

Hungarian pancakes – palacsinta

Pancakes from Hungary. The origin of this thin pancake (palacsinta), which is extremely popular in Hungary, is not entirely clear. Most probably they developed from the Roman 'plazenta', a small, round cake that was eaten instead of bread. Pancakes are served in a wide range of varieties, both sweet and savory. They are served as an appetizer, a main course, and a dessert. As well as the familiar round, they are also made as pasta or even cakes, and are even breaded and deep-fried in hot oil. What makes this "quick-change artist" so popular with rich and poor alike is the easy availability and affordability of the ingredients.

Ideal for cooking Hungarian pancakes: a long-handled skillet with 1 1/2 inch (3 cm) high sides, made of iron, with a flat base and rounded edges. New skillets need to be seasoned before using. To do so, make a few dark-brown, slightly burned it (not intended for consumption). Finally, lightly wipe over the skillet with a sponge soaked in water and detergent, then rinse in clear water, and dry well. Take a little longer to cook in nonstick pans, and are not quite as tasty.

Hungarian pancakes batter (Makes 10 pancakes)

Ingredients :

- 1 2/3 cups/200 g flour
- Pinch of salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup/250 ml milk
- 2 tsp sugar (optional)
- Scant 1/2 cup/100 ml soda water
- Sunflower oil for frying

Combine the flour, salt, eggs, and milk, to make a smooth batter. Add the sugar if the pancakes are salty to have a sweet filling. Pour enough soda water into the batter to give it a thick, creamy consistency. Brush a skillet with some of the oil, and ladle a small amount of batter into it. Cover the skillet to distribute the pancake batter, and fry on both sides over a high heat. Use a spatula to turn it. Brush some more oil into the skillet for each new pancake so that they will not burn.



Dobos Cake - Dobos torta

Dobosh or Dobos torte was first introduced at the National General Exhibition of Budapest in 1885; King Franz Joseph I and Queen Elisabeth were among the first to taste it. The cake soon became popular throughout Europe, both for its durability through shipping and for its unique appearance. With its flat, shiny, caramel top, it was simple but elegant, as opposed to the more intricate cakes of the age. It was notable for its use of fine buttercream, which was very little known at the time; cake fillings and frostings were usually made with cooked pastry cream or whipped cream. The chocolate buttercream and the batter of the cake were both invented by Jozsef C. Dobos. Notably, the buttercream incorporated cocoa butter for extra smoothness. During his lifetime, the cake was often imitated, but never reproduced. Near the end of his career, in 1906, Dobos donated his recipe to the Pastry and Honey-Makers' Guild.

Ingredients

Chocolate Buttercream:

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 6 large egg yolks
- 2 cups (4 sticks) unsalted butter or margarine, softened
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 10 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled, or 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- 2 to 3 tablespoons rum or kirsch (optional)

Batter:

- 6 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups plus 1 tablespoon (9 ounces) sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups (7 1/2 ounces) all-purpose flour, measured by dip-and-sweep method

Caramel (optional):

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar

Preparation

1. To make the buttercream: Stir the sugar and water in a small saucepan over low heat until the sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Increase the heat to medium and boil, without stirring, until the syrup reaches the soft-ball stage, or 250°F on a candy thermometer, about 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, beat the egg yolks until pale and thick, about 4 minutes. In a slow, steady stream, pour the hot syrup into the eggs, beating continuously as you pour. (Do not let the syrup touch the beaters or it will spin into threads.) Continue beating until the mixture thickens and cools to room temperature, about 10 minutes.

3. Beat in the butter and shortening, 2 tablespoons at a time, until absorbed. Gradually beat in the chocolate. Blend in the vanilla, salt, and rum if using. Do not add the flavoring too quickly or the buttercream might curdle. Chill until of spreading consistency, at least 2 hours or up to 1 week. If the buttercream firms too much, return to room temperature before using, about 1 hour.

4. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease the bottoms of several 9-inch round cake pans and dust with flour, tapping out the excess. Or grease and flour several large baking sheets and, using a 9-inch saucepan lid or springform pan, mark 9-inch circles on the sheets.

5. To make the batter: Beat the eggs and sugar until thick and creamy, 5 to 10 minutes. Add the vanilla and salt. Sift the flour over the top and carefully fold it in.

6. Spread about 1/4 cup of the batter evenly over the bottom of the prepared pans or over each circle on the baking sheets.

7. Bake until the edges begin to color, 5 to 7 minutes. Loosen with a spatula, invert onto a rack, and let cool. Wipe the pans, regrease, dust with flour, and repeat until there are 6 or 7 matching layers.

8. To make the caramel if using: Stir all the caramel ingredients in a small saucepan over low heat until the sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Stop stirring, increase the heat to medium, and cook, swirling the pan occasionally, until the syrup turns a deep amber color. Do not burn.

9. Using a lightly oiled metal spatula, spread all of the caramel evenly over one of the cake layers. Let set slightly (do not let it harden), then use an oiled knife to cut just the caramel into 8 to 10 wedges (indicating where the cake will be sliced).

10. To assemble: Place a cake layer on a serving plate, spread with 1/8-inch thick layer of buttercream, then place a second layer on top. Repeat layering the buttercream and cake layers. Cover the top of the cake with buttercream. If using the caramel layer, place on top of the cake. Cover the sides of the cake with buttercream. Chill. Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 day or in the freezer. Let stand at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before serving.

VARIATION

Oblong Layer Cake: Divide the batter between two 15 1/2-by-10 1/2-inch jelly roll pans and bake. After cooling the cakes, cut each lengthwise into 3 equal pieces to make a 6-layer cake.

