

Crepes

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Lettie suggests that beginning crepe cooks "don't waste time trying one that has no oil in it," because those recipes are very difficult to work with. Fortunately, the only one not containing oil is the Chinese egg roll recipe. But, unfortunately, Chinese food lovers will have to wait for their cooking expertise to improve before they can stop bringing home that delicacy from the Chinese restaurant. The eggs in the recipes give the crepes needed

elasticity, flavor, and color. Also, the liquid used can consist of almost anything, but one thing is always the same - there is usually a large amount of liquid in relation to the flour.

EQUIPMENT
Although the average housewife anticipates elaborate equipment for "fancy" foods, this is not the case with crepes.

"You really don't need special equipment," says Lettie, "all you really need are bowls, measuring



Alletta Schadler, Lebanon County Extension home economist, demonstrates how to work with crepes.

equipment, and a whip, egg beater or blender. Lettie recommends using a stainless steel wire whip.

Of course, a pan is a necessity, also, but it really isn't a single-use item, so purchasing one for the crepes isn't really the same as buying special equipment. There are all kinds of crepe pans on the market, but really all that is necessary is a pan with sloping sides that conducts heat evenly throughout. The size Lettie suggests using is a six or eight inch pan. This is also a good size for omelets, so a practical idea is to buy that size pan and keep it only for those two foods.

Of course, there are also many different kinds of electric crepe makers on the market, and each has its own virtues, but Lettie says, "I would think several times before buying one that's only a one purpose piece of equipment."

"And," she continues, "you are going to have to practice no matter what you use." So, as far as she is concerned, a good small saucepan is a practical investment, because "saucepans are handy for all sorts of things."

PRACTICAL USE
As was said before, crepes are good for almost any dish on a menu. There are also several advantages to cooking with crepes. First of all, they can be made ahead of the time guests arrive. Also, they are inexpensive, they can be either high or low calorie, and they can be fast or tedious to make,

depending on the recipe used. On the average, a crepe contains about 65 calories, and they can be prepared in advance before using. They can also be stacked between layers of wax paper or frozen in aluminum foil if the homemaker desires. Only crepes browned on both sides should be frozen, however, since crepes done on only one side are not durable enough to stand the conditions of freezing and thawing without tearing.

Lettie also stresses that there are some definite "don'ts" with crepes. First of all, don't fill them ahead of time, and don't wait until the day the guests are to arrive to make the crepe, itself. Since they do offer the convenience of prior preparation, Lettie emphasizes using this advantage to its fullest.

PREPARATION
To make the crepes, follow the recipe, and after the batter is completely mixed, let it stand for about 30 minutes. By doing this, you will be eliminating many of the bubbles before frying. The batter should be no thicker than heavy cream as you prepare to fry the crepes.

To begin, dip a natural bristle brush in butter and grease the bottom of the fry pan with a light coat of butter. Then, pour the liquid batter into a measuring cup and at the same time have the saucepan you will be using heating on the burner. The pan should be hot enough so that the batter sets as soon as it touches the pan.

Making the crepes is actually a two-handed job. You should pour the batter from the measuring cup with one hand and work the saucepan with the other. "Working the saucepan" refers to tipping it and moving it so that the batter forms a nice circular-shaped thin pancake around

the edges and slightly up the sides of the gently sloping pan. If you tip the pan improperly, the crepe will become too large, or be formed unevenly, or will turn out too thick. Most recipes make 12 - 16 crepes, so if you only get six or seven, you know that they are too thick.

As soon as the batter hits the pan, it will set, and then you simply let it brown on the one side until it is finished. According to Lettie, this is very easy to tell because when it is done, it shakes loose from the pan very easily. Once it is finished on one side, it should be flipped over and browned for a few minutes on the other side if the recipe calls for it. The second side gets browned, however, only until it forms "freckles" or brown spots - about 15 seconds.

