

Petra Pospěchová

TASTE ATLAS

of Czechia, Moravia and Silesia

Regional cookbook



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The best way to understand the gastronomic roots of a certain country is through the historical and natural context and relations of the region as well as stories about local lifeways. Each and every Czech region has unique recipes and ingredients. What Moravian specialties used to be exported to the Habsburg court in Vienna? What did 19th-century markets in Prague look like? From which interesting fruit do they make brandy in Wallachia and Moravian Slovakia? The Taste Atlas of Czechia, Moravia, and Silesia consists of 13 chapters, each presenting a different region and its gastronomic specifics. Each chapter offers around 10 traditional recipes for regional foods and drinks. And if you'd like to try the original specialties, there are recommendations for restaurants, markets, and fairs. Every chapter has also three tips for a walk, hike, or trip, to help you get to know the land as well as the cuisine.

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Petra Pospěchová

Petra Pospěchová is one of the most influential food-writers in the Czech Republic. She has worked as a journalist since the age of eighteen, being part of the team of *Týden* or *Hospodářské noviny*. Currently she works as a freelance writer, cooperates with major Czech magazines and newspapers. From the culinary field she reports mostly for *Reportér*, *Lidové noviny* and *MF Dnes*. She also contributes to *Future Perfect* international on-line magazine. When she's not busy writing or cooking, she enjoys hiking and rock climbing. Petra considers the Slovakian mountain ranges her second home, but often and with pleasure explores the wilderness of the mountains in Romania, Ukraine, Albania or Macedonia too. She has a degree in sociology and speaks English, German and French.

Get to know Wallachia through all of the senses

Projděte se

KOLEM SVATÉHO HOSTÝNA

Nejslavnější poutní místo Valaška je výborným výletním cílem i pro nevěřící. Stín vzrostlých lesů chrání při stoupaní k bazilice i v nejarmejším létě a naholeček krom jiného netradiční křížová cesta od architekta Jurkoviče. Dál se můžete hřebenovkou vydat na Skalný a nebo seběhnout do Rusavy. Tamní muzejní expozice představuje kroje či valašský nábytek a taky malby okolní krajiny od Adolfa Kašpara, Marty Makovské a dalších umělců.

OD PORTÁŠE NA KOHÚTKU

Impozantní hřeben javorníků se táhne od Stělně až po Makov, jeho nejměkčí část je nad Novým Hrozenkovem. Dvě horské chaty – Portáš a Kohútka – stavi už léta na domácí kuchyni podle místních receptur. Kohútka je vyhlášená hlavně borůvkovými knedlíky, na Portáši mívají výborné jehněčí, čepuje se tu pivo z nedaleké Zašové a rozlévá cider z Vizovic.

NAD TARAHŮNY

Nejjíznější cípem Valaška je údolí zvané Tarahůny. Pojmenovaní je z času, kdy tudy táhli nájezdníci z jihovýchodu (v řeči lidu Tataři a Huni, ve skutečnosti spíš Turci) a nechali tu prý genetickou stopu. Údolí tvoří tři vesnice – Návojná, Nedašov a Nedašova Lhota, přiléhá k němu Brumov, odkud pocházel a který zvečnil ve svých knížkách Ludvík Vaculík. Z Návojni vede pěkný výšlap přes Králavec do Valašských Klobouk. Na podzim tu najdete neuvěřitelně velké bedly, v létě zase mnoho léčivých rostlin včetně mateřídoušky a dobromysli.

VALAŠSKO

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Folklor

Valaško patří k regionům, kde se folklorní tradice drží živě, a tak o každém Mikuláši můžete vyrazit do Valašských Klobouk a vidět „jarmek“ starých femesel i s početným průvodem bytostí. Čerti s rohy z berana, laufri, turek, františkán... Přes den se na jarmeku jí kyselica navařená do velikánských kotlů, večer už se hlavně pije a tancuje. Často se mezi tanečnický najde i nějaký chasník, co si u muziky poručí odzemek – improvizovaný mužský tanec, jehož tempo se ve dvoučtvrtinovém taktu zrychluje, až k padnutí. Figury jsou různé, krom nohou a rukou může tanečník zapojit i hůl valašku.

Typické suroviny

BRAMBORY

Brambory čili zemiňáky přijdou do většiny polévek, ale taky do zapékaných jídel včetně kontrabáše, kde se potkávají s pohankou.

