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# Czech Republic: The Heart of Europe

## Teaching Guide

**Introduction:** The Czech Republic is one of the newest nations in the world, yet it has an ancient and varied history. Its location in the center of Europe made it a cross roads for many cultures. Its history spans the best and worst of times.

### Activity: Matching Game

Cut apart the matching game cards and distribute them randomly among the participants, so that each have about the same amount. There are 60 cards, so if your group has 10 people, give six to each person. For 20 people, each person would get three.

Instruct the participants to find the person with the match to their card. Encourage those who find a match quickly to help others find their matches. When all the cards have been matched up you can briefly review the sets of questions and answers to see if the correct matches were made.

### Optional: English Lesson

If you have the opportunity to borrow a laptop computer with an LCD projector (local extension faculty are the most likely source), you can download the 6-minute video "English Lesson" from the home page of [www.czechtourism.com](http://www.czechtourism.com). Find it in the right hand column, "What's New". Warning: it is a very large file and will take time to download off the web, even with a high speed Internet connection.

### History: Timeline

Review the timeline with the group, and highlight portions that you find interesting.

## **The Czech Language**

Czech is a Western Slavonic language spoken by about 12 million people in the Czech Republic. There are also many people of Czech origin in other countries, particularly the USA. Czech is closely related to Slovak, Polish and Serbian.

Czech literature started to appear in the 13th century. The first printed book in Czech, the story of the Trojan War, was published at Plzeň (Pilsen) in 1468. After many years of Austrian rule, during which German was the main language of literature and government, there was a revival of Czech literature at the end of the 18th century.

The language can be challenging to learn, with the use of diacritical marks that change the pronunciation of the letters, and nouns and adjectives that change depending on their usage in a sentence.

***Basic Greetings in Czech*** (see if your group can learn these!)

- Dobrý den (Doh-bree DEN)- Good day
- Dobré ráno (Doh-bray RAH-noh)- Good morning
- Dobrý večer (Doh-bree VEH-CHAIR)- Good evening
- Dobrou noc – (Doh-bro NOHTZ) Good night
- Ahoj/Čau – (A-hoy, CHOW) Hello!
- Děkuji (DYEH-koo-yih)- Thank you
- Jak se máš? (Yuk-seh-MAHSH) - How are you? (literally, "how do you have yourself?")
- Mám se dobře (Mam-seh DOH-bzheh) - I'm fine (literally, "I have myself well")

## **Czech Idioms and Their English Counterparts**

Review and discuss the handout.

## **Czech Christmas Customs and Superstitions**

Review and discuss the handout.

### **Activity: Names and Name days**

The Czechs have a unique custom, that of name days or Svátky (SVAATH-kee). Each person celebrates this special day in addition to his or her birthday. The custom originated with Catholic saints' days, but it has become secular, and is deeply ingrained in the Czech culture. Czech parents who want to give their newborn child an unusual name that does not have a name day designated, has to ask for special permission from the government.

Divide the participants into small groups of about 6 people. Provide the each group with a copy of these three lists: English and Czech Name Equivalents, Czech Diminutive Names and the Czech Name Days-Alphabetical List. Working in small groups, the participants should find the equivalent of their name in Czech (if none is found, they can use their middle name, or just pick a name they like), see if their Czech name has a diminutive version (very common in the Czech Republic), and then figure out the date of their name day or svátky. Ask each person to share their name and name day with the group.

On the Czech person's name day, they are treated to a small gift like flowers or chocolate. Flower for the living are only given in odd numbers. Even numbered bouquets are only for funerals.

Czech surnames are different for males and females. The suffix "-ova" is attached to the end of the female's surname. For example, the Holec family's father and son would have the surname Holec. The wife and daughter's surname changes to Holcova. Many grave markers in the Czech Republic list the family name, so since family is a feminine word, Rodina, the surname is feminine as well.

### **Music**

According to a popular Czech phrase, every Czech is a musician. From classical composers like Dvorák and Smetana to polkas, folk music and rock and roll, Czechs value their music.

### **Czech Film Industry**

The Czech movie industry, already influenced by Hollywood, flourished after World War I. The golden age of Czechoslovak film took place in the 1960s. The top directors of the time included Miloš Forman, Jiří Menzel, Ján Kadar, and Elmar Klos. *The Shop on Main Street (Obchod na korze, 1965)* and *Closely Watched Trains (Ostře sledované vlaky, 1966)* both won Oscars



for Best Foreign Language Film. The Soviet invasion in August 1968 brought the era to an end. The 1990s saw the rise of a new generation of Czech film makers. Svěrák's Elementary School (*Obecná škola*, 1991) was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, and his movie *Kolya* (*Kolja*, 1996) won it. Hřebejk's *Divided We Fall* (*Musíme si pomáhat*, 2000) also received an Oscar nomination. Many of these films are available (with English subtitles) on DVD through online stores and subscription rental companies such as Netflix.

Foreign film studios, including those from the USA, discovered the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic became an attractive location for foreign filmmakers thanks to its historical beauty and well preserved architecture that was not damaged in the world wars. Examples of films with footage shot in the Czech Republic include *Yentl*, *Shanghai Knights*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Les Miserable*, *Mission: Impossible*, and *Amadeus*.

### **Czech Food**

Czech cuisine can be best described as heavy on the meat and potatoes and light on the fruits and vegetables. Vegetarian restaurants are nonexistent in the villages and hard to find in the cities. Restaurant menus feature items like "hunter's stew" which contains pork, beef, chicken and bacon! Pork is the most popular meat, and is often accompanied by potato dumplings (knedliky --- KNED-lee-kee) and sauerkraut (zely - - - ZEH-lee). Side salads are usually a sweet and sour chopped or grated vegetable like cabbage, carrots or beets, served in a small portion.

### **Optional: Photos**

If you have the opportunity to borrow a laptop computer with an LCD projector (local extension faculty are the most likely source), you can show the Power Point photos of the Czech Republic. Because it is expensive equipment, you may want to ask the Extension staff to run the equipment for you. To receive a copy of the CD with the Power Point presentations, contact Debra Minar Driscoll, [debra.driscoll@oregonstate.edu](mailto:debra.driscoll@oregonstate.edu) or 503-623-8395.

### **Resources**

[www.czechtourism.com](http://www.czechtourism.com)

[www.czech.cz](http://www.czech.cz)

[www.myczechrepublic.com](http://www.myczechrepublic.com)



<p><b>What does the suffix “-ova” mean at the end of a Czech person’s name?</b></p>	<p><b>That person is a female</b></p>
<p><b>You have been invited to a Czech home. What is the first thing you should do when you enter the house?</b></p>	<p><b>Remove your shoes. There will probably be slippers at the entry for you to put on.</b></p>
<p><b>What happens in Czech villages on May 1st?</b></p>	<p><b>A fir tree and wreath are decorated and put on tall poles in the village center. Young men stay up late to guard it from stealing neighbors.</b></p>
<p><b>What part of Czech culture was nearly lost during the Hapsburg rule from the mid-1500s to the mid-1800s?</b></p>	<p><b>The Czech language</b></p>
<p><b>Besides birthdays, what other special day does each Czech citizen celebrate?</b></p>	<p><b>Their Svátek or name day</b></p>
<p><b>What food is always served on Christmas Eve?</b></p>	<p><b>Carp (a fish)</b></p>

<b>Nebraska, Texas, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Illinois</b>	<b>Which states received the most Czech immigrants?</b>
<b>Who are the two most famous Czech music composers?</b>	<b>Antonin Dvořak and Bedřich Smetana</b>
<b>Which 4 countries share a border with the Czech Republic?</b>	<b>Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia</b>
<b>What is the population of the Czech Republic?</b>	<b>10.2 million</b>
<b>How many tourists visited the Czech Republic in 2005?</b>	<b>over 6 million</b>
<b>What ingredient is crucial to making authentic Czech dumplings?</b>	<b>Cooked potatoes</b>

