

# MAPPING THE GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE

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BRNO

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# Introduction

The gastronomical cultural heritage of Brno was mapped under the Slow Food Central Europe project. Slow Food-CE is an international cooperation project aimed at improving the ability of local public and private entities to protect and appreciate local gastronomic heritage as part of a vision that integrates economic, environmental, and social sustainability. The project strives to create a transferable model that can give traditional foods their real value through information about their growers and breeders or about plant variety, animal breeds, traditional processing techniques, folklore, and cultural landscape. The project will support the expansion of common gastronomic heritage in Central Europe and the creation of a new alliance between the five cities involved in the project: Venice, Dubrovnik, Brno, Kecskemét, and Krakow.

## Mapping

Through research, each project partner sought to identify and document the gastronomic cultural heritage of their city and region. The specific objective of the survey was to map the historical development and the presence of the local food system from production to consumption and its corresponding economic and social environment.

The mapping was conducted by reconstructing the historical, cultural, social, and economic context employing bibliographic, archive, photographic, audiovisual, and iconographic resources and information available from libraries, archives, study centres, art galleries, and universities.

# Regional Historical and Cultural Context

## The Czech Republic

According to the legend recorded by the chronicler Cosmas of Prague at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the forefather Čech brought the first inhabitants to a desolate land under Říp Hill, which may have stood in the middle of the original Slavic settlement although the very first people who settled in Bohemia - now understood as the current territory of Czechia - arrived much earlier in ancient times.<sup>1</sup>

The history of this land is both the history of the Czech Republic and of other political units located on this territory. The history of human settlement in the area stretches back to the Lower Palaeolithic period. The first of today's type of people appeared in the Upper Palaeolithic period, which was between 12,000 and 40,000 years ago. The oldest inhabitants we know by name were the Celts, followed by the Germans and the Slavs. It was the Slavs who formed the first political units - Samo's Empire (around 630) and Great Moravia (9th century). In addition, Christianity arrived at that time (St. Cyril and Methodius arrived in Great Moravia in 863). In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a Bohemian principality began to form around a Central Bohemian tribe led by the House of Přemyslid, which gradually spread and even acquired its saints (St. Wenceslas, St. Ludmila, and St. Adalbert of Prague) and bishopric (973). The centre of the principality was Prague Castle. Boleslaus I, Wenceslas' brother and successor, added Moravia to the Přemyslid's dominion. At the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the principality became part of the Holy Roman Empire.

Ottokar I was awarded the prestigious title of hereditary king, as confirmed by the Golden Bull of Sicily (1212). The House of Přemyslid came to an end with the murder of Wenceslas III in 1306 and was replaced by the House of Luxembourg. The Luxembourgs produced the successful ruler Charles IV, who founded the University of Prague (1348), the first university in Central Europe. The first half of the 15th century was marked by Hussite wars sparked by the reformist school of thought in Czech Christianity. The Habsburgs came to power in 1526 after the end of the rule of the Jagellon dynasty and remained until 1918 after the Czech lands were incorporated into a large empire controlled from Vienna. In 1618, there was an unsuccessful insurrection of non-Catholics, which resulted in violent recatholisation and the destructive Thirty Years' War. The Czech lands then experienced a cultural flourish, especially in painting and architecture in the following Baroque period. A number of temples, monasteries, palaces, and castles were built, and even the countryside changed with numerous churches, chapels, and monuments. However, the Czech language and culture had begun to decline as a result of Germanisation in the empire, with Czech eventually becoming the language of only uneducated people.

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<sup>1</sup> Petr Čornej, *Dějiny českých zemí*, Prague, 1999.

Empress Maria Theresa (1740-1780) launched enlightenment reformations, which continued under her son Joseph II (1780-1790). The Czech National Revival took place at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which allowed the emergence of a modern Czech nation as a cultural and political power and the restoration of the significance of the Czech language. Rapid modernisation and industrialisation of the Czech territory soon followed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The demise of the Habsburg Empire began with the start of First World War (1914-1918). From its ruins rose democratic Czechoslovakia (proclaimed on 28 October 1918), and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk became the first president.

In 1938, Nazi Germany occupied part of the Czech territory inhabited primarily by Germans, followed by a conquest of the entire country just one year later. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was a puppet state controlled by the Nazis. Many enemies of the then regime, mostly Jews and Roma, were murdered during the Second World War (1939-1945).

After the country was liberated by the Soviet and American armies aided by the Czechoslovak resistance, Czechoslovakia was restored in 1945 although it only managed to retain its democracy for less than three years. In February 1948, the Communists staged a successful coup, ruling authoritatively and following orders from the Soviet Union. In 1968, there was an attempt to democratise the regime; however, the so-called Prague Spring was suppressed on 21 August by the military intervention of Communist countries led by the Soviet Union. In 1989, when the entire Soviet bloc faced a major crisis, the Czechoslovaks succeeded in overthrowing the Communist regime without bloodshed in an event known as the Velvet Revolution. However, they were unable to maintain the country's unity and split into the Czech and Slovak Republics on 1 January 1993. Both countries have since politically joined the West and acceded to the European Union in 2004.<sup>2</sup>

## South Moravia

Since prehistoric times, South Moravia has held a special place compared to other parts of today's Czech Republic. Dolní Věstonice, where famous artefacts of mammoth hunters were found (known as the Venus of Dolní Věstonice), is one such example.

South Moravia was one of the centres of the Great Moravian Empire in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the conquest of Moravia by the Czech duke Oldřich, the south was divided into the Brno and Znojmo estates. One of the oldest rotundas on the territory of today's Czech Republic can be found in Znojmo. Since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Brno, today the capital of the South Moravian Region, has been the seat of the Moravian Margraves (and also of the Moravian Diet), which convened in Olomouc and, at the time of its formation, in Znojmo.

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<sup>2</sup> Wikipedie, Dějiny Česka, [https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C4%9Bjiny\\_%C4%8Ceska](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C4%9Bjiny_%C4%8Ceska)

One of the world's most famous events that took place in South Moravia was the "Battle of the Three Emperors" at Austerlitz on 2 December 1805, when the French Emperor Napoleon defeated the combined forces of the Austrian Emperor Franz and the Russian Tsar Alexander.

## Brno

The strategic location of this city truly lying at the very heart of Europe made it the ideal place to establish a network of major trade routes running across its territory. On the other hand, it was also the reason why the city was drawn into numerous military conflicts, whether the regular Turkish raids or the military campaigns of the Habsburgs and the Hungarians. The city had to defend itself against Swedish troops, repeatedly against Prussian troops, and even Napoleon's Great Army twice marched in its streets (1805 and 1809). The city's history was also heavily influenced by the presence of the nearby Habsburg Imperial Court in Vienna. Brno became a major military fortress for the Habsburgs destined to protect the imperial seat from the north. Foreign colonists had begun to arrive in the city from the 13<sup>th</sup> century - Germans, Flanders, and Valoni - who settled around the lower square (Svoboda Square). The Jewish community was located in the lower part of what is today Masaryk Street. Due to the city's right to hold annual markets, international trade grew, which required a thorough knowledge of the law. This resulted in the town hall writer Jan writing the Book of Decisions of the Town Councillors of Brno, which then became a legal model for many cities.

During the Hussite wars, the city remained loyal to King Zikmund, and the Hussites besieged Brno twice, both times unsuccessfully (1428 and 1430). In 1454, King Ladislaus the Posthumous expelled the Jews from Brno, and they only began to return as late as the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Under King George of Poděbrady, Brno aligned itself with Matyáš Korvín, who was the king's enemy and recognised in Moravia as the true Czech king. In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Brno began to lean towards Protestantism and its followers gained dominance in the city council.

