

Traditional Czech Cuisine

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Undoubtedly, the culture of cooking is one of the elements of human culture. Traditional cuisine differs from region to region. In the past, the use of individual ingredients was closely linked not only to climatic conditions and their gradual changes, but also to human activities – development of trade (overseas travels), discoveries of new cooking technologies (closing of the fireplace).

Cooking skills have traditionally passed from the mother onto the daughter. They were also reinforced by folk customs, preparation of meals at weddings, and important Christian festivities (Christmas, Lent, Easter). Each region has its specific cuisine. Similar meals in individual countries, and even villages, have different names although their preparation is the same. Each region also adds its own specific features to its meals (mushrooms in and below the mountains, corn (*turkyňa*) in Southern Moravia).

Today, however, we are confronted with new methods of acquiring and transferring of cooking skills. Recipes are published in newspapers and magazines, cooking is on TV. People often taste meals from foreign countries, and various world cuisines gain on popularity. Monitoring nutritious values of dishes and weight reduction through food intake have become an integral part of the current trends. Recent emergence of new recipes has been influenced by various diet and dietology prescriptions.

Expert knowledge about this area in the Czech Republic comes from questionnaire investigations from the first half of 1940s. A number of ethnological studies of researchers and students, aimed at analysing certain attractive regions of the Czech Republic are another source of information. However, no national representative investigation has been performed so far.

The presented results from an investigation conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (*Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění – CVVM*) between 19 and 26 May 2003 as part of the Our Society 2003 (*Naše společnost 2003*) project try to map the basics of the area. The survey was conducted on a representative sample of the population of the Czech Republic over 15 years, and 1,048 respondents participated in the survey. Readers will be presented with two groups of topics. The first covers the issue of respect for traditions and cooking of traditional dishes in our households. It investigates what dishes we classify as belonging to traditional Czech cuisine, monitors familiarity with regional dishes, familiarity with traditional ingredients, and assesses the traditional Czech cuisine from several aspects.

The second group of issues is related to transfer of cooking skills, and it involves the following question blocks: eating habits of the Czechs, frequency of cooking in homes, ability to cook without recipes, using recipes from various sources (cookbooks, written recipe-books, recipe sharing between friends and acquaintances, recipes from newspapers and magazines), and using various technologies for preparation of dishes.

1. Preserving Traditions in Our Households

The degree to which people keep up traditions and whether traditions are significant for them is one of the aspects influencing the degree to which people are familiar with traditional dishes of the Czech cuisine. We have, therefore, investigated the relationship towards traditional folk customs and, especially, towards preparation of traditional dishes associated

with various feasts and festivals. First of all, we asked all respondents the following question: “Is respecting traditions important for you?” Answers to this question are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Importance of respecting traditions (in %).

Definitely yes	22
Rather yes	44
Rather no	25
Definitely no	6
DK	3
TOTAL	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

Results from Table 1 show that two thirds of citizens (66%) consider respecting traditions important, while approximately three people out of ten (31%) are of the opposite opinion. Women (72%) and people above 45 years attach a relatively higher importance to keeping up traditional customs.

The next question of the survey closely monitored the preparation of traditional dishes in the households of the respondents in at certain occasions¹. The question specified the preparation of traditional dishes in connection with major festivals and events throughout the year, with which preparation of traditional dishes was often associated in the past (see Table 2).

Table 2: Preparation of traditional dishes (in %).

	YES	NO	DK	TOTAL
Christmas Eve	96	4	0	100
Easter	67	32	1	100
New Year	52	45	3	100
Wedding	43	50	7	100
Christmas Day and Boxing Day	42	54	4	100
Feasts	29	69	2	100
Wake	24	74	2	100
Christening	22	69	9	100
Shrovetide	21	76	3	100
Other holiday	18	62	20	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

As Table 2 shows, almost all households (96%) prepare traditional menu for the Christmas Eve. Two thirds of households also make traditional dishes for Easter, and in approximately one half of households, traditional dishes are prepared for New Year. Traditional dishes for other occasions are less usual in the opinion of the respondents. Special dishes for weddings or Christmas or Boxing Days are prepared in about two fifths of households. Share of households preparing traditional dishes for feasts, Shrovetide, christening or other holiday, is even lower.

