



## DATE PANCAKES WITH CARAMEL SAUCE

Preparation time: 40 minutes

+ standing

Total cooking time: 30 minutes

Makes 10–12 pancakes



185 g (6 oz) pitted dates, chopped  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
2 cups (250 g/8 oz) self-raising flour,  
sifted  
½ cup (95 g/3 oz) soft brown sugar  
1 cup (250 g/8 oz) sour cream  
3 eggs, separated  
ice cream, for serving

### Caramel sauce

1 cup (185 g/6 oz) soft brown sugar  
1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) cream  
200 g (6½ oz) unsalted butter

1 Put the dates with 1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) water in a small pan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, stir in the bicarbonate of soda and cool for 5 minutes. Purée in a food processor until smooth. Cool.

2 Mix the flour and sugar in a large bowl. Stir in the date purée and make a well in the centre.

3 Whisk the sour cream and egg yolks together and pour into the well, stirring until the batter is just smooth. Set aside for 15 minutes. Beat the egg whites in a clean, dry bowl until soft peaks form. Stir a heaped tablespoon of egg white into the batter to loosen it, then fold in the remainder until just combined.

4 Heat a frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter or oil. Pour ¼ cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) batter into the pan. Cook for 2–3 minutes, or until bubbles form on the surface. Turn over and cook the other side. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel while cooking the remaining batter. Grease the pan when necessary. Stack the pancakes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

5 To make the sauce, stir all the ingredients in a pan over medium heat, without boiling, until dissolved, then simmer gently for 3–4 minutes. Serve over the pancakes, with ice cream.

### DATES

Dates have been an important part of the diet of Arab, Middle Eastern and North African countries for thousands of years. They are always used to break the daily fast during Ramadan. Fresh dates are often frozen when they are imported. Their high sugar content makes them easy to freeze and defrost. They are best eaten at room temperature and do not usually need to be refrigerated. Semi-dried dates have a darker skin than fresh dates, and have a more concentrated sweetness, making them excellent in baked goods and desserts. Choose plump, soft dates when buying. There are many varieties and they are used in desserts such as baked puddings and fruit salads.



ABOVE: Date pancakes with caramel sauce



## HAZELNUT PRALINE CREPES WITH CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Preparation time: 1 hour + standing  
Total cooking time: 45 minutes  
Makes about 10 crepes



100 g (3½ oz) hazelnuts  
⅓ cup (90 g/3 oz) caster sugar, plus  
2 tablespoons  
90 g (3 oz) unsalted butter, at room  
temperature  
1 cup (125 g/4 oz) plain flour  
1 egg, plus 1 egg yolk  
1¼ cups (315 ml/10 fl oz) milk  
125 g (4 oz) dark chocolate, chopped  
50 g (1¾ oz) unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons sifted icing sugar  
½ cup (125 g/4 oz) sour cream  
2 tablespoons Kahlua or Tia Maria  
ice cream, for serving

1 Toast the hazelnuts under a low grill, watching them carefully to ensure they don't burn, then rub off the skins with a tea towel. Roughly chop a third of the nuts, set aside and put the remaining nuts on an oiled baking tray. To make the praline, put ⅓ cup (90 g/3 oz) sugar with 2 tablespoons water in a heavy-based pan. Stir over low heat, without boiling, until the sugar has completely dissolved. Do not boil until the sugar has dissolved or it will crystallize. Bring to the boil and cook without stirring, until golden brown. If the caramel darkens in patches, swirl the pan until you have an even colour. Dip a pastry brush in cold water and brush down the side of the pan if crystals start to form. Be very careful at this stage as the caramel can cause burns. Quickly pour the caramel over the whole nuts and allow to set. (The heat of the caramel will cause the tray to become very hot.) Finely chop the praline in a food processor or crush it with a rolling pin or in a mortar and pestle.

2 Beat the unsalted butter and remaining sugar with electric beaters until creamy. Stir in two-thirds of the praline, cover and keep cool.

3 Sift the flour into a large bowl and make a well in the centre. Gradually whisk in the combined egg, egg yolk and milk until the batter is smooth and free of lumps. Transfer to a jug for easy pouring, cover and set aside for 30 minutes. Heat a medium crepe pan or non-stick frying pan and brush with melted butter. Pour ⅓ cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) batter into the pan, swirling to cover the base. Pour any excess batter back into the jug. Cook for 30 seconds, or until the edges just begin to curl, then turn and cook the other side. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel. Repeat with the remaining batter, greasing the pan when necessary. Stack the crepes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

4 Preheat the oven to warm 160°C (315°F/ Gas 2-3). Spread each crepe with a tablespoon of the praline butter. Roll up into cigar shapes and place in a greased ovenproof dish in a single layer. Bake for 10 minutes, or until warm.

5 Meanwhile, heat the chocolate and the remaining butter in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. When it has melted, add the icing sugar, sour cream and liqueur. Stir the mixture until smooth and glossy.

6 To serve, sprinkle the crepes with the chopped hazelnuts and the remaining praline. Serve with warm chocolate sauce and ice cream.

