

February Notes from the Coaching Inns' Kitchens

Bacon and spinach pancakes

An interesting and different idea for pancake day.

This recipe is inspired by the Italian crespelle – delicious light pancakes filled with stuffing then baked with tomato sauce and lashings of parmesan. Here bacon, spinach and cheese are rolled into pancakes and covered with parmesan.

There is always more batter than one needs for one session so even with a bit of trial and error you will probably have enough for a special breakfast treat...the batter will keep for a couple of days in the fridge.

Serves 4

For the pancakes:

270g plain flour

pinch of salt

3 large eggs

640ml liquid 2/3rds milk and 1/3rd water

For the filling:

200g smoked back bacon

Flavourless oil

1 bunch spring onions

250g spinach

200g cream cheese

200g cottage cheese

20g parmesan

20g butter

salt and pepper

45 minutes before you want to eat

First of all, make the pancake batter, sift the the flour and salt into a large bowl make a well in the centre and add the eggs and other liquid in a slow stream to the flour until you have a smooth batter.

Now make the filling, heat a large pan with a lid with a splash of oil, when it is hot, snip in the bacon with a pair of scissors and let it cook away for a few minutes while you trim and slice the spring onions, using as much green as you can.

Now throw them into the pan with the bacon, shake them about a little and put a lid on. Leave these to soften down while you wash the spinach.

Once the spinach is thoroughly washed. Let it drain well in a colander and then chop roughly. Now remove the lid from the pan, turn the heat up and add the spinach and stir about to get the heat amongst it.

When it has started to wilt, lower the heat a little and keep moving it about so that it becomes a soft mass.

At this point, increase the heat and let the cooking liquor reduce, when the mixture is pretty dry, taste and season.

In the meantime, roughly grate the parmesan and put all but 2 tablespoons of it into a mixing bowl, then tip the soft cheeses in, stir about and season the mixture well.

When the spinach mixture is cooked and pretty much dried out, tip it onto a plate and flatten it out to cool down. Leave this cooling while you cook the pancakes.

Preheat the oven to 200/400/gas6.

Heat a flat (nonstick for preference) frying pan over a medium heat add a splash of oil and let it get hot.

Now pour enough batter into the frying pan to just cover the base, swirling it all the time to make a very thin layer.

It is ready to turn when it has set all over and it is easily liftable at the edges, loosen round the edge and carefully turn over, you want the final result to be soft and golden on both sides. You should gradually get the hang of it, you may find you need to keep adjusting the temperature slightly. Stack the pancakes on top of each other on a

large plate, put a slip of cooking paper or foil between each one so that they don't stick together.

Make 7 more pancakes in the same way; the first one is always the most tricky so you may find you have to give that one up to trial and error. Be sure to oil the pan a little between pancakes.

When you have 8 pancakes ready, put an ovenproof dish big enough to fit 8 pancake rolls in the oven with a small nut of butter to melt. Mix the now cool spinach mixture with the cheese in the bowl and season it to taste.

Place a generous tablespoon or two of the filling across the length of one end of each pancake, you should be able to judge what makes a generous filling, then roll each one up. The filling should be ample for 8 so bear that in mind when you are filling them.

When you have filled the 8, take the dish out of the oven and swirl the butter around, lie the pancakes side by side in the dish and scatter over the leftover parmesan.

Bake them in the oven for about 15 to 20 minutes. Make a simply dressed, crunchy salad of carrots, celery, apple, walnut and little gem .

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