

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Saturday mornings—breakfast for five

When our sons were younger, Saturday mornings were a lazy, pajama-wearing time, with the boys on quilts or sleeping bags spread out on the living room floor, playing with toys and (when we had a TV) watching cartoons. Many of those mornings involved massive amounts of whole wheat pancakes—partly because the boys loved them and partly because homemade pancakes were a cheap way to fill our growing boys with healthy food. Now, I used to make typical thin pancake batter, but the longer I stood in front of the stove making batch after batch, I realized that a more filling pancake would make my life easier—heavier pancakes mean everyone eats less, therefore I spend less time in the hot kitchen. Thus, my infamous whole wheat pancakes were born—even the heartiest eater can't finish a fourth pancake! Lighten the batter with unbleached all-purpose flour. Add blueberries, mashed banana, pecans or even coconut for variety. Chop or stew fresh fruit for a delicious topping. Special occasions call for a scoop of ice cream or freshly whipped cream as an extravagant taste treat. Don't forget a candle for birthday breakfasts—what a memorable start for a special day!

Whole Wheat Buttermilk Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

3 cups whole wheat flour
1 Tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoons melted butter or oil
2 Tablespoons honey
2 eggs, lightly beaten
4 cups (1 quart) buttermilk
blueberries and/or pecans

DIRECTIONS

Mix together dry ingredients in a big bowl. In a separate bowl, mix all wet ingredients. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and stir only until combined. Let batter sit at least 10 minutes at room temperature before cooking pancakes.

Heat griddle or pan on medium-high heat. Grease hot pan lightly with butter or oil. Using a measuring cup or ladle, pour 1/2 cup batter onto hot griddle. In 3-4 minutes, small bubbles form around the edges of the pancakes. The edges will then begin to look dry and waxy. Flip pancake and cook approximately 2-3 minutes on the other side. Test for doneness by touching the pancake edge and then the center—they should feel alike. If using blueberries, stir 1-2 cups fresh or frozen berries into batter, lower the temperature and cook pancakes a little longer. If using pecans, just drop onto uncooked top of pancake before flipping. Try both for a special treat. Serve with maple syrup or honey.

Baked Egg Custard with Blueberries

2 cups hot milk, 3 eggs beaten, 1/2 cup sugar, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, 2 Tablespoons Grand Marnier (optional), 1 cup fresh blueberries. Mix together everything except milk and berries. Slowly beat in milk, then stir in blueberries. Bake in buttered casserole placed in a water bath at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until a silver knife tests clean. Serve the day it is made—warm or cold.

Never used kohlrabi before? This Sweet and Sour Kohlrabi recipe is from Jerry at the 441 Farmers' Market. Chop kohlrabi into bite-sized pieces. Sauté with 1 Tablespoon bacon fat (I used 1 Tablespoon olive oil), 1 Tablespoon sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt and just a little water to steam. Cover and cook until tender. Splash with balsamic, flavored or rice wine vinegar and serve.

It's Local, It's Fresh, It's Blueberries

Picking blueberries is a blast—only the mosquitoes can ruin my day at a blueberry farm. The best is a warm day that suddenly gets a little breeze and a quick cooling shower. There you are—lips stained blue, bucket half full, enjoying the cool fresh air—heaven on earth! And if the farm has a blackberry patch, I'm a kid again visiting my Granny!

The blueberry farmers I talked to recently are wishing for rain like that. The drought has forced them to irrigate—a few of the larger businesses are watering all their berry bushes, but some of the smaller farms are using micro-drip irrigation on only the early ripening varieties. One farmer said that the freeze caused her to lose over 80% of her early crop, so she was hoping for a good harvest of late bloomers.

I've noticed that during drier seasons, some of the berries seem to have a tougher skin than others, so I use these for baking or in pancakes—the burst of flavor is still there, but the skin becomes unimportant.

Even if you don't get out to a blueberry farm to pick this year, be sure to stock up while they are in season, freeze a bunch for the future and enjoy fresh blueberry pancakes next winter!

What's Fresh Right Now?

Acorn Squash—"Cream of the crop"
Beans—green, Roma, wax, cranberry
Beets
Blueberries—high bush, rabbit-eyes
Cabbage
Cantaloupes—orange or green flesh
Cucumbers—hydroponic, pickling
Eggplant—Italian, Oriental
Greens—turnip, collard, Arugula
Lettuce—basket, hydroponic, spring mix
Kohlrabi
Okra
Onions—green, white and red, dry
Peas—English, snow, white acre
Peppers—cherry, cubanelle, Anaheim
Potatoes—new, red, sweet
Radishes
Squash—summer, marrow, patty pan
Strawberries
Tomatoes—red, orange, yellow, cherry
Turnips
Watermelon

Frozen Blueberries

We love frozen blueberries—not the kind you get at the store, but the ones we freeze ourselves each year. Wash the blueberries, dry them completely and then place in freezer zip-locs. Try to leave as little air as possible in each bag or ice crystals will form. Lay bags in a single layer in the freezer and stack them after they are frozen.

