

At Home



Honey whole-wheat clafoutis with raspberries is a dessert pancake that’s delicious and easy to make.

PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

French dessert one-ups a pancake

Ellie KRIEGER *Special To The Washington Post*

Like some French-country dishes, a clafoutis (klah-foo-TEE) sounds like something fancy and complicated, but it’s actually homey and easy to make. The fruit-laden dessert pancake is elegant in its simplicity – glorious, golden brown and sugar dusted. And nearly all it entails is making a basic pancake batter, pouring it into a pie dish, adding the fruit and baking it.

The accompanying recipe is a more healthful yet equally sumptuous take on the classic, using tender whole-grain pastry flour instead of all-purpose flour, and honey instead of refined sugar. It also calls for low-fat milk to more comfortably allow for some butter in the batter, but if you prefer whole milk to low-fat, that would be fine as well.

The taste of the honey shines through beautifully here, and its flavour is lovely with the fresh raspberries. The French dish was born to make delicious use of whatever fruit is in peak season, so feel free to use what you find to be

especially prime at the market or farm stand this spring or at any time of year.

Honey whole-wheat clafoutis with raspberries

6 servings

This healthier take on the classic French-country dessert pancake uses whole-grain pastry flour instead of white and honey instead of refined sugar. Raspberries are called for here, but feel free to make delicious use of whatever fruit is in peak season.

Ingredients

- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup low-fat (1 per cent) milk
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 1/2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest (from 1 lemon)
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- 9 ounces (2 cups) fresh raspberries

1 tablespoon confectioners’ sugar, for serving

Steps

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 9-inch pie plate or ceramic dish with cooking oil spray.

Whisk together the eggs, milk, honey, butter, lemon zest and salt in a mixing bowl until well incorporated, then gradually whisk in the flour, to form a smooth batter.

Pour into the pie plate, then add the raspberries; top sides down will help them to stay upright as you work.

Bake (middle rack) for 40 to 50 minutes, until the clafoutis is golden brown and centre is set.

Dust the top with confectioners’ sugar and serve right away.

Per serving: 170 calories, 4g protein, 27g carbohydrates, 6g fat, 3g saturated fat, 75mg cholesterol, 85mg sodium, 3g dietary fibre, 14g sugar

Krieger is a registered dietitian, nutritionist and author who hosts public television’s Ellie’s Real Good Food. She blogs and offers a weekly newsletter at www.elliekrieger.com.

Dining out with kids need not be a pain

Becky KRYSTAL *The Washington Post*

When you have young children, it can be easy to give up on going to restaurants altogether. Too much hassle. Too much uncertainty. Too much chance of the stink-eye from other diners.

But there are plenty of restaurants that roll out the welcome mat for families, and plenty of conscientious parents who enjoy eating out with their little ones, without incident.

“Ninety-nine per cent of the time, everyone is super-respectful,” said Gareth Croke, parent of an almost-three-year-old and a partner in two Washington eateries

Of course, it doesn’t always seem that way; bad behaviour and its consequences typically make for better stories and lead to more heated debate. Case in point: a “classy, intimate” Italian spot in North Carolina recently made national news when it banned kids younger than five.

Still, there’s no need to stay home with your budding gourmand, especially if they’ve shown themselves inclined to try new things. Wherever you choose to go, try to consult with your kids. If they’re invested in the decision, they’ll be more likely to cooperate and have a good time.

We talked to parents, inside and outside the restaurant industry, for tips on how to make eating out a great experience for everyone.

It doesn’t hurt to call ahead

The fact that restaurants are in the hospitality business means they should do their best to make all diners, regardless of age, feel comfortable. But there are certain times when you should alert a place that you’re bringing kids.

If they’re invested in the decision, they’ll be more likely to cooperate and have a good time.

One is if you will need equipment such as a high chair or booster seat, because restaurants often have limited supplies. Plus, the host stand can be ready at your arrival rather than having to scramble as you’re being seated.

It’s also a good idea to give the restaurant a heads-up if your child has any serious allergies, so the kitchen can be prepared or let you know whether it can handle dietary restrictions.

