meat 1 000 g
- root vegetables (carrot, celery root, parsley root) 200 g
- onion 100 g
- smoked bacon 130 g
- lard or oil 120 g
- plum jam 60 g
- cranberry compote 100 g
- tomato paste 50 g
- red wine 200 ml
- salt, wild spices, lemon, cloves

1. First sauté slices of the root vegetables in the lard or oil, then add chopped onions and cubes of bacon. When everything is browned, add the tomato paste, cranberry compote, wild spices (bay leaf, whole peppercorns, allspice), a sprig of thyme, and then even-sized cubes of the well-salted meat.

2. Baste everything with wine, slowly simmer while covered with a lid, and add broth if necessary. Approximately half way through the cooking add the plum jam seasoned with lemon juice and add three to five cloves. When the meat is almost tender, it is necessary to chill the ragout and allow it to mellow till the next day. Before serving, slowly heat in an oven set to low or medium.

Game ragout can be prepared in various ways, depending on which fruits are used: e.g. rowanberries, blackberries, and also pieces of stewed tart apples.



Game ragout



Festive table with roast pheasant

### ROAST PHEASANT

.....  
The recipe below will show you how game is most often prepared, because wild duck, hare, and other game are prepared in the same way.

- two or three pheasants
- bacon 200 g
- onion 100 g
- root vegetables (carrot, celery root, parsley root) 300 g
- butter 50 g
- salt
- bay leaf, allspice, whole peppercorns, juniper berries, thyme

1. Cut the cleaned pheasants in half and lard their legs and breasts with wedges of bacon. Thoroughly salt and place in a pan onto the

chopped root vegetables, roughly chopped onions, remaining bacon, and spices. Add a little water and a pat of butter, and slowly bake at 160°C.

2. Bake covered, at first stew and only at the end of cooking turn up the heat.

3. In some places they add pieces of fruit when the pheasant is almost finished baking – for example, plums and apples or also fruit marmalades.

4. Divide into single servings and serve with the baked vegetables and natural drippings.

Sometimes poultry, rabbit, pork knee, and other meats are prepared according to this recipe. Food cooked in this way is said to be "in the wild manner" or "à la pheasant".



*These visitors to a wine cellar are glowing with good spirits*

## DURING THE GRAPE HARVEST

### **Dumplings in cream (recipe from 1826)**

*Mix four tablespoons of clarified butter and two tablespoons of fresh butter; add six whole eggs, a pinch of salt and mix in enough flour to make a silky batter. Bring a pot of sweet cream to a boil and drop spoonfuls of batter into the cream to make small dumplings. Add a little lemon zest and sugar and season slightly with salt; place in oven. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and roast until nicely golden on top.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

Now I'll invite you to southern Moravia. Whenever anybody mentions this fertile land south of the Moravian city of Brno, I see an image of vineyard tracts growing cultured varieties of grapevines. You can find brief and basic information about Czech and Moravian winemaking in a special annexe. But now let's go to one of the many celebrations that have been taking place to celebrate the crop harvest every year for many centuries. Before we plunge into the whirls of festivities or visit some of the

wine cellars, though, it's a good idea to eat until you are full. I chose the very popular schnitzel with salad and of course a very good sweet dessert.

**Garlic soup** – This is a clear broth with pieces of boiled potatoes and a good amount of crushed garlic. Before serving, we add cubes of bread pan-fried in lard. This popular soup can get you back on your feet in the morning after a wild night spent celebrating.

We very often prepare chicken



*Garlic soup*



Schnitzel

## SCHNITZEL

This is a breaded and fried fillet of high-quality meat that is the most beloved dish of many of my fellow citizens. You will be able to prepare it according to this recipe. It's up to you which meat you choose for its preparation. It could be pork leg, cutlet or neck.

Ingredients for four servings:

- quality leg or joint of pork with the membrane removed 600 g
- fine flour 40 g
- one or two eggs
- breadcrumbs 80 g
- oil for frying 100 g
- salt

1. Tenderize the fillet by beating it, salt it and then dip it first in fine flour, then

in beaten and slightly salted eggs and finally in fine white breadcrumbs.

2. Immediately after coating fry in hot oil. After frying, allow to drain onto a paper towel. Serve with slices of lemon and boiled potatoes or potato salad.

## POTATO SALAD

This is one of the most often served side orders with fried dishes and roast meats. Many varieties are prepared, so here I offer you one of the classics:

For six to eight servings, you'll need:

- boiled and peeled potatoes 700 g
- onion 100 g
- root vegetables (carrot, celery root, parsley root) 200 g
- mayonnaise 200 g
- sweet and sour pickles 120 g
- five eggs
- salt 20 g
- vinegar, coarse sugar, ground pepper

1. Cool the boiled potatoes, peel them and cut them into even-sized slices or cubes. Cut the root vegetables, which have been cooked in salted water, and the pickles, to the same size. Chopped hard-boiled eggs also go in the salad.

