



## Scio Kolace

Kolace (or kolache) are sweet yeast buns filled with a poppyseed or fruit filling. Having originated in the Czech homeland as *koláče*, they migrated with the Czechs to various communities in the West and Midwest. In Scio, Oregon, where the Czechs became leading citizens, their kolace became a treasured local food.

Scio was established on the eastern edge of the Willamette Valley by Oregon Trail pioneers in 1866. When Czech settlers began arriving in the area, in 1888, Scio had a population of a little more than five hundred. The Czech newcomers established farms, stores, and other businesses, and more Czechs came. By 1937 there were 170 Czech families in and around Scio.

In 1922 the Zapadni Czechoslovakia Brakaska Jednota (Western Czechoslovakian Fraternal Association) Lodge No. 226 built a gathering hall in the center of Scio. The ZCJ Hall was intended primarily for lodge meetings and celebrations and Sokol (gymnastic) activities. But since its early days the ZCJ Hall has been Scio's main gathering-place for both Czechs and non-Czechs, for dinners, weddings, funerals, flea markets, plays (in Czech and in English), concerts, and, above all, dances. A feature of all these events, at least when Czechs have been involved, has been kolace. Before lodge events local families would order kolace by the dozen.

Scio kolace are made from a sweetened yeast dough enriched with eggs, milk, and butter or other shortening. After the dough has risen, it is rolled out and formed into small rounds. When the dough has risen a second time, it is brushed with melted

shortening, indented in the center, filled, and baked. The most common kolace fillings are ground and sweetened poppy seeds and jam made of prunes or apricots. The buns may be topped with streusel, powdered sugar, or glaze.

Several Western and Midwestern communities where Czechs settled still have kolace festivals. Kolace in these places differ somewhat from Scio's, both in what they are called and how they are made. For example, Montgomery, Minnesota, celebrates Kolacky Days with squarish buns, whose dough is gathered at four points and stretched to the center to cover most of the filling. Texas kolache are sometimes filled with sausage, which is completely enclosed in the dough.

Today most of the Scio Czechs have died or moved away, but kolace are still made for community events at the ZCJB Hall. These treats help keep memories of the town's past alive.

*Nominated to the Ark by Linda Ziedrich  
Boarded to the Ark in 2015*