



Next Tuesday is *Mardi Gras*, the French term for “Fat Tuesday,” so named because of the Christian tradition of eating rich foods on the day before Lent, when fasting begins.

In this country, as in the British Empire, it is celebrated by cooking and eating pancakes, the breakfast food you can eat without limits. While you wouldn't ask for a second plate of bacon

and eggs, or another omelet, pancakes were made for seconds and thirds.

They're easy to make at home, starting with just flour, eggs, milk and butter. So put aside the mixes and frozen stuff.

Just keep in mind two rules: When mixing dry and liquid ingredients, stir just enough to moisten the dry ingredients. The batter should remain lumpy; overmixing makes pancakes tough. And the griddle is ready when a few drops of cold water sizzle when sprinkled on the surface.

BASIC PANCAKES

1 cup all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled

2 tablespoons sugar

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup milk

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, or vegetable oil

1 large egg

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Assorted toppings

Preheat oven to 200°F to keep cooked pancakes warm in the oven.

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt; set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together milk, butter (or oil) and egg. Add dry ingredients to milk mixture; whisk until just moistened (do not overmix; a few small lumps are fine).

Batter Up!

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Place a large skillet (nonstick or cast-iron) or griddle over medium heat and moisten with oil using a paper towel.

For each pancake, spoon 2 to 3 tablespoons of batter onto skillet, using the back of the spoon to spread batter into a round. (You will be able to fit 3 if you use a large skillet.)

Cook until surface of pancakes have some bubbles, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip carefully with a thin spatula, and cook until browned on the underside, 1 to 2 minutes more.

Transfer to a baking sheet or platter; cover loosely with aluminum foil, and keep warm in oven. Continue with more oil and remaining batter. This recipe yields 12 to 15 pancakes. Serve warm, with butter, syrup, jam, honey, etc.

BUTTERMILK PANCAKES

Batter Up!

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2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons sugar

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

3 cups buttermilk

4 tablespoons butter, melted, plus 1/2 teaspoon for the griddle

Heat griddle to 375°F. Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and sugar in a medium bowl. Add eggs, buttermilk, and 4 tablespoons butter; whisk to combine. Batter should have small to medium lumps.

Batter Up!

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Heat oven to 175°F. Test griddle by sprinkling a few drops of water on it. If water bounces and spatters off griddle, it is hot enough. Using a pastry brush, brush remaining 1/2 teaspoon of butter or reserved bacon fat onto griddle. Wipe off excess.

Using a 4-ounce ladle, about 1/2 cup, pour pancake batter, in pools 2 inches away from one another. When pancakes have bubbles on top and are slightly dry around edges, about 2-1/2 minutes, flip over. Cook until golden on bottom, about 1 minute.

Repeat with remaining batter, keeping finished pancakes on a heat-proof plate in oven. Serve warm. Makes about 9 pancakes.

Note: If you don't have buttermilk, for each cup required add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice and enough milk to equal 1 cup. Let stand 10 minutes.

LOW-CHOLESTEROL, LOW-FAT PANCAKES

1 cup fat free milk

2 tablespoons canola oil

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1-1/4 cups flour

1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 cup egg substitute (Egg Beaters, Nulaid ReddiEgg, etc.)

No-Stick Cooking Spray

Batter Up!

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Pour milk into small bowl and whisk in oil and lemon juice; set aside. Place flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda in medium bowl; blend well. Form a well in center of dry ingredients; set aside.

Add egg substitute to milk mixture; whisk together. Pour mixture into the center of dry ingredients. Gently whisk together just until combined; a few lumps will remain. Do not overmix.

Spray large nonstick griddle or skillet with cooking spray. Heat griddle over medium heat until hot. Pour four 1/4 cupfuls of batter separately onto griddle.

Cook about 1-1/2 to 2 minutes or until large bubbles form on top and bottom is golden brown. Turn with wide spatula; cook 1 minute more or until second side is golden brown. Keep warm. Repeat until all batter is used. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar or serve with pancake syrup, if desired.