2. Prepare a binding dressing from mayonnaise, the sweet and sour pickle juice, sugar, salt, vinegar, and finely chopped onions. Lightly stir this into the ingredients, and it will combine their flavours. Before serving, place the salad in the refrigerator overnight to mellow.

and turkey schnitzels the same way as pork schnitzels. Sometimes the schnitzels are coated in a batter made from eggs, flour and milk.

At the end of a good dish one deserves to have something sweet, and that is why I offer you two folk dishes:

**Pancakes** – They are prepared from leavened batter, which is fried in grease or oil in special frying pans that are round and palm-sized. They're served with various toppings: sprinkle it with sugar and ground cinnamon, spread it with fruit marmalade, spread it with curd cheese, stewed fruit, and so on.

**Fruit dumplings** – Pieces of fruit are inserted into small loaves of ordinary leavened dough, and after



Dumplings with strawberries

the dough rises they are boiled in salted water. The round dumplings are then served covered with grated curd cheese, sugar and melted butter.

Fruit dumplings are also made from cream cheese dough. Here's one of many recipes:



Pancakes with fruit and whipped cream

**CURD CHEESE DUMPLINGS**

- soft curd cheese 250 g
- one egg
- a tablespoon of oil
- a handful of semolina
- a pinch of salt

1. Thoroughly mix all the ingredients together and allow to stand for half an hour. During this time the semolina will absorb the moisture from the curd cheese. Then using some flour, make small round

dumplings from the dough. Immediately cook these in salted boiling water, five to eight minutes according to size.

2. You can cook a quick fruit sauce to go perfectly with the curd cheese dumplings. You can use either fresh or frozen fruit. All you need to do is boil it down with sugar and vanilla, and if necessary thicken with starch flour. Be sure not to forget the sour cream, and a spoonful of honey if you like.



*Fruit dumplings with farmer's cheese*



**In vino veritas, and in  
this land the history  
of Europe. Cheers!**

The story of south Moravia is as intense and full-bodied as the wine produced here. Its fertile ground was once a battlefield for Napoleon's army. Today it is an oasis of picturesque beauty, perfect for relaxing strolls. Tranquil forests, glistening rivers and rolling hills with vineyards kissed by the sun. Would you prefer white or red?



### THE VARIETIES OF WINES CULTIVATED MOST OFTEN

#### White varieties

Müller Thurgau	12 %
Veltlínské zelené (Green Veltliner)	11 %
Ryzlink vlašský (Riesling Italico)	8 %
Ryzlink rýnský (Rhine Riesling)	7.5 %
Rulandské bílé (Pinot Blanc)	5 %
Sauvignon	4.5 %
Chardonnay	4 %

#### Red varieties

Svatovavřínecké (St. Laurent)	9 %
Frankovka (Lemberger)	7 %
Zweigeltrebe	5 %
Rulandské modré (Pinot Noir)	4 %
Modrý Portugal (Blue Portugal)	3.5 %

## ON THE HISTORY OF WINEMAKING IN MORAVIA AND BOHEMIA

The beginning of winemaking in southern Moravia goes back to the time of the Roman Empire. Archaeological findings confirm extensive and developed winemaking by the Slavic inhabitants of the mighty Great Moravian Empire (833–906) in the region south of today's city of Brno. Wine in Bohemia was cultivated around the town of Mělník, north of Prague, at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Winemaking underwent significant growth and development during the reign of King Charles IV in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when winemaking saw its greatest boom here, Moravia had over 17,000 hectares of vineyards while in the less fertile Bohemia there were more than 3,000 hectares. Wars and phylloxera, a pest accidentally imported from America, caused a decrease in vineyards over the following centuries. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Moravian vineyards totalled less than 4,000 hectares.

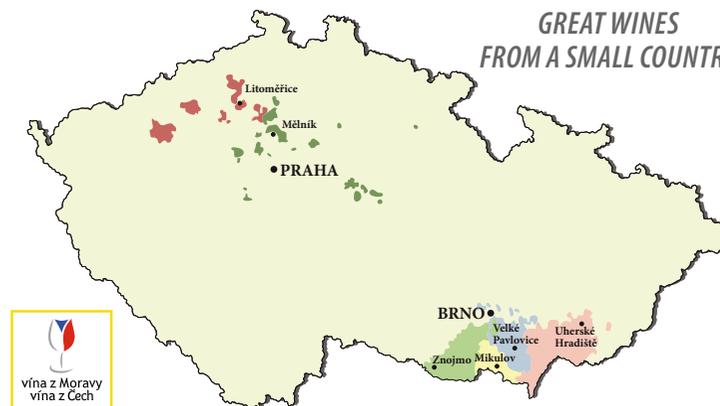
By the 1960's this had doubled, and by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the total area of vineyards amounted to 11,183 hectares. Today the Czech Republic has about 18,554 hectares of registered vineyards.