A more detailed analysis clearly revealed that traditional dishes were prepared especially in households of people who considered keeping up traditions and folk customs important. In

¹ Question: “At what occasions do you cook traditional dishes? New Year, Shrovetide, Easter, feasts, Wake, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, wedding, christening, other holidays?”

these households, a special traditional menu appears relatively often for a number of other occasions in addition to the generally respected Christmas or Easter. A remarkable finding also is that women reported much more frequently than men about home preparation of traditional dishes in connection with various feasts. This suggests that the view on the matter may be subject to certain subjective distortion, e.g. for example depending on who takes care of the kitchen in the household. Also, the analysis has shown that preparation of traditional dishes is a relatively more frequent phenomenon in the country or in smaller towns with population up to 5,000 inhabitants and in southern regions of the country (the Plzeňský, Budějovický, and Vysočina regions). On the other hand, the Ústecký, Liberecký, Olomoucký, or Zlínský regions show relatively less frequent preparation of traditional dishes for various occasions. Traditional dishes are more frequently prepared in households of people older than 45 years, in larger households, or in households of people with permanent partner.

Concerning the issue of respecting traditions and customs associated with certain feasts or other occasions in respondents' own households,² the investigation has demonstrated that almost all do that (99%). Only 1% of respondents stated that no traditions, folk customs, or traditional dishes were respected in their own household.

2. Traditional Czech Cuisine and Us

Traditional Czech cuisine was another topic. We were interested in which dishes people associate this notion with. Interpretation of this issue will mainly be of use when determining in what historical periods and in what social classes these dishes emerged.

The results imply that most people think of the pork roast with dumplings and sauerkraut (80% of cases)³ under the notion of "traditional Czech cuisine". Others associate it with roast sirloin with cream and vegetable sauce (45%) and part of respondents with pork schnitzel (23%) or goulash (18%). Association with sweet dishes – fruit dumplings and cakes with sweet filling – is also relatively frequent. From other dishes, potato pancake, roasted goose or duck, and dumplings as a side dish were perceived as representatives of traditional Czech cuisine.

The respondents, who thought of some dishes in relation to traditional Czech cuisine, were further enquired whether they cook some of them regularly in their homes. The next question we asked the respondents therefore was: "Do you regularly cook some of these dishes in your household? Which ones?"

From the results, it is apparent that pork roast with dumplings and sauerkraut (55%)⁴ is the favourite of Czech households. By a margin after the first dish, other respondents mentioned roast sirloin with cream and vegetable sauce (28%) and pork schnitzel (20%). Goulash was also mentioned quite frequently. Also vegetarian or sweet dishes (e.g. potato pancakes, fruit dumplings, and cakes) are popular.

The following two questions verified to what degree the custom of preparing certain traditional dishes for Christmas and Easter was respected in Czech households. These

² Question: "Do you keep any traditions in your household, such as folk customs, traditional dishes?"

³ Respondents had the option to mention up to five various dishes. The total of the answers therefore amounts to 500 percentage points. For exact wording of the question, see heading of Table 1.

⁴ Since respondents had the option to mention up to five various dishes, the overall total of the answers in Tables 2 and 4 amounted to 300 percentage points, and in Table 3 to a total of 500 percentage points. For exact wording of the questions, see headings of the relevant tables.

Christian calendar feasts are widespread across the entire Czech population, and they are associated with many respected customs. In various regions, various traditional dishes are prepared for these days. For Christmas, the tradition is very rich and differs for the individual feast days – the Christmas Eve and Christmas Eve dinner, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

The survey proved that carp (79% of respondents mentioned it) and potato salad (65%) were the most dominant Christmas dishes. Over ten percent of answers mentioned fish in general and schnitzel. Further, the answers suggest that the Christmas menu usually contains fish soup, usually Christmas sweets, and challah (*vánočka*). Other dishes are less frequent – respondents mentioned for example “kuba” (pot barley with dried mushrooms), sausages, pea soup, and turkey.