NOTE: The praline can be made a day in advance and stored in an airtight jar in the refrigerator. It may become sticky but will still have the same flavour.



ABOVE: Hazelnut praline crepes with chocolate sauce

## STRAWBERRY RICOTTA CREPES WITH ORANGE LIQUEUR SAUCE

Preparation time: 40 minutes  
+ standing

Total cooking time: 30 minutes

Makes about 12 crepes

☆☆

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (90 g/3 oz) plain flour

1 egg, plus 1 egg yolk

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (185 ml/6 fl oz) milk

20 g ( $\frac{3}{4}$  oz) unsalted butter, melted

fresh berries, for serving

### Ricotta cream filling

350 g (11 oz) ricotta

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) cream

1 tablespoon caster sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla essence

300 g (10 oz) strawberries, sliced

### Orange liqueur sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon grated orange rind

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (185 ml/6 fl oz) fresh orange juice

2 tablespoons caster sugar

2 tablespoons Grand Marnier or Cointreau

1 tablespoon cornflour

30 g (1 oz) unsalted butter

1 Sift the flour into a large bowl and make a well in the centre. Gradually whisk in the combined egg, egg yolk and milk until the batter is smooth and free of lumps. Mix in the melted butter and transfer the batter to a jug for easy pouring. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes.

2 To make the ricotta cream filling, beat together the ricotta, cream, sugar and vanilla essence until smooth. Fold in the strawberries, cover and refrigerate.

3 To make the orange liqueur sauce, place the orange rind, juice, sugar and liqueur in a small pan. Mix the cornflour with 3 tablespoons water in a small bowl until smooth, add to the pan and stir over low heat for 3–4 minutes, or until the mixture boils and thickens. Add the butter and stir for another minute. Cover and set aside.

4 Heat a small crepe pan or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour a little batter into the pan, swirling, to thinly coat the base. Pour any excess batter back into the

jug. If the batter is too thick, add a little more milk. Cook for about 30 seconds, or until the edges just begin to curl, then turn and cook the other side until lightly browned. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel. Repeat with the remaining batter, greasing the pan when necessary. Stack the crepes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

5 Place a crepe on a serving plate and spread evenly with filling. Fold the crepe in half, then in half again. Pour the sauce over the top and scatter with berries. Do the same with the remaining crepes.

NOTE: The crepes can be made ahead of time and frozen until needed. Wrap in foil and reheat in a moderate 180°C (350°F/Gas 4) oven before use.

BELOW: Strawberry ricotta crepes with orange liqueur sauce





# SUGAR

From the natural soft brown sugars with a lingering taste of sugar cane, to the pure white crystals that give us instant energy, sugar is the sweetest substance known to man.

Worldwide, sugar is produced from sugar cane, sugar beet, palm trees, maple trees and sorghum. Sugar is sucrose, a pure carbohydrate which adds sweetness to dishes, and is either white or brown, refined or unrefined. It is a natural preservative, caramelizes on heating and is used to stabilize egg whites to produce meringue. Sugar cane is harvested and crushed to extract its juice. The juice is

purified and any excess water evaporated off to leave a type of molasses. This is 'seeded' with sugar crystals—the crystals are planted in the molasses to grow into bigger crystals. When they reach the required size the crystals are extracted from the molasses. At this stage, they are golden brown and contain some molasses and impurities. Unrefined sugar is only part-purified and contains some molasses.

Refined sugar has all impurities removed and is separated from its molasses.

**WHITE SUGAR** is bleached in the refining process. It is graded or granulated refined sugar which has no colour or flavour except for sweetness. It is used for caramel, in beverages and in making cakes, puddings, biscuits and jams. It is what to use when a recipe requires 'sugar'.



**CASTER SUGAR** is white sugar with very small crystals, which dissolves easily and has no colour and flavour other than sweetness. It is used in meringues and baking, and in America is often used instead of granulated sugar.

**ICING SUGAR** is white sugar crushed to a fine powder. Pure icing sugar has no additives and dissolves easily. Icing sugar mixture contains starch to prevent lumps.

**MUSCOVADO SUGAR** (dark and light) has small crystals and a rich flavour. Light muscovado is fudge-like, dark is richer. Both contain molasses which coats each crystal, making it a moist soft sugar.

**RAW SUGAR** is a natural, golden sugar with a distinctive raw flavour. It can be used in the same way as white sugar.

**SOFT BROWN SUGAR** has a caramel flavour and a light or dark coloured fine grain.

**DARK BROWN SUGAR** is a richer, moister sugar with a molasses flavour.

**SUGAR CUBES** are granulated sugar compressed into cubes.

**COFFEE SUGAR** has large crunchy, golden crystals. Sprinkle on crumble as topping.

**GOLDEN DEMERARA** has a rich caramel taste, is less refined than white sugars and contains a little molasses.

**MOLASSES SUGAR** is almost black and has a strong flavour which adds richness.

**PALM SUGAR** (jaggery) is made from the boiled sap of palm trees. It has a fine

texture and is usually sold in jars or set into solid lumps which must be grated or crushed before use. It has a fudgy flavour and is slightly less sweet than cane sugar.