<p><b>What do Czech families often do when they go to the woods on a weekend?</b></p>	<p><b>Pick mushrooms</b></p>
<p><b>What behavior will earn you looks of disapproval in a Czech Republic restaurant?</b></p>	<p><b>Loud laughter, being boisterous</b></p>
<p><b>What behavior could possibly result in being asked to leave certain Czech pubs?</b></p>	<p><b>Not drinking beer</b></p>
<p><b>What is a vowel-less Czech tongue twister that means “stick a finger through your neck”?</b></p>	<p><b>strč prst skrz krk</b></p>
<p><b>What is the Czech currency called?</b></p>	<p><b>The Czech Crown or Koruna, to be replaced by the Euro in the next 5 years</b></p>
<p><b>What colors are the flag of the Czech Republic?</b></p>	<p><b>red, white and blue</b></p>
<p><b>What animal is on the state emblem of the Czech Republic?</b></p>	<p><b>The Bohemian lion, a silver lion with a split tail and a gold crown and golden claws</b></p>



<p><b>Where does the name “Bohemia” come from?</b></p>	<p><b>The ancient Celtic tribe called the “Boii”, former inhabitants of the western Czech Republic</b></p>
<p><b>Who brought Christianity to the Czech lands?</b></p>	<p><b>Saints Cyril and Methodius</b></p>
<p><b>What was the “Prague Spring”?</b></p>	<p><b>1976-68 reform movement that gave “communism a human face”, led by Alexander Dubcek</b></p>
<p><b>What was the “Velvet Revolution”?</b></p>	<p><b>The 1989 peaceful turnover of power from the communist government</b></p>
<p><b>What was the “Velvet Divorce”?</b></p>	<p><b>The 1993 separation of the Czech and Slovak Federated Republic into the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic</b></p>
<p><b>In what year was the nation of Czechoslovakia born?</b></p>	<p><b>1918, at the end of World War I</b></p>

<b>Who was the first president of the Czech Republic?</b>	<b>playwright Vaclav Havel</b>
<b>Who are the Roma?</b>	<b>A minority group of 200,000 in the Czech Republic, also known as Gypsies</b>
<b>Why do adults and teens dress up as angels, devils and bishops during one evening in early December?</b>	<b>They are portraying the characters of Mikulaše, the feast of St. Nicholas</b>
<b>Who is a famous tennis player from the Czech Republic?</b>	<b>Martina Navratilova</b>
<b>Which Czech-born entrepreneur, Olympic athlete and fashion model was married to one of the riches men in the USA?</b>	<b>Ivana Marie Zelničova Trump</b>

### English and Czech Name Equivalents

Female	Male
Adele - Adéla	Adam - Adam
Adrienne - Adriana	Adolph - Adolf
Agatha - Agáta	Alan - Alan
Agnes - Anežka	Albert - Albert
Alexandra - Alexandra	Alex - Alexej
Alice, Alicia - Alice	Alexander - Alexandr
Amelia - Amálie	Alfred - Alfred
Anastasia - Anastázie	Alphonse - Alfons
Andrea - Andrea	Ambrose - Ambrož
Anette - Aneta	Amos - Ámos
Angela - Anďela	Andrew - Ondřej
Angelica - Angelika	Anthony - Antonín
Anita - Anita	Arthur - Artur
Anne, Ann, Anna - Anna	Bartholomew - Bartoloměj
Antonia - Antonie	Benedict - Benedikt
Barbara - Barbora	Bernard - Bernard
Beatrice - Beáta	Bill - Vilém
Bernice - Bronislava	Boris - Boris
Bertha - Berta	Carl - Karel
Betty - Běta, Bětuše	Charles - Karel
Blanche - Blanka	Christopher - Kryštof
Bridget, Brigitte - Brigita	Conrad - Konrád
Camilla - Kamila	Daniel - Daniel
Carol - Karla	David - David
Caroline - Karolína	Dennis - Denis
Catherine - Kateřina	Dominic - Dominik
Cecilia - Cecílie	Edgar - Edgar
Charlotte - Šarlota, Karla	Edmund - Edmund
Christina, Christine - Kristýna	Edward - Eduard
Claire, Clara - Klára	Elijah - Eliáš
Claudia - Klauďie	Eric - Erik
Dana - Dana	Ernest - Arnošt
Danielle - Daniela	Eugene - Evžen
Denise - Denisa	Felix - Felix
Diane, Dianne, Diana - Diana	Ferdinand - Ferdinand
Dominique - Dominika	Francis, Frank - František
Dorothy - Dorota	Frederick - Bedřich
Edith - Edita, Dita	Gabriel - Gabriel
Elena - Elena	George - Jiří
Elisa, Elise - Eliška	Gregory - Řehoř
Elizabeth, Elisabeth - Alžběta	Gus - Gustav
Emma - Ema	Henry - Jindřich
Emily - Emílie	Hugh, Hugo - Hugo
Erica - Erika	Ian - Jan



Esther - Ester  
Eve, Eva - Eva  
Evelyn - Evelína  
Faith - Věra  
Florence - Květa, Květuše  
Frances, Francine - Františka  
Gabrielle, Gabriella - Gabriela  
Georgia - Jiřina  
Gertrude - Gertruda  
Giselle - Gizela  
Hannah, Hanna - Hana  
Helen - Helena  
Henriette - Jindřiška  
Hope - Naděžda  
Irene - Irena  
Isabella, Isabelle, Isabel - Izabela  
Jane - Jana  
Janet, Jeanette - Žaneta  
Joanne, Joanna, Johanna - Johana  
Josephine - Josefina  
Judith, Judy - Judita, Jitka  
Julia, Julie - Julie  
Justine - Justýna  
Karen - Karina  
Katherine, Kathryn - Kateřina  
Laura, Lauren - Laura  
Lena - Lenka  
Lilianne, Lillian - Liliana  
Linda - Linda  
Lucy - Lucie  
Lydia - Lýdie  
Madeline, Magdalene - Magdaléna  
Margaret - Markéta  
Marianne - Mariana  
Mary, Marie, Maria, Mariah - Marie  
Martha - Marta  
Matilda - Matylda  
Melanie - Melánie  
Michelle, Michaela - Michaela  
Mira, Myra - Miroslava  
Miriam, Mimi - Miriam  
Monica - Monika  
Natalie - Natálie  
Nelly - Nela  
Nicole - Nikola  
Nina - Nina

Isaac - Izák  
Ivan - Ivan  
Jack - Jan  
Jacob - Jakub  
James - Jakub  
Jeremy, Jeremiah - Jeremiáš  
Jerome - Jeroným  
John - Jan, Johan, Ivan  
Jonah, Jonas - Jonáš  
Jonathan - Jonatán  
Joseph - Josef  
Julian - Julián  
Julius - Julius  
Karl - Karel  
Lawrence, Laurence - Vavřinec  
Leo - Leo, Leoš  
Leonard - Leonard  
Leopold - Leopold  
Lewis, Louis, Luis - Luděk, Ludvík  
Luke, Lucas - Lukáš  
Mark - Marek  
Martin - Martin  
Matthew - Matěj, Matouš  
Maximillian - Maxmilián, Maxim  
Michael - Michal  
Moses - Mojžiš  
Nicholas - Mikuláš, Mikoláš  
Oliver - Oliver  
Oscar - Oskar  
Oswald - Osvald  
Otto - Otto, Oto  
Paul - Pavel  
Patrick - Patrik  
Peter - Petr  
Philip - Filip  
Raphael - Rafael  
Richard - Richard  
Robert - Robert  
Rudolph - Rudolf  
Samuel - Samuel  
Sidney - Zdeněk  
Sigmund - Zikmund  
Simon - Šimon  
Stanley - Stanislav  
Stephen, Steven - Štěpán, Štefan  
Sylvester - Silvestr