In connection with traditional Easter dishes, no distinctly dominant dish was mentioned. In a quarter to a third of answers, pastry – lamb and Easter cake – were mentioned. Easter filling was mentioned in approximately one fifth of answers. On fifth of respondents mentioned hand-decorated eggs or decorated Easter eggs. But for example “jidáše” (wheat Easter pastry) were mentioned only in four percent of instances.

3. Ingredients and Dishes Associated with Traditional Czech Cuisine

The issues of perception of traditional Czech cuisine and assessing which dishes make up the cuisine are further closely linked to the ingredients from which these dishes are prepared. Therefore, we have further asked the respondents in the survey what ingredients traditional Czech cuisine uses most frequently.⁵ A list of 21 ingredients was compiled for this purpose. Some of them have been grown, bred, and used in Bohemia for several centuries; others were imported sooner or later from distant countries or other continents.

Although, for example, potatoes were imported into Bohemia as late as two hundred years after America was discovered, and it lasted another hundred or two hundred years before the Czechs adopted them as their own, this ingredient became the basis of traditional Czech cuisine. Seven people out of ten have also mentioned rice as being used frequently in traditional Czech cuisine. Detailed results from answers to this question are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Ingredients used in traditional Czech cuisine (in %).

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER	DK	TOTAL
Sesame	6	31	43	20	100
Barley	19	27	36	18	100
Pumpkin	13	45	30	12	100
Buckwheat	22	41	25	12	100
Poppy	67	29	2	2	100
Potatoes	98	2	0	0	100
Rice	71	21	7	1	100
Lentils	74	23	2	1	100
Pea	71	26	2	1	100
Beans	58	35	5	2	100
Greaves	62	30	6	2	100
Sunflower	8	40	39	13	100
Goose	59	35	6	0	100

⁵ Question: “Now I will present you with a list of several ingredients. Please tell me whether they are used in traditional Czech cuisine in your opinion?”

Mushrooms	74	24	1	1	100
Cabbage	95	5	0	0	100
Curd cheese	84	14	1	1	100
Tomatoes	64	28	7	1	100
Bacon	70	26	3	1	100
Kale	57	36	4	3	100
Turkey	38	53	7	2	100
Cauliflower	68	27	3	2	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

Potatoes and cabbage are the ingredients that practically all respondents associate with traditional Czech cuisine. They are used frequently in traditional Czech cuisine in the opinion of almost all respondents. Other ingredients most often associated with Czech cuisine include: curd cheese, lentils, mushrooms, and, surprisingly also rice (that is not grown in our country). To the contrary, sunflower and sesame are the ingredients least frequently associated with typical Czech cuisine.

In the next two questions, respondents were presented with a list of certain traditional dishes of Czech cuisine and they expressed their opinion as to whether they have ever tasted these dishes in their lives⁶ and whether they indeed cook them in their households⁷ (see Table 4).

Table 4: Share of respondents who have tasted traditional Czech dishes and who indeed cook them in their households (in %)⁸.

	Tasted	Cooks
“Kuba” (pot barley with dried mushrooms)	55	28
Leavened dumplings	99	86
“Jidáše” (wheat Easter pastry)	48	20
“Kyselo” (soup from leaven boiled in water)	69	47
“Kulajda” (potato and milk soup)	69	44
Garlic soup (“oukrop”)	95	85
Potato pancake (“cmunda”)	98	93
Drop scones	95	73
Gingerbread	94	68

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

Leavened dumplings, garlic soup, and potato pancake are among the most popular traditional Czech dishes. Almost all interviewed have tasted those. More than three fourths of Czech households prepare these dishes at home. *Jidáše* (wheat Easter pastry) was the dish that the least Czech citizens had the possibility to taste (so far, only less than half of respondents tasted those). Only less than one fifth of respondents prepare *jidáše* in their homes.

⁶ Question: “Have you ever tasted these dishes?”

