

A Feast in a Country at Latitude 50 Degrees North

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Summary

[Knedliky(bread dumpling)] It is a supporting player as well as a main actor on the plate. Perhaps this is the most typical Czech food. It looks like steamed bread. Usually several pieces of knedliky (about 1 cm to 1.5 cm thick slices of boiled cylindrical dough) are placed beside pork and gravy and some garnish. Also, you can find sweet knedliky. It looks like “an-man”, sweet re-bean dumplings in Japan, containing cooked fruit, as blueberries, strawberries, cherries and so forth inside, and is sprinkled with grated cheese or powdered sugar.

[Pork dishes] Traditionally pork is eaten more than other kinds of meat in the Czech Republic. Hams and sausages are particularly tasty and used frequently.

[Fruits and Vegetables] Czech people enjoy their domestic fruits such as apples, cherries and pears, but it is not warm enough to grow watermelon. They are imported from Slovakia, Hungary and so forth. Most vegetables are also imported except examples that grow under the earth.

[Halushikis with bryndza (dumpling with sheep cheese)] This is a typical Slovak dish, and has certain features in common with Czech knedliky. Also it is comparable with Japanese “miso-shiru” or “zouni” because it tastes differently in each home. For us Japanese it takes some effort to get used to its flavor, as with “natto” for foreigners.

[Carp] In the Czech Republic, carp is served as a Christmas dish, perhaps to express gratitude to God by refraining from eating delicious pork and beef. For only a few days before Christmas, you will see carp vendors on the sidewalks. It is a sign that the festive season is near at hand.

[Beer and wine] Czech beer is very famous for its taste, and its wines also have a very good reputation. In the Czech Republic, beer is mainly brewed in Bohemia (the western part of the country) while wine is produced in Moravia (the Eastern part). Karlovy Vary is a well known city for its hot springs for drinking as well as the production of Bechelovks, which is a kind of strong herb liquor.

[Delicious cuisine] Czech people are overcoming handicaps of a northern inland country by importing various sea foods and fresh green vegetables, and now we can enjoy a wide culinary variety of dishes in restaurants and hotels in Prague and other cities in the Czech Republic.

