

# Traditional Czech Fare

## *Menu*

### Czech Bean Soup

Svickova na smetane: Beef tenderloin, served in a sweet & tangy cream sauce, garnished with sour red currants

### Bun Dumplings

### Sautéed Carrots with Mushrooms

### Sweet & Sour Red Cabbage

### Red Wine or Pilsner Beer

### Bohemian Apple Strudel

Tea with sugar and lemon  
Coffee

## **Czech Bean Soup**

2 cups white navy beans, soaked overnight in water	2 carrots, diced
8 cups beef or chicken broth	1 Tbsp crushed caraway seeds
1 onion, finely chopped	2/3 cup heavy cream
3 cloves garlic, minced	4 slices dark bread, cubed
2 parsnips, diced	2 Tbsps chopped fresh parsley

Drain the beans and place them in a large stock pot. Cover the beans with broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and partially cover the pot with a lid. Simmer the beans until tender, about 90 minutes. Mash the beans well, using a food processor, if available.

While soup is simmering, prepare croutons by frying bread cubes in butter and parsley until crispy. Drain on paper towels.

Fry the onion and garlic in 2 Tablespoons butter until almost golden. Add the parsnips and carrots and fry them 2 to 3 minutes. Add the vegetables to the soup and simmer 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper and caraway seeds to the soup. Blend about 1/2 cup cream into the hot soup. Take the soup off of the heat and mix in the remainder of the cream. Serve the soup with croutons.

## **Svickova-** (Marinated Beef with Cream Sauce)

Serves 8

3-4 lb. sirloin or tenderloin roast  
1 strip of bacon, cut into thin strips

### *Marinade:*

2 cups water	4 whole allspice
1 cup red wine vinegar	1 teaspoon Thyme; dried
3 carrots, cut up	5 whole pepper corns
2 stalks celery, cut up	1 bay leaf
1 large onion, chopped	

### *Sauce:*

4 tablespoons flour  
1 pint sour cream  
1 1/2 cups strained cooking juices  
1 cup beef broth

*Garnishes:*

fresh sour red currants or prepared cranberry relish  
lemon slices

Slice 1/2" deep slits into the beef with a sharp pointed knife and stuff bacon pieces into the slits. Tie meat into a bundle with string and place it into a large ceramic or glass bowl. Combine ingredients for marinade; bring marinade to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes; cool marinade to room temperature. Pour cooled marinade over meat and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 24 hours, turning meat occasionally.

Place roast and marinade into a roasting pan. Roast at 350° F. about 2 hours or until meat reaches an internal temperature of 140° F (medium). Remove the roast and place on a cutting board to cool. Strain cooking juices and save for making the sauce.

For thin slices (as Czechs do) cool the meat first, then slice when it is cold. Slices are warmed up in Svickova sauce before serving. The meat can be roasted one day before serving, sliced while it is cold and brought to room temperature before adding the warm sauce to cover the meat.

Just before serving, prepare the sauce by whisking the flour and sour cream together in a saucepan until smooth. Place saucepan over medium heat and slowly add strained cooking juices and broth. Stir constantly for 5 minutes or until sauce thickens. **Do not boil sauce.**

**Houskove Knedliky** — **Bohemian style** (Bun-dumplings)

1 pound farina (or flour)	1 tablespoon salt
2 cups lukewarm water	5 large stale buns or white bread
1 scant cup of milk	
2 large or 3 small eggs	

First, cut stale buns or bread into small croutons. If bread is fresh, toast or fry croutons until crisp. Mix water, milk, eggs, and salt together. Stir in farina, adding it until the dough is smooth and makes bubbles and does not stick to the bowl. Mix in croutons. Divide the dough into 4 parts, form oblong ball dumplings. Let dough set for about 30 minutes. Place dumplings into salty, boiling water, and cook about 25 minutes. Cut with string or thread into slices. Serve 4 pieces per serving.

**Mrkev Dušená** (Sautéed Carrots with Mushrooms) Serves 4 - 6

3 cups sliced carrots  
1 cup water  
butter, approximately 1/2 cup  
salt  
1/2 teaspoon sugar  
3 tablespoons flour  
1 cup milk  
juice of 1/2 lemon  
1 tablespoon minced parsley or chives

Cook the carrots in water with 1/4 cup butter, salt and sugar until tender, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile clean the mushrooms sauté them in 3 to 4 tablespoons butter.

Whisk the flour and milk together and add to the carrots when they have become tender. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add lemon juice, mushrooms and parsley or chives.

**Ěrvené zelí** (Sweet and Sour Red Cabbage) Serves 4 - 6

1 medium head red cabbage, cored  
1 onion, chopped  
1 tablespoon oil or bacon grease  
1 cup water or chicken broth  
dash salt  
3 tablespoons cider vinegar  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
1 tablespoon flour (instant, Wondra, if available)

Shred the cabbage into strips about 1/4" by 1 or 2 inches.

Heat oil in medium sized pot; cook onion until soft. Add cabbage, water, and salt; cover and simmer on very low heat about 30-40 minutes until limp but not mushy. [There should be very little water left at this point. If there's more than a few tablespoons present, drain most of it off, either reserving it for soup or discarding it.]

Finish by stirring in vinegar and sugar. Taste test to see if it needs more salt/sugar/vinegar. Sprinkle flour across cabbage while quickly blending to avoid lumping. Turn up heat and cook, stirring, until thickened.

## **Bohemian Apple Strudel**

¼ cup milk  
¼ cup butter  
1 egg  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1¼ to 1½ cups flour

2 cups thinly sliced baking apples  
½ cup raisins or currants, soaked in warm water or liqueur of choice  
¼ cup sugar  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ cup melted butter  
1¼ cups coconut  
2 cups toasted nuts

1/2 cup whipping cream

Warm milk and butter together and beat in the egg and salt using a fork. Add enough flour to make a dough. Place the dough onto a floured board and knead it for 5 minutes, folding dough over on itself constantly. Mold into a ball and cover with a hot skillet for about 10 minutes while preparing apples.

Mix apples, sugar, nuts, raisins or currants, cinnamon, butter, coconut and nuts. On very lightly floured cloth, about 24" x 24", roll out dough as thinly as possible with a rolling pin, so that it is thin enough to see through, or about 16" x 22". Cut end edges evenly and use that dough to patch any tears in the rolled out dough.

Place the fruit mixture about 2 inches from the long side of the dough. Take hold of the cloth at the two corners and lift it and roll the strudel tightly over the fruit, as you would a jelly roll. Place the seam side down on a buttered baking sheet that has sides at least ½" high.

Bake strudel about 30 minutes at 350° F. Pour half a cup of thick cream over the strudel; then finish baking the strudel for 30 additional minutes.

*"Dobrou chut!" ... Enjoy!*