

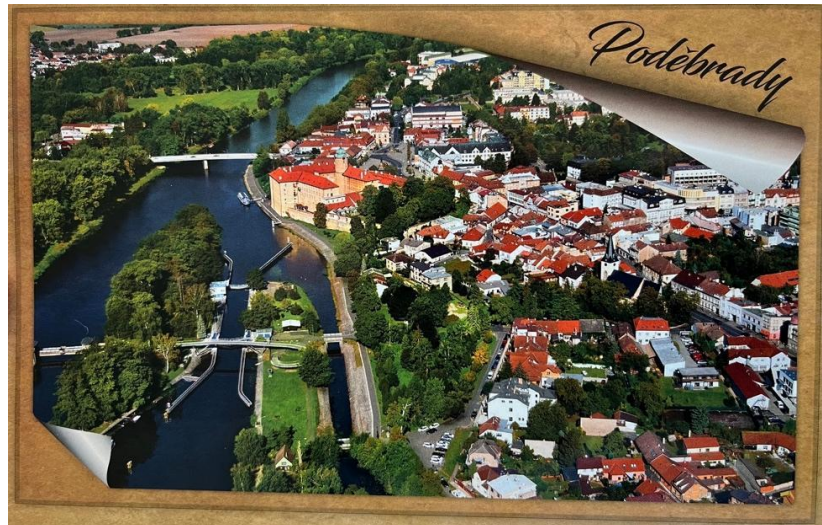
Czech Krajany Course to Czech Homeland

by Ann Marie Wasserbauer, Sokol San Francisco, Summer 2024

Have you ever wanted to understand more Czech, the language of your parents or grandparents?

You can do it at the Czech Summer Course in the spa town of Poděbrady!

Imagine spending a summer in the spa town of Poděbrady in the Czech Republic, high atop the castle with a view of the Labe River. For lunch, you will dine on delicious Czech food and in the afternoon you will tour the beautiful Renaissance royal town of Mělník. Top that off with a tasting of Czech beers in the evening. That's what awaits you at this marvelous four-week Summer Czech Language Course (Kurz Českého Jazyka Pro Krajany)!



In the Summer Czech Language Course 2024, a total of 69 participants, ages 18 to 75, traveled to Poděbrady from as far away as South and North America, from Scandinavia and the Balkans. The Czech Ministry of Education awarded 60 scholarships for all instruction, books and materials, accommodations and food, excursions, sightseeing, and a stipend towards travel costs.



Many participants had Czech grandparents, and their specific interests in Czech culture ranged from classical and folk music, traditional marionettes, Czech cuisine, film-making, history, literature, and sports.

The Summer Czech Language Course was a dream come true for me. I received a recommendation to the program from Sokol San Francisco.

My grandparents were born in Bohemia and spoke Czech. I always wanted to see their homeland and learn their language. For many years it wasn't possible for me to study there or even visit, but now it is possible. I highly recommend this course to anyone who would like to learn more about Czech language and culture.



We toured nearby historical towns such as Kutná Hora, Mělník, Lidice, and Prague. In the evenings, we gathered at Poděbrady Castle for various cultural presentations. We learned how to dance to traditional Bohemian and Moravian music. We even had a beer tasting of 14 different types of beer and tasted Czech pub food.

One evening, we had "Christmas and Easter in July." Each class of students presented a program of traditional holiday customs and songs. Then everyone decorated "perník," gingerbread Christmas cookies, and wove willows into the traditional Easter "pomlázka." For our final gathering, we ate freshly made "bramborak," potato pancakes and "palačinky," Czech pancakes.

On warm summer evenings, we took walks along the Labe (Elbe) River or went swimming and boating in the nearby "jezero" (lake). We roasted Czech sausages over a campfire and watched the picturesque sunsets. We even had late-night stargazing at Poděbrady castle with a Czech astronomer!

The four-week Czech language summer course is designed for adults 18 and over, who want to learn the language and culture of their Czech ancestors. The course is sponsored by the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (Dům zahraniční spolupráce or DZS). It features instruction from the highly-trained language teachers of Charles University and is intended for beginners to advanced speakers of Czech.

More information is available under "Language Course." at <https://www.databaze-krajane.cz>