Don’t assume you can bring your stroller inside

Here’s another instance when calling ahead is useful, because not all restaurants have room to store your large stroller, and not all places make it easy (steps, narrow entries, etc.) to even get one through the door.

For babies, you may want to consider a sling or other wearable carrier. For toddlers, an umbrella stroller that is lightweight and collapsible is a good option: stow it under your table or at the coat check.

Consider eating early or at off-peak hours

“We try to dine out early before the bulk of the people get there,” said Tina Smith, who

uses her Do DC With Kids blog to share some of the restaurant adventures she and her husband have with their two-year-old daughter. That means eating lunch at 11 a.m. and dinner around 5 p.m.

If you must eat at the height of the dinner rush, as might be the case if you’re going out with a group that includes non-parents, make a reservation. This saves your kid’s patience for the actual meal, not waiting in line.

And if you want to eat closer to your kid’s bedtime, Croke suggests choosing a restaurant near home, where travel time is minimal.

Noisy restaurants can be better for children

You may want quiet dining rooms for a date night or other adult-oriented special occasion. Parents can use the din of a high-decibel spot to their advantage: at one recent dinner, Smith’s daughter decided to scream at the top of her lungs, but the place was buzzing loud enough that “no one noticed,” she said.

Have an escape plan

“I think if your child is freaking out, you have to take him outside,” said Fred Herrmann, father of a nine-year-old boy and vice president of operations for kid-friendly D.C. chain Ted’s Bulletin.

Be ready to act fast if things start going downhill. Take a fussy child outside or somewhere else in the restaurant a manager can direct you to, such as an unoccupied private dining area. You can also pivot and have your food packed to go.

Early colour always welcome



Gardening

JOS VAN HAGE

After a long winter many of us can’t wait to see some bright colour in the landscape.

Some of the early blooming flowering shrubs such as forsythia, double flowering plum, sand cherry and February Daphne will soon be showing their colourful blooms. I noticed that the February Daphne is already blooming in our yard at home.

February Daphne does not bloom in February in our northern climate, but it is the earliest shrub to bloom of all the hardy flowering shrubs. The shrub is covered in clusters of fragrant pink blossoms that grow along the length of each stem. The flowers appear first and are soon followed by the soft green foliage.

When the flowers are finished, you will notice small berries that will eventually turn bright red. These berries, along with all parts of the plant, are poisonous, which is something that should be kept in mind when deciding where to plant a February Daphne. The berries will fall off the plant when they are ripe and if left on the ground, some will become new plants the following spring.

The February Daphne is an upright plant, growing 90 centimetres high and 1.5 metres around. Plant in a sunny location, in a moist soil. It will tolerate most soils, including clay.

Forsythias are easy to spot when they bloom because of their bright yellow primrose flowers that go down the length of the yellow-grey barked stem. Northern Gold is the hardiest of the forsythias (zone 3) and the flower buds are hardy to -35 C which is good because sometimes the flowers are not hardy enough to withstand the cold winter.

You may notice in extreme cold temperatures that only the branches that were under the snow will bloom in the spring because of the extra protection. During very cold weather, you can protect the flowers by piling extra snow to cover the plant, but be careful not to break any branches. This compact shrub grows 1.8 to two metres tall and wide. Plant forsythias in a sunny location where the soil is moist and well-drained.

Double flowering plum produces a nice show of early spring flowers. The double pink flowers go along the entire length of the stem and last for a couple of weeks before the leaves emerge. In the fall the leaves turn a yellowish-bronze. Hardy to zone 3, it grows around two metres tall and wide. This variety of plum does not produce fruit.

Purple leaf sandcherry (Prunus cistena) offers year-round interest. In early spring it blooms first with soft pink fragrant blooms, and then the colourful purple foliage appears, which lasts throughout the summer, along with little black/purple cherries that will cling on the plant until the birds find them. Over the winter months the dark bark stands out against the white snow.

These flowering shrubs are not high maintenance shrubs. The forsythia, double flowering plum and sandcherry should be pruned after they have finished blooming. February Daphne do not like to be pruned. These early bloomers are easily seen, and can be planted toward the back of the landscape so that after they have finished blooming, other plants that bloom later can be planted in front of them.

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