During the Thirty Years' War in 1643 and 1645, Brno was the only city in Moravia which resisted a prolonged siege by Swedish troops. This allowed the Austrian Empire to form a new army and fight off the Swedish. The city was rewarded for its merits with new privileges, including promotion of its emblem, and became the sole capital of Moravia. Since 1641, Brno has housed the Land Tables of Moravia. After the Thirty Years' War, the city became an impregnable Baroque fortress. Attempts at recatholisation brought new Catholic orders to the city through which, especially the Jesuits and Capuchins, increased their influence.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Brno developed in terms of industry, and the process continued in the next century. Brno focused on the textile and engineering industry and rapidly introduced the latest technologies of the time. The first train arrived in Brno in 1839. This industrial development gave rise to suburbs and the city began to lose its fortress character, including Špilberk Castle, which later became the feared "Prison of Nations". Following the example of Vienna, the city walls were demolished and replaced with new buildings and green areas.

In 1850, 32 neighbouring municipalities merged with Brno, increasing the population to 46,000. Gas street lighting (1847) and a tramway (1869) were introduced and gymnasiums, realschules, and even universities established. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, national differences between the German and Czech populations culminated in the city. The predominance of Germans in local self-government ended in 1919.

During the so-called first Czechoslovak Republic, Brno was the second city after Prague, both in size and importance, and the capital of the Moravian-Silesian land. At that time, Masaryk University (1919) was founded and the Brno Exhibition Centre (1928) opened with a display of contemporary culture. Brno was an industrial, commercial, educational, and cultural centre. Leoš Janáček, Viktor Kaplan, Jiří Mahen, and Bohuslav Fuchs were just some of the prominent figures of that time.

The Second World War resulted in severe damage to Brno. During the Nazi occupation, hundreds of Czechs and Moravians were executed at Kounic College. After the war, the German population was expelled from Brno in 1945. During the period of Communist governments, Brno remained somewhat left out due to the preference for other priorities, and fell into stagnation although it quickly recovered when the country joined the European Union.<sup>3</sup>

There are several public and state universities in Brno today: Janáček Academy of Performing Arts, Masaryk University, Mendel University in Brno, University of Defence, University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno, and Brno University of Technology. The South Moravian Region and the City of Brno strongly support the development of science and research, especially in the IT sector, and the city has earned the nickname of “the Czech Silicon Valley”.<sup>4</sup> Nearly 400,000 people currently live in Brno with another 100,000 commuting to the city for work and study. The real size of the city is about half a million inhabitants.<sup>5</sup>



*Two Pickers in the Field by the South Moravian painter Jožo Uprka (Moravian Gallery in Brno)*

<sup>3</sup> Moje Brno, Historie Brna, <http://www.mojebrno.jecool.net/inka--brno-historie.html>

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedie, Jihomoravský kraj, [https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihomoravsk%C3%BD\\_kraj#Historie](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihomoravsk%C3%BD_kraj#Historie)

<sup>5</sup> Wikipedie, Brno, <https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brno>



# Regional Gastronomy of South Moravia

## Climate Conditions and Agriculture

The climate of South Moravia is one of the warmest in the Czech Republic. Local agriculture is most developed in the lowlands. More than half of the area of the South Moravian Region is made up of agricultural land. Breeding specialises in pigs, water poultry, and chickens. The most common cereals are wheat, barley, and corn and vegetables such as local famous pickles, peppers, and tomatoes. Due to the warm climate, peaches, apricots, and grapevines also grow well in the region. Over 96% of all vineyards in the Czech Republic are located in South Moravia.

## Traditional Foods of South Moravia

The South Moravia Region includes several distinctive ethnographic regions (Moravian Slovakia, Podhorácko, Haná) characterised by a wide range of folk traditions, which gave rise to a distinct regional gastronomy. The typical features of the local cuisine are mostly due to the region's fertility with plenty of fruits, vegetables, grains, and wines.

Ordinary cooking is perhaps simple yet scented with fruit dumplings, so-called patents (potato pancakes with plum jam and poppy seeds), cakes, and hearty soups from beans and peas. Special noodle soup or roasted goose with sour cabbage and potato dumplings with local red wine are served on holidays. When supplemented with numerous wine and spirit tastings from local producers, dulcimer music, and excellent singers and dancers, it all creates the distinctive tone of South Moravia.

The first months of the year revolve around dances, costume balls, pig-slaughtering feasts finished by a carnival during which dancers, musicians, and a costume parade visit houses on their way (the bear, the goat, the horse, the gipsy, Turkish motifs). The ancient dance of unmarried men "under sabres" still takes place today when housewives stick pieces of bacon, doughnuts, and other delicacies on the men's sabres (now wooden) at each stop. The pig-slaughtering feast involves "obarovica" soup (a soup from a cooked pig's head with groats), baked blood or tripe sausages, roasted goose (otherwise meat is mostly boiled), duck, as well as rabbit and hare. Traditional sweets are also baked - cakes full of butter and eggs and especially trdelníks or what is known as God's graces.

According to the memories of local people and the works of ethnographers, food was rather humble and scarce until the 1980s even though the recipes were many and varied. It was only with the advent of local industrial factories combined with the considerable rationalisation of farming and breeding and the resulting increase in the wealth of the local population when the cuisine was greatly transformed and enriched.

The original diet, which has essentially remained unchanged for centuries, is strongly associated

with nature. Early in the spring, people ate various vegetable roots and herbs cooked in soups. This form of diet was, of course, also common in times of wars, poor harvests, and hailstorms. Nettle roots were cooked and tree bark ground and mixed with maple and birch buds to prepare simple bread. To keep the teeth and stomach healthy, it was important to eat only wholemeal (dark) roughly-ground flour to ensure enough fibre intake - now very popular. Almost every house had its own stone grinder. People ate boiled or raw milk with bread and various soups for breakfast. The main dish was legume soups, such as lentils, beans, and peas; caraway or mushroom soups; beggar's soup (water with old bread), or cabbage soup (whey, sauerkraut, supplemented with caraway and onion). Meat soups were only served on Sundays, and meat was consumed to a very limited extent. The main meals were mainly legumes (often cooked in a soup), from which various mashes were made. Legumes were filling and cheap and were packed with protein. This was most often peas, served either cooked or buttered. Beans and lentils were eaten thickened as a sauce. "Sujmaštr" was a meal made from legumes and groats. In addition to peas, lentils (known as "šoška" or "čučka"), and beans ("fazula"), horse bean and common vetch were cultivated. The cultivation of chickpeas ("chehrna", *Cicer arietinum* in Latin) was recorded in the village of Hrušky. For dinner, only cold milk, acid milk, or boiled plums would often have to suffice.

Ethnographic scholars have found records of a much more nutritious and complex diet at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century near Podlužáky; however, legumes and flour meals were still prevalent. The most popular flour dish was "pukance" (festive pastry). Their later version (for Christmas Eve) was made from special blank cakes boiled with hot milk, buttered, and sprinkled with poppy seeds. In addition, women often prepared "slíže" (noodles with poppy, nuts, sour milk) from rye flour. Popular sweetmeats included "lokše" (potato pancakes sprinkled with poppy seeds), "bélešky" (muffins), or "gugla" (a baked potato). The proportion of meat had increased slightly at that time, although it was still a special festive food and certainly not meant for everyday diet. It was chiefly cooked meat complemented by a variety of sauces. Meat was baked only on feasts, pig-slaughters, and important occasions. Fish and various mushroom dishes were a welcome but occasional change. Potatoes (known as "zemáky" or "erteple") were already an important ingredient of the cuisine in Moravian Slovakia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They were usually divided into early ("žluté", "rané", "svatojáňky", "jakubinky") and late ("růženy", "česky", "modráky", "škrobáky" to make starch, or "svinské" for cattle). From other root crops in the Podluží region, beet ("repa"), both for food and sugar, also grew well, which laid the foundations for the later sugar industry in Břeclav. The region's specificity was extensive corn ("turkyň") fields.