When you are finished with the one crepe, remove it from the pan and then butter the pan again with a natural bristle brush. Then, pour, brown, shake, flip, and freckle another crepe until you are done. To store the crepes, stack each one between two pieces of wax paper. They will hold in the refrigerator this way for as long as three days. The only thing left to do at this point is fill them, and here is where the creativity comes into play.

For snacks, a good filling is shrimp, bean sprouts, soy sauce, salt and pepper put into a crepe and fried until done. The trick to rolling these crepes is to loosely roll them and adhere them together with cornstarch and water. Egg can also be used.

A Monty Christo is another way to elegantly treat guests. This particular recipe takes a finer crepe which is filled with meat or egg filling. When meat is used, the crepe is spread with mustard and thin slices of chicken roll, baked ham, and Swiss cheese. The crepe is rolled in a jelly roll fashion and dipped in beaten egg and then sauted in butter until brown.

Of course, crepes can be used for dessert, also. This is a very simple process. Dessert crepes take a sweet crepe recipe and can be filled with cherry pie filling (which has had ½ teaspoon of almond extract added to make it taste more authentic) folded over, and topped with a dab of whipped topping and a cherry. This is a delicious dessert which takes only a few seconds to make and is guaranteed to please guests any time. A practical idea for this crepe is to make it on the plate on which you plan to serve it.

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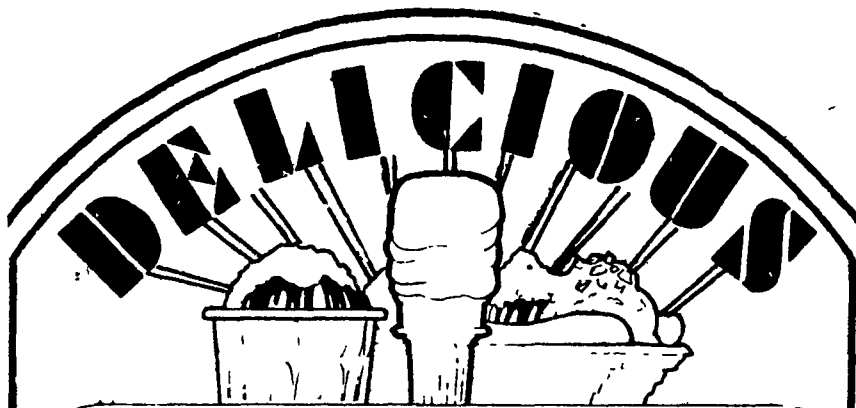
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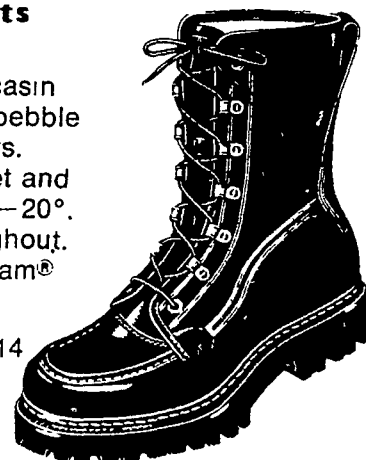
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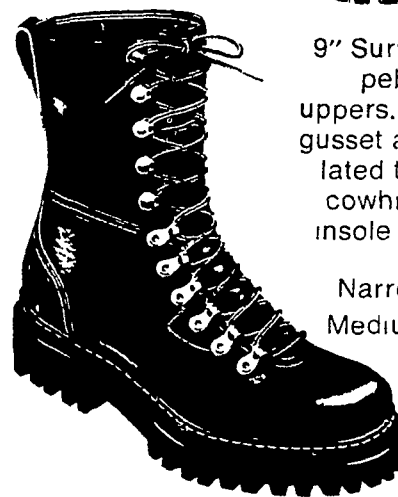
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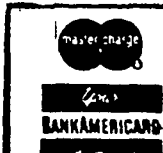
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