⁷ Question: “Do you cook these dishes in your household?”

⁸ The table shows respondents (in percent), who selected “yes” as their answer. The remaining part up to 100% are the “no” and “do not know” answers.

4. Regional Dishes and Assessment of Traditional Czech Cuisine

The most popular dishes of the region in which the respondents of our survey live are potato pancakes, called *cmunda* in certain regions, especially in Bohemia (13% of respondents), potato griddlecakes (6%), *kyseló* (soup from leaven boiled in water), *kulajda* (potato and milk soup), and tarts (all 5%); these are followed by goulash, dumplings, and dishes from pig-slaughtering (the last three were mentioned by one person out of 25, i.e. 4% of respondents). There is not a large difference between regional traditional dishes that we know, and those that we cook in our homes, with one exception: for pig slaughtering, many more people mentioned that they knew these dishes than those who said that they also prepared them in their homes.

The respondents who thought of some dishes in connection with traditional Czech cuisine (N=594), further answered whether they regularly cooked some of them at home. From regional dishes, people most frequently mentioned that they cooked potato pancakes at home. This was mentioned by 18% of respondents. Potato griddlecakes, *kyseló*, *kulajda*, goulash, stuffed, fruit or plum jam dumplings and tarts are among other regional dishes that we still cook. One respondent out of twenty mentioned all these dishes. There were always less of those who cook the following regional dishes in their households: garlic soup, or *oukrop*, dumplings, sauerkraut, pork roast, cabbage soup, sirloin roast, and potato pasta-balls.

The last question concerned monitoring of general opinions concerning traditional Czech cuisine. We have selected a wide range of possible characteristics, related to nutritious qualities of traditional Czech dishes (heavy, containing vitamins, healthy, rich, and balanced food). The question further monitored to what degree traditional Czech dishes are sought-after and valued (tasty, available, cheap, dull). The anticipated selected characteristics and possible answers offered are listed in Table 5.

Table 5: "In your opinion, are/do traditional Czech dishes...(in %)

	Definitely yes	Rather yes	Rather no	Definitely no	DK	TOTAL
Heavy	64	33	2	0	1	100
Tasty	69	27	3	1	0	100
Available	44	50	4	0	2	100
Sought-after	46	40	8	1	5	100
Contain vitamins	11	48	31	4	6	100
Cheap	8	41	38	6	7	100
Rich, balanced food	10	39	39	7	5	100
Healthy	10	36	42	8	4	100
Dull	4	17	41	34	2	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

5. Eating Habits of the Czechs

The second group of topics under survey started with investigating the eating habits of the Czechs. The question involved included: how often they cook at home, how often they eat out, and where they eat most frequently during the day (at home, in a restaurant, at work – at

canteens, fast food). Also, we have investigated what dishes the respondents do not eat during the day.

The first of these partial topics was the eating habits: that is where people eat, how often they cook at home. For the question “How often do you cook in your household?”, people selected one of the alternatives mentioned in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency of cooking at home (in %).

Every day or almost every day	53
Several times a week	39
Several times a month	5
Several times a year	1
Less frequently	1
Not at all	1
TOTAL	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

The results suggest that 9 out of ten people cook at least several times a week, only 8% of respondents stated that they cooked several times a month or less frequently at home.

Frequency of cooking is closely related to the living standard of the household. Generally speaking, it is possible to say that the lower the living standard of the household, the more frequently people cook at home (from people mentioning a very good living standard, only 41% cook every or almost every day; from people mentioning poorer living standard, the figure amounted to 59%). But this applies only up to the moment when the living standard of the household is marked as “very bad”. Of these people, only 41% may afford to cook every day or almost every day!

Also people living with a partner cook more frequently. From lonely people, women cook more frequently. As far as age is concerned, people between 30 and 44 cook the least at home. People in productive age and with children underage cook the most.

For the following question: “How often does your family eat in a restaurant?”, respondents selected from the same alternatives. Frequency of answers is mentioned in Table 7:

Table 7: Frequency of eating out (in %).