By the 1920s, researchers were already describing a gradual retreat from the traditional leguminous diet and a decline in legume cultivation. Housewives tended to buy ingredients at the market instead of growing everything themselves. Villages were full of front gardens and yards behind the house where women grew their own vegetables and herbs. Carrot, parsley, onion, lettuce, cucumbers ("oharky"), cabbage, horseradish, leek, cauliflower, and garlic were, and still are, thriving in the local soil. Pumpkins were grown as a by-product among potatoes and corn. The cultivation



of tomatoes also became popular. Cultivation of lettuce was widespread in Břeclav and Hodonín. Most of Moravian Slovakia was characterised by developed fruit-growing.

The menu of those times included sparrows in caraway or goulash from ground squirrels caught in the fields. Poached white fish or even game ranked among the best that poor people could hope to eat. Housewives would use everything that grew around and so potato soups contained yarrow and the pulp of wildly growing carline thistle served as a snack. Fresh elderberries were used to prepare a special mash called “chebzová” or “kozenková”. Black elder was cooked with a pear, which not only made the dish sweeter but also worked as a timepiece - when the pear was soft, the mash was ready. It was then sprinkled with a little grated gingerbread and served. Black elder flowers were fried in batter like today’s cauliflower. Of course, mushrooms were also popular and were fried, prepared for sauces, added to soups, dried for winter, and used in a festive black sauce that was served on Christmas Eve. On weekdays, sauces and soups were less rich (onion, tomato, pickles) and mostly contained nothing more than dumplings. Meat was mainly served on holidays and Sundays. Dumplings were particularly popular at that time.<sup>6</sup>

Wild fruits and berries were usually picked by children (strawberries, blackberries, wild sour cherries, pears, and blackthorns). Children liked to eat unripe fruit, such as “dalamašky” or “roblíky” (unripe plums infested with a parasitic fungus). The main part of the diet was crops grown in fields and in the garden rather than animal products.

Soups were very popular because they created a feeling of saturation and required fewer ingredients when compared to other meals. Their preparation was very simple and was divided into three groups: the most common were milk and roux soups (thickened with flour mixed with milk), clear soups (garlic, millet), and meat soups (only occasionally and mainly with beef and served on Sundays).

As for vegetables, cabbage has been cultivated and eaten around there since time immemorial. Head cabbage was used as stuffing in cakes, grated into dough, or even served as a standalone meal, just like sauerkraut, which could also be eaten raw. As a full meal, cabbage was prepared in the usual Moravian way with onion and thickened with grated potatoes or flour. This method of preparation was then transferred to all kinds of vegetables if they happened to arrive in the Brno countryside (such as beet cabbage). Beets, asparagus (from Ivančice), cucumbers, and lettuce (only shortly before the First World War) were the most popular.

Mashes were very common as they too required only a short time and few ingredients to prepare. The most popular were “netaja” millet or groat mashes, where a layer of rye flour was added into boiling water into which holes were made with a spoon through which the water evaporated. When the mash broke into pieces, it was served with butter. “Kocmoch” was a flour mash usually prepared for children.

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<sup>6</sup> Petra Prospěchová, Regionální kuchařka aneb Všechny chutě Čech, Moravy a Slezska, Prague, 2013.

Floury foods, such as bread, pastries, and potatoes were the basis of the diet in the Brno region. Food reflected a family's social status: farmers prepared their dough with milk (and even with eggs after 1900), while poor families could only afford water. Only farmer's families could use butter for their meals (poppy seeds were also an excellent source of fat). Most flour meals were eaten sweetened. Stuffing was made from plum jam, dried carrots, pears with poppy seeds, curd, and cabbage. So-called "přesňáke" (pancakes) were made from unleavened dough (barley flour with water) prepared in the pan or in the oven sprinkled with poppy seeds or spread with plum jam. This meal was prepared in poor families until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were also so-called "lukše" (noodles) often prepared without eggs. They were thin and added to soups and widely consumed separately with groats. Potato gnocchi called "škubánky" only became common after 1900, and this is the only food that was prepared both sweet and with eggs. Cakes with "karlátka" were a seasonal meal made from dough with water, stuffed with plums, and sprinkled with poppy seeds, curd, and groats. Dumplings were usually cooked in winter and were very hard. Leavened dough was also used to make bread, which held a special place as the term "bread" was also used synonymously with "food". This is a remnant from the days of hunger caused by poor harvests, though poor families with many children still had their bellies full. It was believed that if someone did not respect the bread properly, misfortune would strike their family. Another food that was prepared at that time was muffins and "bacoche" (square, roughcakes).

Dumplings called "guliváry" belong to the tradition of southeast Moravia, not only in the Brno region but also in neighbouring Moravian Slovakia. They were filled with different kinds of fruit, most commonly apricots, mirabelles ("špendlíky"), or cherries. In Moravian Slovakia, they are made not only from leavened dough but also from potato dough and sprinkled with poppy seeds.<sup>7</sup>

Milk was hardly ever used or even known among the landless. Those who had a cow or a goat occasionally drank some; however, even the farmers did not have too much of it as everyone aimed to sell it. Curd was used not only to sprinkle baked food and for stuffing, but also to prepare "tvarůžky", which is a round ripened cheese.

Farmers ate meat three times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays while cotters ate it only on Sundays, and the poor only on major holidays. Those who had a pig held pig slaughters, most often after New Year's Day. Meat could also be bought - most often beef, rarely poultry - and was served with cabbage and sauces (garlic, onion, dill, milk, liver, ortomato).

Eggs were only added to dough on festive occasions prior to 1900 and were never eaten alone. It was only after 1905 when eggs became a standalone meal, although the farmers regarded them as unclean and usually tried to sell them.

There had always been a lack of fat, and some poor families substituted it with beet syrup, milk, or sugar water, while some even used tallow. Only those who held pig- slaughters could have lard.

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<sup>7</sup> Petra Prospěchová, Regionální kuchařka aneb Všechny chutě Čech, Moravy a Slezska, Prague, 2013.

Potatoes became the diet of the poor (and joined soups, cabbage, and legumes) and the most important food after the Napoleonic wars. When there was not enough flour, potatoes were baked as a fully fledged meal for breakfast or dinner. Potato mash was very popular and was called “ždánice”. Potatoes were used to prepare “škubánky”, apple pies (“koláčky jabkovy”), and apple pancakes (“placky jablkovníke”).

Water was the most common drink, and coffee arrived as late as after 1866. It was first drunk at weddings, then only on Sundays. After 1900, coffee became an everyday drink, although often with substitutes and not from beans and without milk.<sup>8</sup>

The landless peasants, if not working on a farm, had to buy everything. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, every town and village had their own grocery or self-help food associations set up by workers commuting to Brno. In 1890, there were 208 groceries and 139 general stores and a huge number of small vendors. Everybody at that time only wanted to purchase sugar, salt, chicory, spices, and spirits for the harvest feast. Still, in some villages located in the woods, even the farmers had to buy flour in the spring, which they only could do if they managed to sell some of their own products (most often plum jam). After 1900, it was customary that farmers sold their good grain and bought lower-quality flour that sufficed for their needs at home.<sup>9</sup>

## Traditional Foods of Brno

Brno and the entire South Moravian Region are a natural crossroads where trade routes have intersected for centuries. As a result, Czech and German influences naturally blend together both in terms of language and cuisine. However, these two cultural traditions are not the only ones that shaped the region. There were also Jewish, Hungarian, and Polish cuisines that left numerous influences and ingredients in Moravia that local people eventually grew to accept as their own. Some of the lesser populations that came to Moravia from the Balkans (Bulgarians, Croats) or Romania should also be noted. Regardless of whether they were re-emigrants (originally Moravian or Slovak families), their eating habits were quite different from the Central European habits. Recipes from these families initially seemed exotic to South Moravian women and, therefore, slightly suspicious, but they eventually found their way into local cookbooks. One example of these meals that has survived to this day is stuffed peppers.

