

Potato Soup

Potato soup has significant position between soups in Czech cuisine. It's prepared in various ways according to region or family recipes.

Ingredients

- 500g of potatoes
- 2 onions
- 2 carrots
- 1 celery
- 1 parsley root
- parsley sprig
- mushrooms (optional)
- 2 spoons of flour
- marjoram
- 2 cloves of garlic
- bouillon cube
- salt, pepper
- oil

Directions

1. In large pot saute chopped onion in oil and add flour and stir until it has golden color.
2. Pour 1,5l of water stir and bring to boiling point.
3. Add cutted vegetables, potatoes and mushrooms and boil slowly until everything is tender.
4. Add bouillon cube and season with salt, pepper, garlic, marjoram and parsley sprig. Allspice and bay-leaf could be used as well.

5. Let cook for another few minutes and serve with bread.

Confectionery and Czech Tradition



Although the Czech lands do not have very rich **tradition in confectionery**, not as much as in bakery, it provides a range variety of adopted and modified delicacies which will satisfy everyone who loves sweets.

Origins of Czech confectionery

One of the first Czech mentions of sweets manufacture and mongering is speaking about producers of **gingerbread and sweets** for which they used honey, sugar and flour and then they sold their confectionery, a contemporary parallel to hard candy, in the streets. A similar range of sweets was also sold in apothecaries. The first confectioner mentioned in writing is most likely Mates who was the first street seller in 16th century in Prague. Making of confectionery was very popular in the times of Rudolf II (1576 – 1611) when, following the French trends, people made pastry creations such as peacocks, flowers baskets and other decorative candy. It was not earlier than in the 17th century when cakes, biscuits and other pastry were introduced to the Czech lands. It's also the first time people tasted small candies and sweet jellies.

Development of Czech confectionery to the present

The gingerbread gained large popularity across the country. The Czech word for the Czech version of **gingerbread is 'Perník'** which came from the word 'peprník' which is derived from the Czech word for pepper. Ginger, along with other ingredients like milk, egg, cinnamon, clove, cardamom or mace were added to the recipe later. Another quite **favourite dainty** is marzipan. This sweet candy was spread across Europe from the oriental countries and can have many forms, decorations, shapes and colours. Marzipan figures are present in every Czech sweet shop. The Czechs also like custards and crèmes. In combination with various icings you can find it in cream rolls, cream puffs, walnut rolls with chocolate cream and many other combinations. Fruit in jelly is also quite a common filling in various butter cupcakes with whipped cream.

The best time for **confectionery then comes with Christmas**. The Christmas family top would certainly include the vanilla rolls with butter and walnut, a nice small brittle which almost melts in the mouth. Another kind of sweet you would typically find on the Christmas table **is**



small gingerbreads decorated with lemon icing. These small crunchy sweets take shape of animals and fairy tale characters, or little cottages, Christmas trees, angels and other related motives. The top third is completed by Linzer cookies, which are among many types adopted from the surrounding countries, yet are considered as traditional as most of the others.

Last but not least, it is certainly worth pointing out that Czech have learned, from countries like Austria and France, to

perform art in form of cakes which come really in as many forms as there are. The ingredients are rich and decorations beautiful. In each good café you can get cake as good as in any country with tradition in bakery and confectionery.

So although there is a great share of foreign influence, each sweet tooth will meet its needs in the plentiful range offered in good Czech confectioneries, renowned cafés and restaurants.

Typical Czech Cuisine

Czech cuisine is famous for its varieties of meat, which plays the main role on a plate, and further for the variety of delicious sauces, dumplings and soups.

Local tastes



As in every country, the traditional cuisine of the Czech Republic is given by its location, its climate and crops which find favourable conditions in this area. It is no wonder then that in this moderate climate with large water areas, many rivers and forests the

typical meals consist of field crops, vegetables and game. The **Czech cuisine** is also rich in mushrooms, for the Czechs are quite keen mushroom pickers and the climate in this country, as well as in the most Central Europe, is just perfect for growth of mushrooms. When it comes to desserts then, the Czech land is rich in many kinds of pulp fruit and berries used in

cakes together with curd cheese, walnut and poppy seed. One of the main characteristics of **Czech cuisine** is that the meal usually consists of a soup and a main course. The soup has quite often a form of broth with various ingredients, mostly vegetables according to the season, and pastinas. Thickened soups are also very common and traditional way of preparation. As a thickener the Czechs usually use roux of flour and the most typical ingredients are legumes, sausages or giblets. This kind of soup can be served as a main course with bread. **Traditional soups** include for example the potato soup, bean soup, lentil soup, cabbage soup, mushroom soup, fish soup – which many households hold for their **traditional Christmas soup**, and so on. Another typical feature of **Czech cuisine** is meat, the Czechs hardly pass a day without a proper portion of meat for lunch. **Traditional meat on a Czech table** is pork, poultry, beef, fish. Veal and mutton are rarer in use and in regions with gamekeeping tradition it is not a problem, in certain seasons, to have a nice boar or roe deer noisette. On festive occasions, the Czechs mostly relish roast mallard or goose with cabbage and dumplings. As you can see, the range is pretty wide. The ways of preparation, on the other hand, are to a certain extent alike. It is mostly roasting or frying – as our **favourite schnitzel** or anything covered with breadcrumbs or as the typical and almost legendary **Czech fried cheese**.