ŠVESTKY

Švestky, po místním trnky, se suší, dávají do koláčů, ale hlavně jsou gruntem silivcového kvasu.

ZELÍ

Zelí je mimo jiné základem nejslavnější valašské polévky zvané kyselica.

BEE FRITTERS WITH PEAR POWDER

Brukev řepák čili vodnice má bílé kulovité bulvy. Na Horácku se této dvočeté rostlině říká „bílá řepa“. Bulva se dá v kuchyni upravit na různé způsoby, mladé lístky se pak mohou přidávat do salátů.

4 porce

8 menších vodnic

hladká mouka

100 ml mléka

4 lžice másla

2 lžice sádla

100 g sušených hrušek

sůl

Den předem dáme hruškové křížáky dosušit v troubě při nízké teplotě tak, aby se daly roztřítit na prášek. Tím získáme koření zvané pracharanda či prachanda.

Bulvy vodnice očistíme, zbavíme dřevnatých částí a nastrouháme. Přidáme k nim zhruba stejné množství mouky, jako je vodnicové hmoty, a promícháme. Přilijeme mléko, osolíme, a pokud je těsto řídké, ještě přidáme mouku. Pak z něj lžící tvarujeme placky, které pečeme z obou stran na pánvi lehce omaštěné sádlem. Opečené placky masťme rozpuštěným máslem a sypeme pracharandou.

HORÁCKO

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ŠUMAVA

The type of work the breadwinner of the family carried out was the determining factor in Šumava cuisine. The diet was the richest in glassmakers' families. Meat was on the table almost every day, and there was no shortage of it. The women prepared beef and veal for the men from the glassworks to give them the strength and stamina they needed. They also made hearty 'glassmakers' dumplings, to which, besides cracklings or bacon, cabbage was also added.



ŠUMAVA

(Bohemian Forrest, Böhmerwald)

The name Šumava is derived from the Slavic term šuma, which means thicket or dense forest. In this word is contained not only the factual description of a long mountain range but also a certain mysteriousness inherent in it. In the region, it materialises in the greenish wilderness beneath mature trees, streams, that burst unexpectedly from the hillsides, and the pillows of dark moss that hide the boulders.

The Czech side of the border mountains is much less sloping than the southern German side. The hills rise gently out of the valley, and the landscape looks like wavy hair when viewed from above. Sometimes, it seems that stretching a hand would be enough, and one could stroke it, like the unruly curls of his beloved.

Šumava is one of the oldest mountain ranges in Europe - perhaps this is the source of the pervasive mystery and a certain melancholy common in those who have seen much. The Czech-German writer Karel Klostermann (1848-1923) has succeeded in capturing this unique face of the region and the people who live there.

The critics of the time accused this writer of a lack of inventiveness and too much descriptiveness - on the other hand, it is thanks to it that we can still be transported to the glassmakers' cottages in Hůrka or Michl's glassworks and look over the housekeeper's shoulder as she pours plum sauce onto the plates for Christmas dinner.

Thanks to Klostermann, we also know that snowdrifts after winter storms sometimes reached the top frame of the windows, and what daily life was like for families of the „expatriate workers“ (Auswanderinnen) who'd set out to sell glass or carved wooden goods across Europe. Until the men returned with their earnings, the rest of the family was working the not-very-fertile fields stretched near the houses nestled in the hillsides.

Energy for the furnace

The type of work the breadwinner of the family carried out was the determining factor in Šumava cuisine. The diet was the richest in glassmakers' families. Meat was on the table almost every day, and there was no shortage of it. The women prepared beef and veal for the men from the glassworks to give them strength and stamina against the tuberculosis caused by glass dust.

As Václav Malovický (1943-2018, author of regional cookbooks and books about historical cuisines) writes in his essay on the Šumava diet, as glassmaking began to decline in Šumava at the end of the 19th century, the diet of glassmaking families changed. There would be less and less beef and veal on the dinner table and pork became more accessible, and when there wasn't any money, dog meat was often served.

However, from the good times, when the glass from the Šumava region was in high demand, there are still many recipes for hearty specialities of glassmaking families that have survived to this day. The most famous of these is probably the 'glassmakers' dumplings - the dough is filled with bacon or cracklings and, above all, sauerkraut, which keeps the dough moist.

Land of dumplings

'Glassmakers' dumplings are just one of the many dumplings traditionally made in the region. If any Czech region is a dumpling superpower, it is probably the Šumava.