Every day or almost every day	2
Several times a week	4
Several times a month	15
Several times a year	32
Less frequently	27
Not at all	20
TOTAL	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

One fifth of the Czechs eat out at least several times a month and each fifth respondent stated that his/her family did not eat in restaurants at all. Other respondents mentioned that they eat out only several times a year or less frequently.

People with higher living standard, people without permanent partner, men, and younger people eat more often in restaurants.

Because similar surveys from previous periods are not available, we can only assume that the diversion from every-day cooking that was usual 100 years ago occurred gradually. It would probably be possible to observe certain jumps related to a) development of company catering,

and b) development of business in 1990s (increase in offer for customers, increase in income and living standard of the population, increase in variety of available catering facilities). Eating in restaurants would probably show opposite development in time.

The last question of this group enquired about where do we eat, for the most part, during the day, and what dishes do we prepare mainly at home. The question was: “Where do you eat most frequently a) in the morning, b) at noon, c) in the evening?” (See Table 8)

Table 8: Where do people eat most frequently (in %).

	In the morning	At noon	In the evening
At home	91	39	94
In a restaurant	0	9	2
At work – canteen	3	39	1
Fast food	1	8	1
Do not eat	5	5	2
TOTAL	100	100	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

Taking into account proper eating, it is not entirely pleasing that 5% of the Czechs do not have breakfast and the same number do not eat lunch. Vast majority of respondents eat at home in the morning and in the evening. Four out of ten Czechs eat lunch at home, and the same portion of them at work.

Men do not eat breakfast slightly more often than women but the same numbers of men and women do not eat lunch. For breakfast, only one significant difference appeared, and it is easy to explain – people in productive age eat at work or in a company canteen more often than students or pensioners. For lunches and dinners, there is also significant difference depending on the living standard. People with higher living standard often have lunch or dinner in restaurants.

6. Cooking in Czech Households

We may surely say that the next generation will have the most information about dishes that we like the most, and that are the most popular. We have therefore enquired the respondents in this survey what their most favourite dishes were.⁹

Bouillon, mentioned by 15% as their most favourite, was the convincing winner in the soup category. Potato soup (12%), goulash soup (7%), chicken soup, soup with liver gnocchi, tripe soup (all 6% of responses), and vegetable soup (5%) followed. Over twenty other soups were mentioned, but always by less than 50 respondents. Because the entire survey focused on traditional Czech cuisine, I select only soups whose tradition is indeed long: cabbage soup (4%), garlic soup – *oukrop*, lentil soup, bean soup (all 3%), mushroom soup, pea soup, and *kulajda* (all 2%), *kyselo* (1%).

Ham roll with horseradish was the queen among starters, with 22.4% of respondents mentioning it as their favourite starter. More than 3% of respondents agreed on another starter – egg in various forms (fried egg, Russian egg, ham and eggs, or scrambled eggs) – eggs were mentioned by 5% of respondents. These answers noticeably confirmed the non-existing tradition of starters in our cuisine, with the exception of soups.

⁹ Question: “What are you most favourite dishes? a) Soup, b) starter, c) side dish, d) meat dish, e) meatless dish, f) dessert, g) drink.”

Potatoes rank as number one side dish in Czech cuisine. 53% of respondents mentioned them in various forms (potatoes, American potatoes, potato rolls, mashed potatoes, potato salad, potato dumplings – 3%, chips, croquettes). Dumplings (including potato dumplings) are considered as the most popular by 17%, rice by 10%, pasta was mentioned by 5%.

Also meat dishes have their big favourites: schnitzel (for 24% of respondents) and chicken. Be it roasted, with filling, steamed with rice, medallions or steaks, chicken was selected by 22% of respondents. Pork roast, or pork roast, sauerkraut, and dumplings (8%), roast sirloin with vegetable and cream sauce (7%), and goulash (5%) are lagging behind significantly.