You can use frozen blueberries in place of fresh in your favorite pancake and muffin recipes—just leave them frozen and mix them into the batter.

Our favorite way to eat blueberries is straight from the freezer, poured into a mug and covered with milk. The milk forms an icy capsule around each berry, making the whole mug like slushy ice cream. Experiments in our kitchen have also had positive results using orange juice or lemonade in place of milk.

For a sweet, sticky blueberry sensation, try drizzling a thin stream of local honey over the frozen berries—it's like candy!

Save the World—One Dinner at a Time!

Cook dinner tonight! Make it at home or cook together with friends or family.

Use locally purchased seasonal food. Make conscious choices about how your food is grown and processed. Eat your food with love and laughter, appreciating those who grew and prepared it, and the earth it grew in.

Enjoy your food by making the best choices for your body.

Conscious choices can change your health, your family and your planet.

Every day we have a chance to save the world—one dinner at a time!

BBQ Tempeh

INGREDIENTS

1 pound Tempeh strips (Buy Local—The Tempeh Shop at Union Square Farmers' Market)

1 cup BBQ Sauce—homemade or store-bought

DIRECTIONS

Heat tempeh until just warm in the microwave. Slather with BBQ Sauce and place 6"- 8" away from the broiler until it is all bubbly and gooey—about 15 minutes.

Sauteed Green Beans with Mushrooms

INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 pound fresh green beans, snapped and snapped (Buy Local—Any Farmers' Market)

1 - 8 ounce package of sliced mushrooms (portobellos work well in this recipe)

DIRECTIONS

Heat large pan, add oil and then mushrooms. Stir and cook until browned. Add green beans and stir-fry until tender. Add 2-3 Tablespoons water and cook covered until they taste done to you. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Quick, Sweet Cabbage Salad

INGREDIENTS

1/2 head cabbage, sliced into long thin strips (Ours came from a friend's garden)

1/3 cup Newman's Own Light Raspberry and Walnut Dressing

1/2 cup chopped walnuts

1/2 cup jumbo raisins

DIRECTIONS

Mix cabbage with dressing, then stir in remaining ingredients. If you want crunchy slaw, serve immediately or refrigerate only 30 minutes before serving. If you want a softer slaw, stir in 1/4 teaspoon salt, then refrigerate for 1-2 hours. Stir again before serving.

Tricks and Tips

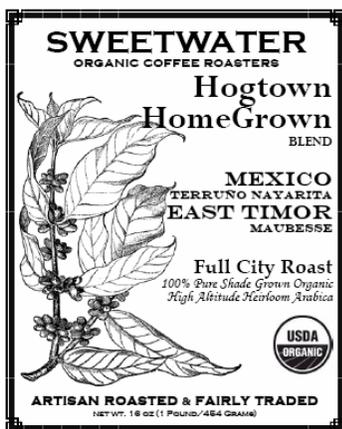
I served this meal with Grilled Garlic Cheese Grits Squares. Just make a batch of your favorite grits or polenta, let cool in a shallow pan, cut into squares, brush with olive oil and grill on high heat until crispy on the outside and creamy in the center.

Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More
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Blueberry Stacks for Two

INGREDIENTS

6—3” rounds of puff pastry, baked and cooled
1/2 cup ricotta cheese, part skim
2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen
8 dried apricots, quartered
1 teaspoon lemon zest
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup honey
2 stems fresh rosemary
8 fresh mint leaves, sliced in chiffonade
1/2 cup fresh berries (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Warm honey in small saucepan, add rosemary and pound with a wooden spoon to release the flavor. Remove from heat. Steep at least 15 minutes, but no longer than 1 hour. Strain and cool.

Mix ricotta with 1 Tablespoon of cool honey.

Stew blueberries, apricots, lemon zest and water for 30 minutes on low heat. Stir and check water level every ten minutes. After 30 minutes, remove from heat and allow to cool slightly.

Now comes the fun part—stacking your dessert to taste! Here's a suggested stacking order—top to bottom:

Chiffonade of Fresh Mint

Drizzle of Rosemary Honey

Fresh blueberries (optional)

Stewed berries and apricots

Puff Pastry Round

Ricotta

Puff Pastry Round

Stewed Berries and Apricots

Ricotta filling

Puff Pastry Round

Drizzle of Rosemary Honey on plate

Tricks and Tips

Puff Pastry can be tricky. Follow the package directions, especially regarding defrosting and rolling. I found the easiest way to keep the pieces flat as they baked was to place another cookie sheet on top of the puff pastry—the heat baked it thoroughly, but it stayed flat.