



A Home and
Travel Magazine

Vacation Rental travels

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SOUTH BOHEMIA

SOUTH BOHEMIA: STAY IN A 500-YEAR OLD CHATEAU

Text by Patti Morrow



For Americans, it's difficult to imagine staying in a 500-year old castle. After all, the country is officially only 242 years old, and the oldest hotel is arguably The Colonial Inn in Concord, Massachusetts, dating back to 1716, and while charming, is hardly a castle.

Formerly known as Chateau Koloděje nad Lužnicí, the romantic Chateau Mitrowicz, on the bank of the Lužnice River, dates back to 1565. Over time, it had a rich and troubled history, changing

ownership often. After being auctioned to Count František Wratislav of Mitrowicz in 1704, it remained in his family for many years. From 1737-1741, František Karel Wratislav and his wife Maria Anna Rosa renovated what was at that time a Renaissance-style manor house, and added the extension of the Chapel of St. Anne, creating the present Baroque style of the castle.

St. Anne's Chapel was built with Baroque elegance by Jan Hybner, who was influenced

by Master Architecture Kilian Ignacio Dienzenhofer. Stunning frescoes adorn the interior walls of the chapel, but look up and you'll see the finest example on the ceiling, displaying Virgin Mary and the Holy Trinity.

In the 1940's, the property, then owned by the family of free lord Dercsényi, was nationalized and managed by a local agriculture company. In 2002, the whole area was flooded with almost ten feet of water for fourteen days,

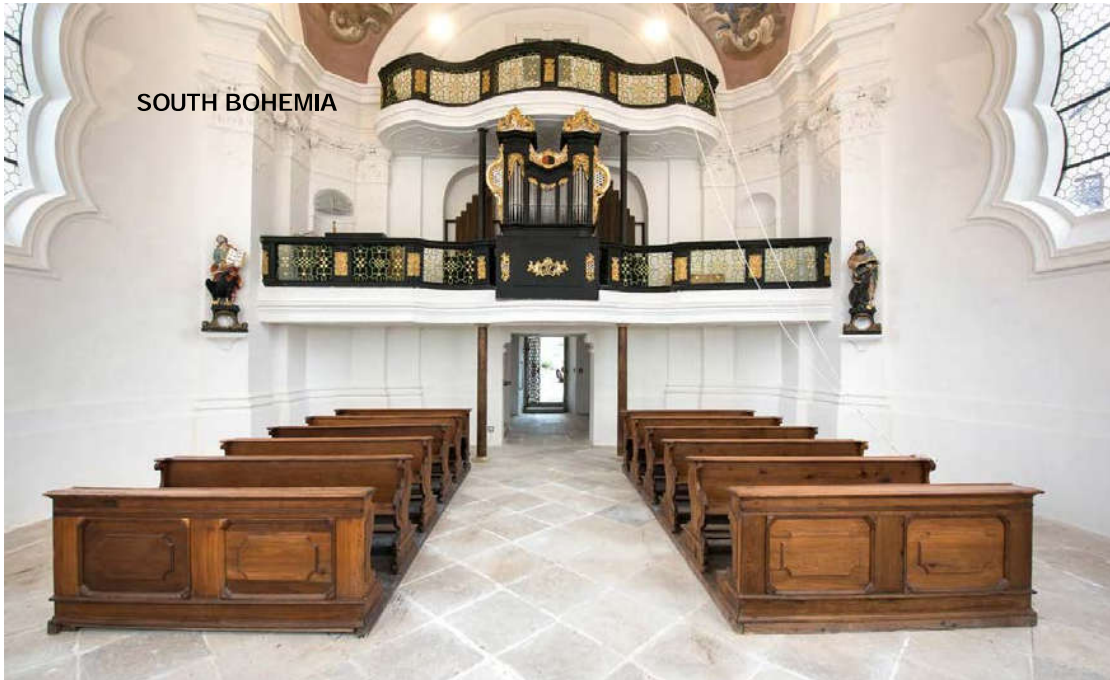
resulting in extensive damage to the buildings.

The property has been owned by the Mitrowicz family since 2008 and since then has undergone a very demanding reconstruction. In 2016, for the first time in almost five hundred years of history, it opened to the public.

Unique frescoes helped the chateau become a national heritage site, listed among monumentally protected buildings. The entire first floor



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is decorated with eye-catching murals, created at the end of the 18th century, including scenes from the life of one of the ancestors, Wratislav called "Tureček" (1576-1635), who as a fifteen-year-old traveled with Emperor Rudolf II on his journey to Constantinople.

