



COOKING CLASSES
AT SUR LA TABLE

FRENCH CRÊPES 3 WAYS

WITH CHEF BRIEA N.

CRÊPES

The French took the basic pancake and created paper-thin, tender crêpes that are surprisingly simple to make, especially if you have the right pan. The French crêpe pan is basically a sauté pan with low sides and an easy to grasp, long, narrow handle. They are primarily made of blue steel or nonstick aluminum. The pan must conduct, distribute and retain heat efficiently to turn out perfect crêpes.

The crêpe batter needs to be evenly distributed and completely cover the surface of the pan to ensure a great crêpe. To help spread the batter, you'll need to lift the pan from the burner and rotate it several times. If the pan is not evenly balanced or it is too heavy, this step will be difficult, so it is a good idea to simulate the motion before you purchase any pan. The French crêpe pan comes in a range of sizes. The smaller pans (6 to 8 inches in diameter) are typically used for dessert crêpes, whereas the larger pans (9 to 11 inches) are generally used for dinner recipes.

Tips for Using

Preheat the pan and cook crêpes on medium heat. The batter should begin to set the moment it hits the pan. Adjust the amount of batter to the pan size.

Most pans require only one very light application of butter. Apply softened or melted butter by brushing it onto the warm pan with a silicone brush. Getting the batter to coat the bottom of the hot pan quickly and evenly takes practice. You need to rotate your wrist smoothly so that the batter swirls and flows outward simultaneously.

The first crêpe is never perfect but, even if it tears or needs to be patched, it will still taste good.

Some pans come with rabot, a T-shaped wooden tool for spreading the batter. It works best in a large crêpe pan. Some crêpe pan sets include a flat wooden slat with a pointed tip. Use the top to release the set edges of the crêpe, so you can easily lift and turn the crêpe.

Care in Using

The traditional steel crêpe pan must be seasoned before use. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Crêpe pans generally need little or no washing. Use a mild soap if necessary, but never use any abrasive detergents. The best pans are cleaned by wiping them with a damp towel and buffing them dry. Never place a crêpe pan in the dishwasher.

Alternatives

A small, well-seasoned skillet can be used to make small crêpes. For larger crêpes, a large skillet would be too awkward and heavy for swirling the batter.

CRÊPES FILLED WITH SMOKED SALMON, GOAT CHEESE AND FRESH DILL

Yield: 4 servings

For more flavor, stir up to 4 tablespoons of chopped fresh dill into the crêpe batter right before cooking.

Crêpes:

2 large eggs

1 cup whole milk

1/3 cup water, plus more as needed

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter, plus more for cooking crêpes

Filling:

8 ounces goat cheese, softened

1 tablespoon each chopped fresh parsley, thyme, and dill

Zest of 1 lemon

Fresh lemon juice

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

8 ounces smoked salmon, sliced into 1/2x2-inch strips

Fresh dill, for garnish

- 1. To prepare crêpe batter:* Place eggs, milk, water, flour, salt, and the 2 tablespoons of melted butter in a blender. Blend into a smooth batter with the consistency of heavy cream. If batter is too thick, whisk in additional water, 1 tablespoon at a time. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to overnight.
- 2. Heat a 9-inch crêpe pan or high-quality nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot enough for a drop of water to sizzle on contact. Brush the surface of the crêpe pan with a thin film of the melted butter using a silicone pastry brush. Ladle 1/4 cup of batter into the middle of the pan, tilting the pan quickly in all directions to evenly coat with a thin layer of batter. Cook crêpe until the edges turn golden brown, 60 to 90 seconds. Gently lift the edge of the crêpe with an offset spatula and quickly flip. Cook the second side until the batter is set, another 30 to 60 seconds.*
- 3. Transfer the crêpe to a plate and top with a sheet of parchment paper. Repeat with the remaining batter, brushing the pan with more butter, as needed. Stack the crêpes, layered between sheets of parchment, to prevent sticking. You will need at least 8 crêpes for serving.*
- 4. To a medium bowl, add goat cheese, herbs, and lemon zest. Stir with a rubber spatula to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning with lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Set aside.*
- 5. To serve:* Place a crêpe on a serving plate and spread 2 tablespoons of goat cheese mixture over the bottom half of the crêpe using an offset spatula. Arrange about 1 ounce of smoked salmon strips evenly over the cheese. Fold the top half of the crêpe over the filling. Top the center of the crêpe with a small spoonful of cheese mixture. Garnish with dill and serve immediately.

