

Pancake Secrets Revealed

by Pamela Fay

Few breakfast selections are as satisfying and nostalgic as a stack of golden brown pancakes dripping in sweet maple syrup. But pancakes are not always the most logical choice. They never turn out the way Dad used to make them on Saturday morning. They are too time-consuming to make. And even if you can whip up a decent batch, do you need all those sugary calories? Good news! Learn a pancake secret or two that will help you make pancakes you're sure to love.

Gluten-Free Low Carb

Although doctors claim that just one percent of the population actually has celiac disease, marketers estimate that up to 25% of consumers want gluten-free foods. This is because many people without the disease have some degree of gluten intolerance leading to a variety of symptoms. If you are one of these people, you may not want to start the day with a belly full of wheat pancakes. Gluten-free pancakes are easier to make than the flour variety and these don't require any hard-to-find ingredients. Using a high-speed blender, grind ½ cup oatmeal until it resembles flour. Add ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese, 4 egg whites, 1 teaspoon baking powder and a dash of vanilla extract. Blend till smooth. Cook just like regular pancakes. These are not only gluten-free, they are also low carb and will not cause blood sugar spikes that leave you hungry two hours later.

Keep 'em Fluffy

Pancakes are best when they are light and fluffy. The secret to fluffy pancakes is to avoid overbeating them. Beat pancake batter just until smooth. If you are using a mix, don't try to beat out every small lump. If you want to make pancakes with a texture that resembles angel food cake, separate the eggs. Add the egg yolks with the other wet ingredients. Fold the combined wet ingredients into the combined dry ingredients. Whip egg whites until soft peaks form and fold them gently into the batter with a rubber spatula.

Fast from the Freezer

If you don't have time for culinary gymnastics in the middle of your morning rush, make a large batch and freeze them. No need to go to the expense of buying them ready-made. Allow the pancakes to cool. Use a cooling rack to prevent them from getting slightly soggy on the bottom. Once your pancakes cool, single layer them on a large cookie sheet. Place the cookie sheet in the freezer until they are stiff, about 10 minutes. Store the pancakes in a bread or bagel bag. You can reuse the plastic and avoid having to put wax paper between each pancake. To reheat, pop them in the microwave or toaster oven.

Save on Syrup

In some areas of the United States and in some countries, real maple syrup is expensive and so are maple-like alternatives. If you have a large family with big sweet teeth, one money-saving pancake secret is to make your own syrup. Boil two cups of water with two cups of brown or white sugar and a dash of lemon juice to desired consistency. Add a tablespoon of maple extract. You'll have a large batch of syrup for a fraction of the price you pay at the supermarket. To save further, serve pancake syrup on the side rather than

pouring it over the pancakes. Dip your fork in the syrup and cut the pancakes with it. You will taste the syrup without drenching them in sugary calories.

References

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