

ADVENTURE BY CHOCOLATE
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HERALD-SUN TRAVEL SECTION

If your idea of ‘adventure’ travel extends to learning the correct way to order a hot chocolate or in five different languages then you’re not alone. I enjoy getting off the tourist trail to explore the sweet underbelly of a city, but also love getting back to my hotel room to relax with a hot bath. Autumn in Europe has much to offer in this regard, with crisp clear days to explore the outdoors and somewhat cooler evenings to encourage the consumption of local delicacies.

Vienna
Mit schlag – With impact

The words “Mit schlag” are shamelessly superfluous in Austria, because ordering hot chocolate “with impact” is a bit like ordering your waffles “with syrup”. The two make a fabulous combination I might add. Museums, cathedrals and gardens in Vienna offer a compelling induction to life and history in Central Europe, while the street performers are unavoidable but entertaining. If you prefer your chocolate solid and wrapped in foil, Cafe Mozart is the home of Vienna’s proudest tradition of schokolade.

Český Krumlov
Ovoce buchtý – Fruit buns

This delightful Bohemian town is straight out of medieval Europe, paved with charm and home to some of the finest artisans in the Czech Republic. Our cocoa loaded treat found a companion in a local delicacy of fruit dumplings. Berries of the forest are buried deep within a soft and fluffy bun, topped with mascarpone and nutmeg. Day trips on the river are popular adventures here, but of special note is the bicycle tour. They drive you out to the farmland and forests surrounding the town and you spend the day riding back at a gentle pace, stopping for chocolate and fruit buns when required.

Prague
Horká čokoláda všech nám – Hot chocolate for everyone

Nothing helps to work up an appetite like climbing up to Petrin Hill and admiring the view across the river and the old city blocks. The centre-piece of the park is a scale replica of the Eiffel Tower, the top of which stands at the exact same height above sea level as the original. If you are taking a day off from adventure then music and art combine to charm pedestrians on Charles Bridge. The Creperie Cafe, tucked behind the old square in Krizovnicka Lane, is not to be missed for breakfast either.

Krakow
Pierogi jablko – Apple dumplings

A city that is famous for fine chocolates and amber jewellery. But the real gems here are the selections of sweet and savoury pierogi. Picture ravioli-like parcels stuffed with the tastiest fillings every devised by man. Apple and cinnamon is highly recommended, not to mention a side serve of melted chocolate to dip them in. At the height of summer they may be devoured with a cold glass of apple cider instead. Amber, however, makes for a better souvenir than a plate of pierogi; so do visit the Clock Tower’s amber market before you leave. Lovers of the piano accordion and polka music will enjoy the live entertainment in the main square.

Bratislava
Horúca čokoláda – Hot chocolate

The old town in Bratislava is its major attraction. The highlight here is not the town hall, the flea market or the funky manholes with sculptures of people climbing out. It’s the little shop named “Horúca čokoláda” – which translates literally into Hot Chocolate. Fifty kinds of melted cocoa designer creations fill the menu. Hazelnut and Orange contains just that – chunks of hazelnut and shavings of orange rind. Fold in a little extra cream if you find the lava-like dark chocolate is too dark. This is how hot chocolate was meant to be.

