

Chapter 43

Quick and Yeast Breads

Pour-Batter Quick Breads

Directions: Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

Flour, baking powder, salt, eggs, milk, and oil—these common ingredients provide a surprising variety of quick breads. Recipes using these ingredients start out simple, leaving plenty of room for creativity.

Pancakes

Whether you call them pancakes, hot cakes, or flapjacks, these breads offer an easy way to add appeal to a meal. Try whole-wheat, buckwheat, or buttermilk pancakes. Experiment with chopped nuts; vanilla or maple extract; spices and herbs; and fresh, dried, or puréed fruit.

Whatever you add, pancake batter is mixed by the muffin method, meaning it should be somewhat lumpy. A hot skillet is essential for fluffy cakes with a tender-crisp crust. Test by sprinkling a few drops of water onto the skillet. The drops “dance” across a skillet that is just the right temperature. A light coat of grease is advisable, even on nonstick surfaces.

For each pancake, use about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 mL) of batter. Watch carefully because pancakes cook quickly. They're ready to turn when bubbles appear across the top and the edges look dry. Cook them briefly on the other side, and serve them hot.

Syrup is a favorite pancake topping, but it's almost pure sugar. Try a more nutritious alternative, such as applesauce or fruit slices.

Crepes

A crepe (KRAPE) is a very thin pancake. The two are prepared much the same way. Crepe batter is thinner, however, because it contains less flour in proportion to liquid and egg, which gives a taste similar to sweetened scrambled eggs. Special pans can be purchased for cooking crepes easily.

Crepes are often rolled or folded around a filling. Desserts crepes might enclose fresh fruit or jam, with a dusting of powdered sugar. A seafood filling and cheese sauce turn crepes into an entrée.

Waffles

Waffle batter is similar to pancake batter but usually contains a little more egg and oil. Sometimes beaten egg whites are added for extra lightness and crispness. The batter is baked in a waffle iron, which cooks both sides at the same time and marks the surface with a characteristic grid pattern.

Waffles can be served with the same toppings as pancakes. They can also be used as a base for a creamed main dish. Try topping a hot waffle with yogurt and fruit as a dessert.

Popovers

Popovers have a crisp exterior and an airy, hollow interior. They are made from a runny batter that, unlike most quick breads, is beaten until smooth. The batter is poured into well-greased custard cups, muffin tins, or special popover pans and baked at a very high temperature. The heat turns the liquid in the batter to steam, causing the bread to rise, or “pop.”

Popovers need “privacy” when rising. Opening the oven door lets in a draft of cool air that can cause them to fall. Once out of the oven, they are gently slit to let out steam and prevent soggy centers. Popovers may be served by themselves or filled as a main dish or dessert.

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Thinking Critically

1. What is the main difference between a pancake recipe and a muffin recipe?

2. What flour could you substitute or add to quick-bread recipes that increases fiber in your diet?

3. What accounts for the vast difference in cost among bread products, such as bread mixes, refrigerator dough, frozen dough, ready-to-eat products, and bakery products?

4. Debate: Oat-bran muffins are a heart-healthy quick bread for those who need to lower their cholesterol levels.

For Further Study

- ◆ Locate three quick-bread recipes that use only baking soda as the leavening agent and recipes that use both baking powder and baking soda as the leavening agent. Which ingredient in each recipe is the acid that combines with the baking soda to produce the carbon dioxide that helps bread rise?
- ◆ Compare and contrast the quality of biscuits or muffins made from a recipe, refrigerated dough or batter, and a convenience mix. Develop a rubric to score the final products based on the qualities that are important to you. When would you choose to use each option? What other suggestions or recommendations can you make? Write a brief summary and submit it to your teacher.
- ◆ Create a scrapbook called (Your name)'s Baking Center. What equipment, utensils, and ingredients would be basic to your baking center? What equipment, utensils and ingredients would be added to your center as you become more experienced with baking? Analyze the cost of your center. What insights did you gain from creating your scrapbook? Share your scrapbook with the class.