**GOLDEN SYRUP** is a golden liquid containing sucrose, glucose and fructose that is manufactured from the syrup left after white sugar is extracted.

**TREACLE** is produced in the same way as golden syrup but with its original colour and a strong flavour. It adds colour and rich flavour to puddings and cakes.

**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:** White sugar, caster sugar, icing sugar, light muscovado, dark muscovado, coffee sugar, molasses sugar, golden syrup, treacle, palm sugar, golden demerara, raw sugar, soft brown sugar, white sugar, sugar cubes



## BANANA FRITTERS WITH CARAMEL SAUCE

Preparation time: 10 minutes  
Total cooking time: 15 minutes  
Serves 4



### Caramel sauce

1 1/4 cups (230 g/7 1/2 oz) soft brown sugar  
1/2 cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) cream  
100 g (3 1/2 oz) unsalted butter, chopped

1 cup (125 g/4 oz) self-raising flour  
1 egg, beaten  
3/4 cup (185 ml/6 fl oz) soda water  
oil, for deep-frying  
4 bananas, each cut into quarters  
ice cream, for serving

BELOW: Banana fritters with caramel sauce



1 To make the caramel sauce, combine all the ingredients in a small pan and stir until the sugar has dissolved and the butter has melted. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 2 minutes.

2 Sift the flour into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the egg and soda water all at once. Stir until all the liquid is incorporated and the batter is free of lumps.

3 Heat the oil in a deep heavy-based pan, to 180°C (350°F), or until a cube of bread browns in 15 seconds. Dip the bananas in batter a few pieces at a time, then drain off any excess batter. Gently lower the bananas into the oil and cook for 2 minutes, or until golden, crisp and warmed through. Carefully remove from the oil with a slotted spoon. Drain on paper towels and keep warm. Repeat with the remaining bananas. Serve the fritters immediately with ice cream and caramel sauce.

## CREPE RIBBONS WITH ZESTY LEMON SAUCE

Preparation time: 40 minutes  
+ standing  
Total cooking time: 30–40 minutes  
Serves 4–6



1 1/4 cups (155 g/5 oz) plain flour  
pinch of salt  
3 eggs, beaten  
2 cups (500 ml/16 fl oz) milk  
20 g (3/4 oz) unsalted butter, melted  
oil, for shallow-frying  
icing sugar, to dust

### Zesty lemon sauce

1/2 cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) lemon juice  
1 tablespoon grated lemon rind  
80 g (2 3/4 oz) unsalted butter  
1/2 cup (125 g/4 oz) caster sugar

1 Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl and make a well in the centre. Gradually whisk in the combined egg and milk until smooth and free of lumps. Stir in the melted butter and transfer the batter to a jug for easy pouring. cover and leave to stand for 30 minutes.

2 Heat a small crepe or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour a little batter into the pan, swirling to thinly cover the

bisc, then pour any excess back into the jug. Cook gently for 20 seconds, or until the edges just begin to curl, then turn over and cook the other side. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel. Continue until all the batter is used, greasing the pan when necessary.

**3** To make the zesty lemon sauce, combine the lemon juice, rind, butter and sugar in a small pan. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the liquid becomes syrupy. Keep warm until ready to serve.

**4** Cut the cold crepes into ribbons about 2 cm ( $\frac{3}{4}$  inch) wide. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and cook the ribbons in batches until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Pile up the ribbons onto individual serving plates, pour the sauce over and dust with icing sugar. Delicious served with fruit and cream.

**NOTE:** Crepes and sauce can both be made in advance. Fry the ribbons just before serving.

## BANANA AND COCONUT PANCAKES

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Total cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves 4-6



- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (40 g/1  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz) plain flour
- 2 tablespoons rice flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 g/2 oz) caster sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (25 g/1 oz) desiccated coconut
- 1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) coconut milk
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 4 large bananas
- 60 g (2 oz) unsalted butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 g/2 oz) soft brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup (80 ml/2  $\frac{1}{4}$  fl oz) lime juice
- 1 tablespoon shredded toasted coconut, for serving
- strips of lime rind, for serving

**1** Sift the flours into a bowl. Add the caster sugar and coconut, mix through and make a well in the centre. Gradually whisk in the combined coconut milk and egg and beat until smooth.

**2** Heat a small crepe or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour 3 tablespoons of the pancake mixture into the pan and cook over medium heat until the underside is golden. Turn the pancake over and



cook the other side. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel to keep warm. Repeat the process with the remaining batter, buttering the pan when necessary. Stack the pancakes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together. Keep the pancakes warm while preparing the bananas.

**3** Cut the bananas diagonally into thick slices. Heat the butter in the pan, add the bananas and toss until coated. Cook over medium heat until the bananas start to soften and brown. Sprinkle with the brown sugar and shake the pan gently until the sugar has melted. Stir in the lime juice. Divide the bananas among the pancakes and fold over to enclose. Sprinkle with toasted coconut and strips of lime rind.

**NOTE:** These pancakes are quite delicate so it may be easier to turn them over if you slide each one out onto a plate and then invert it back into the frying pan.