#### Did you know that...

- The consumption of wine per person per year in the Czech Republic is 17 litres (35 litres in the EU)
- The domestic production of wine exceeds 500,000 hectolitres annually, which covers approximately 40 % of domestic consumption.

## GREAT WINES FROM A SMALL COUNTRY



### WINEMAKING REGIONS IN MORAVIA

#### Winemaking sub-regions

Znojemská	(3,521 ha)
Mikulovská	(4,861 ha)
Velkopavlovická	(5,166 ha)
Slovácká	(4,748 ha)

### WINEMAKING REGIONS IN BOHEMIA

#### Winemaking sub-regions

Litoměřická	(291 ha)
Mělnická	(428 ha)



*Preparation of potato dough*

## WITH POTATO DUMPLINGS

Potatoes were brought to the European continent from America after it was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Originally the potato was supposed to be an ornamental plant, but when it was discovered that its tuber is not only edible but tasty, it didn't take long for potatoes to start being grown for consumption. Since then, they have spread throughout all of Europe and many times in the past have saved many people from famine.

Potatoes were domesticated in

Bohemian and Moravian cuisine as well. In fact, at one time, together with sauerkraut, they were the main food staple of the common folk. Today we use potatoes to prepare numerous dishes. The first place is held by potato dumplings, which are great not only as a side dish, but also as a dish all by themselves, for example stuffed with bacon or fruit.

**Potato dumplings** – Rolled long loaves from dough and boiled in salted water. When finished cooking, they are greased and cut into circles. They are often served with roast duck, pork, etc.

**Stuffed potato dumplings** – The rolled out dough is cut into quarters and topped with a mix of browned onions and pieces of smoked meat. Then the filled dumplings are rounded and boiled. They are served with cooked sauerkraut and browned onions.

**Potato scones** – The potato dough is rolled into small rolls the size of a finger, which, after being boiled, are eaten with rich sprinkles of fried breadcrumbs, sugar, and butter, or with ground poppy seeds.

**Potato-pasta balls** – Boiling water from boiled potatoes is partially drained.



*Plum jam "scarves"*



Potato dumplings stuffed with smoked meat

Then wheat flour is added and everything is left to be steamed. This is finally kneaded into a homogenous dough which is served with ground poppy seeds, powdered sugar, and butter.

**Plum scarves** – Squares are cut from a sheet of potato dough and filled with plum jam. The dough is then folded in half, the edges are squeezed together, and it is boiled.

**"Fuzzy" dumplings** – These are dumplings boiled in the shape of

gnocchi or balls. They are prepared from dough made from grated raw potatoes, flour, eggs, and salt.

**Plum dumplings** – Whole plums, including the pit, are wrapped in a sheet of potato dough. This is boiled and served with grated hard curd cheese, sugar and covered with melted butter.

#### POTATOES AS A SIDE DISH

This is how potatoes most often find their way onto our plates. Most often, these are boiled potatoes. Peeled and

1. Boil the potatoes in their skins, peel and let cool. Then finely grate or strain them into a bowl.
2. Add the other ingredients to the potatoes: salt, eggs, cornstarch, semolina and flour. Mix them all together right away to make a firm dough, that you'll knead immediately. The dough will become thinner with time.

#### POTATO DOUGH

You can use boiled and grated potatoes, coarse flour, semolina, and eggs to prepare this potato dough which serves as the basis for many different dishes. This is a universal recipe for it along with several ways to use it in the kitchen as we cook it.

- boiled potatoes 800 g
- wheat semolina 150 g
- coarse flour 100-150 g
- cornstarch 50 g
- 2 eggs
- salt 30 g

cut into smaller pieces, they are boiled in salted water with some caraway seeds. On the plate they are usually buttered and garnished with chopped parsley or chives. Often, cooled boiled potatoes are prepared in a frying pan with a little oil to make fried potatoes. More and more dishes are prepared with baked potatoes, whether with garlic and a spice mix or covered with cream. Of course, here just as in other corners of the world, fried potatoes are very popular, especially French fries. Another frequent potato side dish is mashed potatoes.