Nora - Nora  
Olivia - Olívie  
Paula - Pavla  
Pauline, Paulina - Pavlína  
Rebecca - Rebeka  
Regina - Regina  
Renée - Renata  
Rose, Rosa - Růžena  
Ruth - Rút  
Sabina, Sabine - Sabina  
Sabrina - Sabrina  
Sandra - Sandra  
Sara, Sarah - Sára  
Sidney - Zdeňka  
Simone - Simona  
Sonia - Soňa  
Sophie, Sophia - Sofie, Žofie  
Stella - Stela  
Stephanie - Štěpánka  
Susan, Suzanne, Susanna - Zuzana  
Sylvia - Silvie, Sylvie  
Tanya, Tatiana - Táňa, Ta'ána  
Theresa, Therese, Teresa, Terry - Tereza  
Ursula - Uršula  
Valerie - Valérie  
Veronica - Veronika  
Victoria - Viktorie  
Violet - Viola  
Wanda - Vanda  
Wendy - Vendula  
Xenia - Xénie  
Yolanda - Jolana  
Yvonne - Ivona

Theodore - Teodor  
Thomas - Tomáš  
Tobias - Tobiáš  
Ulrich - Oldřich  
Valentine - Valentýn  
Victor - Viktor  
Vincent - Vincenc  
Walter - Valtr  
William - Vilém  
Xavier - Xaver  
Zachary - Zachariáš

### Czech Diminutive Names

Female	Male
Adéla - Adélka, Ada, Áda	Adam - Adámek, Áda, Ada
Adriana - Adrianka, Ada	Adolf - Adolfek
Agáta - Agátka	Alan - Alánek
Albína - Albínka	Albert - Albertek, Bertík
Alena - Alenka, Ala, Alča, Ája	Alexandr - Saša, Aleš
Alexandra - Saša	Alexej - Aleš, Saša
Alice - Alička, Ali	Alois - Lojza, Lojzík, Lojzek
Alžběta - Běta, Bětka, Bětuška, Bětunka, Alžbětka	Ambrož - Brož, Brožík
Amálie - Amálka, Málinka	Antonín - Tonda, Toník, Toníček, Tonin
Anastázie - Stázka, Stázička, Anka, Anastázka	Arnošt - Arnoštek
Anděla - Andělka	Artur - Arturek
Andrea - Andrejka	Bedřich - Běďa, Běda, Bedříšek
Aneta - Anetka, Anka	Benedikt - Ben
Anna - Anka, Anička, Andulka, Andula, Anča, Aninka, Anina, Anuška	Blahoslav - Slávek, Blažek
Antonie - Tonička, Tonka, Tony	Blažej - Blažek
Apolena - Apolenka	Bohumil - Bohouš
Barbora - Barborka, Bára, Barča, Barunka, Baruška	Bohumír - Bohouš, Bohuš
Beáta - Beátka	Bohuslav - Bohouš, Bohuš
Běla - Bělka, Bělinka	Boleslav - Bolek
Berta - Bertička, Bertinka	Bořek - Bořík, Bořa
Blanka - Blanička	Boris - Borisek
Blažena - Blaža, Blažka, Blaženka	Bořivoj - Bořek, Bořík, Bořa
Bohdana - Bohda, Dana	Břetislav - Břeťa, Břetík, Břetěk
Bohumila - Bohuna, Bohunka, Bohuška	Bronislav - Broněk, Broník
Bohuslava - Bohunka, Bohuška, Slávka	Ctirad - Radek
Božena - Boženka, Božka, Boža	Čeněk - Čenda
Brigita - Brigitka, Brigit	Dalibor - Libor, Dalek
Cecilie - Cecilka, Cilka, Cílinka	Dalimil - Míla
Dagmar - Dáša, Dášenka, Dagmarka	Daniel - Dan, Danek, Danoušek
Dana - Danka, Danuška, Danča, Danička	David - Davídek
Daniela - Danielka, Danka, Dana, Danuška, Danča, Danička	Dušan - Dušánek
Darina - Darinka, Dara, Darka	Eduard - Eda, Edík
Denisa - Deniska, Deni	Emanuel - Eman, Emánek
Diana - Dia, Dianka	Evžen - Evženek, Evža
Dita - Ditka	Ferdinand - Ferda, Ferdík
Dobromila - Dobruška, Míla, Milka	Filip - Filípek, Filda
Dorota - Dorotka, Dorka	František - Franta, Frantík, Fanouš, Fanoušek, Francek, Fráňa
Doubravka - Dobinka	Gabriel - Gábin
Drahomíra - Draha, Drahuška, Mirka	Gustav - Gusta, Gustík
	Havel - Havlík
	Herbert - Bertík, Herbertek
	Hubert - Bertík, Hubertek
	Igor - Igorek



Drahoslava - Draha, Drahuška, Slávka	Ivan - Ivánek, Váňa, Váňuška
Edita - Editka, Dita, Ditka	Ivo - Ivoš
Elena - Ela, Elenka, Lenka, Elka	Jakub - Kuba, Kubík, Kubíček, Jakoubek
Eliška - Ela, Elka	Jan - Honza, Honzík, Honzíček, Jenda,
Emílie - Emilka, Ema, Míla, Milka	Jeník, Jeníček, Jeňa, Janek
Ester - Esterka	Jarmil - Jarek, Jarda
Eva - Evka, Evička, Evulka, Evinka, Evuška	Jaromír - Jarek, Jarda, Jaroušek
Evelína - Eva, Evka, Evelínka	Jaroslav - Jarek, Jarda, Jaroušek, Slávek
Evženie - Evža, Evženka	Jeronym - Jeronýmek
Františka - Fanyňka, Fany, Frantina, Fanka, Fráňa	Jindřich - Jindra, Jindříšek
Gabriela - Gábina, Gábi, Gabi, Gabrielka	Jiří - Jirka, Jiřík, Jiříček, Jíra, Jura, Jiránek, Jiroušek
Gita - Gitka	Jonáš - Jonášek
Gizela - Gizelka	Josef - Pepa, Pepík, Pepíček, Jožka, Joža, Jožánek, Joska
Hana - Hanka, Hanička, Haninka	Julius - Julek
Hedvika - Hedva, Hedvička	Karel - Kája, Karlík, Karlíček, Kájík, Kájínek
Helena - Helenka, Hela	Kryštof - Kryštůfek
Ilonka - Ilonka	Květoslav - Květoš
Irena - Irenka, Irča	Ladislav - Lad'a, Láďa, Ládík, Ládíček, Ladínek
Iva - Ivka, Ivanka, Ivuška	Leopold - Leo
Ivana - Iva, Ivka, Ivanka, Ivuška	Libor - Liborek, Libek
Iveta - Ivetka, Iva, Ivka, Ivuška	Lubomír - Lubík, Luboš, Lubošek, Lubek, Lubor, Luba
Ivona - Ivonka, Iva	Lubor - Lubík, Lubek, Luba
Izabela - Izabelka	Luboš - Lubík, Lubošek, Luba
Jana - Janička, Janinka	Luděk - Luděček, Luďa
Jarmila - Jarka, Jarča, Jaruška, Jarunka	Ludvík - Ludva
Jaroslava - Jarka, Jarča, Jaruška, Jarunka, Slávka	Lukáš - Lukášek, Luki
Jindřiška - Jindra	Lumír - Lumírek
Jiřina - Jiřka, Jiřinka, Jiřa	Marek - Mareček, Mara
Jitka - Jít'a, Jituška	Martin - Martínek
Johana - Johanka, Jana, Hana, Hanka	Matěj - Matýsek, Matoušek
Jolana - Jola, Jolka, Jolanka	Matouš - Matoušek
Judita - Juditka, Jitka, Dita	Maxmilián - Max
Julie - Julka, Julinka, Julča	Michal - Míša, Michálek, Miki
Justýna - Justýnka	Mikuláš - Mikulášek, Miki
Kamila - Kamča, Kamilka	Milan - Milánek, Milda
Karina - Karin, Karča, Karinka	Miloš - Milošek, Míla, Milda
Karolína - Karolínka, Karla, Kája,	Miloslav - Milda, Miloš, Slávek
Karlička, Karča, Kájinka	Miroslav - Mírek, Mireček, Mirda
Kateřina - Katka, Kačenka, Kатуška, Kát'a, Kaťka, Káča, Kačka	Norbert - Bertík
Klára - Klárka, Klárinka	Oldřich - Olda, Oldík, Olin
Kristýna - Kristýnka, Krista, Týna	Oleg - Olin
Květa - Květka, Květuška	