ABOVE: Banana and coconut pancakes



ABOVE: Almond mascarpone crepes with summer fruit

## ALMOND MASCARPONE CREPES WITH SUMMER FRUIT

Preparation time: 40 minutes + standing

Total cooking time: 35 minutes

Makes about 17 crepes

☆☆

### Almond mascarpone

60 g (2 oz) slivered almonds

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 g/4 oz) caster sugar

500 g (1 lb) mascarpone

250 g (8 oz) fresh strawberries, sliced

1 tablespoon caster sugar

1 cup (125 g/4 oz) plain flour

2 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) milk

30 g (1 oz) unsalted butter, melted

4 kiwi fruit, thinly sliced

200 g (6½ oz) raspberries

250 g (8 oz) blueberries

1 To make the almond mascarpone, grill the almonds under a low heat until lightly golden, then place on an oiled baking tray. Put the caster sugar in a small heavy-based pan with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) water and stir, without boiling, until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, without stirring, for 15 minutes, or until the liquid turns golden brown. Quickly pour over the almonds and leave to set. Finely grind in a food processor, transfer to a bowl, then stir in the mascarpone, cover and refrigerate.

2 Place the strawberries in a large bowl and sprinkle with the caster sugar. Refrigerate.

3 Mix the flour, eggs and milk in a food processor for 10 seconds. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) water and the butter and process until smooth. Pour into a jug and set aside for 30 minutes.

4 Heat a small crepe pan or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) batter into the pan, swirling to cover the base thinly. Cook for about 30 seconds, or until the edges just begin to curl, turn the crepe over and cook the other side until lightly browned. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel while cooking the remaining batter.

5 Spread each warm crepe with almond mascarpone and fold into quarters. Serve with macerated strawberries and some kiwi fruit, raspberries and blueberries.

## FILLINGS FOR CREPES

**MIXED BERRY** Macerate fresh berries in orange juice with a little icing sugar and grated orange rind for a few hours. They will be ready when they have given off a little syrupy juice.

**APPLE** Cook slices of peeled, cored apple in melted butter until golden and softened, but still in their shape. Sprinkle with sugar and keep cooking until they caramelize. Sprinkle with lemon juice or cinnamon.



## COCONUT CREPES WITH LIQUEUR FIGS

Preparation time: 30 minutes  
Total cooking time: 50 minutes  
Serves 4



### Liqueur figs

375 g (12 oz) dried figs  
1 tablespoon soft brown sugar  
1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) orange juice  
¼ cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) brandy  
1 bay leaf  
3 cloves  
1 cinnamon stick

### Mascarpone cream

150 g (5 oz) mascarpone  
2 tablespoons soft brown sugar  
2 tablespoons thick (double) cream  
½ cup (60 g/2 oz) plain flour  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoons oil  
¼ cup (185 ml/6 fl oz) milk  
1 cup (60 g/2 oz) shredded coconut, toasted

1 To make the liqueur figs, place the figs, sugar, orange juice, brandy, bay leaf, cloves and cinnamon stick in a pan. Simmer for 20 minutes, or until the figs are plump and the liquid has reduced by two-thirds.

2 To make the mascarpone cream, gently mix together the mascarpone, sugar and cream.

3 Sift the flour and a pinch of salt into a large bowl and make a well in the centre. Gradually whisk in the combined eggs, oil and milk until just smooth and free of lumps. Mix in the coconut.

4 Heat a small crepe or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Add ⅓ cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) batter to the pan and spread with the back of a spoon. Cook over moderate heat for 1 minute, or until the underside is golden, then turn over and cook the other side. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel while cooking the remaining crepes. Stack the crepes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

5 Place a few drained figs in the centre of each crepe. Fold the crepes up and around the figs to form bags and tie with string. Dust lightly with icing sugar and serve with mascarpone cream.

### BAY LEAVES

Bay leaves are a dark, glossy green when fresh, with a nutmeg and vanilla type flavour. They respond well to drying which gives them a pepperiness. Bay leaves are an essential part of a bouquet garni for savoury foods but they are also used with desserts—baked custards are often flavoured with bay leaves, with a leaf floated on the top for decoration. Cream can be delicately flavoured with bay and sugar. Fresh bay leaves keep for a few days in a plastic bag in the refrigerator (remember to wash them before use). Dried leaves keep well in an airtight container in a cool dry place, but will lose flavour as they get older. Powdered bay leaf is also available.



ABOVE: Coconut crepes with liqueur figs



## AMARETTI BISCUITS

Amaretti are small, macaroon-type biscuits from Italy. Amaretti di Saronno, the most well known, are flavoured with bitter almonds and often come as two biscuits wrapped in coloured paper, which is twisted at the ends like a giant sweet. Amaretti are usually eaten with dessert wine or coffee, or crushed and added to desserts.