At the end of this chapter I must mention potato griddlecakes. There are many various recipes. Besides classic dough prepared from grated boiled potatoes and flour, griddlecakes are also prepared with curd cheese or browned onions and pieces of bacon. Unfortunately, potato griddlecakes, just like many other dishes our grandmothers made, are being pushed off our



Did you know that...

**Potatoes** and other crops made their way to Europe following the discovery of the New World by the Genoese explorer **Christopher Columbus** in 1492.

tables by various frozen and pre-fried croquettes and other similar products made in factories. Here is a traditional recipe for potato griddlecakes:

#### POTATO GRIDDLECAKES

- boiled and peeled potatoes 800 g
- fine or medium flour 50 g
- salt
- pork lard or butter for greasing

1. Allow the boiled potatoes to cool. Then finely grate them, add salt, and then mix in flour. This will make pliant dough.

2. Roll the dough on a rolling board, cut out the griddlecakes and cook them on a cast-iron plate or non-stick pan without oil. Understandably, it is possible to cook the griddlecakes in grease or oil, but then they will be greasier.

3. Grease the cooked griddlecakes and serve as a side dish or as a dish by itself. One of the most traditional ways of eating griddlecakes is with sweet plum jam.



Potato griddlecakes



*The Czech potato pancake has a different name in different areas*

## POTATO PANCAKE

.....  
These are pancakes made from grated raw potatoes, sometimes prepared with pieces of smoked meat and with crackling that can be served as the main dish or just as a side dish to go with meat. Here is a detailed recipe for six servings:

- peeled raw potatoes 750 g
- fine flour 200 g
- milk 100 g
- boiled smoked flank 200 g
- two eggs
- garlic 40 g
- pork lard or oil 200 g
- salt, pepper, marjoram

1. Finely grate the cleaned and peeled potatoes. Allow to stand for a while and pour out, or if necessary squeeze out, the released liquid.

2. Add warm milk to the potatoes and stir in salt, pepper, marjoram, and crushed garlic. Then add flour, eggs and the finely chopped smoked meat. Mix everything again and allow to stand for a while.

3. Pour the batter onto hot oil and make thin pancakes of any size. Serve as a side dish or with pickled vegetables.

Another way of making this dish is replacing the raw potatoes with grated zucchini or also a combination of raw and boiled potatoes.

**Please take note:  
This city is good for  
what ails you.**

Karlovy Vary is a place with healing powers – the cure comes not from a doctor but from nature herself. The phenomenal effects of the local thermal springs were well known to the Russian tsar Peter the Great, Goethe and Beethoven. Today, time-honoured spa treatments are supplemented with more modern elixirs for body and spirit, all provided in world-class surroundings.





*Fish harvest at a pond in the Třeboň region*

## FISHING OUT A POND

### ***Pike with fried onions (recipe from 1826)***

*Scale and clean the pike; rinse and season with salt. Coil fish and place in boiling water to cook. Drain water, tip pike into bowl and sprinkle with breadcrumbs and chopped parsley. Cover with fried onions and serve with creamy horseradish or mustard. The fish may be served immediately after soup.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

My country lies in the heart of Europe, so we do not get the chance to acquire the gifts of the sea. Thanks to Christian customs and traditions, ponds were

gradually created around towns and villages in which fish were raised (fish is a Christian food during Lent). The history of founding ponds goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The greatest glory that fishpond cultivation experienced was in southern Bohemia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when a unique system of ponds and water works was established surrounding the town of Třeboň. Since that time, not only has the tradition been maintained, but fishpond cultivation is developing further. In this chapter I would like to invite you to the fishing out of a pond. This is actually sort of the culmination of fishermen's yearlong work. In order to see how fishermen in

high boots and waterproof cloaks pull and enclose the net at the pond's earthen dam, we have to get up early. Most of the fish are corralled towards the surrounding boats, where they're collected and sorted according to species and size.

Let's move, then, not far from Třeboň to the earthen dam of our largest pond named Rožmberk and there, among the hundred-year-old oaks, I will offer you some delicacies made from freshly caught fish.

**Třeboň carp** – Carp is the best-known Czech fish. Personally, I like it best salted, sprinkled with fine flour and fried with crushed caraway seeds in hot

oil. The most popular way of cooking it, however, is battered with eggs and white breadcrumbs and fried in oil.



*Zander (Sander lucioperca)*

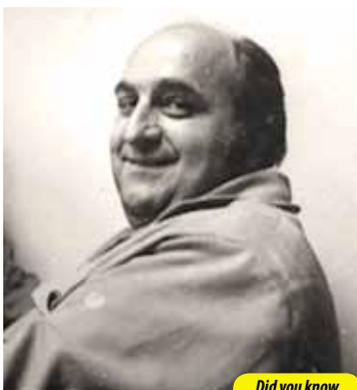
**Zander and pike** – These are the most sought after and highly prized fish, with firm, white meat. They are prepared both hot and cold and are a delicacy in Czech gastronomy.

