

Christmas Gingerbreads

Gingerbreads are unforgettable part of Czech Christmas. Preparation is not difficult, you just need to put baked gingerbreads aside for 2 weeks and wait till they soften. That's why you can start baking at the start of December. You can cut different shapes of animals and motives from the dough. Also you can prepare sections and build a house or tree. Advent wreath from gingerbread is also amazing. After baking we can decorate them with sugar topping.

Ingredients

- 500g of soft wheat flour
- 250g of powdered sugar
- 3 eggs
- 100g of honey
- 50g of butter
- 1 tsp of baking soda
- 1tsp of cinnamon
- 3 dried cloves
- 1 tsp of anise
- 1 allspice
- lemon peel

Directions

1. Lightly warm up honey and crush spice in mortar.
2. Mix all ingredients together and knead into a dough.
3. Put dough in bag and let in fridge for 2 days.
4. Take small parts one by one and roll them thin. Cut shapes of your choice and lay them on baking paper.

5. Bake in preheated oven 180°C for 3-5 minutes.

Potato Salad

Potato salad is traditionally served with [Schnitzel](#) and cannot miss at Czech Christmas dinner table with carp. Every family prepare potato salad by their own recipe according to their taste and customs.

Ingredients

- 2kg of potatoes
- 3-4 carrots
- 1 celery root
- onion
- 5 pickled gherkins
- 4 hard boiled eggs
- canned peas
- 300g of ham
- spoon of mustard
- mayonnaise and tartare sauce (according to your taste)
- salt, pepper

Directions

1. Boil unpeeled potatoes in water with salt and let cool off. Then peel potatoes and cut to small cubes.
2. Boil root vegetables in water with pinch of salt and

vinegar. Let cool off and cut to small cubes and mix with potatoes.

3. Same way add chopped onion and gherkins, cubed boiled eggs, peas, cubed ham and mix together.
4. Blend mustard and mayonnaise, season with salt and pepper. You can also pour a little of brine from pickled gherkins.

Confectionery and Czech Tradition



Although the Czech lands do not have very rich **tradition in confectionery**, not as much as in bakery, it provides a range variety of adopted and modified delicacies which will satisfy everyone who loves sweets.

Origins of Czech confectionery

One of the first Czech mentions of sweets manufacture and mongering is speaking about producers of **gingerbread and sweets** for which they used honey, sugar and flour and then they sold their confectionery, a contemporary parallel to hard candy, in the streets. A similar range of sweets was also sold in apothecaries. The first confectioner mentioned in writing is most likely Mates who was the first street seller in 16th century in Prague. Making of confectionery was very popular in the times of Rudolf II (1576 – 1611) when, following the

French trends, people made pastry creations such as peacocks, flowers baskets and other decorative candy. It was not earlier than in the 17th century when cakes, biscuits and other pastry were introduced to the Czech lands. It's also the first time people tasted small candies and sweet jellies.

Development of Czech confectionery to the present

The gingerbread gained large popularity across the country. The Czech word for the Czech version of **gingerbread is 'Perník'** which came from the word 'peprník' which is derived from the Czech word for pepper. Ginger, along with other ingredients like milk, egg, cinnamon, clove, cardamom or mace were added to the recipe later. Another quite **favourite dainty** is marzipan. This sweet candy was spread across Europe from the oriental countries and can have many forms, decorations, shapes and colours. Marzipan figures are present in every Czech sweet shop. The Czechs also like custards and crèmes. In combination with various icings you can find it in cream rolls, cream puffs, walnut rolls with chocolate cream and many other combinations. Fruit in jelly is also quite a common filling in various butter cupcakes with whipped cream.

The best time for **confectionery then comes with Christmas**. The Christmas family top would certainly include the vanilla rolls with butter and walnut, a nice small brittle which almost melts in the mouth. Another kind of sweet you would typically find on the Christmas table **is**

small gingerbreads decorated with lemon icing. These small crunchy sweets take shape of animals and fairy tale characters, or little cottages, Christmas trees, angels and



other related motives. The top third is completed by Linzer cookies, which are among many types adopted from the surrounding countries, yet are considered as traditional as most of the others.

Last but not least, it is certainly worth pointing out that Czech have learned, from countries like Austria and France, to perform art in form of cakes which come really in as many forms as there are. The ingredients are rich and decorations beautiful. In each good café you can get cake as good as in any country with tradition in bakery and confectionery.

So although there is a great share of foreign influence, each sweet tooth will meet its needs in the plentiful range offered in good Czech confectioneries, renowned cafés and restaurants.