AMARETTI APPLE STACK  
WITH CARAMEL SAUCE

Preparation time: 40 minutes + standing

Total cooking time: 1 hour

Serves 4-6



- 1 cup (125 g/4 oz) plain flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) milk
- 30 g (1 oz) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon Amaretto liqueur, optional
- 125 g (4 oz) Amaretti biscuits
- 5 cooking apples, peeled and cored
- 185 g (6 oz) unsalted butter
- 1 cup (185 g/6 oz) soft brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (175 g/6 oz) golden syrup
- 1/2 cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) cream
- 3/4 cup (185 g/6 oz) light sour cream

1 Sift the flour into a large bowl and make a well. Gradually whisk in the combined eggs and milk until the batter is smooth and free of lumps. Mix in the butter and Amaretto. Transfer to a

jug, cover and leave for 30 minutes. Heat a small crepe or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour a little batter into the pan, swirling quickly, to thinly cover the base, pouring any excess back into the jug. Cook for 30 seconds, or until the edges just begin to curl, then turn and cook the other side until lightly browned. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel. Repeat with the remaining batter to make 10 crepes, greasing the pan when necessary. Stack the crepes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

2 Preheat the oven to moderate 180°C (350°F/Gas 4). Roughly chop the biscuits in a food processor. Place on a baking tray and bake for 5-8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until crisp. Cut the apples into very thin slices and mix in a bowl with 60 g (2 oz) of the butter, melted, and half the brown sugar. Spread evenly onto a tray and place under a moderate grill for 5 minutes. Turn and grill until light brown and soft (you may need to do this in batches). Set aside.

3 Put a crepe on a large heatproof plate. Spread evenly with some apple, slightly mounded in the middle, and sprinkle with chopped Amaretti biscuits. Continue to fill and layer until all the crepes are stacked. Cover with foil and heat in the oven for 10 minutes, or until warm.

ABOVE: Amaretti apple stack with caramel sauce

4 Put the remaining brown sugar with the syrup, cream and remaining butter in a small pan. Stir over low heat until the sugar has dissolved, then simmer for 1 minute. Spread the top crepe with sour cream. Pour a little warm sauce over the pancake stack and cut into wedges to serve.

## CHOCOLATE CREPES WITH CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Preparation time: 40 minutes + standing

Total cooking time: 10–15 minutes

Makes 8–10



1/2 cup (60 g/2 oz) plain flour

1 tablespoon cocoa powder

2 eggs

1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) milk

2 tablespoons caster sugar

3 oranges

### Sauce

160 g (5 1/2 oz) good-quality dark chocolate, chopped

1/2 cup (185 ml/6 fl oz) cream

1/2 cup (125 g/4 oz) sour cream or crème fraîche

75 g (2 1/2 oz) white chocolate, grated

250 g (8 oz) blueberries

1 Sift the flour and cocoa into a large bowl and make a well. Gradually whisk in the combined eggs, milk and sugar until the batter is smooth and free of lumps. Transfer to a jug, cover with plastic wrap and set aside for 30 minutes. Cut a 1 cm (1/2 inch) slice from the ends of each orange. Cut the skin away in a circular motion, cutting only deep enough to remove all the white membrane and skin. Cut the flesh into segments between each membrane. (Do this over a bowl to catch any juice.) Place the segments in a bowl with the juice. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

2 Heat a 20 cm (8 inch) crepe pan or non-stick frying pan over medium heat and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour 2–3 tablespoons of crepe batter into pan and swirl evenly over the base. Cook over medium heat for 1 minute, or until the underside is cooked. Turn the crepe

over and cook the other side. Transfer to a plate and cover with a tea towel. Repeat with the remaining batter, greasing the pan when necessary. Stack the crepes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

3 To make the sauce, strain the oranges and reserve the juice. Combine the juice in a pan with the chocolate and cream. Stir over low heat until the chocolate has melted and the mixture is smooth.

4 To assemble the crepes, place a heaped teaspoon of sour cream or crème fraîche on a quarter of each crepe. Sprinkle with grated white chocolate. Fold the crepe in half, and in half again to make a wedge shape. Place two crepes on each serving plate. Spoon warm sauce over the crepes and serve with orange segments and blueberries. If preferred, crepes and sauce can be cooked several hours in advance. Reheat gently, fill and assemble just before serving.



BELOW: Chocolate crepes with chocolate sauce



## BLINTZES

Blintzes are filled pancakes which originated in eastern Europe and are part of Jewish cuisine, usually served for breakfast or early supper. They consist of thin pancakes, cooked on one side, then folded in a rectangular shape around a sweet cheese filling before being baked.

## RICOTTA BLINTZES

Preparation time: 30 minutes + standing

Total cooking time: 30–40 minutes

Makes about 14



1 cup (125 g/4 oz) plain flour

2 eggs

1¼ cups (315 ml/10 fl oz) milk

30 g (1 oz) unsalted butter, melted

**Ricotta filling**

60 g (2 oz) raisins

1 tablespoon Grand Marnier or  
Cointreau, optional

375 g (12 oz) ricotta

⅓ cup (90 g/3 oz) caster sugar

1 tablespoon grated lemon rind

2 tablespoons lemon juice

20 g (¾ oz) unsalted butter, melted

icing sugar, to dust

1 Sift the flour into a large bowl and make a well. Gradually whisk in the combined eggs and

milk until the batter is smooth and free of lumps. Stir in the melted butter, transfer to a jug, cover and set aside for 30 minutes.

