

Welcome to a Czech pig-slaughtering feast

The Czech word for the event is **zabíjačka**. In the word, you can hear the root **zabít** or to kill.

The interesting thing is that nothing of the pig gets wasted - every bit can be used to make something **edible**. Apart from the meat - which can be cooked in many different ways: roasted on a **spit**, boiled in water or fried in breadcrumbs - there are many other pork specialities that are prepared almost exclusively during a pig-slaughtering feast.

Let's start with the sausages. Perhaps the favourite are **jitrnice**. They are the size of a smaller banana and greyish in colour. To make them you need the pig's head, **brisket**, liver, **lungs** and other **entrails**, **pork stock**, bread, onions, garlic, marjoram, pepper and other seasoning. Everything is cooked, minced and pressed into **casings** made from clean **guts**. It tastes very nice, usually served with sauerkraut and boiled potatoes.

The other traditional sausage is called **jelito**. It is bigger than **jitrnice** and has a dark brown colour. You need pretty much the same ingredients in terms of meat, and on top of that boiled peeled barley and a bucket of pork blood - yes, you heard me well. It is actually quite similar to black pudding.

Another delicacy is **tlačenka (headcheese)** - it could be compared to Scottish **haggis**, only it's made from pork meat. You need both fat and lean meat, the **trotters**, the heart, tongue and liver, the skin and seasoning. All is boiled, some parts are cut into small pieces and others minced, and everything is then stuffed into a cleaned pork stomach which is again boiled for another three hours. It is served sliced and tastes great with fresh onions, vinegar and pepper.

Another traditional dish is **ovar** - that's basically a pork head or knee boiled in water that is served with horseradish or mustard and bread. The water in which you boiled the meat together with seasoning, garlic and onions makes a nice soup - just add peeled barley and that's it. There is also a dark variety of the soup - **zabíjačková polévka**, you just add pork blood and boil again.

Diced fat is used for **škvarky** - cracklings. A real delicacy with fresh baked bread.

Dobrou chuť! Bon appetit!

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(Photo: Rudolf Kalivoda)