In terms of recent history, the current cuisine of the region has been greatly influenced by the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Typical examples of this are Wiener schnitzel and Hungarian goulash, which have become so domesticated that the Czechs, Moravians, and Silesians consider them genuine local meals.

The gastronomy of Brno and its wider surroundings has been shaped not only by national factors

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<sup>8</sup>Miroslava Ludvíková, Lidová strava na Brněnsku, Brno 1961

<sup>9</sup> Miroslava Ludvíková, Lidová strava na Brněnsku, Brno 1961

but also by the local soil. “Even though it is a ring of towns relatively remote from a single centre, the region is not homogeneous. There are poor areas in the north and northwest, where the last headlands of the Drahaný Highlands and the Bohemian- Moravian Highlands reach Brno, while the southeast and south have a more fertile soil and richer cuisine,” explains Miroslava Ludvíková in her ethnographic work from the early 1960s. In the north and northeast of the region, the cuisine resembles that of mountainous Moravian Wallachia, while the south is closer to that of Moravian Slovakia. This is both in terms of ingredients and individual dishes. Brno itself falls into the latter category. The local pantries were filled with foods mostly from adjacent villages.

The still surviving market at the Zelný rynek is just one of many that used to be regularly held in Brno a hundred years ago. There used to be a fish market at Dominican Square, a fruit market in Františkánská Street, and a cattle market in Radnická Street. Greengrocers from Líšeň had unique status on these markets, and there could be as many as 400 women with stuffed backpacks (“krošňa”) heading to the markets around 1900. “Women for Líšeň control the daily market. How they came to this preferential right is hard to tell. But once they hold it, they will not lose it”, writes the contemporary newspaper. There also used to be pots with sausages sold hanging on cooking spoons over the boiling water. And those who did not like the fast food of the time could wet their whistle and fill their stomach in one of the thriving inns.

## Holidays and Good Food

### Christmas

People used to fast on Christmas Eve. There was no lunch and adults only drank a little chicory coffee while children waited to see the “golden lamb”. All day was spent in preparation for the evening and the following days. The farmers used to prepare feed for animals for entire holidays and personally went to feed them: they fed horses with corn cobs and old bread, cows with carrots, hens with cooked beans, and fed various leftovers to pigs so that the animals also knew it was Christmas.

The Christmas Eve dinner, when the farm labourers also joined the farmer’s family at the table, began when the first star appeared. After a prayer, the feast began. They placed a bundle of straw underneath the table in memory of the fact that Christ was born on one and the housewife then put baskets on a white table cloth filled with symbols of plenty (bread, grain, and flour), health (honey, garlic, parsley, onion), and fertility (apple).

According to an unwritten tradition, there should have been nine dishes on the table on Christmas Eve. First were served biscuits with honey, garlic, fruit, or herbs. The soup was filling, thickened, and flavoured with dried mushrooms. Other popular dishes included kuba (a mixture of groats and peas) made either with smoked meat or lurid boletes with garlic. The feast would, of course, be incomplete without a mash - whether from millet, groats, or peas with butter and honey. Plaited “vánočka”, where the preparation is related to a myth that people must bind the sun on the winter

solstice so that it does not run away, is a traditional part of the Christmas Eve dinner even today. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, expensive candy was often replaced with boiled dried fruits called “krůžalky” or dough called “bábečko” baked in a clay form and again sprinkled with poppy seeds (instead of today’s vánočka). From meat, only fish was served occasionally baked on caraway in the oven. The typical Christmas Eve dinner as we know it today - fish soup, potato salad, and fried fish - first appeared at the end of the 1930s and has become fully domesticated only due to the gradual decline of folk customs and traditions in the 1960s. It was an unforgettable moment after eight o’clock when shepherds and guards sounded their horns and cracked whips (“kocar”).

Christmas Day used to be a quieter time than today as it was not customary to visit friends and family. However, Saint Stephen’s Day (who was a fiery preacher, the first martyr of the Christian faith, and the patron of all horses and cats) was all about celebration. After the church service, farm labourers left their current jobs and started working for a new farmer (hence the saying “There is no master on Stephen”).

## Easter

In the Catholic tradition, Ash Wednesday begins a 40-day pre-Easter fasting period lasting until Easter Day. The tradition of fasting before Easter can also be found today in some Catholic families in the Podluží region, though to a lesser extent, and essentially meant to exclude the meat of warm-blooded animals. People thus ate kuba or kyselo (a soup or rather sauerkraut water). Animal fat was replaced with beechnut oil or oil from plum stones. The Easter fasting period lasts six Sundays in the Catholic calendar. The first is called “black” or “fox” Sunday. Housewives secretly baked pretzels and hung them on trees. When they sent the children to find them in the morning, they told them it was foxes who hung them on the trees. The second Sunday is called “roast” Sunday due to a roasted grains dish, which was prepared on that particular Sunday named “pražmo”.<sup>10</sup>

Due to ethnographic works, the so-called taking out of death (“morana”) from the village, which symbolised the burial of winter and the welcoming of the spring, has survived to this day from the rituals of the Easter cycle. On Holy Week, people bake sweet “jidáše” on Ash Wednesday and boys rattle wooden sticks on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to replace the sound of silent bells. According to the Holy Scriptures, on the Wednesday after Palm Sunday, Judas denounced Christ to the high priests. Judas made the first step of his betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. This day is also known as Soot-Sweeping Wednesday as women swept the chimneys and baked more “jidášky” (or “jidáše”) that were twisted as was Judas’ character. These were actually buns from leavened dough whose surface was pierced with a fork or knife before baking, and their shape of a twisted string or rope resembled the noose on which Judas, tortured by his conscience, hung himself. These “jidáše” sprinkled with honey were eaten on Maundy Thursday and were supposed to protect against “snake bites, bee stings and any other poison.” According to folklore superstitions, no one could frown on that day or the frown would remain on their face for the rest of the year.

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<sup>10</sup> Regional Association of the National Network of Local Action Groups of the South Moravian Region, Regionální gastronomie jižní Moravy a tvorba pěších tras, venkovských muzeí a dalších produktů venkovského cestovního ruchu.



Easter Monday. The village youth in costumes went from house to house where single girls lived and whipped them with a twisted willow stick decorated with colourful bows. In return for the “beating”, they were given food and drink and traditionally decorated Easter eggs. This tradition was very popular and has survived until today, which cannot be said about the tradition that fell on the next day which belonged to girls in the village square and housewives in their homes.



*Easter eggs from Borkovany. After the First World War, production for markets grew in Borkovany and many women used this opportunity to earn extra money.*

## **Hody**

Originally, the term “hody” (meaning kermesse) referred to a specific festive time related to a religious event. Simply put, hody is usually centred around a saint to whom a local church or chapel is dedicated. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many parishes returned to celebrating their patrons, while some still celebrate both. The purpose of this autumn feast is the fact that at that time, most of the field work had already been completed, some money was being earned for the harvest, geese had grown, and young wine was almost ready.

The feast was often associated with major annual markets and an opportunity for craftsmen and traders to earn money and for villagers to buy goods. It was also associated with cleaning and repairing the house, preparing feast cakes and other festive meals or wearing folk costumes (or buying new costume parts) by single women and men. A typical festive menu was comprised of beef soup with “rezance” (noodles), offal with a sweet soup with “šišky” (dumplings), roast pork with cabbage, roast goose “oharky” salad, and roast chickens. Sometimes women also prepared fried chickens with cooked “trnky” (dried plums). And finally, there was a bowl of sweets.