Chateau Mitrowicz provides a unique experience to its guests. The second floor offers six luxurious castle rooms in what was the former private chamber of the Wratislav family of Mitrowicz, who built and owned this castle for generations. While the rooms maintain the charm, appeal, and furnishings of the Baroque period, they have been thoroughly modernized to meet today's luxury standards, particularly the spacious en suite bathrooms and the comfortable beds.

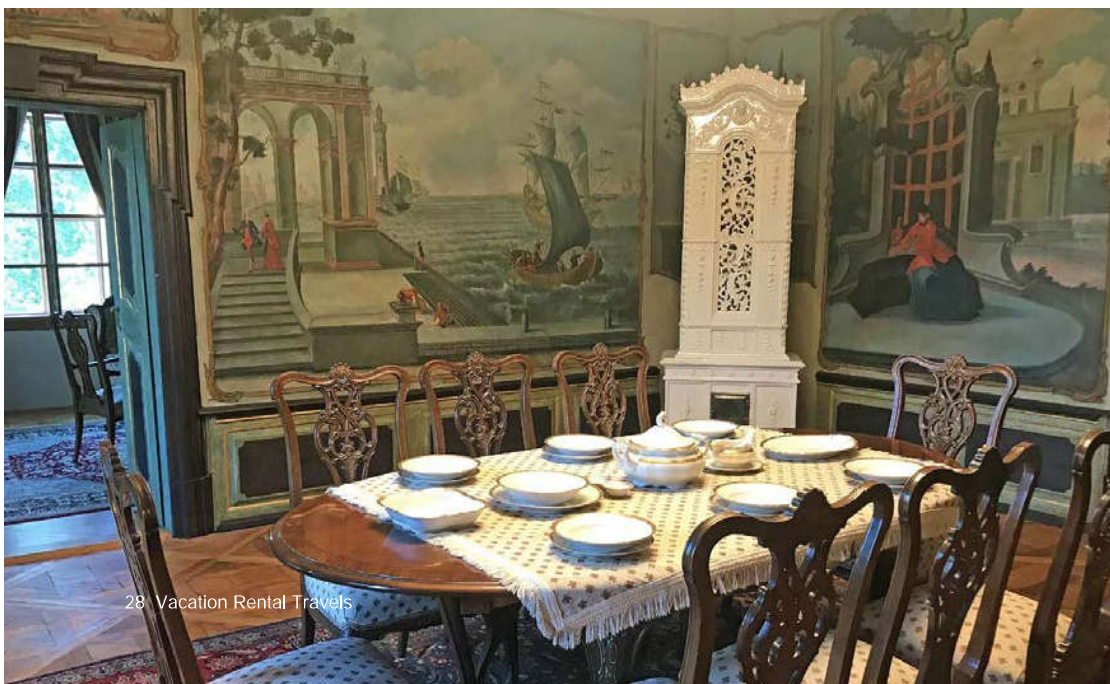
The wedding suite is the most unique apartment in the castle. Behind the large bed is a two-person bathtub encompassed in a semi-circle of windows which overlook the illuminated chapel.