Some of the dumpling recipes are potato-based. Probably the most famous are 'scratchers' (drbáky) or 'bare dumplings' (bosáky): these were made from a mixture of boiled and raw potatoes. Other potato dumplings were bulked up with a bread roll.

Then there are the various kinds of Schupfnudeln (škubánky or šlejšky) that used to be served both savoury and sweet. And then, of course, the yeasted dumplings (Dampfnudeln), to which the same applies. The basic recipe is always roughly the same, and it's up to the cook to decide whether to shape them into logs and serve them sliced with a wild boar's leg with juniper or to fill the yeasted balls with fruit and top with melted butter.

Curd cheese dumplings are also made with fruit: either the same way as with the yeasted dough the blueberries, strawberries or apricots are stuffed inside, or the fruit is made into a thick, sweet sauce which is served with small round dumplings.

Experiencing the Šumava through all the senses

Take a walk

UP THE OSTRÝ HILL (OSSER)

The border hill Ostrý (meaning sharp), or Osser in German, did not receive its name by accident. Both journeys, from the town of Nýrsko (Neuern) and the other side of the mountain, require endurance and resilience. Hikers are rewarded with magnificent views from the rocky summit and a cosy inn, hidden behind it. The kind owners give the frozen pilgrims hot tea, even if it's not officially open. We were treated like this on New Year's morning when we decided to end our extended Christmas ramble with a proper sunrise climb.

If you don't want to soar above the clouds, you can stay in the foothills and head out to see the Šumava Astronomical Clock in Hojsova Stráž (Eisenstrass). The five-metre-high tower, which shows time, but also the movement of the sun through the zodiac and the phases of the moon, can be found in the centre of the village.

Plan at least part of your journey to Hojsova Stráž by train – the railway between Nýrsko and Železná Ruda (Markt Eisenstein) leads through a very charming landscape.

BY LENORA (ELEONORENHAIN)

This village on the upper course of the Vltava River is known mainly to paddlers (river tourists), because the famous section from the Soumarský Bridge winding through the Teplá Vltava ends here. Another local curiosity is the glassmaking tradition confirmed by the museum and the old communal bread oven which is heated up once a month to be filled with loaves.

AROUND LAKE LAKA

The highest lake in the country has a mystery inherent to the whole of Šumava.

Grassy banks and forest surround its dark waters, and a layer of peat lies at the bottom of the lake. The best way to get here is from Železná Ruda (Eisenstein) or Prášily (Stubenbach).



Folklore

Konopicka is a peculiar custom that can be seen in the Prácheň region. At harvest time (especially harvest of flax and hemp – konopí) this folk theatre – a parody of nuptials – takes place in the village square and has several acts. The first comes the persuasion of the groom and everything culminates in a wedding ceremony.

This was a female-led festival and all the characters were played by women.

Typical ingredients

MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms are dried and kept for winter months, except for a few seasonal recipes. Especially important are dried mushrooms in the Christmas wheat groat pudding (kuba).

BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries, locally called black strawberries, are here transformed into various kinds of cakes, liqueurs and dumplings.

GAME MEAT

Ragouts, goulashes or roasts are made here from venison, deer, and even boar meat.

BOAR LEG WITH JUNIPER SAUCE

The land torn up by wild pigs trying to find something to eat is a fairly common picture in Šumava and you don't have to go very deep into the forest to see it either. Wild hogs have lived here since ancient times and have therefore been a permanent part of the feasts of the local nobility. And also, of clever poachers.

For 4 portions

750 g boar's leg

50 g fat bacon cut in thick stripes

1 onion

5 cloves of garlic

3 tablespoons of lard

juniper, pepper, salt

Clean the boar meat, lard it with bacon, season with salt and pepper on all sides and sprinkle with crushed dried juniper berries. Leave it in the refrigerator for a few hours.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Cut the onion into small cubes and mince the garlic.

Place the onions in a baking dish large enough to fit the meat, fry it in hot lard, add the garlic for a short while and then remove the dish from the heat. Place the meat on this base, pour over it a small amount of hot water and place it in the oven. Leave it to bake for ten minutes, then reduce the temperature to 160 °C. Baste the meat continuously during baking, first with hot water and then with the juices it releases. Bake for approximately two hours.

Once the meat is soft, remove it from the dish, place it in a warm place and cover it with aluminium foil. Cook the juices from the meat so that it thickens.

Cut the meat into slices and serve with the sauce, red cabbage, cranberry compote and potato dumplings.