*To celebrate a good harvest, some South Moravian villages hold a harvest festival called “dožinky” in late summer. Dožinky were associated with the last round of collecting the harvest from the field. The character of this feast differs by region. In some, a procession decorated with sickles, scythes, and wreaths parades through the village although some villages now only celebrate the feast in a more modern and modified version.*

### Weddings

The typical menu of a wedding feast involved “slíže” (noodle) soup, beef with horseradish, cabbage with tripe and blood sausages, offal sauce, fried chicken, roast pork, cooked dried plums and pears, pickled beetroot, and sweets such as “gugla”, “koláčky”, and poppy-seed cakes.

### Funerals

At a funeral feast, women served bread, cheese, wine or beer. Meat dishes were usually omitted.

### Puerperium

After a woman had given birth, there was six-week (Sunday) period (hence the Czech term “šestinedělí”), which was associated with numerous protective magical practices. According to tradition, the mother was physically weakened after the birth and her child was threatened by a variety of evil forces. They were usually brought cooked hen with noodles, various soups (except with legumes), milk, cream, and various breads characteristic of the given region. New mothers were also given a bottle of wine or liquor “to cleanse the blood”.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Regional Association of the National Network of Local Action Groups of the South Moravian Region, Regionální gastronomie jižní Moravy a tvorba pěších tras, venkovských muzeí a dalších produktů venkovského cestovního ruchu

## Traditional Gastronomic Products of Brno and the South Moravia Region

### Slaughtering and Sausages

Pig-slaughtering has a long tradition throughout Moravia and Silesia and has become an increasingly popular tourist and gastronomic attraction.<sup>12</sup>

### Znojmo Pickles

A renowned delicacy and a centuries-old tradition of growing and preserving vegetables- these are the famous the Znojmo pickles. The Znojmo region is ideal for the cultivation of cucumbers. Due to the favourable microclimate and soil composition, cucumbers grown there are very tasty and fragrant. The pickle contains vinegar, sugar, salt, and spice extracts in special proportions that ensure a truly delicious and pleasant taste.<sup>13</sup>

### Almond Tree in Hustopeče

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the town of Hustopeče was the largest wine-growing village in the Czech lands. Local wine cultivation has a long tradition, and wine has always been both a great source of pleasure and a livelihood for local people. The vineyards around Hustopeče used to cover an area of more than 1,350 hectares although wine growing, unfortunately, began to decline significantly after the Second World War. After 1949, almond trees were planted on a large scale. The reason behind this was to produce almonds and thus prevent their import from other, especially capitalist, countries (Spain, Italy, Greece). This gave rise to the almond orchards in Hustopeče. At the time of the greatest boom, over 50,000 almond trees grew there. However, the almond trees gradually gave way to apricots while economic conditions also changed. Nobody was interested in the produce any longer and the orchards were left unused and neglected. Eventually, only two four-hectare almond orchards remained in Hustopeče. The rescue came at the last minute when Hustopeče City Hall stepped in and saved this Central European rarity. Of the original 50,000 trees, around 1,000 still remain. The view of the flowering orchards of almond trees is still an unforgettable experience for every visitor today.<sup>14</sup>

### Asparagus in Ivančice

The most famous asparagus plantations in Ivančice come from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Asparagus began to be planted in local vineyards, which to a certain extent contributed to the decline of local wine growing. At that time, the Ivančice asparagus, or “špargel”, was more famous than Pilsen beer and was exported to the whole of Europe, including the imperial court in Vienna. According to the oldest sources, the first asparagus plants arrived in Ivančice at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century from a monastery in Moravský Krumlov. According to other theories, asparagus seedlings were imported there by Václav Hüppš, a trader from Frankfurt, in the 1880s. Some also

<sup>12</sup> Bukovany Mill, [www.bukovansky-mlyn.cz](http://www.bukovansky-mlyn.cz)

<sup>13</sup> Znojmo pickles, [www.znojemskaokurka.cz](http://www.znojemskaokurka.cz)

<sup>14</sup> Almond and Wine Feast in Hustopeče <http://www.slavnostimandloniavina.cz/>

mention the pharmacist Anton Worell as the originator of the Ivančice asparagus miracle, who cultivated this crop in bulk in 1829. The cultivation of asparagus declined both after the First and the Second World War when investors shifted their focus to sugarbeet.<sup>15</sup>



*Asparagus growing in Ivančice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a profitable activity*

### **Pohořelice Carp**

Fish farming has a rich tradition in South Moravia and Pohořelice is a major fish-farming region. The very first tangible evidence of establishing ponds in South Moravia is the written record of Měnínský Pond, which was constructed by Margrave Jošt of the Luxembourg family at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and had an area of 1,108 morgens. In the Lednice and Mikulov region, it was the House of Liechtenstein who established most ponds and built Sedlecký pond (now Nesyt) between 1417 and 1418. In the Pohořelice region, it was the Pernsteins and the Žabkas who were most interested in fish farming. The Pohořelice carp is registered in the Register of Protected Designations of Origin. The designation can only be awarded to unique and quality products whose production is closely related both to the area and a rich tradition. In addition, the Pohořelice carp holds the KLASA national quality label and the Golden Taste of South Moravia. The Pohořelice carp is char-

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<sup>15</sup> Město Ivančice, Po stopách šparglu, <https://mesto.ivancice.cz/po-stopach-sparglu-slavne-dejiny/>



acterised by excellent growth abilities and muscling. Its muscle has a strong consistency, a pink to red colour, a fresh fish scent, and a typical fine flavour. The exceptional quality of the Pohorelice carp is due to observing good manufacturing practice and the unique soil and climatic conditions of South Moravia.<sup>16</sup>



*Summer reduction fishing in the Vrkoč in Pohorelice*

### **Punkva Trout**

Even though trout breeding has a short tradition in the Moravian Karst, the local trout farm is exceptional as there are only two such farms in karst water in Europe (the other is in France). The Skalní Mlýn trout farm is located in a protected area where the groundwater remains pristine due to the absence of chemicals. Local trout are bred using water from the Punkva River, which springs in an ecologically clean area while the temperature never exceeds 13 °C, not even in the summer.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Fish farming in Pohorelice, <http://www.rybnikarstvipohorelice.cz/>

<sup>17</sup> Blansko, Punkevní pstruh - tradiční lahůdka známá i na vídeňském dvoře, <https://www.blansko.cz/clanky/2011/12/punkevní-pstruh-tradicni-lahudka-znama-i-na-videnskem-dvoře>

## Viticulture

Wine cultivation has a long history in the Czech Republic. It is assumed that grapevines were brought by the Romans in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Between 276 and 282, the Roman emperor Probus abolished Emperor Domitian's ban in force from 91 and ordered the planting of vineyards in the Roman colonies behind the Alps. At that time, vineyards were already more developed in Austria. The Roman garrison in Vindobona "Legio Decima Gemina, Pia Fidelis" built a military post on the Roman Hill under Pálava and planted the very first vineyards in the region. In 1926, during the excavations of the buildings of the tenth legion located in the former village of Mušov, a 28 cm long viticultural knife was found with a 10 cm long tang.