2 Heat a crepe pan or non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter. Pour enough batter into the pan, swirling quickly, to thinly cover the base. Pour any excess back into the jug. Cook for 30 seconds, or until golden brown and completely set on the upper part. Remove and cover with a tea towel while cooking the rest. Stack the crepes between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

3 To make the ricotta filling, put the raisins in a bowl, mix with the liqueur, if using, then set aside for 30 minutes. Beat the ricotta, sugar, rind and juice for 1–2 minutes, or until smooth. Stir in the raisins and liqueur.

4 Preheat the oven to warm 160°C (315°F/Gas 2–3). Place a heaped tablespoon of filling on the centre of each crepe, then fold into a flat parcel. Place the filled crepes, fold-side-down, in a greased ovenproof dish in a single layer. Brush each crepe lightly with the melted butter. Cover with foil and bake for about 10–15 minutes, or until hot. Serve with a light dusting of sifted icing sugar.

NOTE: Ricotta blintzes can be assembled several hours in advance and heated just before serving.

BELOW: Ricotta blintzes



## CHOCOLATE CHIP PANCAKES WITH HOT FUDGE SAUCE

Preparation time: 35 minutes + standing

Total cooking time: 30 minutes

Makes 16



- 2 cups (250 g/8 oz) self-raising flour
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1/4 cup (60 g/2 oz) caster sugar
- 1/4 cup (130 g/4 1/2 oz) dark choc bits (drops)
- 1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) milk
- 1 cup (250 ml/8 fl oz) cream
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 30 g (1 oz) unsalted butter, melted
- 3 egg whites
- whipped cream or ice cream, for serving

### Hot fudge sauce

- 150 g (5 oz) good-quality dark chocolate, broken into pieces
- 30 g (1 oz) unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup (95 g/3 oz) soft brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) cream

1 Sift the flour, cocoa and bicarbonate of soda into a large bowl. Stir in the sugar and choc bits and make a well in the centre. Whisk together the milk, cream, eggs and melted butter in a jug, then gradually pour into the well and stir until just combined. Cover and set aside for 15 minutes.

2 Beat the egg whites in a clean dry bowl until soft peaks form. Using a large metal spoon, stir a heaped tablespoon of the beaten egg white into the batter to loosen it up, then lightly fold in the remaining egg white until just combined.

3 Heat a frying pan and brush lightly with melted butter or oil. Pour 1/2 cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) batter into the pan and cook over moderate heat until the underside is browned. Flip or turn the pancake over with a spatula and cook the other side. Transfer to a plate, and cover with a tea towel while cooking the remaining batter. Stack between greaseproof paper to prevent them sticking together.

4 To make the hot fudge sauce, put all the ingredients in a pan and stir over low heat until melted and smooth. Serve the pancakes warm with whipped cream or ice cream and drizzled with hot fudge sauce.



## PANCAKES

Pancakes are thicker and more substantial than delicate crepes. Some are yeasted to help them rise, others have raising agents such as bicarbonate of soda. Pancake batter should be left to rest, like crepe batter, to lighten it. Cook pancakes on a griddle or in a heavy-based pan. They need an even heat or they may burn before they are cooked through. When frying pancakes, wait until a few bubbles break through the top surface before turning them over. If it is still too runny, when you flip it over the inside will leak out and spoil the even shape. Pancakes should be fluffy inside and should be eaten immediately. They do not benefit from keeping, as do crepes.

ABOVE: Chocolate chip pancakes with hot fudge sauce



## COFFEE BEANS

Originating in Ethiopia and the Sudan, coffee is made by grinding the seeds or beans of an evergreen shrub. It was considered a gift from God and was adopted by the Sufis—supposedly it helped keep them alert during prayer. The first public coffee house opened in Mecca in about 1511. Coffee drinking then spread via Constantinople to Europe and England. Coffee was very fashionable in the 17th century but in England was eventually ousted by tea, which was cheaper. In America, however, the tax on tea made coffee the cheaper, more popular drink. Varieties of coffee bean include *arabica*, the finest and most robust, and *robusta*, with the highest caffeine content. Coffee is grown in Africa, South America, Arabia, India, the Caribbean, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

ABOVE: Mocha waffles with espresso syrup



## MOCHA WAFFLES WITH ESPRESSO SYRUP

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Total cooking time: 45 minutes

Makes 8 waffles



## Espresso syrup

3/4 cup (185 g/6 oz) caster sugar

1/2 cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) brewed espresso coffee

1/4 cup (60 ml/2 fl oz) cream

2 cups (250 g/8 oz) plain flour

2 tablespoons cocoa powder

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 1/4 cups (315 ml/10 fl oz) milk

2 tablespoons coffee and chicory essence

1/2 cup (125 g/4 oz) caster sugar

3 eggs, separated

60 g (2 oz) unsalted butter, melted

1 To make the espresso syrup, put the sugar, espresso coffee, cream and 3 tablespoons water in a small pan. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 4–5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

2 Preheat the waffle iron. Sift the flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt into a large bowl. Add the milk, essence, sugar, egg yolks and butter and whisk until smooth. In a clean, dry bowl, beat the egg whites until firm peaks form. Using a large metal spoon, stir a tablespoon of egg white into the batter to loosen it up, then gently fold in the remainder.