**Trout** – Even though this is a river fish, together with the carp, this is one of the most eaten fish.

**Fish soup** – This is mostly prepared from a strong broth made from fish scraps. Generally it is served thickened with pieces of boiled fish innards and root vegetables, and seasoned with salt, bay leaves, whole peppercorns, and ground nutmeg flowers.

**Carp cooked blue** – The salted serving of fish is boiled in a strong vegetable broth with salt, sugar, vinegar or wine, and aromatic spices. The cooked fish is then buttered, or poured over with mulled vinegar.

**Pickled fish** – An interesting way of preparing primarily smaller fish is to steep them in a hot vinegar marinade



**Did you know that...**

*Gourmet experiences connected with pickled fish are described in an irresistible way by the Czech writer **Ota Pavel** (1930-1973) in his short story *The Death of the Beautiful Roebuck*: "The cellar was stocked with stone pots filled with fish pickled in vinegar and onions, and when you grabbed one, the juice ran between your fingers and delicious flakes fell off, making your head spin with delight."*



Pickled herring



Miller style trout

with onions. The fish are then set aside to mellow for several days. During this time their small bones become soft, otherwise these bones are very difficult to remove.

**Miller style trout** – Dry the cleaned fish and thoroughly salt the inside and outside. Then coat it in fine wheat flour and fry it in a frying pan in hot oil. Slowly fry one side, then the other. Butter the fried trout and sprinkle with finely chopped parsley. Many other fish are prepared in the same way. The most common side dish with fish is boiled potatoes with butter, or smashed potatoes. Onions or leek browned on lard are added to boiled potatoes, and everything is smashed together. I personally prefer mashed potatoes, so here's a detailed way to make them.

**Mashed potatoes with sauerkraut** – This is an outstanding side dish, and not only with fried fish. It also goes with cooked smoked meats, warm smoked meats, meatballs, etc. The main ingredient is mashed boiled potatoes. Sauerkraut cooked in water with

caraway seeds and salt is stirred into the mashed potatoes. The dish is seasoned with onions freshly browned in lard.

**Smoked fish** – A popular way to prepare fish is to smoke them. At home, we smoke larger sections of fish with cold smoke from wood from fruit trees or beech. In stores you can buy other varieties, such as mackerel, eel and others. The most popular pickled fish are pickled herring and herring fillets with onions or sauerkraut wound into a roll, called a "zavináč" (rollmop).



**Did you know that...**

*Fishermen still caught **salmon** in the Otava and Vltava rivers before the Second World War. The construction of the dams in the "Vltava cascade" permanently cut off their route from the sea to our country.*

**CARP WITH WINE**

*This ancient recipe is from the archives of the town of the Třeboň chateau.*

What you will need to make four servings:

• carp fillet	600 g
• lard	100 g
• flour for coating, salt, caraway seeds	
• one large onion	
• streaky bacon	100 g
• red wine	150 ml
• a spoonful of honey	
• a sprig each of sage and rosemary	
• bread	200 g

1. Salt the carp fillets and set aside for a while to rest. Then sprinkle with caraway seeds and coat in flour and quickly fry on all sides in lard.

2. Remove the fried fish from the frying pan and keep warm. Fry the bacon strips in the frying pan and then add the chopped onions. When the onions are browned, add honey, wine and herbs. Quickly cook everything so that some of the wine boils away and the sauce thickens.

3. Place a slice of toast on the plate and onto it place a serving of the fried fish and pour the wine sauce over everything.

**MASHED POTATOES**

• potatoes	800 g
• butter	50 g
• milk	200 ml
• salt	

1. Cut the peeled raw potatoes into small pieces, salt, put in boiling water and cook. Thoroughly strain the soft potatoes and add butter. Thoroughly whip everything so that no lumps remain.

2. Then add boiling salted milk and whip everything into a purée and serve.

**NOVÉ HRADY STYLE CARP**

*This is a traditional dish of fishermen and fishpond cultivators. This simple recipe makes four servings:*

• sectioned carp	600 g
• flour	60 g
• salt, garlic, ground paprika	
• oil	100 g

1. Cut the carp into 2-centimetre thick horseshoe-shaped sections. Thoroughly salt and rub on crushed garlic, and then set aside for two hours to rest.