Květoslava - Květa, Květka, Květuška	Ondřej - Ondra, Ondrášek
Lada - Laděnka, Ladka, Laduška	Oskar - Oskárek
Laura - Laurinka	Otakar - Ota, Otík, Otakárek
Lenka - Lenička	Otmar - Ota, Otík
Leona - Leonka, Lea	Oto - Otík
Liběna - Liba, Líba, Liběnka, Libuška	Pavel - Pavlík, Pavlíček
Libuše - Liba, Líba, Libuška	Petr - Peťa, Péťa, Peťka, Petřík, Petříček, Peťulka
Liliana - Liana, Lia	Přemysl - Přemek
Lucie - Lucka, Lucinka	Radek - Radeček, Rád'a, Radoušek
Ludmila - Ludmilka, Lída, Lidka, Lidunka, Liduška, Míla, Milka	Radim - Radimek, Rád'a
Lýdie - Lída, Lidka, Lidunka, Liduška	Radomír - Radek, Radeček, Rád'a, Radoušek, Mírek
Magdaléna - Magda, Magdička	Radoslav - Radek, Radeček, Rád'a, Radoušek, Slávek
Mahulena - Mahulenska, Lenka	Radovan - Radek, Radeček, Rád'a, Radoušek
Marcela - Marcelka	René - Renoušek
Mariana - Maruška, Mária	Richard - Ríša
Marie - Maruška, Mařenka, Majka, Máňa, Mánička, Mária	Robert - Rob, Robertek, Bertík
Marika - Marička	Roman - Románek
Marina - Marinka	Rostislav - Rosťa, Rostík, Rostíček
Markéta - Markétka	Rudolf - Ruda, Rudolfek
Marta - Martička	Řehoř - Řehořek, Hořek
Martina - Martinka	Samuel - Sam
Michaela - Michala, Míša	Slavomír - Slávek, Sláva
Milada - Míla, Miladka, Miluška	Soběslav - Slávek
Milena - Míla, Milenka, Milka	Stanislav - Standa, Staňa, Stáňa, Slávek, Staniček
Miloslava - Míla, Milena, Milka, Slávka	Svatopluk - Svaťa, Svát'a
Miluše - Miluška, Míla	Svatoslav - Svaťa, Svát'a, Slávek
Miriam - Mirka	Šimon - Šimůnek, Šimonek
Míroslava - Mirka	Štefan - Štefa, Štefek
Monika - Monča, Monička	Štěpán - Štěpa, Štěpek, Štěpánek
Naděžda - Naďa, Naděnka, Naďka	Teodor - Teo
Natálie - Natálka	Tomáš - Tom, Tomík, Tomášek, Toman, Tománek
Nela - Nelinka	Václav - Vašek, Vašík, Venda, Venouš, Venoušek, Věna
Nikola - Niki, Nikol, Nikolka	Valdemar - Valda
Oldřiška - Olina, Olinka, Olda	Valentýn - Valentýnek
Olga - Olina, Olinka	Vavřinec - Vavřík, Vavřineček
Otýlie - Otylka	Vendelín - Venda
Pavla - Pavlínka, Pavlička	Viktor - Viki
Pavlna - Pavla, Pavlínka, Pavlička	Vilém - Vilda, Vilímek, Vilémek, Vilík
Petra - Petruška, Peťa	Vincenc - Vincek, Vinca
Radana - Radka, Radanka, Radunka, Raduška	
Radka - Radunka, Raduška, Rád'a	
Radmila - Radka, Raduška, Míla	
Renáta - Renátka, Renatka, Renča	

Romana - Romanka, Romča, Romka, Romi	Vít - Vítek, Víťa
Růžena - Růženka, Růža	Vítězslav - Vítek, Víťa
Sabina - Sabinka	Vladimír - Vlád'a, Vládík, Vládíček,
Sára - Sárinka, Sárka	Vládínek, Vladimírek
Silvie - Silva, Silvinka	Vladislav - Vlád'a, Vládík, Vládíček,
Simona - Simonka, Simča	Vládínek, Slávek
Slavěna - Slávka, Slávinka	Vlastimil - Vlastík, Vlasta
Soňa - Sonička	Vlastislav - Vlastík
Stanislava - Stáňa, Stánička, Slávka	Vojtěch - Vojta, Vojtíšek, Vojtík, Vojtek
Stela - Stelinka	Vratislav - Vráťa
Svatava - Svatka, Svata	Zbyněk - Zbyněček, Zbyňa
Světlana - Světa, Světlanka	Zdeněk - Zdenek, Zdena, Zdenda,
Šárka - Šárinka	Zdeneček
Šarlota - Šarlotka	
Štěpánka - Štěpka, Štěpa	
Tat'ána - Táňa, Tánička	
Tereza - Terezka, Terka, Terinka, Teri,	
Tery	
Vendula - Vendulka, Vendy	
Věra - Věrka, Věruška, Věrunka	
Veronika - Verunka, Verča	
Viktorie - Viktorka, Viki	
Viola - Violka	
Vladěna - Vlad'ka, Vladěnka, Vlád'a	
Vlasta - Vlastička, Vlastinka	
Zdeňka - Zdenka, Zdena, Zdenička,	
Zdeninka	
Zdislava - Slávka	
Zlata - Zlatka, Zlatuška, Zlatinka	
Zora - Zorka, Zorinka	
Zuzana - Zuzka, Zuzanka, Zuzi	
Žaneta - Žanetka	
Žofie - Žofka, Žofinka	



### Czech Name Days- Alphabetical List

Female	Male
Adéla - Sep. 2	Adam - Dec. 24
Adriana - Jun. 26	Adolf - Jun. 17
Agáta - Oct. 14	Alan - Aug. 14
Albína - Dec. 16	Albert - Nov. 21
Alena - Aug. 13	Aleš - Apr. 13
Alexandra - Apr. 21	Alexandr - Feb. 27
Alice - Jan. 15	Alexej - May 3
Alžběta - Nov. 19	Alois - Jun. 21
Amálie - Jul. 10	Ambrož - Dec. 7
Anastázie - Apr. 15	Andrej - Oct. 11
Anděla - Mar. 11	Antonín - Jun. 13
Andrea - Sep. 26	Arnošt - Mar. 30
Aneta - May 17	Artur - Nov. 26
Anežka - Mar. 2	Augustýn - Aug. 28
Anna - Jul. 26	Bartoloměj - Aug. 24
Antonie - Jun. 12	Bedřich - Mar. 1
Apolena - Feb. 9	Benedikt - Nov. 12
Barbora - Dec. 4	Bernard - Aug. 20
Beáta - Oct. 25	Blahoslav - Apr. 30
Běla - Jan. 21	Blažej - Feb. 3
Berta - Sep. 23	Bohdan - Nov. 9
Blanka - Dec. 2	Bohumil - Oct. 3
Blažena - May 10	Bohumír - Nov. 8
Bohdana - Jan. 11	Bohuslav - Aug. 22
Bohumila - Dec. 28	Boleslav - Sep. 6
Bohuslava - Jul. 7	Bonifác - May 14
Božena - Feb. 11	Borek - Jul. 12
Brigita - Oct. 21	Boris - Sep. 5
Cecílie - Nov. 22	Bořivoj - Jul. 30
Dagmar - Dec. 20	Břetislav - Jan. 10
Dana - Dec. 11	Bronislav - Sep. 3
Daniela - Sep. 9	Bruno - Jun. 11
Darina - Sep. 22	Ctibor - May 9
Darja - Apr. 10	Ctirad - Jan. 16
Denisa - Sep. 11	Čeněk - Jul. 19
Diana - Jan. 4	Čestmír - Jan. 8
Dita - Mar. 27	Dalibor - Jun. 4
Dobromila - Feb. 5	Dalimil - Jan. 5
Dorota - Feb. 26	Daniel - Dec. 17
Doubravka - Jan. 19	David - Dec. 30
Drahomíra - Jul. 18	Dobroslav - Jun. 5
Drahoslava - Jul. 9	Dominik - Aug. 4
Edita - Jan. 13	Drahoslav - Jan. 17
Elena - Mar. 16	Dušan - Apr. 9
Eliška - Oct. 5	Eduard - Mar. 18
Ema - Apr. 8	Emanuel - Mar. 26
Emílie - Nov. 24	Emil - May 22
Erika - Apr. 2	Erik - Oct. 26

