

How to Make Crêpes

Crêpes are made in a small, flat pan like a frying pan. (If you don't have a crêpe pan, a small frying pan will work.) The batter is egg rich with no leavening. In a hot pan, they cook in moments.

Here's how to make crêpes:

1. Sift the flour into a medium bowl. Make a well in the center.
2. Add the liquids, eggs, and sugar and whip to a smooth batter.
3. Refrigerate the batter for two hours.
4. Heat a seven- to nine crêpe pan on medium high heat. Brush with butter.
5. Measure the batter into the hot pan. Immediately tilt and rotate the pan so that the batter covers the bottom of the pan in a thin layer.
6. Cook until bubbles appear and the bottom of the crêpe is a nice even, golden brown.
7. Use a pallet knife or thin, sturdy spatula to turn the crêpe.
8. Cook the second side only if it is a blonde color, not as dark as the first side.
9. Remove the crêpe to a sheet of parchment paper or waxed paper and repeat with the rest of the batter



Troubleshooting Crêpes

In our experience, people quickly master the art of making crêpes. But if they have trouble, it is in one of four areas: not getting the pan hot enough, putting too much batter in the pan, not pouring the batter into the pan all at once, or turning the crêpe. Let's look at these problems:

- The heating element should be on medium high. (Different stoves and different pans heat differently.) The crêpe should cook in just a minute or so. You'll know you have the heat right by the appearance of the crêpe—an even, golden brown. If it has a veined appearance, either the heat isn't right or there is too much butter in the pan.
- The crêpe should be thin, not thick like a pancake. Two to four tablespoons is all the batter you need. We use a ladle and fill it to the same level each time for uniform crêpes.
- Pour the batter into the pan all at once, in the center of the pan. Immediately tilt the pan to allow the batter to flow to the edge and then continue to tilt and twist the pan so that the batter runs all around the edge. (It's easier to do that to explain.) The objective is to cover the bottom of the pan before the batter begins to cook. (The reason that most recipes call for chilling the batter is to give you a few extra seconds to cover the pan before the batter begins to cook.)
- Turning the crêpe just takes a little experience. Slip a thin spatula or a pallet knife under the crêpe and lift so that it hangs like a wet towel. Then with a roll of your wrist, turn the crêpe uncooked side down into the crêpe pan. (Again, it's easier to do than explain.)

A Choice of Folds

You don't have to fold your crêpes. You can stack them in layers with filling between each like a torte. You can fold them in fourths, you can roll them into a tube, or you can fold them like an envelope. It's your choice. Stacking, folding, and rolling are easy. We will show you how to fold a crepe into an envelope enclosing your filling with our recipe for strawberry blintzes. The pictures that accompany the recipe will show you how.

Storing Crêpes

Crêpes can be stored for about five days in the refrigerator. Once cooled, stack them between layers of parchment paper or waxed paper.

Crêpes can also be frozen. Simply stack them between a plate with wax paper or parchment paper between each. Place the plate with the crêpes in a plastic bag and put the bag in the freezer. Use within three months.

What's the difference between a crepe and a blintz?

For most of us, nothing. Blintzes have a Russian derivation and were originally leavened with yeast. Crêpes are French. Both are thin and pancake-like. Usually, they are egg-rich and often sweetened but there are thousands of variations. They are used to make both desserts and main dishes. Blintzes are often refried after filling and folding.

For us, we think of crêpes stacked as pancakes with filling between the layers or rolled into a tube. We think of blintzes as folded into an envelop that encases the filling.

Recipe

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups milk
2 large eggs
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 pinch salt

1. Sift the flour into a medium bowl. Make a well in the center.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the milk, eggs, sugar, vegetable oil, and salt. Add to the flour and whip to a smooth batter. Refrigerate the batter for two hours.
3. Heat a nine-inch crêpe pan on medium high heat. Brush with butter.
4. Measure batter into the hot pan. Immediately tilt and rotate the pan so that the batter covers the bottom of the pan in a thin layer.
5. Cook until bubbles appear and the bottom of the crêpe is a nice even, golden brown.
6. Use a pallet knife or thin, sturdy spatula to turn the crêpe. Cook the second side only if it is a blonde color, not as dark as the first side.

7. Remove the crêpe to a sheet of parchment paper or waxed paper and repeat with the rest of the batter.