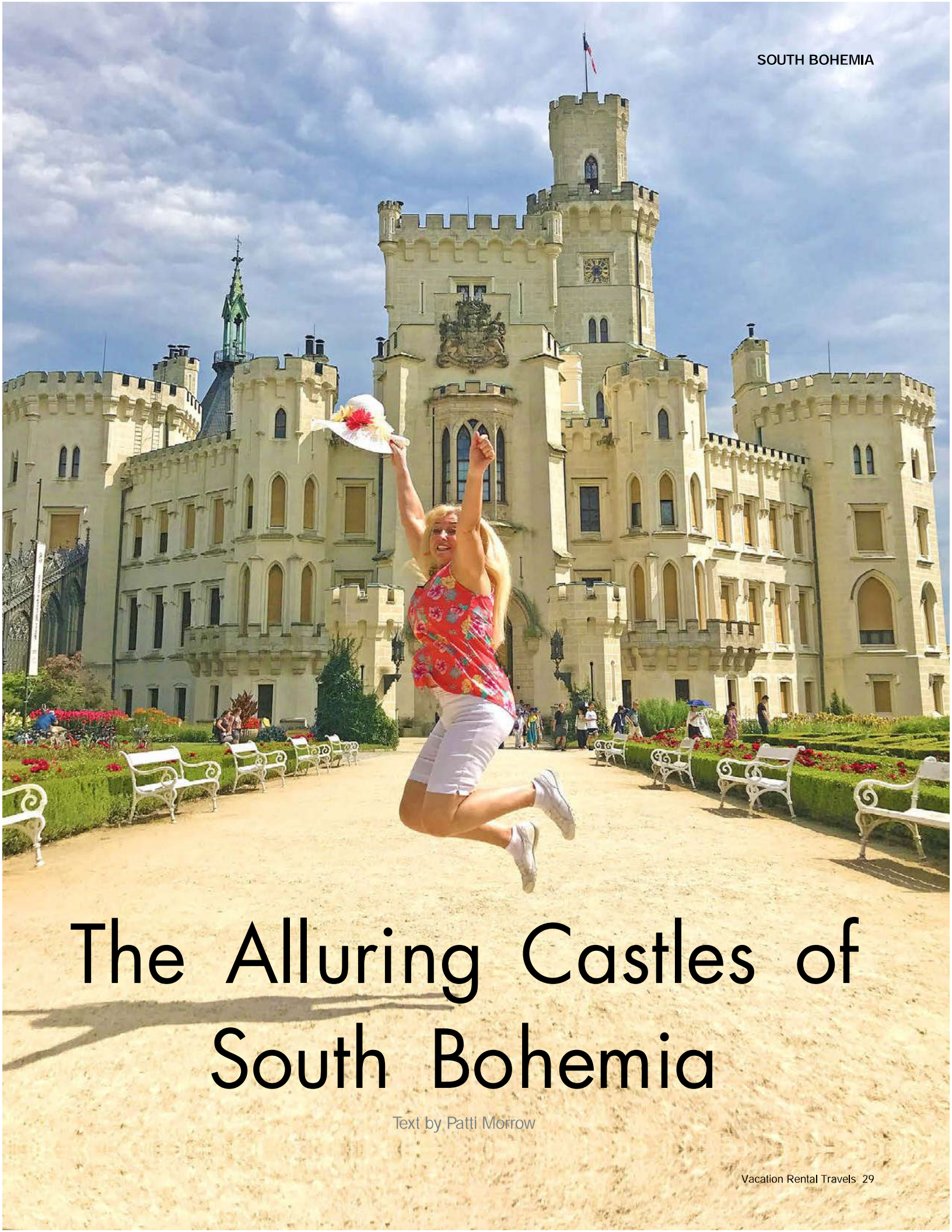
And yes, the castle is heated!

Chateau Mitrowicz is a true rental property; in order to stay, visitors must reserve all the rooms in the castle, not as individual room accommodations. However, the chateau holds seasonal events on the grounds that are shared with the public. Live events include holiday programs, comedy theater, and traditional fencing fights. There's a picnic area in the herb garden with views of the countryside as well as the chateau park with 8,500 new plants and a soaking pond.

The price for booking the entire floor (sleeps up to 18) is \$1,100 USD.

To book Chateau Mitrowicz:
<http://www.zamekmitrowicz.cz/>





The Alluring Castles of South Bohemia

Text by Patti Morrow

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South Bohemia, a region in the Czech Republic, has some of the most stunning castles and “Instagrammable” spots in Europe.

Hluboká nad Vltavou Castle

With a fairytale façade, graceful spiral staircases, and the gorgeous flower-strewn grounds, it's no wonder that Hluboká Castle is considered to be one of the most beautiful and romantic castles in the Czech Republic.

In the second half of the 13th century, a Gothic castle was built on site by Bohemian kings as a guardian fortress. Over the centuries, the castle underwent several expansions and major renovations, taking on the styles of Renaissance and Baroque.

The current neo-Gothic transformation took place during the 19th century, when Johann Adolf II von Schwarzenberg, one of the most well-known families of Czech nobility, ordered the reconstruction of the castle in the style of England's Windsor Castle. The Schwarzenbergs also created the expansive park, meticulously landscaped with colorful flowers that enhance the castle experience.

Although you can enter the main arch and wander around the inner courtyard, you can only see the 140 rooms and 11 towers in the interior as part of a guided tour. Visitors can take one of a variety of tours, including the representation rooms,

ceremonial halls, private apartments, kitchen and tower. Some of the lavish interior items are the exquisite crystal chandeliers, rich tapestries, carved wood paneling, pristine period furniture, and collection of paintings.

Best Hluboká Instagram Spots

1. There's a long dirt path in front of the castle. This is the best place for a vertical photo with the castle in the background.
2. If you follow the dirt path away from the castle, past the hedges and flower beds, you'll see steps leading up to the top of a hill. At the summit is an aerial view of the castle for great photos.

Český Krumlov Castle

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Český Krumlov has the distinction of being the second biggest castle complex in the world, and one of the most beautiful sites in Europe. Located about three hours south of Prague, this enchanting town is nestled in the hills and countryside of South Bohemia. The Vltava River twists, turns and bisects the town forming a natural moat around part the castle.