Ester - Dec. 19  
Eva - Dec. 24  
Evelína - Aug. 29  
Evženie - Apr. 22  
Františka - Mar. 9  
Gabriela - Mar. 8  
Gita - Jun. 10  
Gizela - Feb. 18  
Hana - Aug. 15  
Hedvika - Oct. 17  
Helena - Aug. 18  
Hermína - Apr. 7  
Ida - Mar. 15  
Ilona - Jan. 20  
Ingrid - Jan. 27  
Irena - Apr. 16  
Irma - Sep. 10  
Iva - Dec. 1  
Ivana - Apr. 4  
Iveta - Jun. 7  
Ivona - Mar. 23  
Izabela - Apr. 11  
Jana - May 24  
Jarmila - Feb. 4  
Jaroslava - Jul. 1  
Jindřiška - Sep. 4  
Jiřina - Feb. 15  
Jitka - Dec. 5  
Johana - Aug. 21  
Jolana - Sep. 15  
Judita - Dec. 29  
Julie - Dec. 10  
Justýna - Oct. 7  
Kamila - May 31  
Karina - Jan. 2  
Karolína - Jul. 14  
Kateřina - Nov. 25  
Klára - Aug. 12  
Kristýna - Jul. 24  
Květa - Jun. 20  
Klaudie - May 5  
Květoslava - Dec. 8  
Lada - Aug. 7  
Laura - Jun. 1  
Lenka - Feb. 21  
Leona - Mar. 22  
Liběna - Nov. 6  
Libuše - Jul. 10  
Liliana - Feb. 25  
Linda - Sep. 1  
Ljuba - Feb. 16

Evžen - Nov. 10  
Felix - Nov. 1  
Ferdinand - May 30  
Filip - May 26  
František - Oct. 4  
Gabriel - Mar. 24  
Gustav - Aug. 2  
Hanuš - Oct. 6  
Havel - Oct. 16  
Herbert - Mar. 16  
Herman - Apr. 7  
Hubert - Nov. 3  
Hugo - Apr. 1  
Hynek - Feb. 1  
Ignác - Jul. 31  
Igor - Oct. 1  
Ilja - Jul. 20  
Ivan - Jun. 25  
Ivo - May 19  
Jáchym - Aug. 16  
Jakub - Jul. 25  
Jan - Jun. 24  
Jarmil - Jun. 2  
Jaromír - Sep. 24  
Jaroslav - Apr. 27  
Jeroným - Sep. 30  
Jindřich - Jul. 15  
Jiří - Apr. 24  
Jonáš - Sep. 27  
Josef - Mar. 19  
Julius - Apr. 12  
Kamil - Mar. 3  
Karel - Nov. 4  
Kazimír - Mar. 5  
Klement - Nov. 23  
Kristián - Aug. 5  
Kryštof - Sep. 18  
Květoslav - May 4  
Kvido - Mar. 31  
Ladislav - Jun. 27  
Leopold - Nov. 15  
Leoš - Jun. 19  
Libor - Jul. 23  
Lubomír - Jun. 28  
Lubor - Sep. 13  
Luboš - Jul. 16  
Luděk - Aug. 26  
Ludvík - Aug. 19  
Lukáš - Oct. 18  
Lumír - Feb. 28  
Marcel - Oct. 12

Lucie - Dec. 13  
Ludmila - Sep. 16  
Lýdie - Dec. 14  
Magdaléna - Jul. 22  
Mahulena - Nov. 17  
Marcela - Apr. 20  
Mariana - Sep. 8  
Marie - Sep. 12  
Marika - Jan. 31  
Marina - Oct. 10  
Markéta - Jul. 13  
Marta - Jul. 29  
Martina - Jul. 17  
Matylda - Mar. 14  
Michaela - Oct. 19  
Milada - Feb. 8  
Milena - Jan. 24  
Miloslava - Feb. 17  
Miluše - Aug. 3  
Miriam - Nov. 5  
Miroslava - Apr. 5  
Monika - May 21  
Naděžda - Sep. 17  
Natálie - Dec. 21  
Nataša - May 18  
Nela - Feb. 2  
Nikola - Nov. 20  
Nina - Oct. 24  
Nora - Jul. 8  
Oldřiška - Aug. 6  
Olga - Jul. 11  
Olívie - Oct. 2  
Otýlie - Jan. 28  
Patricie - Jul. 2  
Pavla - Jun. 22  
Pavčina - Aug. 31  
Petra - Aug. 17  
Radana - Dec. 15  
Radka - Sep. 14  
Radmila - Jan. 3  
Regína - Sep. 7  
Renáta - Oct. 13  
Romana - Nov. 18  
Rút - Mar. 14  
Růžena - Mar. 13  
Sabina - Oct. 22  
Sandra - Aug. 23  
Sára - Oct. 9  
Saskie - Nov. 7  
Sáva - Nov. 14  
Silvie - Oct. 29

Marek - Apr. 25  
Marián - Mar. 25  
Martin - Nov. 11  
Matěj - Feb. 24  
Matouš - Sep. 21  
Maxmilián - May 29  
Medard - Jun. 8  
Michal - Sep. 29  
Mikuláš - Dec. 6  
Milan - Jun. 18  
Miloš - Jan. 25  
Miloslav - Dec. 18  
Miroslav - Mar. 6  
Mojmír - Feb. 10  
Norbert - Jun. 6  
Oldřich - Feb. 20  
Oleg - Sep. 20  
Oliver - Oct. 2  
Ondřej - Nov. 30  
Oskar - Aug. 1  
Otakar - Aug. 27  
Otmar - Nov. 16  
Oto - Apr. 26  
Pankrác - May 12  
Patrik - Feb. 19  
Pavel - Jun. 29  
Petr - Feb. 22, Jun. 29  
Pravoslav - Jan. 12  
Prokop - Jul. 4  
Přemysl - May 16  
Radek - Mar. 21  
Radim - Aug. 25  
Radomír - Jul. 3  
Radoslav - May 6  
Radovan - Jan. 14  
René - Nov. 28  
Richard - Apr. 3  
Robert - Apr. 29  
Robin - Jan. 30  
Roland - Jun. 14  
Roman - Aug. 9  
Rostislav - Apr. 19  
Rudolf - Apr. 17  
Řehoř - Mar. 12  
Samuel - Sep. 1  
Servác - May 13  
Silvestr - Dec. 31  
Slavomír - Jan. 22  
Soběslav - Aug. 8  
Stanislav - May 7  
Svatopluk - Feb. 23



