

Passed Down Passover Pancakes

By Guest Chef Gil Marks



Each Passover I prepare all sorts of fancy desserts for my family and friends, often experimenting with adaptations of sophisticated modern fare. Yet every year I repeat one traditional dish: *chremslach* (bite-size matzah meal pancakes in honey). The recipe I use is scribbled in my grandmother's handwriting on a yellowed, wine-splattered index card. I scrupulously follow the directions, making certain that the pancakes are the size of a quarter and not too brown. Inevitably my father sneaks a sample of the nearly finished product with the excuse of "quality control," remarking on how they take him back to his childhood and the ones his mother used to make. The mere sampling of a piece of pancake transcends time, linking generations.

Chremslach

(Ashkenazic Matzah Meal Pancakes in Honey)

Yields about 3 dozen 1-inch pancakes

1 cup matzah meal
1/4 cup chopped almonds or walnuts
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch of ground ginger
About 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup sweet wine or water
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
Vegetable oil or schmaltz for frying
1 1/3 cups (1 pound) honey

Combine matzah meal, nuts, sugar, cinnamon, ginger and salt. Stir in wine and eggs. Let stand until thickened, about 10 minutes. Heat a thin layer of oil in a large skillet over medium heat. In batches, drop batter by teaspoonfuls and fry until browned on both sides. Drain on paper towels. Add honey to skillet and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently (the honey may boil up). Return *chremslach* to skillet, tossing to coat. Store in the honey syrup.

Bimuelos de Massa

(Sephardic Matzah Farfel Pancakes)

Yields about 2 dozen 3-inch pancakes

Pancakes made from crumbled matzah or matzah meal are familiar Passover breakfast and supper fare in both Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities. They can be enhanced in a variety of ways: Fill with jam or fruit; stir in chopped fruit, nuts or cheese; or bathe in a honey syrup. For a crisper pancake, decrease the number of eggs.

4 cups (about 8 ounces) crumbled matzah
About 3 cups boiling water
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
About 1 teaspoon salt
Pinch of ground black pepper
3 tablespoons olive oil or margarine for frying

Soak matzah pieces in water until softened but not mushy, about 1 minute. Drain and squeeze out excess moisture. Stir in eggs, salt, and pepper. Melt oil in a large skillet over medium heat. In batches, drop batter by heaping tablespoonfuls and fry until golden brown on both sides, 1 to 2 minutes per side.

Bimuelos are traditionally served with *arrope* (raisin syrup), *dulce* (fruit preserves) or yogurt.

Variations:

Bimuelos de Massa con Muez (Sephardic Matzah Pancakes with Nuts): Dip the hot pancakes into cooled sugar syrup, then into finely chopped walnuts.

Pizzarelle (Italian Matzah Pancakes): Add 1/3 cup raisins or dried currants, 1/3 cup chopped walnuts or almonds, 1 tablespoon grated orange or lemon zest and 3 to 6 tablespoons leftover *charoset*. Bring 1 cup honey, 1/4 cup water and 1 tablespoon lemon juice to a boil and drizzle over pancakes.

Zeess Kaese Chremslach

(Ashkenazic Sweet Cheese Pancakes)

Yields about 30 3-inch pancakes

Ashkenazim enjoy these delicate pancakes for dairy meals on Chanukah and Passover.

2 cups (1 pound) cottage, pot or ricotta cheese
4 large eggs
About 1 cup matzah cake meal
2 tablespoons melted butter or sour cream
1 to 2 tablespoons granulated sugar or honey
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract or ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
Vegetable oil or butter for frying

In a food processor or blender, purée cheese, eggs, matzah meal, butter, sugar, vanilla and salt until smooth. (Or beat eggs with an electric mixer until thick and creamy, then beat in remaining ingredients.) Heat a large skillet or griddle over medium heat. Lightly grease with oil. In batches, drop batter by heaping tablespoonfuls and fry, until bubbles form on tops and bottoms are lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn and fry until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Repeat with remaining batter. If pancakes are too soft to turn, place under a broiler until lightly browned. (Pancakes may be kept warm by placing in a single layer on a baking sheet in a 200-degree oven.) Serve accompanied with sour cream, yogurt, maple syrup, flavored butter, jam, cinnamon-sugar or fresh fruit. **JA**

Gil Marks is the author of the James Beard finalist The World of Jewish Cooking, The World of Jewish Entertaining, and The World of Jewish Desserts and writes the weekly "Parsha Recipe" column for the OU's "Shabbat Shalom" email (see www.ou.org).