For meatless dishes, the situation is very balanced for four leading candidates. Dumplings (filled, fruit, plum jam, leavened) and fried cheese (with Tartar sauce, camembert, or romadour) are at the top, each with 11%. Cauliflower (fried or prepared as cauliflower *brains*) follows with 10%, and the last place goes to potato pancake with 7% of fans. From historic point of view, potato pancake and fruit dumplings are among the oldest dishes that are often prepared in our kitchens and that are still very popular.

The situation in desserts is also very clear. For 13% of respondents, the favourite is a gateau (in general, but also sacher, molokov, and cream cake were mentioned). Every tenth respondent prefers ice cream or ice-cream cake, 7% strudel and pudding, and cakes and pancakes were mentioned by 5% of respondents.

The Czechs are a nation of beer-drinkers; this is implied in the statistics of beer consumption per capita in the Czech Republic as compared with other countries. Moreover, the Czechs do not hide this fact at all. 31% of respondents mentioned beer as their answer to our question as to what is their favourite drink. Not only 51% percent of men but also 12% of women taking part in the survey mentioned beer. Table or mineral water had 17% of fans, various lemonades 14%. But taking the fans of lemonades, juices, and fruit juices as one group, 24% of respondents would belong here. Only one third of the beer fans (10%) like wine or spritzer. Coffee was mentioned by 9% of respondents.

Unlike in the past, cooking skills are not so common nowadays. 45% of respondents older than 15 years¹⁰ are able to cook a wide variety of dishes. On the other hand, 27% of respondents admitted that they could not cook at all. (See Table 9)

Table 9: Cooking skills (in %).

	All	Men	Women	Living with partner	Living without partner
Cannot cook	27	46	8	23	32
Knows several simple dishes	28	38	19	26	32
Able to cook a wide variety of dishes	45	16	73	51	36
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

It is natural that cooking skills increase with age, although people in retirement age mention more frequently than people in their fifties that they cannot cook. Obviously, it is evident that women can cook more frequently than men. The relationship between ability to cook and living in a household with or without a partner is very interesting. Those living with a partner can cook a wide variety of dishes significantly more frequently. People living without a

¹⁰ Question: "Can you cook? You cannot, you know only several simple dishes, or you can cook a wide variety of dishes."

partner cannot cook or can cook only several simple dishes more frequently. It is obvious that cooking skills are closely related to necessity. People living alone do not feel the need to learn to cook a variety of dishes. Also, the explanation may be that we learn cooking from partners in adult years.

It is not only significant who can cook in a household but also who actually cooks. We have therefore further asked: “Who cooks in your household? Predominantly you, sometimes you, sometimes another household member, predominantly another household member?” The answers are listed in Table 10.

Table 10: Who cooks at home (in %).

	All	Men	Women	Living with partner	Living without partner
Mostly respondent	41	13	67	42	38
Sometimes respondent, sometimes another household member	16	16	16	19	11
Predominantly another household member	43	71	18	39	51
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

Because the participation of men and women in the survey was balanced, it is natural that the share of respondents who say that it is predominantly them who cook and those saying that it is predominantly someone else cooking is in principle the same (difference of 2 points is not statistically relevant for this size of sample). In our society, there are approximately 19% of households in which both partners take turns in cooking. It is predominantly women who cook in households, and they admit it themselves in 67% of instances. The group of people living without partners (there is at least half of young people under 29 years) is interesting. They mention more frequently that another household member cooks. This could involve young people living with their parents as well as pensioners living with their children in three-generation households.

We only enquired those who stated that they were able to cook about their cooking skills (N=768). First, we will look at how we acquire cooking skills. We investigated this issue in two questions¹¹. For answers, see Table 11.

Table 11: How we learn to cook (N=768; in %).

	Yes	No	DK	TOTAL
Mother	87	13	0	100
Father	14	86	0	100
Grandparents	35	64	1	100
Acquaintances	48	52	0	100
Cook-books	78	22	0	100
Primary school	27	72	1	100
Secondary specialised school	4	96	0	100
Course	2	98	0	100

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

¹¹ Question 44: “From who did you learn to cook? a) From mother, b) from father, c) from grandparents, d) from acquaintances, e) from cookbooks.” Question 45: “Have you participated in systematic education of cooking at a) primary school, b) secondary specialised school, c) cooking course?”