Simona - Dec. 12  
Slavěna - Feb. 12  
Soňa - Mar. 28  
Stanislava - Jun. 9  
Stela - Mar. 4  
Svatava - May 11  
Světlana - Mar. 20  
Šárka - Jun. 30  
Šarlota - Oct. 27  
Štěpánka - Oct. 31  
Tamara - Jun. 3  
Taťána - Mar. 29  
Tereza - Oct. 15  
Valérie - Apr. 18  
Vanda - Feb. 6  
Vendula - Apr. 6  
Věra - Oct. 8  
Veronika - Feb. 7  
Viktorie - Mar. 10  
Vilma - Jan. 7  
Viola - May 25  
Vladěna - Aug. 30  
Vlasta - Dec. 23  
Xenie - Nov. 27  
Zdeňka - Jun. 23  
Zdislava - Jan. 29  
Zina - Nov. 29  
Zita - Sep. 19  
Zlata - Sep. 25  
Zoe - Oct. 27  
Zora - Jan. 26  
Zuzana - Aug. 11  
Žaneta - Dec. 27  
Žofie - May 15

Svatoslav - Dec. 3  
Šimon - Dec. 22  
Štefan - Oct. 9  
Štěpán - Dec. 26  
Tadeáš - Oct. 30  
Teodor - Oct. 23  
Tibor - Nov. 13  
Tomáš - Mar. 7  
Václav - Sep. 28  
Valdemar - May 27  
Valentýn - Feb. 14  
Vavřinec - Aug. 10  
Věnceslav - Feb. 13  
Vendelín - Oct. 20  
Věroslav - Jul. 27  
Viktor - Jul. 28  
Vilém - May 28  
Vincenc - Apr. 14  
Vít - Jun. 15  
Vítězslav - Jul. 21  
Vladan - Jan. 9  
Vladimír - May 23  
Vladislav - Jan. 18  
Vlastimil - Mar. 17  
Vlastislav - Apr. 28  
Vojtěch - Apr. 23  
Vratislav - Dec. 9  
Zbyněk - Jun. 16  
Zbyšek - May 20  
Zdeněk - Jan. 23  
Zikmund - May 2

## Czech Timeline

- 4000 BC** Permanent communities started in this part of Europe.
- 500 BC** Celtic tribes settle in this part of Europe.
- 500 AD** Arrival of the Slavic peoples from East of the Carpathian Mountains. The Slavic tribes were pushing out the Germanic tribes, who before them were pushing out the Celtic tribes.
- 863** Arrival of the Byzantine missionaries Cyril and Methodius from Macedonia. Due to the tremendous linguist and political efforts of these two Greek brothers who became monks and scholars, the Slavic peoples were among the very few peoples in Europe at that time who could worship God in their own language.
- 870's** Founding of Prague castle by the first Bohemian Prince, called Borivoj.
- 935** 19 year-old Knight "Vaclav", Christian heir to the Bohemian throne, assassinated on his step-brother Boleslav's orders. (Later he was canonized as St. Wenceslas, and became the patron saint of the Czech people.)
- 1031** Crown lands of Bohemia joined with the Margrave of Moravia; Bohemia and Moravia permanently joined together as the Czech crown lands.
- 1212** Holy Roman King Frederick II affirmed the Independence of the Bohemian Kingdom. German colonists are invited by the Bohemian King to settle in the Czech crown lands.
- 1253-1278** The reign of King "Premysl Otakar II " also called the King of Iron and Gold. He greatly expanded the area of the Czech Kingdom.
- 1346-1378** The reign of Charles IV, son of John of Luxembourg heralding a Golden age of the Czech crown lands. Prague grew into one of the largest and most important cities in Europe. During this time Charles University was founded in 1348, construction was started on Charles bridge, St. Vitus's Cathedral, Prague's new town and the royal castle of Karlstejn.
- 1415** (July 6th) Czech reformer "Jan Hus" burned at the stake in Constance (in today's Switzerland) Hus preached against extreme wealth, corruption and the idea that nobles are better than common people. His martyrdom sparked a religious as much as a nationalistic rebellion centered in Bohemia.

- 1419-1434** Hussite era, age of great nationalism in the Czechlands, and of total universal education. Everyone, every peasant could read and write; no other nation at that time could boast of this great accomplishment.
- 1618-1648** The Thirty Years War, which devastated much of Central Europe including the Czech crown lands. It shattered the economy, about one third of the total Czech population died during this tragic time.
- 1620** Battle of " Bila hora " ( White Mountain ) the Czech Estates and people lost the battle to the Imperial Austrian army and catholic mercenaries who then forced most of the Czech nobility and educated classes to leave their country.
- 1683** Vienna was surrounded by Turkish armies, and Moravia was plundered before they were forced back to the Balkans.
- 1742-1780** Reign of Empress Maria-Theresa, a very enlighten ruler who relaxed the repressive Austrian rule. This lead to a revival in the Czech crown lands. She reconstructed the Prague castle complex, made school attendance compulsory in the Czech crown lands, and many more wise decisions.
- 1789** V. M. Kramerius publishes the first Czech revival newspaper, as the first mass reading material in the Czech language in 170 years.
- 1790's-1850's** Czech National Revival, after a gap of around 200 years a revival of the Czech language, music, history, culture.
- 1848** Serfdom (slavery) throughout the whole Austrian Empire abolished.
- 1914 to 1918** (June 28th) World War I, started with the assassination of the Imperial to successor to the Austro-Hungarian throne "Ferdinand D'Este" and his Czech wife Sofia. By a group of Serb students in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the formation of the Czechoslovak Foreign Legions
- 1918** Founding of the Czechoslovak state, its first president was Thomas. G. Masaryk. Its population makeup was: Czechs 51 %, Slovaks 14.5 %, Germans 23.4 %, Hungarians 5.5 %, plus some Polish, Ukrainians, Russians, Jews and Roma (gypsies).
- 1938** (September) Munich Agreement was forced upon the Czechoslovak nation by its French and English Allies, which ceded the Sudetenland a large heavily fortified area of Bohemia and Moravia to Nazi Germany.
- 1939** (March) Nazi Germany took over all of the remaining Czech lands as the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia."



- 1945** CzechoSlovakia liberated from Nazi Germany, mainly by the Russians from the East, but also from the Americans from the West.
- 1946** Decrees of Nationalization were declared by President Benes, where most people of German background were expelled to Germany. In the free and fair elections of 1946 the communist party wins with 40 % of the total vote mostly from the Czechlands.
- 1948** (February) The CzechoSlovak Communist party seizes government power.
- 1967 & 68** Reform movement "Prague Spring", also called "communism with a human face" was lead by communist party leader Alexander Dubcek. The people enjoyed any freedoms, it was a joyful time.
- 1968** (August 21st) Warsaw pact armies invaded the country to end the "Prague Spring" experiment. Between 700,000 and 800,000 people escape, or leave Socialist CzechoSlovakia. Soviet pressure increases, it is a bleak time.
- 1977** Charter 77 published by a group of intellectuals including dissident playwright Vaclav Havel. It demanded fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the right to play rock music!
- 1989** (November) The Velvet Revolution startles the world. The communist government of G. Husak resigns and playwright and dissident Vaclav Havel was appointed President of the renamed Czech and Slovak Federated Republic.
- 1990** Economic reforms and mass privatization of businesses begin.
- 1990** (June) The first truly free and democratic elections held since 1946.
- 1993** (January 1st ) The Czech and Slovak Federated Republic peacefully separate into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in what is now known as the "Velvet Divorce."
- 1999** (April) Guaranteeing their future freedom, the Czech Republic joins NATO
- 2004** (May) The Czech Republic joins the European Union

adapted from the web page: <http://www.czechheritage.net/timeline.html>

## Czech Idioms and their English Counterparts

**Vyhazovat peníze z okna.**

*To throw money out of the window.*

To throw money down the drain.

**Vstávat se slepicemi.**

*To get up with the chickens.*

To get up with the lark.

**Chodit po tenkém ledě.**

*To walk on thin ice.*

To skate on thin ice.

**Mít knedlík v krku.**

*To have a dumpling in one's throat.*

To have a frog in one's throat.

**Dát/snést někomu modré z nebe.**

*To give/bring someone the blue from the sky.*

To give someone the Moon.

