

Blizzard of Blintzes for Delicious Dairy Days

Jewish Crepe Skips between Sweet and Savory for Holiday or Any Time

RACHEL HARKHAM

Take your cues from Shavuot's favorite dish by frying up a batch or two of blintzes. For Shavuot or anytime, blintzes are versatile for many different configurations of sweet or savory filled dishes, perfect for a snack, light meal or holiday treat. Blintzes are about as uncomplicated as fried eggs, making it a low-stress, highly delicious kitchen activity—even suited for teens.

Blintzes are the eastern European version of a crepe. These thin and light pancakes are called *blinchiki* in Russian and *blettlach* in Yiddish. They are usually filled with fresh cheese, fruit or mashed potatoes. They are also a great way to use leftovers. Traditionally for Shavuot, blintzes served with a sweet cheese filling and topped with a fruit sauce.

Blintzes are buttery and mild because its batter is rich in eggs and milk and they are pan-fried in scant melted butter to golden goodness. A minute on one side and then 30 seconds on the other will yield blintzes that are pleasantly well done. Once you have poured the batter into the center of the sizzling pan, lift it and tilt and turn it so it spreads evenly over the bottom of the pan in a thin circle. When the edges begin to dry and pull back from the sides of the pan, a spatula and your fingers will evenly flip the blintz over. If not using right away, blintzes can be stored in the freezer, so that you can take out the amount you need, as you need, for any combination that appeals.

A Stacked Blintz Cake is a new spin on the Shavuot blintz tradition. Instead of folding the sweet cheese filling into the blintz, stack them up and spread each one with the creamy and light filling, and serve it sliced like a cake, with the sweet and juicy fruit syrup dripping lushly over the blintz wedges. For an easy, yummy snack at any time, try a peanut butter, Nutella and banana blintz. It is decadent enough to feel like a treat. When served alongside a crisp salad, Salsa & Cheddar Blintzes make for a simple and tasty supper. Get creative with your blintz. Just think: this traditional recipe can be filled with new possibilities.

Blintz Recipe

(Adapted from "The World of Jewish Cooking" by Gil Marks)

- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoons salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2-3 teaspoons butter, for frying

Whisk together the eggs, milk, butter and salt. Slowly whisk in flour to a smooth and thin batter that has consistency of heavy cream. Let the batter chill covered in the fridge for anytime between 30 minutes and overnight.

Heat a non-stick skillet with an 8-inch base over medium high heat, and grease with ¼ teaspoon of butter. Pour a quarter cup of the batter into the center of the pan, tilting in all directions so the batter coats the bottom.

Cook until the edges begin to brown and lift from the sides of the pan (about 1 minute).

With your fingers assisting your spatula, flip the blintz over. Cook between 20-30 seconds more.

You can stack the blintz on a plate as they are done, they will not stick together. They soften as they cool.

*Blintzes keep in the fridge, wrapped in plastic for up to three days. To freeze blintzes place sheets of wax or parchment between every few, so that it is easy to pry off as many as you need. Wrap in plastic and store in a freezer bag. Bring to room temperature before using.

Recipe yields 10 blintzes.

Sweet Cheese Filling

- 1½ cup part-skim ricotta
- 1½ cup cream cheese (reduced fat is fine)
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon rind
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5-7 tablespoons granulated sugar (or more if you like it very sweet)

Combine all the ingredients with a hand-mixer or a wooden spoon.



Berry Topping

- 2 cups blueberries, chopped strawberries, or pitted cherries
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

In a medium sized saucepan over medium high heat, bring all ingredients to a boil. Reduce to a simmer for 5 minutes. Allow to cool before using to top blintz cake.

To assemble The Stacked Blintz Cake:

Lay the first blintz on a cake stand or platter. Spread a generous ¼ cup of the sweet cheese filling smoothly over the surface of the blintz, leaving a ¼-inch border all around.

Lay second blintz on top, and repeat process until the entire filling is used up. End with a thin layer of the sweet cream on top.

Cover loosely with wax or parchment paper and chill for two hours or as long as overnight.

Before serving, spoon fruit syrup over the top, allowing it to run over sides and pool at the bottom of the plate. Reserve some syrup to spoon over cut and plated individual wedges.

Other Cooking Ideas:

Peanut Butter, Nutella & Banana

Gently warm individual blintz in a dry, hot skillet for 5-10 seconds. Loosely spread 1 tablespoon of Nutella and 1 tablespoon of peanut butter over the bottom half of a blintz, place banana slices on top. Fold top half of blintz over filling. Melt ½ teaspoon of butter over medium heat. Place folded blintz in skillet and press down with to seal in filling. Cook on each side for 20-30 seconds. Serve warm.

Salsa & Cheddar Blintz

Place a blintz on an even surface and spoon a heaping tablespoon of salsa in the lower center. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of shredded cheddar over salsa. Fold the sides over the filling; fold the bottom edge over, the roll up to form a package. Heat ½ teaspoon of olive oil in skillet over medium high heat. Fry the blintzes until golden brown on both sides. Top with sour cream, if desired.

Rachel Harkham is a Rockland County mother of three, runs a small chocolate business and is the co-author of an upcoming Jewish cookbook.