

Slovene Cuisine

Slovene cooking is just as varied as the landscape. Old national dishes have rich tradition. Some of them have been preserved through centuries. In Slovenia there are around 40 culinary districts, which apart from having very different eating habits also have very different dishes.

Slovenian cuisine is heavily influenced by that of its neighbours. From Austria, it's klobasa (sausage), zavitek (strudel) and Dunajski zrezek (Wiener schnitzel). Njoki (potato dumplings), rizota (risotto) and the ravioli-like zlikrofi (miners) are Italian. Hungary has contributed golaz (goulash) and paprikas (chicken or beef stew). And then there's an old Balkan standby, burek, a greasy layered cheese, meat or even apple pie served at takeaway places.

All these influences were only additions to the authentic components of Slovenian cooking that were dependent on economic and, of course, climatic conditions. Slovenian farm food certainly contained great amounts of cereals and legumes with large amounts of fiber and other healthy ingredients

The offer of many types of dumplings; cheese ones called struklji is truly immeasurable, with over three hundred recipes for serving in soup, as side dishes, or as desserts. And while we are speaking of rolled dough garnished with the most varied fillings from walnuts to tarragon, we can't overlook the potica. This excellent, original, almost sculptured cake is a Slovene speciality. The recipes are a kind of family secret, passing from generation to generation.

Bread is also very important to the Slovenes since there is practically no meal without bread. They are a nation of bread eaters. The tradition of home-made bread goes far back as well, and the day of the week when the bread was baked in the farm stove was a feast for the whole family. It was usually made once for the whole week or an even longer period. Crofters and poorer farmers made bread from a mixture of black flour and potatoes. Such bread stayed fresh for several days. Richer farmers used to make white bread with prunes, raisins, walnuts, sunflower and pumpkin seeds. No bread from the bakery can be as delicious as the bread baked in the traditional farm stove.

Slovenia produces some noticeable red and white wines, a strong brandy called zganje, (which is supposed to "tie down your soul") and brand beers, which are very popular.