Massive development of vineyards in the Podluží and Hodonín regions was recorded in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century when vineyard organisations were established as a form of guilds. Under the rule of the House of Liechtenstein, the colonisation of the Mikulov region began in 1248 where many vineyards were set up around Pálava. At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, vineyards expanded rapidly throughout Moravia. For the Brno townspeople who owned vineyards not only in Brno but also in Židlochovice, Hustopeče, Mikulov, and Znojmo, Austrian wines presented major competition. At their request, in 1325 King John of Bohemia ordered that from the harvest of grapes until Easter only local wine may be tapped in Brno. Consequently, wine tasters were appointed in Brno who stood at the city gates and tested the origin of the wine brought to Brno. They only allowed in that which originated in Moravia and even set its price. It was the beginning of the guild of wine commissioners, whose function in Moravia was later carried out by the so-called "šlotéři". Šlotéři transported barrels of wine, taking out full barrels from wine cellars and wheeling them to the cellars of customers. They were the ones who knew which wine was best and how much of it was in store, and they also served as intermediaries for buying and selling wine.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, vineyards spread across Bohemia and Moravia due to the activities of townspeople who could afford the costly investment in establishing vineyards on hill slopes. Wine production grew and foreign wines imported on the local market began to pose tough competition for the local wine. Winemakers demanded a ban on the import of foreign wines in the winter while trying to export their wine to northern countries. Only quality wines from the south were exempt from the ban. Around 1763, on the contrary, Austrian winemakers, worried about the competition of Moravian wines demanded that Empress Maria Theresa restrict the size of Moravian vineyards. Between 1783 and 1784, Emperor Joseph II issued his revolutionary patents, and in 1783 all wine-growing regulations were abolished, including the jurisdiction of the local wine courts in Moravia, and new wine-growing rules were issued for Moravia. By the imperial patent of Joseph II of 1784, everyone was allowed to sell food, wine, and fruit juice that they produced themselves. This also resulted in the so-called sale of wine "pod víchou" (under a small thatched roof).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Vína z Moravy a vína z Čech, Historický vývoj vinařství v datech, <https://www.wineofczechrepublic.cz/nase-vina/historie/vyvoj-vinarstvi/historicky-vyvoj-vinarstvi-v-datech.html>

Major changes take place in the 1950s in the context of collectivisation and enforcement of large-scale production. Traditional forms survive only as part of crofter's farming. Following the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, two viticultural areas have been established under the 2004 Wine Act. The viticultural area of Bohemia is divided into two sub-areas: Mělník and Litoměřice, while the viticultural area of Moravia is divided into four sub-regions: Slovácko, Velké Pavlovice, Mikulov, and Znojmo.<sup>19</sup>



*The unique area of historic wine cellars called Plže ranks among the jewels of the Slovácko region. This area of original wine cellars is located on the outskirts of Petrov. In 1983, it was declared a conservation area of folk architecture, and it is the oldest village conservation area in the country. You can find the picturesque cellars with their baroque-decorated unmistakable blue-and-white facades in the upper section of the wine-growing area.*

Brno is the gateway to the traditional viticultural area of Moravia. Besides its natural and historical attractions, the local wine production culture is one of the main attractions for visitors. In general, tourism and the services sector have been growing progressively for several years. Wine growing, wine, and wine tourism are the flagship of the South Moravian Region. In the segment of wine tourism, there has been dynamic development, and it is no longer true that tourists visit just to "sit in the wine cellar". Tourists who are wine lovers are also interested in inspecting the vineyards and seeing the actual work during wine production and finishing in the cellar. With the advent of bicycle touring, tourists have become enormously interested in exploring the beauty of South Moravia through the Moravian vineyard trail and museums and exhibitions in many wine-growing villages. Wine tourism is also closely related to local specialities and local gastronomic traditions. Wine tourism promotes the preservation of rural settlements and maintains local traditions and folklore.

Even Brno itself has not completely lost the image of a wine-growing town over the course of time. In the last few centuries, Brno has separated itself from Moravian wine-growing areas due to its

<sup>19</sup> Masarykova Univerzita, Vinohradnictví a vinařství, [https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/bitstream/handle/11222.digilib/131123/Books\\_2010\\_2019\\_054-2014-1\\_10.pdf?sequence=1](https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/bitstream/handle/11222.digilib/131123/Books_2010_2019_054-2014-1_10.pdf?sequence=1)



size, modernity, and unfortunately, also due to its conscious lack of interest in wine history and cooperation with wine-growing institutions, centres, and sub-regions.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence, Brno has lost one of its most important characteristics that would have distinguished it from all the other major cities east of Prague running all the way to Vienna and Bratislava. The revival of this tradition and linking it with the city's modern features could be something that would emphasise the historical uniqueness and make Brno far more attractive to its citizens and visitors.

### **Bystrc Bread**

The most delicious bread in the whole Brno region has been baked in Bystrc since time immemorial. The reasons are the long tradition, ancient privileges, and exemption from taxes. The bakers of Bystrc were freed from taxes from the time that the Swedes besieged Brno when they secretly baked bread at home and smuggled it all the way to a well in Špilberk through an underground passage leading from the mill in Komín and thus saving the city from starvation.<sup>21</sup>

### **Goose Liver from Líšeň**

Geese from nearby Líšeň, which is now part of the city, were renowned in Brno. Vendors from Líšeň knew how to fatten up their geese so that their meat was soft as butter and their livers as big as a plate and a single goose could provide over two litres of lard. A true goose vendor from Líšeň would not dare to go to the market if she did not have a goose that weighed at least ten kilograms or she would be disgraced. Geese weighing as much as 14 kg were commonplace and could fill the bellies of an entire family. Baked lard and livers were then spread on bread, especially if it was fresh and preferably from Bystrc, where as everybody knew, they made the best.<sup>22</sup>

### **Beer**

Beer has been brewed in Brno since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The city's privileges from 1243 mention the production of beer and malt. Until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there were a number of small, home breweries; however, brewing of beer eventually moved to the city brewery. The development of the brewery took place at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when there were five larger breweries operating in Brno at the same time. From 1943 until 1993, there was only one brewery - Starobrno. The story of beer in Brno illustrates the then general social transformations; the development of cities in the 13<sup>th</sup> century is connected with the emergence of city breweries. On the contrary, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century enterprising nobility emerged and flooded the market with cheap light beer that was drunk as much as water. The Industrial Revolution then laid the foundations for large breweries owned by wealthy families. There was a decline in beer production during the period of both world wars and also during the subsequent nationalisation of private property.<sup>23</sup> Pubs in Brno most

20 BRNO - MĚSTO VÍNA VSTUPNÍ BRÁNA DO VINAŘSKÉHO REGIONU JIŽNÍ MORAVY A WEINVIERTEL, a study under the project "Otevřené sklepní uličky vyprávějí příběhy".

21 Brno Bystrc, <http://www.bystrc.net/>

22 Neviditelný pes - Lidovky, ČLOVĚČINY: Vzpomínky starého zbrojnoše - Husy, [http://neviditelnypes.lidovky.cz/cloveciny-vzpominky-stareho-zbrojnose-husy-f3t-/p\\_zviretnik.aspx?c=A090622\\_160834\\_p\\_zviretnik\\_dru](http://neviditelnypes.lidovky.cz/cloveciny-vzpominky-stareho-zbrojnose-husy-f3t-/p_zviretnik.aspx?c=A090622_160834_p_zviretnik_dru)

23 Špilberk, Žit pivo, <http://www.spilberk.cz/vystava/zit-pivo/>

often tapped beer from Litovel, Přerov, and Černá Hora, but also from Pilsen and Smíchov.<sup>24</sup>

### Wedding Cakes

Individual wedding cakes called “koláčky” differed not only by their names (koláčičky, koláčky, etc.), but also by their size (the bigger, the better) and filling (usually ceremonial curd with plum jam, poppy seeds, and nuts).<sup>25</sup>

## Good Food, Drink, and Shopping in Brno

Inns, and later the cafés, have been important centres of the social life of the inhabitants of Brno since the Middle Ages. People gathered in local inns, taverns, and alehouses, which gradually started to offer accommodation to travellers. Over the course of the centuries, these social centres have transformed into various restaurants, wine bars, pubs and, finally, cafés as we know them today.<sup>26</sup>

### Historic Cafés

The very first permanent café was founded in 1702 by Turk Achmet, who quickly managed to popularise coffee drinking in the city. In 1717, there were already three city cafés, with another four within the next two years. The most popular ones were those owned by Italians. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a total of 16 cafés in Brno, of which none had a Czech owner. There were two types of cafés - one for aristocrats and one for the poor, which catered for the grocers from Zelnýtrh.