Sauces and side dish



What mostly comes with meat is either potatoes, which have rooted in the **Czech cuisine** really deeply since they were brought from the US, or the already mentioned fluffy dumplings. **Czech cookery** is also known for its almost excessive use of various sauces. These sauces are prepared on béchamel-like basis

and the most traditional ones are the dill sauce, tomato sauce, mushroom sauce, paprika sauce and the very favourite cream sauce which is made with root vegetable and goes so well with sirloin, lemon and cranberries. Apart from these quite heavy on flour and cream sauces, there are variants as the side dish to meat. Mostly it is vegetables such as stewed spinach or cabbage.

Snacks and desserts

In pubs you can order also small snacks with your beer. The most traditional and omnipotent ones are a pickled bratwurst called the 'drown man', pickled camembert-like cheese usually with a pepperoni, very often you can also have a garlic toast, and of course that it would not be a proper pub without a proper goulash, although it is originally a Hungarian meal. As a dessert you can have a strudel, which is also borrowed, from Austria this time, but has long ago found its place on Czech

tables. Typical are various kinds of cakes with fruit fillings made of plums, cherries, peaches, apples, blueberries and so on; or with poppy seed, walnut, curd cheese and raisins. In Wallachia you can find more kinds in one big cake called 'frgál' which was included in the European Commission's list of products with protected geographical indication quite recently.

So, as you can easily conclude, **Czech cuisine** is not of the healthiest ones. The amount of meat, cream based sauces, and also smoked meats and sausages, etc., makes it quite heavy but very, very rich in nutrition. Yet it has its tradition and if done really properly and well, it has its unmistakable magic. The traditional meals can be found in almost every restaurant. It is still good, though, to find a better place to taste the real sweet smoothness of cream sauce with a slice of sirloin, good roast duck with red cabbage and bread dumplings, or a really nice mushroom soup.



Prague Goulash

Goulash is originally Hungarian recipe, where under this name represents a soup. Czech goulash is more similar to Hungarian pörkelt. Commonly made from beef or pork, but during hunting season venison goulash is also served. You will definitely find it in every Czech restaurant served with dumplings.

Ingredients

- 700g of cubed beef (shin or leg)

- 500g of onion
- lard or oil
- 4 garlic cloves
- 2 spoons of paprika
- teaspoon of cumin/caraway
- salt, pepper
- marjoram

Directions

1. In large pot saute chopped onion in oil until it has golden color.
2. Add paprika and stir quickly otherwise it gets bitter. Add meat and stir-fry for few minutes.
3. Add salt and pepper and put about 200ml of water. Also add cumin, minced garlic and simmer until meat is tender. Stir from time to time and add more water if necessary.
4. Finally add marjoram.
5. If the sauce is too soupy, you can thicken it with a little flour.
6. Best served with bread dumplings, potato pancakes or bread and onion. Tastes best with cold beer.

Buchteln – Czech Sweet Buns

Buchteln or in Czech “Buchty” are traditional filled sweet buns made mainly by grandmas at countryside. Most popular fillings are plum jam, curd cheese and poppy seeds. Main character in almost every Czech fairytale packed these buns

for his adventurous trip.

Ingredients

- 20g of yeast
- 250ml of milk
- 60g of sugar
- 250g of fine wheat flour
- 250g of soft wheat flour
- 2 yolks
- 60g of butter
- 1 lemon
- 1 spoon of rum
- pinch of salt
- 80g of butter – use to oil the pan
- icing sugar (powdered sugar)

Directions

1. Heat up part of milk and blend in yeast, spoon of sugar and spoon of flour. Let rest for 10 minutes.
2. Whip yolks in remaining milk. Sift flour into bowl, add mixture from point 1, whiped yolks, sugar and butter. Add lemon peel, lemon juice, rum and salt and make into a dough. Cover dough with cloth and let rest for 1 hour in a warm place.
3. Divide dough to small portions with a spoon. Make flat and add filling of your choice (poppy seed, curd cheese, plum jam).
4. Join the corners together into the shape of bun and put it in the butter oiled pan (joined corners down). Butter every bun a bit. Before baking let rest for 20 minutes.
5. Put in preheated oven 180°C (356°F) and bake for about 30 minutes until they have golden color.

6. At last dust with icing sugar. Dobrou chuť!

Traditional Schnitzel

Schnitzel in Czech “Řízek” has its origins in German cuisine, but it has significant position in **Czech cuisine**. Covered in “Trojobal” or breading if you want it’s made from all kinds of meat, but mainly chicken and pork are used. You can easily recognize a Czech on a trip, because he has a few schnitzels in his backpack, which is often a point of mockery.

Ingredients

- Chicken breasts, pork, veal, boar
- flour
- 2-3 eggs
- breadcrumbs
- oil
- salt, pepper

Directions

1. First tenderize the meat a little bit.
2. Salt and pepper the meat. (You can add other spices too.)
3. Take 3 bowls and put flour, whisked eggs and breadcrumbs. (You can pour mouthfull of beer into eggs.)
4. Cover meat in flour, then eggs and finally breadcrumbs.

5. Fry in preheated oil from both sides for 8-10 minutes (depends on meat and thickness).
6. Serve with potatoes, potato salad or french fries. Garnish with lemon slice and pickles.