2. Then wrap individual servings in coarse flour, into which is mixed a little ground sweet paprika and ground pepper.

3. Immediately afterwards, fry the carp horseshoes in a thick layer of oil or in a deep-fat fryer.

4. Serve with fresh bread and pickles or with boiled potatoes or mashed potatoes.



*Carp like they make it in Nové Hradý*

**Attention... this is not a dream! It's a true Bohemian fairy tale!**

Romantic lanes and nooks, cafés and medieval taverns, all nestled below one of the greatest monuments in Central Europe – a singular castle and chateau. Welcome to the fairy tale! Český Krumlov is a true Bohemian gem and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its sparkle will suit you, too.



Bohemian farmhouse in the style of the rustic baroque

## VILLAGE TRADITIONS

### **Cake topping (recipe from 1826)**

*On a rolling board, crumble six tablespoons of fresh butter in a quarter pound of flour and four tablespoons of powdered sugar. Mix well and sprinkle over a large coffee cake.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

The delicacies that I included in our eleventh chapter are inspired by the festivals that the locals still observe in the Bohemian and Moravian countryside. One of these is a "saint's day" or also a wake, i.e. an annual festival to honour the saint to which a church is dedicated.

Other widespread folk customs include the symbolic burning of witches at the end of April. Maypoles are erected in villages at the beginning of May. These are the tallest possible spruce trees, stripped of their bark and decorated at the top with a wreath and ribbons. Rich banquets have always been a part of countryside festivals. Just imagine a beautiful village green with colourful gables in rustic baroque style, a folklore band dressed in colourful folk costumes, and the local tavern where inside all sorts of food have been prepared. First, according to custom, we are greeted by the local beauty with bread and salt, and now we can look

forward to the most popular Czech food – the folk way of saying it is "vepřo-knedlo-zelo", or pork-dumplings-cabbage.

Before we start eating, let's enjoy a shot of spirits. The liquor that receives the most attention is made from ripe plums and is known as slivovice. But we'll try a pear liquor called hruškovice, from the Wallachian town of Vizovice. This town in the middle of Moravia is really the Promised Land when it comes to distilled liquors. The modern way of serving liquor is with the relevant fruit compote and a drop of sweet juice. And let's not forget, our traditional toast is "Na zdraví!" (to health!).

**Roast pork with dumplings and cabbage** – This is probably the most



Pear spirits

## SAINT MARTIN'S GOOSE

A traditional roast dish served on St. Martin's Day:

- one whole goose
- apples
- white wine
- salt, ground caraway seed, fresh rosemary

1 kg  
250 ml

1. Pat dry the thoroughly washed and cleaned bird, salt it, and add caraway seed inside and out.
2. Place quartered apples and a few sprigs of thyme in the opening.

3. Roast the bird, basted with white wine, at a temperature of 120 degrees for around three hours, depending on size.
4. When the meat is soft, finish roasting at a higher temperature (180 degrees) until the skin on the surface turns brown and crisp.
5. Serve the goose with baked apples and fatty gravy.

For the St. Martin's Feast, wine makers prepare special young St. Martin's Wine, which is ever more popular and sought after, from the latest harvest.



Saint Martin's goose



The most popular Czech dish – roast pork with dumplings and cabbage

## LEAVENED BREAD DUMPLINGS

For ten servings:

- coarse flour
- milk
- bread roll cut into cubes
- yeast
- two eggs
- salt and a little sugar

900 g  
400 ml  
250 g  
50 g

perforated with a fork or skewer, so that the warm dough does not harden.

4. Regular circles are cut from the loaf with a knife or thread, and these are then served with a dish.

## STEWED SAUERKRAUT

This recipe makes ten servings:

- white sauerkraut
- onion
- rendered lard or oil
- fine flour
- coarse sugar
- salt, caraway seeds, water

1 500 g  
200 g  
100 g  
50 g  
150 g

1. Add two pinches of sugar, salt, yeast, and one third of the flour to warm milk. Stir thoroughly and allow to rise.

2. After the yeast rises, add the eggs and remaining flour and knead into smooth, not sticky, dough, into which you will add, and work into, the chopped bread roll. Then allow the dough to rise. Later knead it, cut into equal parts and from those parts roll elongated dumpling rolls.

3. After they rise, boil in salted water for 15–20 minutes. During cooking turn several times. After removing the cooked dumplings from the water, they must be immediately

1. Cut the sauerkraut into shorter pieces, add a little water, some caraway seeds, and stew. Occasionally stir from the bottom.

