

food and recipes



PAULETTE'S CRABMEAT CRÊPES WITH SHERRY SAUCE



ASPARAGUS CRÊPES



HOT CHOCOLATE CRÊPE

Crêpes: Sweet or Savory...A Delicious French Treat

WRITER/FOOD STYLIST JENNIFER CHANDLER
PHOTOGRAPHER NATALIE ROOT

Not many things conjure up memories of France like a warm and tasty crêpe. Almost everyone who has ever visited Paris has enjoyed one of the savory or sweet concoctions made by the many crêpe street vendors scattered throughout the City of Lights. Many have been wowed at a fancy French restaurant by the dramatic presentation of a flaming Crêpes Suzette.

Local Midtown institution Paulette's Restaurant is famed for their delicious main course crêpes as well as their to-die-for dessert crêpes. On its lunch menu, Paulette's features savory crêpes stuffed with such scrumptious fillings as spinach soufflé, tender chicken in a white wine sauce as well as Louisiana shrimp in a sherry sauce. "Our dessert crêpes are probably some of our most popular," says owner George Falls. With options such as Hot Chocolate, Fresh Strawberry Delight and a banana Jamaican Crêpe Amandine, it's not hard to see why.

If a trip to Paris or Paulette's is not in your plan, you can still enjoy delicious crêpes.

Made from the household ingredients flour, eggs, milk, butter and salt, one can whip up a batch in minutes. Stuff them with fillings as simple as strawberry jam or as complex as Paulette's Crab With Sherry Sauce. "Be sure to use a nonstick pan," suggests Don Eschelweck, owner/operating partner of Paulette's, "and don't get discouraged if your first few do not work. Once you get the technique down, making crêpes is a breeze."

PAULETTE'S CRÊPE BATTER

Makes 6 cups of crêpe batter

(You will need a well-seasoned skillet or a non-stick pan to cook your crêpes.)

4 cups whole milk
1/2 cup water
12 oz. all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp. salt
8 eggs
Vegetable oil, for coating the pan

To prepare the batter, mix the milk and water in a large mixing bowl. In a different large mixing bowl, mix the flour and salt together. Add half of the water-milk mixture to the flour-salt mixture and, using an electric mixer, beat on high speed until all lumps are gone. Add the remaining liquid until it is blended. Strain the mixture through a sieve into a new bowl. Beat the eggs, and strain through a sieve into the batter and finish mixing with a hard whip. Store in a refrigerator until ready to use.

To make the crêpes, preheat an 8-inch skillet until very hot. Heavily coat the skillet with vegetable oil. Add 2 oz. of crêpe batter, and evenly coat the skillet. Watch the crêpe very carefully. When it begins to look done (when bubbles form in the uncooked side of a pancake), gently lift the edge and turn the crêpe over. Flip the crêpe out onto a plate when finished. Repeat with remaining batter.

Serve immediately with your favorite filling or store in the refrigerator covered by a damp towel and plastic wrap.

PAULETTE'S CRABMEAT CRÊPE WITH SHERRY SAUCE

Makes 3 crêpes

3 tbsp. butter
2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
2 cups milk

1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
6 oz. dry sherry
8 oz. jumbo lump crabmeat
3 crêpes

To prepare a béchamel sauce base, heat the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat until melted. Add the flour, and stir until smooth. Over medium heat, cook until the mixture turns a light, golden sandy color, about 6 to 7 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the milk in a separate pan until just about to boil. Add the hot milk to the butter mixture one cup at a time, whisking continuously until very smooth. Bring to a boil. Cook 10 minutes, stirring constantly, then remove from heat. Season with salt and nutmeg. Whisk in the sherry to taste to make the sherry sauce.

Place the crabmeat in a large bowl. Gently fold just enough warm sauce into the meat to coat generously. Fill each crêpe with an equal portion of the crab mixture. Roll to enclose, and then spoon sauce to taste over the top. Garnish with a sprig of parsley, a lemon wedge and a sprinkle of paprika if so desired.

HOT CHOCOLATE CRÊPES

(an "at home" version of Paulette's recipe)

Makes 4 crêpes

4 crêpes
1 cup warm chocolate sauce
1 pint French vanilla ice cream
3 tbsp. toasted chopped pecans
Chocolate shavings for garnish, optional

Place each crêpe on a plate. Place two scoops of ice cream on each crêpe, and fold gently to cover. Drizzle the warm chocolate sauce over the crêpes, and sprinkle with the nuts. Serve immediately.

CHERRIES JUBILEE CRÊPES

Adapted from *Crêpes* by Lou Seibert Pappas

Serves 4

8 crêpes
3 tbsp. unsalted butter
3 tbsp. sugar
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup ruby Port
1 1/2 cups Bing cherries, pitted
1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
3 tbsp. brandy
1 pint vanilla ice cream

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter until it foams. Sprinkle in the sugar, and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Pour in the water and wine, and cook until it reduces to the consistency of syrup. Add the cherries, heat through and stir in the lemon juice. Fold the crêpes into triangles, and add them to the skillet, coating them in the sauce.

Push the crêpes to one side. Heat the brandy. Ignite with a match, and spoon the flaming brandy over the sauce. When the flames subside, serve two crêpes and a spoonful or two of sauce on each plate. Top with a scoop of ice cream. Serve immediately.

ASPAGUS CRÊPES

Makes 4 crêpes

4 crêpes
1 1/2 lbs. fresh asparagus spears, cut into 1-inch diagonal pieces
1 egg
3/4 cup ricotta cheese
1/2 cup shredded Gruyere cheese
2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
1 garlic clove, finely minced
2 tbsp. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Preheat an oven to 350° F.

Blanch the asparagus until crisp tender. Drain and set aside.

In a bowl, mix together the egg, ricotta cheese, Gruyere, Parmesan, garlic, and parsley. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in the asparagus.

Spoon the filling down the center of each crêpe, and roll to enclose. Bake on a lightly greased baking pan for 10 to 15 minutes, or until heated through. Serve immediately. ●

Accessories by Boulevard Inc.



CHERRIES JUBILEE CRÊPE