

Czech this out!



Well, it's that time again for a trip around the globe for I'm Just Cookin': International Edition. This time we're going to the Czech Republic!

You probably didn't know this, but Wilber, Neb. is "The Czech Capital of the USA." So it's no surprise that every year they have the Wilber Czech Festival in celebration of their rich Czech heritage.

I love how small towns always have fun summer festivals, so when I happened to be in eastern Nebraska during Czech Fest, I most definitely had to "Czech" it out!!

Besides the abundance of Czech vests, polka music and a Miss Czech/Slovak U.S. Pageant, there were lots and lots of kolaches.

Being from a primarily German family in Colorado, my Nebraska friends laughed when I said I'd never heard of kolaches.

These pastries, with their signature dollop of fruit on top, originated in Central Europe, but have also become popular in certain parts of the U.S., like Nebraska!

These sweet treats certainly grabbed my curiosity, so I asked my foreign exchange student friend Hana what she had to say about kolache.

I'm Just Cookin'

Written by Darci Tomky

Living in the Czech Republic city of Prague and originally from Slovakia, Hana thought it was funny that we Americans would think of kolache as their national traditional food. But after some research among her friends, they all agreed kolache has been there with them their whole lives.

“Kolache is our Slovak/Czech traditional pastry I’d say because, as far as I remember, my grandma (and I bet that not just mine, actually many of the families) has baked kolache every Sunday as a bit of a celebration of Sunday as we are a religious country,” said Hana.

She said they used to be a very poor country, so people ate only what they were able to grow. Therefore, most of the fillings were made of cottage cheese or nuts and on top was fruit like apricots or plums.



“People used to bake it once a week because they didn’t have enough money to make it more often, and so there was and still is the saying that, ‘There are no kolaches without work.’”

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Kolaches are still very popular in Central Europe, and Hana said she can get some very tasty kolaches in almost every bakery in Prague, but her grandma Anicka makes the “most delicious cake ever.”

She said kolache is very universal, as people eat it as a dessert, at breakfast or just for a snack.

I tried making my own kolache last Sunday, and let's just say I'm sure they're nothing like Grandma Anicka's!

My recipe came from an interview on servedraw.com with the Kolache Factory's Hermann Gruebler.

I think my kolaches ended up being more of a mini-sized kolache, and I took the easy way out with some canned apple pie filling instead of taking the time to grow my own backyard plums and apricots. But I was excited that it still brought a little bit of the Czech Republic and Slovakia a little closer to home!

Kolache

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