Český Krumlov is immersed in the intricate and tortuous history of several high-ranking noble families, each of which had control over the castle and town during different eras.

The castle was built in the 13th-century by the Vitkovci





family; from the 14th to 16th-century it was held by the Rosenberg family, who ran the city from this perch for three centuries until sold in the 17th century. From the early 18th century until its nationalization in 1947 the castle was owned by the House of Schwarzenberg – the same noble family that owned Hluboká. After World War II, the castle was returned to Czechoslovakia.

The castle itself is pure medieval magic. The prominent feature is the vibrantly-colored round tower, which can be seen from anywhere in old town.

Inside the castle grounds is the Gothic-style Church of St. Vitus, dating back to the 15th century, with frescoes from the same period. The castle grounds include extensive gardens and concerts are held in inside the castle's 17th-century Baroque theater.

Best Český Krumlov Instagram Spots

The Castle complex is so large and expansive that it's not possible to get an all-encompassing photo of the entire castle and grounds. However, there are two places

to capture some incredible shots:

1. Go through the Red Gate in old town and enter the castle complex. Cross the wooden bridge, pass the peepholes, and look for the door on the left which leads to an open-air terrace. Here, you can capture the iconic painted tower as well as the charming old town, and the twisting Vltava River filled with kayakers and rafters. Note: it will likely be crowded, but I found other tourists to be extremely polite in allowing everyone their chance to get next to the edge for their selfies.

2. Head across the river for the best views with the castle complex and red roofs of the village in the background. In the old town, there's a bridge that crosses the Vltava River. After crossing the bridge, take the second left (it's an uphill, cobbled street). Continue uphill until you reach the main road and bear left until you reach a large cement patio that looks down and across to the castle. This is that iconic shot that you see in glossy travel brochures. Note, there are far less people if you go early in the morning.

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Food and Fun in South Bohemia

Text and photos by Patti Morrow



In a land where beautiful landscapes meet rich history, South Bohemia offers a bevy of fun things to do for every kind of tourist, and irresistible (although heavy!) traditional Czech food that will have you loosening your belt.

Four Activities You Must Do!

1. Treetop Lookout

Responsibly integrated into the natural landscape, the **Lipno Treetop Walkway** is as educational as it is fun. Along the way to the 130-foot summit are plaques that teach about preservation, the views, forest functions, and the lake. The walkway, one of the most popular and unique attractions in the whole Czech Republic, is barrier-free and can be enjoyed by just about everyone. To add to the fun, guests can take a ski lift up to the walkway and/or ride a mountain bike back down on a dirt path through the forest.

2. Lipno Lake

Sometimes called “the Czech Riviera,” the Lipno Lake area offers every kind of water activity. With a backdrop of the beautiful countryside of Šumava, the lake is popular with both locals and tourists. During the summer season you can go cycling, inline skating, swimming, windsurfing, sailing or just chill on one of the Lipno beaches.

3. Budweiser Budvar Brewery

Beer brewing in the city of České Budějovice dates back to the 13th century. There's been an ongoing controversy regarding the trademark of “Budweiser” between Budweiser Budvar in the Czech Republic and



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Anheuser-Busch in the United States. But don't let that stop you...the **Budweiser Budvar Brewery** has fun tours, even for people who don't drink beer.

4. Boating on Vltava River

The Vltava River rises in southwestern Bohemia from two headstreams in the Bohemian Forest. It flows first southeast, then north across Bohemia, and empties into the Elbe north of Prague. The river goes through České Budějovice, where you can rent a boat for a scenic cruise to other parts of South Bohemia.

Four Foods You Must Eat!

1. Svičková

Svičková is one of the most popular Czech dishes, served in just about every restaurant. The entrée consists of a tender slice of beef sirloin covered with a thick cream sauce and traditionally served with **houskové knedlíky** (bread dumplings) and garnished with cranberry sauce.

2. Bramboracky

Bramboracky are traditional pan-fried potato pancakes. Unlike the American version that are made from leftover mashed potatoes, the Czech type starts out with fresh, coarsely grounded raw potatoes that are mixed with a thick egg, milk, and flour batter and then golden fried.

3. Curd Cheese Dumplings

The favorite forest fruit of South Bohemians is the blueberry. The cheese dumplings, similar in taste and density to New York-style cheesecake, are ladled with a fresh blueberry sauce called **žahour**.

4. Schnitzel

The ultimate comfort food, schnitzel, called **Řízek** in Czech, has its origins in German/Austrian cuisine, but has gained a significant position in Czech cuisine. Chicken or pork cutlets are dipped in flour, eggs, and **trojobal** (breading), then deep fried. Traditionally served with a delicious cold potato salad.