**Držet (někomu) palce.**

*To hold one's thumbs (for someone).*

To keep one's fingers crossed (for someone).

**Znát něco jako své boty.**

*To know something like one's own shoes.*

To know something like the back of one's hand.

**Chodit kolem horké kaše.**

*To walk around hot porridge ("kaše" - any food of a mashed consistency).*

To beat about the bush.

**Lije jako z konve.**

*It's raining as if from a watering can.*

It's raining cats and dogs.

**Mám toho plné zuby.**

*I have my teeth full of it. / My teeth are full of it.*

I'm fed up with it.

## Czech Proverbs

**Bez peněz do hospody nelez.**

Don't go to the pub without money.

**Bez práce nejsou koláče.**

Without work, there are no koláče (Czech pastry).

**Co je doma, to se počítá.**

What's at home, counts.

**Co mužeš udělat dnes, neodkládej na zítřek.**

Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

**Dobra ráda nad zlato.**

Good advice is better than gold.

**Dvakrát měř, jednou řež.**

Measure twice, cut once.

**Hloupý kdo dává, hloupější kdo nebere.**

He who gives is foolish, he who doesn't accept is even more so.

**Host do domu, Bůh do domu.**

A guest in your home is like a God in your home.

**Host do domu, hůl do ruky.**

If a guest comes to your home, grab a stick.

**Ranní ptáče dál doskáče.**

An early bird will hop farther.

**Když kocour není doma, myši mají pré.**

When the cat is not home, the mice have a party.

**Vyhni se opilému, jakož i bláznu.**

Avoid a drunkard as well as a fool.

**Na každem šprochu pravdy trochu.**

There's a bit of truth in every gossip.



## **Czech Christmas Customs and Superstitions**

Czech folklore is rich in customs and superstitions and there are hundreds of those related to Christmas. The purpose of many of them is to find out what the coming year has in store for the family.

### **Christmas Dinner Customs**

Czech Christmas dinner (December 24) is connected with a great number of different customs, rules and superstitions. Very few of them are still observed today, and for good reason. It must have been quite a challenge to put the dinner together and go through with it without a mistake if all the customs were to be followed! Here are some of them:

No lights should be lit in the house before the first star comes out. After it does, dinner is served.

The table should be set for an even number of guests. An odd number brings bad luck or death. An extra plate can be used to even out the number of guests. An extra plate should also be prepared in case an unexpected guest or a person in need comes by the house at dinnertime.

The legs of the table can be tied with a rope to protect the house from thieves and burglars in the coming year.

No one should sit with their back to the door.

Christmas dinner should consist of nine courses including soup, bread with honey, carp, potato salad, fruit (dried, fresh or canned), dessert (apple strudel or *vánočka* - Christmas bread), and other foods.

No alcohol should be served on Christmas Eve.

No one should ever get up from the Christmas table before dinner is finished. Doing so brings bad luck and death in the family.

Everyone should finish their dinner and leave nothing on the plate.

The first person to leave the table after dinner will be the first one to die in the coming year – that is why everyone should get up from the table at the same time.

Any leftovers from dinner (crumbs, fishbones, etc.) should be buried around the trees to ensure they will bear lots of fruit.

All household animals should be fed after dinner so that no one goes hungry on Christmas Eve.

### **The Magical Powers of Foods and Plants**

Certain plants, spices and foods are said to have special qualities and have been an important part of Czech Christmas celebrations throughout history.

Garlic---An essential part of Christmas that should not be missing at any Christmas dinner.

It is believed to provide strength and protection. A bowl of garlic can be placed under the dinner table.

Honey---Honey is believed to guard against evil. A pot of honey can be placed on the dinner table.

Mushrooms---Mushrooms give health and strength. A traditional meal called *kuba*, prepared from dried mushrooms, barley, garlic, onions, and spices, used to be served as the main meal in the past. Mushroom soup can be served before dinner.

Sheaf of Grain---A bundle of grain dipped in holy water can be used to sprinkle the house to prevent it from burning down in the next year.

Poppysseed, peas, wheat, barley---If given to the hens on Christmas Eve, lots of eggs will be laid in the coming year.

*Vánočka* (Christmas bread)---Feeding a piece of *vánočka* to the cows on Christmas Eve will ensure that there will be lots of milk all year. Putting a few *vánočka* crumbs in front of the bee hive will make sure that the bees will produce enough honey next year. Throwing a piece of *vánočka* into the well will ensure good quality of the water.

Apple---If the goats are given apples on Christmas Eve, their milk will be sweet.

### **Foretelling the Future**

The foretelling of the future and predicting the well-being of the family in the coming year is connected with many popular Christmas customs some of which are still practiced today.

The Floating of Walnut Shells---Little boats are made out of empty walnut shells and each family member places a little burning candle into a shell. Everyone's shells are then floated on a bowl of water. If the shell makes it across the bowl, its owner will live a long and healthy life. A shell that sinks brings bad luck to its owner.

The Cutting of the Apple---After Christmas dinner, every person present at the table cuts an apple in half (crosswise, from the stem down). Both halves are shown to everyone around the table. If the core is shaped as a star, it means that everyone will get together next year in happiness and health. A four-pointed cross is a bad omen and means that someone at the table will fall ill or die within a year.

The Pouring of Lead---A piece of lead is melted over fire and then poured into a container of water. The resulting shape will tell the pourer's destiny.

## **Foretelling Marriage**

There are lots of Christmas customs that help young girls in the family find out if they will get married in the year to come.

Cherry Tree Twigs (*Barborky*)---On December 4, St. Barbara's Day, an unmarried girl is supposed to cut a twig off of a cherry tree and put it in water. If the twig blooms by Christmas Eve, the girl will marry within a year.

The Throwing of the Shoe---An unmarried girl is supposed to throw a shoe over her shoulder and towards the door. If the shoe lands with the toe pointing towards the door, the girl will marry within a year.

The Shaking of the Elder Tree---An unmarried girl is supposed to shake an elder tree and if a dog barks, she will marry a man who lives in the direction from which the dog bark came.

## **Money and Wealth**

Although Czech Christmas has traditionally been focused on spirituality and family rather than on material possessions, there is a custom relating to money and wealth.

Fish Scales---Fish scales should be placed under Christmas dinner plates or under the tablecloth to bring wealth to the house. Carrying a fish scale in a wallet all year will ensure that money will not run out.

## **Other Christmas Customs and Superstitions**

He who fasts all day until dinner will see the golden piglet on the wall.

After Christmas dinner, no field is to be crossed until the midnight mass. He who does so will die within a year.

He who fails to give a present on Christmas Eve will be met with poverty.

A pregnant woman will know whether she is carrying a boy or a girl once the first Christmas Eve visitor enters the house. If the visitor is male, she will have a son.

from:

[http://www.myczechrepublic.com/czech\\_culture/czech\\_holidays/christmas\\_superstitions.html](http://www.myczechrepublic.com/czech_culture/czech_holidays/christmas_superstitions.html)



# Czech Recipes

## Grandma Minar's Bohemian Kolacky (Koláče)

Jean Minar

A kolacky is a fruit-filled bun that is popular in many forms in the Czech Republic. This recipe was brought to southern Minnesota in the 1860s by immigrants from southern Bohemia.

**Mix:** 2 packages dry yeast  
½ cup lukewarm water and 1 teaspoon sugar in a small bowl

**Scald:** 2 cups milk

**Add:** 2 cups of water saved and chilled from cooking potatoes

**Melt:** ½ cup butter, add ¼ cup oil to cool.

In large mixing bowl, place ½ cup sugar, then add the milk/potato water mixture. Then add 3 egg yolks. Beat with electric mixer. Add 2 to 3 cups flour, then stir yeast mixture and pour it in. Add a scant tablespoon of salt and ½ teaspoon nutmeg. Mix. Add butter/oil mixture and mix. Add enough flour to make a soft dough. Knead 5 minutes. Clean out bowl, oil it, put in dough and coat surface, let rise until double. Punch it down and let it rise again.

