

An Unusual Culinary Column: Fresh Blackberry Deliciousness

By Karen Kain

My first year of picking fresh berries has been an adventure in harvesting and cooking. Blackberries proved to be equally as rewarding. I am not going to complain about my stained fingers and scraped hands and legs. Those luscious berries filled with healthy antioxidants are simply delicious and I would like to have as many stored in my freezer as I can, for all kinds of delicious treats.



Blintzes are one of those decadent dishes that I have only ever eaten at a restaurant. They are rich in flavor and just eating one is fully satisfying. After I made the crepes recipe....twice, I was encouraged to try Blintzes, it was my gateway recipe to attempting to make this delicate crepe filled with ricotta and topped with the most delicious syrup I have ever made. There is no hiding the calorie and sugar content, not to mention the effort that is needed to make this dish. I would suggest you try this recipe; it is great for any special occasion. Blintzes are not difficult by any means but I would be lying if I didn't

tell you that it takes a bit of effort.

In my blackberry recipe research, I came across another delicious recipe, "Blackberry Breakfast Bars." It is super easy and tasty. I am not sure that it is a healthy alternative to breakfast, but my husband has gobbled them up without any complaint all day long. My sensitive baker's ego is always watching for the taste test response and how quickly things disappear; this dish went fast.

I think you can easily cut the brown sugar back in the breakfast bars and if you are really trying to eliminate sugar in your diet, the book, A Year Of No Sugar, suggests using Dextrose in place of sugar. I will be trying that soon.

Thank you to Anne Shields who phoned me to share her canning tips:

She suggested that instead of writing on top of your canning jars use masking tape to label the sides, "Who looks at the top of the jars, anyways?" Another suggestion: when freezing, label the freezer and the contents whereabouts keeps you from pulling everything out, looking for that one item. Thanks Anne, it is always a pleasure talking with you.

I hope you all have a great week and are enjoying a hint of autumn in the weather.

Fresh Blackberry Blintzes

Ingredients:

- Blackberry Sauce
 - 16 Ounce blackberries
 - 1 Cup sugar
 - Juice of one lemon
 - 3 Tablespoon Butter
 - 2 Teaspoon corn starch
- Crepes
 - 1 Cup flour
 - 1 Cup milk
 - 2 Eggs
 - 2 Tablespoons water
 - 1½ Tablespoon sugar
 - 1 Teaspoon baking powder
 - ½ Teaspoon salt
 - 3 Tablespoons butter (for cooking crepes in)
- Ricotta Filling
 - 1½ cup ricotta cheese
 - 2 Ounces cream cheese
 - 3 Tablespoons sugar
 - 1 Teaspoon lemon zest

Directions:

For the syrup - In a medium saucepan add berries, sugar, lemon juice, butter and cornstarch, then heat to a simmer. Mash the berries to release juices. Simmer for five minutes and remove from heat as the syrup thickens. Using a strainer, strain out the seeds and pulp. Set aside. For the crepes - place all ingredients (except 3 tablespoons of butter, for cooking crepes) in a food processor or blender. Process until smooth. Heat a skillet (at least 8" in diameter) over medium-high heat and generously grease with butter. Pour in just enough batter to coat pan. You only need a thin layer. Cook each crepe for 30 seconds on each side. Cover to keep



warm. For the ricotta filling - mix all ingredients together in a large mixing bowl until thoroughly combined. Scoop a large tablespoon of ricotta filling onto the middle section of each crepe. Roll up as you would a burrito. On a low heat add butter in a skillet and cook the blintzes until golden brown, about two minutes or so per side. Place blintzes in a 9x13 baking dish and bake in a 400° oven for 12 minutes to finish cooking the filling. Serve with blackberry sauce. Enjoy!

Blackberry Breakfast Bars

Ingredients:

- 2 Cups fresh or frozen blackberries
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 2 Tablespoons water
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 Teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 Cup all-purpose flour
- 1 Cup Kind Healthy Grains or quick cooking rolled oats
- 2/3 Cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 Teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 Teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 Cup melted butter

Directions:

Combine berries, honey, water, juice and cinnamon in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Stir Frequently. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 8 minutes and remove from heat. In a bowl mix together flour, oats, brown sugar, cinnamon and soda. Add melted butter and mix until thoroughly combined. Set aside 1 cup of the oat mixture for topping. Press the remaining oat mixture into an ungreased square-baking pan. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes. Remove from oven and carefully spread the blackberry filling on top of the baked crust. Sprinkle with reserved oat mixture. Lightly press oat mixture into filling. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack then cut into bars.

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