3 Brush the waffle iron with melted butter. Pour about 1/2 cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) batter (the amount will vary according to your waffle iron) into the centre of the iron and spread almost to the corners of the grid. Cook for about 4–5 minutes, or until crisp and golden. Keep warm while cooking the remaining batter. Spoon espresso syrup over the waffles. Delicious served with freshly whipped cream, chocolate curls (see page 238) and a sifting of cocoa powder.

NOTE: Coffee and chicory essence is also known as camp coffee.



## WAFFLES WITH HOT CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Preparation time: 20 minutes

+ standing

Total cooking time: 20–25 minutes

Makes 8 waffles



- 2 cups (250 g/8 oz) self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 eggs
- 90 g (3 oz) unsalted butter, melted
- 1¼ cups (440 ml/14 fl oz) buttermilk

### Chocolate sauce

- 50 g (1¾ oz) unsalted butter
- 200 g (6½ oz) good-quality dark chocolate, chopped
- ½ cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) cream
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup

1 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, sugar and a pinch of salt into a large bowl and make a well in the centre. Whisk the eggs, melted butter and the buttermilk in a jug and gradually pour into the well, whisking until the batter is just smooth. Set aside for 10 minutes. Preheat the waffle iron.

2 To make the chocolate sauce, put the butter, chopped chocolate, cream and golden syrup in a pan and stir over low heat until smooth. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

3 Brush the waffle iron with melted butter. Pour about ½ cup (125 ml/4 fl oz) batter (the amount will vary according to your waffle iron) into the centre and spread almost to the corners of the grid.

4 Cook the waffle for about 2 minutes, or until golden and crisp. Keep the cooked waffles warm while cooking the remaining mixture. Serve with vanilla ice cream and the hot chocolate sauce.

## WAFFLES

Waffles are pancakes made from batter, with deep indentations on both sides, formed by baking between hinged irons, which give the waffles a honeycomb effect. Belgian waffles are thicker and fluffier with deeper pockets in their surface. Waffle irons can either be electric or stovetop and, except on older models, usually have non-stick surfaces.



ABOVE: Waffles with hot chocolate sauce



# PASTRIES

Perfect pastry is one of the hallmarks of a great cook—it has a reputation as elusive, moody, even downright difficult, but once you've mastered a few commonsense rules you'll probably find it all rather easy. Whether it is puff, shortcrust, choux or filo, beautiful pastry with a light buttery touch can raise any dish to sublime heights, so it is not surprising that almost every country in the world has its own traditional recipe—pecan pie, apple pie, cherry strudel, treacle tart, pithivier... A chapter on pastries really is a mouthwatering journey of culinary exploration.



# PUFF PASTRY

Made by layering dough

with butter and folding to create hundreds of layers. The butter melts, the dough produces steam, forcing the layers apart and making the pastry rise to great heights.

For perfect pastry which rises evenly, the edges must be cut cleanly with a sharp knife or cutter, not torn. Egg glazes give a shine but must be applied carefully—any drips down the side may glue the layers together and stop them rising evenly. The pastry should be chilled for at least 30 minutes before baking to relax it.

Always bake puff pastry at a very high temperature—it should rise evenly so, if

your oven has areas of uneven heat, turn the pastry around when it has set. If you have an oven with a bottom element, cook your pastry on the bottom shelf. When puff pastry is cooked, the top and base should be browned, with only a small amount of underbaked dough inside, and the layers should be visible. Puff pastry is not always perfect—it may fall over or not rise to quite the heights

you had imagined—but provided you don't burn it and it is well cooked it will still be delicious.

## MAKING PUFF PASTRY

We've given a range of fat quantities—if you've never made puff pastry before, you'll find it easier to use the lower amount. This recipe makes about 500 g (1 lb) pastry. You will need 200–250 g



(6½–8 oz) unsalted butter, 2 cups (250 g/ 8 oz) plain flour, ½ teaspoon salt and ¾ cup (170 ml/5½ fl oz) chilled water.

**1** Melt 30 g (1 oz) butter in a pan. Sift the flour and salt onto a work surface and make a well in the centre. Add the butter and water to the centre and blend with your fingertips, gradually drawing in the flour. You should end up with a crumb mixture—if it seems a little dry, add extra drops of water before bringing it all together to form a dough.

**2** Cut the dough with a pastry scraper, using a downward cutting action, then turn the dough and repeat in the opposite direction. The dough should now come together to form a soft ball. Score a cross in the top to prevent shrinkage, wrap and refrigerate for 15–20 minutes.

**3** Soften the remaining butter by

pounding it between 2 sheets of baking paper with a rolling pin. Then, still between the sheets of baking paper, roll it into a 10 cm (4 inch) square. The butter must be the same consistency as the dough or they will not roll out the same amount and the layers will not be even. If the butter is too soft, it will squeeze out of the sides. Too hard and it will break through the dough and disturb the layers.