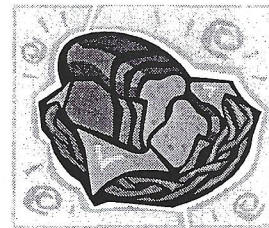
Roll dough out to a thickness of 1/3 inch, cut into 3 to 4 inch squares. Put a spoonful of filling in the center, then bring up opposite corners of the dough and seal. Place in a greased muffin tin. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle lightly with sugar. Let rise to double, then bake 10 minutes at 400 degrees, then lower the heat to 350 degrees for about 10 minutes longer. Immediately after removing from the oven, brush again with butter and sprinkle with sugar.

**Fillings:** For filling, commercially canned poppyseed or apricot filling is available in some stores. A prune filling can be made by cooking prunes in a small amount of water and adding raisins. Another traditional filling is dry curd cottage cheese mixed with raisins, sugar and a little cinnamon.

## Bohemian Rye Bread

1 ½ cups water  
2 Tablespoons brown sugar  
2 Tablespoons shortening  
2 ½ teaspoons salt  
2 teaspoons caraway seeds

½ cup warm water  
1 (2 oz) cake fresh yeast  
4 cups sifted white flour  
2 cups sifted rye flour



Into a small pan measure ½ cup of the water, brown sugar, caraway seeds, salt and shortening. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add 1 cup cold water. Into a small bowl measure ½ cup warm water and add the yeast. Stir until dissolved. Into a large mixing bowl mix the liquids and yeast. Add 2 cups white flour and mix well. Add remaining flour, saving some for kneading. Turn dough onto a floured board and knead until smooth and satiny. Place ball of dough into a greased mixing bowl and turn ball over as to have the top greased. Cover and let rise. Knead down once and let rise again. Divide in half and form into loaves. Place in greased pans and let rise. Bake in hot oven for 1 hour. Makes 2 loaves.

## **Kuba**

Serving Size: 8 – Zuzana Holcova

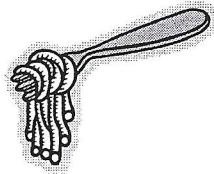
1 ½ cups Barley  
1 ½ cups mushrooms, dried  
7 cups water  
2 teaspoons salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
½ cups garlic, finely minced  
¾ cup onion, dried, finely chopped  
¼ cup butter  
1 teaspoon Marjoram

This is a recipe for a Czech barley casserole that is traditionally served on Christmas Eve but is also good as a side dish. Cook the onion in the butter until translucent. Wash the mushrooms until free from grit

Add the barley (or barley grits, mushrooms, salt and water to the onions and cook, uncovered, until the water has evaporated, stirring frequently. (Mixture will be very thick.) Add the remaining ingredients.

Place in a greased casserole or baking dish and bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes. I usually cut this recipe in half unless we are having a really big crowd. It also freezes well.

## **Homemade Noodles (Nudle)**



1 ½ cups flour  
2 eggs, well beaten

Put flour into small bowl; make a “well.” Pour eggs and oil into well and mix until dough is stiff. Place dough on a floured surface; knead until stiff. Roll out until almost paper thin. Allow to dry slightly on a clean dry cloth, enough to prevent sticking while cutting. Cut dough into strips about 2 inches wide; stack and cut into noodles of desired width. Noodles may be boiled in broth, or salted water, without further drying. If not used immediately, dry so they do not stick together, then freeze.

## **Czech Sauerkraut**

2 medium-sized cans sauerkraut,  
Or 2 pkgs. Frozen sauerkraut  
1 to 2 teaspoons caraway seed  
1 large onion, finely chopped

Lard  
1 Tablespoon flour (more if needed)  
1 to 2 teaspoons sugar (optional)

Drain sauerkraut. Wash and drain again if too sharp. Add caraway seed to taste and enough water to cover. Cook 20-30 minutes.

Sauté onion in small amount of lard until light brown. Add flour (and sugar, if desired) and cook 5 minutes until slightly thickened. Remove from heat; add to sauerkraut and cook 5 minutes longer.

## **Knedlicky (Potato Dumplings) – Jean Minar**

5 pounds potatoes, peel and cook in water. Drain, mash with 1 Tablespoon salt. Cool. Add 1 or 2 eggs and about ¼ cup dry cream of wheat.

To the 5-6 cups of potatoes, add 4 ½ cups flour. Mix till dough is about consistency of cooked play dough. Push together handfuls to form balls. Coat with flour. Put in boiling water, stir to prevent sticking, until dumplings float. Cook a total of 30 minutes. Cut in half to check for doneness.

## **Vanoci Vomacka (Christmas fruit soup)**

1 pound prunes	1 box white raisins
1 pound apricots	2 pkgs. Mixed dried fruit
Sugar	ginger snaps

Soak each fruit separately in cold water overnight. The next morning, add enough water to each fruit and boil until done but not mushy. (Some fruits take longer to cook – hence the suggestion to cook each separately.) Combine all fruits and juice. Add 2 ½ cups sugar or enough to sweeten. Add 1 cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil until sugar completely dissolves. Add 6-8 ginger snaps. Stir well. You can add more ginger snaps for a spicier flavor. Serve cold. Keep refrigerated.

## **Kysela Vomacka (sour cream soup)**

6 small peeled potatoes	1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 large carton cultured sour cream	1 pint whipping cream
1/3 cup vinegar	2 cups fresh green beans or 1 16 oz. can
4 bay leaves	5 whole cloves
½ teaspoon dry dill or 6 sprigs fresh dill	dash pepper
1 large onion, cut up	



Put bay leaves, cloves, and dill into a small cloth bag and tie securely. Boil potatoes, onion, fresh green beans, and spices plus the salt in 3 ½ quarts of water. If canned beans are used, add them after the potatoes are boiled. Add dash of pepper. Put whipping cream in bowl and blend with sour cream. When potatoes are boiled, remove bag with spices. Slowly pour in cream mixture. Thicken soup with flour and water paste to desired thickness, not too thick. Finally, pour in the vinegar very slowly, mixing so as to prevent curdling.

## **Boží Milosti (God's Grace or Celestial Crusts)**

4 egg yolks	6 Tablespoons rich cream
1 teaspoon sugar	1 ½ cups flour
¼ teaspoon salt	

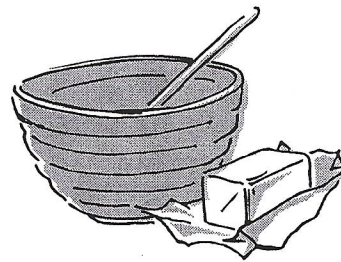
Mix egg yolks with rich cream and beat slightly. Add salt and sugar. Add 1 cup of the flour and mix to make a soft dough. Add more flour so that the dough can be handled by hands. Cut into small balls. Roll each ball of dough thin. Make a few slits in the dough and put aside until all the dough is rolled out. Heat grease in a deep pan – about 2 inches deep. With prongs, turn the dough quickly in it as it browns and fries fast. Don't over fry. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.



## Poppyseed Cake (dort z mak)

¼ cup poppyseeds  
1 ½ cups sugar  
3 egg whites  
½ cup margarine  
¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup water  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
½ cup milk  
3 cups cake flour  
1 teaspoon vanilla



Soak poppyseeds overnight in milk and water. Cream margarine and sugar. Add dry ingredients and liquid with poppyseed. Mix well. Fold in egg whites, beaten stiff, and vanilla. Pour into two round cake pans and bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes until done.

### Filling:

2 cups milk  
½ cup sugar  
2 Tablespoons cornstarch  
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla

½ teaspoon salt  
1 Tablespoon butter  
5 egg yolks

Combine milk, sugar, cornstarch, salt, and egg yolks. Cook over low heat until thick and add butter and vanilla and stir. Let cool before pouring over first layer of cake. Add top layer and frost with any white boiled frosting.