2. Brown finely chopped onions in lard or oil. When it starts to brown, sprinkle with flour, sauté for a short while and then remove from the heat. Use this to thicken the stewed cabbage. Season everything with sugar, salt and vinegar.

popular Czech dish, known by its folk name “vepřo-knedlo-zelo”, and it consists of pork roast au naturel with salt, caraway seeds and garlic and basted with strong salted drippings. Understandably, the roast pork is served with our traditional Czech dumplings. These can be potato dumplings or dumplings made from leavened dough with cubes of bread. They are always cut into circles. All this is accompanied by stewed sauerkraut or sweet cabbage with a sweet and sour taste and with browned onions. In this chapter I offer you a recipe for fat pork offcuts, which is another way of making roast pork, and recipes for stewed cabbage and bread dumplings.

When you finally taste our leavened bread dumplings, you'll understand why we prepare so many sauces and gravies with our meats. I must point out that in order to properly prepare these dumplings you will need our coarse flour.

There are many recipes for preparing sauerkraut. For example, here in southern Bohemia, we do not thicken cabbage with flour, and we cook it au naturel, without sugar. Elsewhere, for example in Moravia, they thicken it more, and what you get on your plate resembles a gravy.

**Cakes and kolaches** – Leavened dough is the dough that we most often use to bake everyday and wedding kolaches, or koláčky. A recipe for them can be found below. Kolaches are often prepared with seasonal fruit, such as apricot, blueberry, or plum. Round, pressed kolaches are generally prepared with plum jam, curd cheese or poppy seeds, with raisins and almond fillings. These fillings are combined in various ways and are variously decorated.



Shrovetide pastries



Classic Czech plum sweetbreads

## CZECH CAKES

Onto one baking pan and into the oven:

• fine flour	800 g
• coarse flour	400 g
• three eggs	
• milk	500 g
• yeast	40 g
• sugar	200 g
• vanilla sugar	25 g
• butter or oil or grease	200 g
• oil	150 g
• lemon peel from one lemon	
• salt	20 g
• poppy seed, curd cheese and plum jam filling	ca. 800 g

1. Warm the milk and add sugar, yeast, coarse flour and salt. Sprinkle with the fine flour and cover and allow to rise in the pot.

2. Pour the leavened dough onto soaked flour, add eggs, lemon peel, vanilla sugar and melted butter. Thoroughly mix everything and immediately knead into non-sticky dough. Then allow this to rise in a warm place.

3. Mix the risen dough, stiffen it, and roll out on a rolling board with a rolling pin. During this it is necessary to sprinkle it with flour. Then cut it into ca. 4 x 4 cm squares, put the filling in their centres and then wrap them well and place them on a pan greased with oil or lard. The cakes will thus grease themselves.

4. After rising, bake them in an oven set on medium until they redden.

5. Tip out the cooled cakes onto the rolling board and sprinkle with powdered sugar.



*Christmas Market on Prague's Old Town Square*

## DURING CHRISTMAS

### **Gingersnaps (recipe from 1826)**

*On a rolling board, measure out 12 tablespoons each of sifted sugar and sifted flour, two tablespoons of crushed ginger and nine egg yolks. Mix into the dough and roll out into a thin sheet. Cut out the gingersnaps with a cookie cutter and place them on a baking sheet lined with baking paper. Brush with egg white, sprinkle with sifted sugar and bake to golden brown. Remove from paper and store.*

**M. D. Rettigová**

Come, let's take a walk outside in the frosty air, and I will tell you something about our Christmas customs. Our Christmas starts on Christmas Eve (December 24). On that day we should eat only meatless dishes and, only in the evening, during the festive dinner, we eat fish. Many families revere this Christian tradition. Our primary holiday, however, occurs in the evening. The cornerstones of a Czech Christmas Eve banquet are fish soup followed by fried fish with potato salad. The evening culminates

with the handing out of Christmas presents. These, according to tradition, were put under the decorated Christmas tree by the infant Jesus, the newborn son of God. The next two days are also holidays, but most people indulge in peace and quiet until New Year's Eve, the last day of the old year. The quiet and peaceful times of Christmas thus turn into the wild celebrations of New Year's Eve festivities, when we celebrate the coming of the new calendar year. On New Year's Day (January 1), some of us



*A Christmas custom – candles in walnut shells*

abide by tradition and have lentils and smoked meat for lunch; others enjoy roast poultry, even though old traditions say that luck will fly away from those who eat poultry on New Year's Day.

Of course, we have many other customs, but we'll focus on customary dishes. So at least in this manner, take a deep breath, enjoy, and savour the aroma of our Christmas cuisine.

**Christmas sweets** – It is a custom in the Czech home to prepare many kinds of teacakes for Christmas. These small cut-out shapes from Linzer dough, nut, coconut and cocoa dough have jam and buttery cream sandwiched between them and are decorated with sugar and chocolate sauces.