The rapid development of Brno in the 1930s also brought about a boom in social life, which, like in other cities, was concentrated in cafés that were frequently established in places with a long tradition of coffee making and hospitality.<sup>27</sup> During the time of the First Czechoslovak Republic, Brno was renowned for its cafés and spending functionalist architecture. Then everything was suddenly wiped out by the Second World War and the subsequent Communist rule. Many cafés from that time vanished and it seemed the golden age had ended. However, in recent years, numerous new cafés have sprung up in addition to the traditional ones, resuming the tradition of coffee drinking in Brno while keeping up with the needs of the modern world. At present, Brno is referred to as the Czech Mecca of coffee. Brno cafés have been featured in prestigious newspapers such as the New York Times and in the Forbes magazine.

### Café Savoy

One Brno café that was on a par with the most exclusive European cafés in terms of its architectural concept, comfortable furnishings, and perfect hospitality was Café Savoy, which stood on the

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24 Oldřich Sirovátka a kol., MĚSTO POD ŠPILBERKEM/ Brno a okolí O lidové kultuře, tradicích a životě lidí, Brno, 1993.

25 Wedding cakes, <http://produktymoravy.cz/recept/svatebni-kolacky/>

26 Oldřich Sirovátka a kol., MĚSTO POD ŠPILBERKEM/ Brno a okolí O lidové kultuře, tradicích a životě lidí, Brno, 1993.

27 Karel Altman - Lenka Kudělková - Vladimír Filip, Zmizelý svět brněnských kaváren, Brno, 2008

corner of the Jakubské Square and Běhounská Street. The building is one of the core works of the architect Jindřich Kumpošt (1891-1968). Café Savoy, which was popular among the Brno elite, was established by the well-known café owner Jan Nekvapil, a son of a Prague innkeeper.<sup>28</sup>

### *Café Opera*

Café Opera also enjoyed immense popularity among Brno's café-goers. It was located on the ground floor of a historicist apartment building on the corner of Kobližná and Divadelní streets in the immediate vicinity of today's Mahen Theatre, after which the café was originally named. The former Café Stadt-Theatre was modernised in 1930 by the widow of the last owner of the café, Augustin Jäger Anna, according to the project by Jindřich Kumpošt. What was formerly a rather small and typically Austro-Hungarian shop became a modern café with large airy spaces in both the parterre and the basement designed as L-shaped in order to correspond with its location at the convergence of two streets.

### *Alfa Palace*

At the beginning of the 1930s, an experimental multipurpose building, the Alpha Palace, was aptly designed for the construction entrepreneur, František Hrdina, most likely by his employee Karel Bezrouk. Construction began near Café Opera on the corner of Jánská and Poštovská streets. Bezrouk successfully utilised numerous creative features in his design that had also featured in an earlier design for the building created by Bohuslav Fuchs. The centrepiece of the gallery was the generously designed Café Alfa, which also contained a gambling room that occupied the entire mezzanine of the buildings at Jánská 11, Jánská 13, and Poštovská 10. The building was leased by the well-known Brno café owner Vladimír Borkovec, who was later replaced by Jan Florian.<sup>29</sup>

### **Restaurants**

The oldest inn in Brno is U Modrého lva located on Křížová Street, where today you can find a large mosaic of a lion on the building's facade. It was a coaching inn on the road to Vienna from which stagecoaches started their journey to Mikulov. The inn survived for centuries only to be demolished in 1934. Other old inns include U Černého medvěda on Jakubské Square, U Tří knížat on Poštovská Street, U Černého orla on Orlí Street, and U Bílého kříže on Pekařská Street. When horsecars were introduced in Brno, new businesses started to emerge further away from the city centre, such as the restaurants Semilasso, U Mlýna in Obřany, and U Černé kočky in Bohunice. Some of the most popular restaurants in Brno were the restaurants Besední dům, U Zlaté Prahy on Česká Street, and Stopkova Plzeňská pivnice.<sup>30</sup>

### **Markets**

Three houses originally stood on the site of today's Brno market. Between 1948 and 1950, a four-storey, late functionalist building for the city's covered food and vegetable market was built

28 iBrno.cz, Slavné brněnské kavárny, kavárna Savoy, <https://www.ibrno.cz/historie/13712-slavne-brnnske-kavarny-i-kavarna-savoy-.html>

29 iBrno.cz, Slavné brněnské kavárny, <https://www.ibrno.cz/historie/36508-slavne-brnnske-kavarny-vi.html>

30 Oldřich Sirovátka a kol., MĚSTO POD ŠPILBERKEM/ Brno a okolí O lidové kultuře, tradicích a životě lidí, Brno, 1993.

on a vacant plot. It was named Dům potravin (House of Food) and according to its original plans, it was supposed to replace the market stalls that had traditionally stood throughout Zelný trh. The building was opened on 12 January 1951 and was later modernised in the 1980s. The original function of the market was later changed to a multipurpose building, and it was partially rebuilt in 1997. At that time, it also gained the new name of Obchodní dům Krokodýl. After 2010, it served only as a warehouse for stalls from the square. In 2014, the owner of the building, the Municipality of Brno Centre, began preparations to restore the original function of the market and its original form. At the end of June 2017, a shopping arcade was opened, and the rest of the building a month later. On the ground floor is a café, bakery, and children's corner. The other two storeys contain a covered marketplace with goods that cannot be sold directly in the square in the open air (meat, sausages, cheese etc.). On the top third storey are the market's office, a co-working space, and a viewing terrace.<sup>31</sup>

## Zelný trh



*The current Zelný  
trh in Brno*

This square was built in the 1330s and called the Upper Square (forum Superius) and included a poultry market (forum Pullorum), a pottery market (forum Figulatorum), and a junk market (Tandelmarkt). It was only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that the square was given its present name Zelný trh

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<sup>31</sup> Wikipedie, Zelný trh, [https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeln%C3%BD\\_trh\\_\(Brno\)](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeln%C3%BD_trh_(Brno))

(Krautmarkt in German). Initially, townsmen and merchants built houses on the square; however, as the nobility and the church grew richer, these houses were replaced with decorated palaces. The most famous of them is Ditrichštejn Palace, today's seat of the Moravian Museum. At the time of the revolutionary year 1848, the square was given the new name of Verbrüderungsplatz (Square of Friendship), but two years later, it returned to its original name Krautmarkt. In 1915, it was again renamed as Kaiser-Wilhelm-Platz (Emperor Wilhelm's Square). After the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the square received the Czech name Zelný trh; however, the ensuing German occupation brought back the name Krautmarkt. After the end of the Second World War and the start of the Communist regime, it was given yet another name - Square of 25 February - only to return to its traditional name of Zelný trh following the political changes in 1989, a name that the people of Brno had never stopped using. Zelný trh is a square that parts of European history have passed through. For example, on 20 November 1805, only a few days before the decisive Battle of the Three Emperors at Slavkov, the city welcomed Emperor Napoleon there.<sup>32</sup>

## Streets

### *Masná*

The street was named after the city slaughterhouse (Fleischmarktasse in German). There used to be a meat market there where butchers could buy fresh raw meat. The market was designed by Bohuslav Fuchs and was constructed from 1924 to 1926. The market later housed the headquarters of a meat processing plant, and today is the seat of several private companies.

### *Pekařská*

The street was probably named Pekařská due to misunderstanding of the Czech word “bekyně” (nun), thus the street's name Bekyngasse, which was based on the location of two convents in the street (Dominican and Cistercian) and which German medieval scribes misinterpreted as Becken-, Bäckchen- or Bäckergasse, meaning bakery.

