



Banana Pancakes with Hazelnut Mascarpone Crème

Hazelnut cream is a delightful and satisfying sweet enjoyed throughout Europe, and in our opinion, Americans will love it equally well. Blending it with mascarpone cheese makes it a winner for spreading atop deliciously rich banana pancakes. This dish reminds us of Dad's Sunday morning pancakes, but we've elevated the presentation slightly above what Dad would have done, enough that it can be served as an elegant part of a casual brunch.

4 Servings

Ingredients

For the hazelnut mascarpone crème:

1 tablespoon hazelnut cream paste (such as Nutella)
½ cup mascarpone cheese
1 dash freshly grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the hazelnut drizzle:

1 tablespoon powdered sugar
¼ cup hazelnut cream paste (such as Nutella)
1 tablespoon half and half

2 bananas, sliced for garnish

For the banana pancakes:

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
2 eggs
2 cups milk
6 tablespoons butter, melted
1 large banana, mashed
4 teaspoons lemon juice

Preparation

[Chef's Note: Bananas should be at full-yellow ripeness and should not be mushy for this dish. If there is not enough yellow appearing on the peel, place a ripe apple in a brown bag with the bananas. They should ripen in a day or two.]

Prepare the hazelnut mascarpone crème:

In a small bowl mix together mascarpone cheese, hazelnut cream, nutmeg, vanilla and powdered sugar until well blended. Set aside.

Prepare the hazelnut drizzle:

Place ¼ cup hazelnut cream in microwave safe bowl and heat in microwave on high for 20 seconds or until melted. Add half and half and stir to combine well. Mixture should be syrupy.

Prepare the banana pancakes:

Slowly preheat a heavy pancake griddle.

March 2006

Mix together, flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and nutmeg.

In a separate bowl, beat eggs and add milk, butter, mashed banana and lemon juice. Mix until well blended. Pour wet ingredients into flour mixture; mix just until combined. Batter should be lumpy.

[Chef's Note: To test griddle temperature, drop a little cold water onto hot griddle; water should roll off in drops.]

Use about ¼ cup batter for each pancake; cook until bubbles form on the surface and edges become dry. Turn; cook 2 minutes longer or until nicely browned on the underside.

[Chef's Note: To keep pancakes warm until service, line a jellyroll pan with a clean tea towel. Place cooked pancakes on towel in a single layer. Separate layers with parchment paper or wax paper. Cover with another tea towel and place in warm oven (about 250°F) until ready to serve.]

Service

Lay one pancake down on the serving plate. Place a few banana slices on one edge, and spread mascarpone cream on the pancake. Top with another pancake, sliding a few more banana slices between the mascarpone and the top pancake. Top with remaining banana slices. Drizzle with a small amount of hazelnut syrup.

Variation

You may also use this sweet and creamy mascarpone filling on bagels. Simply choose a plain or egg bagel (no seeds), slice and toast. Spread mascarpone mixture on bagel halves. If desired, place sliced bananas on top and/or drizzle with hazelnut syrup for a decadent topping (may require fork and knife!).

Copyright © 2006 The Gilded Fork™. Recipe by Lia Soscia. All rights reserved.

March 2006