**Gingerbread** – Making gingerbread has a long and rich history in my homeland. The most famous gingerbread is from the town of Pardubice, but on Christmas, most families prepare a small gingerbread cake according to various family recipes. The special spices added and honey sweetening



*A nativity scene made from gingerbread*

make them especially aromatic, and they are decorated with egg white and sugar ornaments. The gingerbread's attributes make it a typical material used for building Christmas nativity scenes. This idyllic rendering of the moment after the birth of Jesus Christ at the edge of Bethlehem decorates many of our houses and most cathedrals and churches.



*Linzer cookies are one of the most popular types of Christmas cookies*



*Fried carp with potato salad – one of the Czech symbols of Christmas*

**Fried carp** – This is the most frequent way fish is prepared in Czech cuisine, and most of us cannot imagine Christmas without it. In essence, it's prepared the same way as a pork schnitzel. Salted sections of carp are first coated in fine flour and then dipped into salted beaten eggs, then finally coated in white breadcrumbs. Individual servings are then deep-fried in hot oil in a frying pan. Fried carp is most often served with potato salad, the precise recipe for which can be found in chapter eight (page 46).

**Roast poultry** – There are still many other interesting dishes in our gastronomy that deserve to be mentioned in this booklet. Many of my fellow citizens would not forgive me if I left out roast poultry, which was and still is a festive delicacy prepared in our kitchens. This is why I offer you a recipe for roast duck with stuffing which you can also use to

prepare roast chicken, goose or turkey in the same way, according to your taste. The stuffings for poultry and roast meat are usually made from white bread rolls and eggs, and sometimes with almonds, nutmeg flowers, and herbs.



**Did you know that...**

*In addition to fried carp, black **Christmas groats** are another traditional holiday dish. The dish takes its name from the colour imparted by the wild mushrooms.*

## CHRISTMAS "VÁNOČKA"

.....  
This is certainly the most traditional sweet on the Christmas traditional sweet dish on.

- medium flour 500 g
- granulated sugar 70 g
- butter 150 g
- yeast 50 g
- four egg yolks and eggs for coating
- milk 200 ml
- a package of vanilla sugar
- raisins and almonds 200 g
- lemon peel from one lemon and salt

1. Mix the yeast, salt, part of the sugar and a little flour in warm milk then cover it all and let it come to a boil.
2. Melt the butter in a shallow saucepan and mix it with the remaining sugar and yolks. Afterwards make a dough from all this raw material. Thoroughly knead it so that it is smooth, pliable and does not stick to the walls of the kneading dish. Then cover the dough with a dishcloth and leave it to rise.
3. Knead the risen dough and divide it into equal parts. Roll out long strings and plaid them like braids or pig tails. Brush the Christmas cake with egg, allow it to rise and bake it at 180 degrees for around 40 minutes.



The Christmas sweetbread "vánočka"



Roast duck

## ROAST DUCK WITH STUFFING

.....  
For four to six servings:

- one duck
- salt, caraway seeds and water

The stuffing:

- roll or baguette 3–4 pcs
- three eggs
- bacon 100 g
- onion 50 g
- fine flour 30 g
- milk or cream 0.1 l
- broth 0.5 l
- salt, pepper, garlic, marjoram

1. Stuff the cleaned and dried duck with stuffing. Sew or skewer shut the opening, thoroughly salt, sprinkle with caraway seeds and bake covered.

2. The stuffing is prepared by cutting the roll into pieces, soaking the pieces in a little bit of milk or cream and binding the mix with beaten eggs, roast bacon, browned onions, and garlic. If needed, sprinkle with flour. Season with marjoram and pepper, if necessary salt, and garnish with chopped parsley tops.

3. The duck must be roasted slowly. During roasting, pierce the skin in several places to allow the duck fat to run out. Just before the duck is finished roasting, roast uncovered to make the skin brown and crispy.

4. Drain the excess fat from the drippings and prepare a sauce for the servings of roast duck by taking the red-brown drippings mix, pour in the strong broth, and allow to boil. Definitely scrape off the baked on bits on the side of the baking pan into the sauce to cook.



# Regional specialties and ingredients of Czech gastronomy



1. Spa wafers
2. Niva cheese
3. Třeboň carp
4. Znojmo cucumbers
5. Olomouc tvarůžky
6. Pardubice gingerbread
7. Hořice tubes
8. Prague ham
9. Ostrava kielbasa
10. Wallachian frgal tart
11. Štramberk Ears
12. Becherovka
13. Slivovice
14. Žatec hops
15. Nošovice sauerkraut
16. Vřesetář onion
17. Litomyšl Vacek trout
18. Hlinec mead
19. Malín horseradish
20. Ivančice Asparagus



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