Women gain the cooking knowledge from the mother and grandparents more often than men (from mother: 92% of women, but only 77% of men; from grandparents: 44% of women, 19% of men who are able to cook). Men learn to cook from the father more often than women (20% of men and 10% of women). Women also learn to cook from acquaintances and from cookbooks more frequently than men (acquaintances: 51% of women, 42% of men; cook books: 86% of women and 62% of men). Women participate in all three types of education more often than men (primary school: 38% of women, 6% of men; secondary specialised school: 6% of women, 1% of men; cooking course: 3% of women, 1% of men).

The youngest age group most often states that they have learned to cook from parents; those who are currently between 30 and 44 years learnt from grandparents and acquaintances, the entire middle-age generation learnt from cookbooks (30 to 59 years).

Greater part of population (55% of respondents) does not need recipes for cooking and are able to cook a wide variety of dishes without recipes¹². Four people out of ten who can cook are able to cook only several simple dishes without a recipe, 4% stated that they could not cook without recipe at all.

Only 3% of those who can cook do not have any cookbook in their household¹³. On the other hand, vast majority of these respondents own up to 5 cookbooks (61%). 22% of respondents stated that they had 6 to 10 cookbooks, 7% of respondents had more than 20 cookbooks.

A written recipe book is owned by 78% of those who can cook¹⁴, 19% of the interviewed stated that they did not have it (the rest, total of 3%, did not know).

The following two questions asked about the degree to which we try out recipes obtained from acquaintances or from newspapers or magazines¹⁵. We try out recipes from acquaintances slightly more often (85%) than recipes found in newspapers or magazines (80%). Women test recipes from newspapers or magazines and from acquaintances more often than men (from newspapers or magazines: 90% of women as opposed to 59% of men; from acquaintances: 95% of women, 67% of men). Depending on age, it is apparent that both resources are used by far to the least degree by the youngest generation between 15 and 19 years. People who learnt to cook from their mother or from grandparents use these recipes more often. Those who learnt to cook from their father use recipes from newspaper and magazines less often.

What technological procedures do we use for cooking?¹⁶ Which of these procedures do we use often, and not at all, is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Use of Technological Procedures (N = 768; in %).

	All Frequently/uses	Men Frequently/uses	Women Frequently/uses
Boiling	90 / 99	81 / 99	95 / 99
Roasting	78 / 95	61 / 88	87 / 99
Frying	79 / 98	73 / 95	81 / 99

¹² Question: "Can you cook without a recipe? You cannot, you know only several simple dishes, or you can cook a wide variety of dishes."

¹³ Question: "Do you have cookbooks at home? How many?"

¹⁴ Question: "Do you have a hand-written recipe book?"

¹⁵ Question 48: "Have you ever tried a recipe from a magazine or newspaper?"
Question 49: "Have you ever tried a recipe from an acquaintance?"

¹⁶ Question: "Do you use the following technological procedures for food preparation? a) Boiling, b) roasting, c) frying, d) steaming, e) smoking, f) grilling, g) deep-frying, h) marinating, i) flaming."

Steaming	65 / 89	49 / 80	74 / 94
Smoking	6 / 34	9 / 37	5 / 32
Grilling	22 / 68	22 / 63	21 / 72
Deep-frying	23 / 58	19 / 46	25 / 61
Marinating	16 / 53	12 / 47	18 / 56
Flaming	3 / 17	3 / 17	2 / 17

Source: CVVM, Our Society 2003 survey, investigation 03-05.

We use the following procedures for cooking: boiling, frying, roasting, and steaming. Only small part of the Czechs use flaming and smoking. With the exception of smoking and grilling, women use all other technological procedures more often than men.

Most of all, we like cooking the dishes that we like. The respondents had the possibility to mention up to three various dishes to the question “What dishes do you like cooking most of all?” As one of the three dishes that they liked to cook most of all, 26% of respondents stated chicken, 20% stated schnitzel, and 17% goulash.