### *Kobližná*

The street is named after old medieval craftsmen - doughnut makers (kobližníci in Czech while German craftsmen also resided there: bakers, maltsters, woolmakers, taverners, shoemakers, and the like.

## Food Festivals in Brno and South Moravia

### **St. Martin's Wine Tasting in Brno and Follow-Up Opening of Cellars**

Every year on 11/11 at 11 o'clock, the traditional St. Martin's wine tasting is held at Svoboda Square, which is organised by the Wine Fund. St. Martin's wines are the first wines of the year and

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<sup>32</sup> Moje Brno, Zelný trh <http://www.mojebrno.jecool.net/inka--brno-namesti-zelny-trh.html>



you can only clink glasses with this wine on the St. Martin's Day on 11 November at 11 o'clock. It is a fresh and fruity wine that matures just a few weeks previously but has already gained its distinctive character during that time. St. Martin's wines are light in colour and taste and have a low alcohol content, usually around 12%.

### **Asparagus Feast**

Every year, Invančice holds the tasting of asparagus in all known and all lesser known ways. There is a rich cultural programme, extensive wine tasting, and a children's programme for visitors. The event is associated with the grand tasting of asparagus meals served from mobile restaurants in the square. The event is supported by and participated in by top chefs from all over Moravia and Bohemia. There is always a rich cultural and gastronomic programme in the square where visitors can also experience wine-related activities in the tranquil atmosphere of the courtyard in the protected townhall.

### **Local Food**

For five years from 2011 to 2016, guests had the opportunity to enjoy a unique three- course menu prepared exclusively from local ingredients from the best regional producers during three weeks of July in selected Brno restaurants. This festival was organised by the Slow Food Brno and aimed to show the people of Brno the diversity and quality of foods from South Moravia. There was also an accompanying programme during the festival where visitors could have lunch with well-known cookbook authors of cookbooks and meat farmers, winegrowers, small-scale producers of delicacies, and chefs who never stopped loving what they do. Under their supervision, visitors could try out traditional crafts, learn classic recipes, and appreciate the charm of Moravian wines.

### **Apricot Harvest**

Apricots are one of the most popular fruits grown in South Moravia. The town of Velké Pavlovice holds an apricot harvest feast called "Meruňkobraní aneb Meruňky na talíři" where visitors can sample various apricot specialities. In July, apricot lovers can visit the St. Florian's apricot harvest feast with a fair in Miroslav, where they can compete to become the king of dumplings or present the best apricot brandy of the year.

### **Moravian Feast of Smoked Meat and Wine**

Smoked meat was celebrated once again in 2018 at Veverí Castle in Brno. Besides Moravian smoked meat, visitors could taste wieners, savoury sausages, pâtés, salami, bacon, and many other delicious products and, of course, dozens of the best Moravian wines. In 2018, the title of king butcher was awarded to the Ráček Butchery.<sup>33</sup>

### **Cheese Festival**

The Cheese Festival (Festival SÝR in Czech) and the national competition of small cheese makers from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia was created as a joint project by Slow Food Pálava, the

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<sup>33</sup> Moravské uzené, <https://www.moravskeuzene.cz/>



Association of Farm Processors, and the Secondary School of Dairy Industry and Higher Vocational School of Food Technology in Kroměříž. The aim is to support and promote small farm and non-farm milk and dairy product processors (participants must have no more than five employees), present their many excellent products to the general and professional public and publicise the issue of farm processing of agricultural products, which is often associated with inaccurate and confusing information.

#### **Rajská Břeclav - Tomato Feast in South Moravia**

This is a celebration of the tomato as a typical vegetable of the Břeclav region in a variety of culinary arrangements and forms with an accompanying cultural programme.

#### **Cucumber Festival**

This traditional festival is held in the centre of Znojmo and offers visitors a cucumber market with competitions for the best cucumber and pickles or the fastest jar filler. The cultural and musical programme is usually completed with a gastro show and an exhibition of agricultural machinery. There is also a programme for children who can hop on the merry-go-round and other rides in Horní Square.

# Projects to Support Traditional Gastronomy

The most interesting gastronomy projects that have already been realised or are being realised in the region:

## **Czech Specials**

Czech Specials is a partner project of CzechTourism, the Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, and the Czech Association of Chefs and Confectioners. The project aims to raise awareness of the regional gastronomy of the Czech Republic and was created to support restaurants that offer traditional Czech gastronomy in a modern concept. It presents Czech cuisine in individual programmes as varied and full of unique dishes with a wide range of methods of preparation. Czech restaurants are a place where tourists can count on quality services. Czech Specials is also a certification mark that guarantees that the certified restaurants serve their guests traditional top-quality Czech dishes.

## **Taste Moravia**

The South Moravia Tourist Authority has long focused on the development of regional gastronomy. Due to the excellent response to its Taste Moravia (Ochutnejte Moravu in Czech) project, the organisation decided to dedicate itself more to the issue and started cooperation with its Austrian partner, Leader Region Weinviertel Ost, on the cross-border project “Regional Food and Products Market - Online” funded under the Austria- Czech Republic Small Projects Fund 2007-2013. Thanks to the project, South Moravia and the Weinviertel region of Lower Austria could exchange valuable experience in the development of regional gastronomy and traditions. The project successfully mapped producers and vendors in South Moravia so that local citizens and tourists can easily find them.

## **Gourmet Brno**

Gourmet Brno 2017 presents top-rated businesses divided into seven categories - restaurants, bistros, cafés, pubs, wine shops and wine bars, confectionaries, and bars. The aim of the project was to map, rate, and recommend the best ones in Brno.

## **Opportunities for the Development of Gastronomic Cultural Heritage**

“I want to know the history of the food that I am having, not its price. I want to know where it came from, meet the people who grow it... The moment foods lose their true value and biography, we lose all hope for humanity.” Carlo Petrini, President of Slow Food

Intangible gastronomic cultural heritage is an excellent yet underestimated resource. Gastronomy reflects the entire history of the place and embodies centuries-long transformations of different cultures. Regional gastronomic heritage is used to develop tourism but is rarely treated as a means of developing environmental sustainability and social integration.

Cities are ideal laboratories to exploit its potential: they are small enough to influence the business and social scene but still large enough to serve as a gateway to international markets.

Each country has its own cultural identity, and gastronomic heritage is an integral part of it. Gastronomic heritage is made up of specific foods, dishes, traditions, and knowledge of craftsmen. These are the result of thousands of years of people's presence in the given area, as well as sharing and trading with other communities and cultures. This diversity is what differentiates and enriches us at every level. The search for gastronomic products and traditions of the region along with the knowledge of small craftsmen, which is essential for their preservation in protecting and increasing agricultural biodiversity, is an instrument of cultural and social development of the entire region.

Although food cultural heritage is an important resource for regions, it is often undervalued. Working with stakeholders' groups and supporting local traditions and skills allows both to increase their knowledge with the richness of the local gastronomic heritage and to create a new multidisciplinary approach to food that recognises the strong ties between food on the plate, planet Earth, and humans.

Brno is a prospering cultural centre that for centuries has had a strong influence on its surroundings and is also a treasure chest of grand culinary traditions and time-proven skills in the management of cultural heritage.

Yet, Brno has a huge but unused potential in linking its natural and gastronomic heritage with the historical to the benefit of its citizens and tourists.

While Brno is involved in promoting local gastronomy at various levels, it still lacks a comprehensive territorial strategy that would integrate the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage from the point of view of sustainability and its objective to stimulate economic and social growth.

Strengthening the alliance with surrounding rural areas is key for Brno if it desires to make itself a better place for life and work. To increase social cohesion and the development of entrepreneurial opportunities and social responsibility, the city can utilise the highly integrating and powerful tool of gastronomic heritage.

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