**4** Put the pastry on a well floured surface. Roll it out to form a cross, leaving the centre slightly thicker than the arms. Place the butter in the centre of the cross and fold over each of the arms to make a parcel. Turn the dough so that it looks like a book with the hinge side to the left. Tap and roll out the dough to form a 15 x 45 cm (6 x 18 inch) rectangle. Make this as neat as possible, squaring off the corners—otherwise, every time you fold,

the edges will become less neat and the layers will not be even.

**5** Fold the dough like a letter, the top third down and the bottom third up, to form another square, brushing off any excess flour between the layers. Turn the dough 90° to bring the hinge side to your left and press the seam sides down with the rolling pin to seal them. Re-roll and fold as before to complete two turns and mark the dough by gently pressing into the corner with your fingertip for each turn—this will remind you where you're up to. Wrap the dough and chill again.

**6** Re-roll and fold twice more and then chill, and then again to complete 6 turns. If it is a very hot day, you may need to chill between each turn. The pastry should now be an even yellow and is ready to use—if it looks a little streaky, roll and fold once more. Refrigerate until required,

## PITHIVIER

Pithivier is named after the French town, Pithiviers, in the Loire Valley, where the pastry is traditionally served on Twelfth Night and is known as *Galette des Rois*. It consists of two circles of puff pastry enclosing a frangipan filling. The top is decorated with a rosette pattern and the edges are usually scalloped. The *Galette des Rois* version usually contains a bean which brings good luck to the person who finds it in their slice.



## LEMON BRULEE TARTS

Preparation time: 40 minutes + chilling

Total cooking time: 35 minutes

Serves 4



- 1 1/4 cups (315 ml/10 fl oz) cream
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar
- 2 teaspoons cornflour
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 410 g (13 oz) puff pastry or 2 sheets ready-rolled
- 1/3 cup (90 g/3 oz) sugar

- 1 Heat the cream in a pan with the lemon rind until almost boiling. Allow to cool slightly. Whisk the egg yolks, sugar, cornflour and lemon juice in a bowl until thick and pale.
- 2 Add the cream gradually, whisking constantly. Strain into a clean pan and stir over low heat until thickened slightly—the mixture should coat

the back of a wooden spoon. Pour into a heatproof bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for several hours or overnight.

3 Preheat the oven to hot 210°C (415°F/Gas 6–7). Lightly grease four 12 cm (5 inch) diameter shallow loose-based tart tins. If using block pastry, roll it to 48 x 25 cm (19 x 10 inches), then cut 4 rounds, large enough to fit the base and side of the tart tins. If using sheets, cut 2 rounds of pastry from each sheet to line the tins. Line each tin, trim the edges and prick the bases lightly with a fork. Line with baking paper and spread a layer of dried beans or rice evenly over the paper. Bake for 15 minutes, discard the paper and beans and return to the oven for another 5 minutes, or until lightly golden. Leave to cool.

4 Spoon the lemon custard into each pastry shell, smooth the top, leaving a little room for the sugar layer. Cover the edges of the pastry with foil and sprinkle sugar generously over the surface of the custard in an even layer. Cook under a preheated grill until the sugar just begins to colour. Put the tarts close to the grill so they brown quickly, but watch carefully that they do not burn. Serve immediately.



ABOVE: Lemon brulee tarts

## INDIVIDUAL PITHIVIERS

Preparation time: 40 minutes  
 Total cooking time: 25 minutes  
 Serves 8

☆☆

60 g (2 oz) unsalted butter  
 ¼ cup (60 g/2 oz) sugar  
 1 egg  
 ¾ cup (95 g/3 oz) ground almonds  
 1 tablespoon plain flour  
 2 teaspoons grated orange rind  
 1 tablespoon Cointreau  
 375 g (12 oz) puff pastry or  
 4 sheets ready-rolled  
 1 egg, lightly beaten  
 thick (double) cream, for serving

1 Preheat the oven to hot 210°C (415°F/ Gas 6-7). Grease two baking trays and line with baking paper. Using electric beaters, beat the

butter and sugar until light and creamy. Add the egg and beat until well combined. Stir in the ground almonds, flour, orange rind and Cointreau. Cover and refrigerate.

2 Cut the block of puff pastry in half. On a lightly floured surface, roll one half out to a large enough rectangle to cut out eight 10 cm (4 inch) rounds. Carefully transfer to baking trays. Using a smaller round cutter, mark a 7 cm (2¾ inch) impression in the middle of each circle. Divide the nut cream among the pastry circles, spreading evenly inside the marked impression. Brush the edges with beaten egg.

3 Roll out the remaining puff pastry. Using a larger cutter, cut out eight 10 cm (4 inch) circles and place over the top of the filling, pressing the edges to seal. Brush the tops with beaten egg, being careful not to let any drip down the side, as this will prevent the pastry rising. Using the tip of a small knife, score a spiral pattern on the top of each pithivier. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until puffed and golden. Serve with cream.

## PITHIVIERS



Use the tip of a small knife to score a spiral pattern on top of each pithivier.

BELOW: Individual pithiviers