CHOCOLATE CRÊPES WITH BERRIES AND MASCARPONE CREAM

Yield: 4 servings

*2 large eggs
1 cup whole milk
1/3 cup water, plus more as needed
3/4 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1/4 cup unsweetened Dutch process cocoa powder
2 tablespoons plus 1/4 cup granulated sugar, divided
Pinch of sea salt
2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter, plus more for brushing pan
8 ounces mascarpone cheese
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
2 cups assorted berries
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting*

- 1. To prepare crêpe batter:* Add eggs, milk, water, flour, cocoa powder, 2 tablespoons sugar, salt, and 2 tablespoons melted butter in a blender. Blend into a smooth batter with the consistency of heavy cream. If batter is too thick, blend in additional water, 1 tablespoon at a time. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to overnight.
- 2. To prepare filling:* To a medium bowl, add mascarpone cheese, remaining 1/4 cup sugar, and vanilla; whisk to combine and set aside.
- 3.* Heat a 9-inch crêpe pan or high-quality nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot enough for a drop of water to sizzle on contact. Brush the surface of the crêpe pan with a thin film of the melted butter using a silicone pastry brush. Ladle 1/4 cup of batter into the middle of the pan, tilting the pan quickly in all directions to evenly coat with a thin layer of batter. Cook crêpe until the edges turn golden brown, 60 to 90 seconds. Gently lift the edge of the crêpe with an offset spatula and quickly flip. Cook the second side until the batter is set, another 30 to 60 seconds.
- 4.* Transfer the crêpe to a plate and top with a sheet of parchment paper. Repeat with the remaining batter, brushing the pan with more butter, as needed. Stack the crêpes, layered between sheets of parchment, to prevent sticking. You will need at least 8 crêpes for serving.
- 5. To serve:* Using an offset spatula spread the mascarpone cream on the crêpes, place berries over the cream, and roll-up the crêpe. Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve immediately.

FLAMBEED CRÊPES WITH CARAMELIZED ORANGE AND BRANDY SAUCE

Yield: 4 servings

Crêpes:

*2 large eggs
1 cup whole milk
1/3 cup water, plus more as needed
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter, plus more for brushing pan*

Caramelized Orange and Brandy Sauce:

*4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup granulated sugar
Zest of 1 orange
2 cups fresh orange juice from 6 to 8 oranges
1/2 cup Brandy or another orange-flavored liqueur, divided*

- 1. To prepare crêpe batter:* Add eggs, milk, water, flour, salt, sugar and the 2 tablespoons of melted butter to a blender. Blend into a smooth batter with the consistency of heavy cream. If batter is too thick, whisk in additional water, 1 tablespoon at a time. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to overnight.
- 2. Heat a 9-inch crêpe pan or high-quality nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot enough for a drop of water to sizzle on contact. Brush the surface of the crêpe pan with a thin film of the melted butter using a silicone pastry brush. Ladle 1/4 cup of batter into the middle of the pan, tilting the pan quickly in all directions to evenly coat with a thin layer of batter. Cook crêpe until the edges turn golden brown, 60 to 90 seconds. Gently lift the edge of the crêpe with an offset spatula and quickly flip. Cook the second side until the batter is set, another 30 to 60 seconds.*
- 3. Transfer the crêpe to a plate and top with a sheet of parchment paper. Repeat with the remaining batter, brushing the pan with more butter, as needed. Stack the crêpes, layered between sheets of parchment, to prevent sticking. You will need at least 8 crêpes for serving.*
- 4. To prepare the sauce:* Add butter to a large skillet and heat over medium heat. Stir in sugar, zest, orange juice and 1/4 cup Brandy. Bring to a boil and reduce sauce to 2/3 cup, stirring constantly.
- 5. Take 4 of the crêpes and fold each in half. Add crêpes to the pan, spooning sauce over to coat. Using tongs, fold each crêpe in quarters and arrange in pan so you can add the remaining crêpes. Repeat until all crêpes have been added to the skillet. Work quickly so crêpes do not absorb too much sauce.*
- 6. Remove the skillet from the heat and add remaining 1/4 cup Brandy. Carefully ignite liqueur with a stick lighter or long match. When flames have subsided, remove crêpes from pan and divide among 4 shallow serving bowls; serve immediately.*