



Don't Waffle

Waffle iron is more versatile than you might think

Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Waffled chocolate chip cookies, made in a waffle maker.

By DANIEL NEMAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

American cooking is heading in two different directions.



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Waffled margherita pizza, made in a waffle maker.

waffle irons are cooked in waffle irons.

Why not? Waffle irons are just two griddles that heat food on both sides simultaneously. The indentations add to the surface area, so the food is crispier, and they also make anything cooked on them seem more festive.

I'm always a little late to come to fads, but I finally decided to see what a waffle iron can do. And that meant digging our old one out of its hiding place in the basement. When I say old, I mean it: It dates back to the 1970s or '80s and, based on painful personal experience, it apparently has no insulation at all.

But as a cooking device, it worked fine. I started with Waffled Falafel, partly because the name makes me smile. Falafel is the Middle Eastern street food made from spices and ground garbanzo beans that is shaped into balls and fried.

You can't fry in a waffle iron, so you might assume that waffled falafels are better for you. But they have a fair amount of oil mixed into them to keep them moist and hold them together while they are being cooked. So while they do taste wonderful, you are not saving any fat or calories.

I served my waffle falafels the traditional way, in pita (regular pita, not something silly like waffle pita) with tomatoes, cucumbers and tahini.

Sticking with the idea of crowd-pleasing foods, I made a pizza in the waffle iron. Pizza is a fun food anyway, and waffling it only makes it seem like more of a celebration.

It's a three-part process, but it is all easy. First, you cook your favorite pizza dough on the waffle iron. Then you spread the top of it with an easy pizza sauce (I kept mine straightforward because the recipe is all about being simple to make) and shredded cheese.

And to melt the cheese, all I did was close the waffle maker partway. The heat from the top side melted the cheese. I thought I would have to broil

the pizza, but the radiated waffle-iron heat nicely did the trick.

For a breakfast treat, I made Waffled Eggs with Cheese Sauce. If you think of a waffle iron as a griddle with a bunch of bumps in it, the concept makes sense.

Because you cannot stir eggs in a waffle iron, they do not develop the fluffy curds of scrambled eggs. Rather, these eggs develop the soft, almost springy texture you get at a diner that makes omelets on a hot griddle.

But because these eggs have been baked into the shape of a waffle, you can't fold them over like an omelet. I simply sautéed toppings — I used onions, mushrooms and red and green peppers — and placed them on top.

That by itself made a delicious, unusual meal. But I upped the ante by whipping up a light, creamy cheese sauce that mimicked the effect of a hollandaise: It enriched the egg-eating experience simply by adding a lot of calories.

Perhaps the most unusual food I cooked in a waffle iron was a mixture of seasoned rice and egg. This made an Asian-flavored rice waffle that I topped with stir-fried chicken. The result was a decidedly different way to blend Eastern flavors with a Western cooking technique.

It was delicious. And you can use any stir-fry you want. Basically, if it tastes good on rice, it will taste even better on a seasoned rice waffle.

I saved dessert for last: Waffled Chocolate Chip Cookies. Yes, you can even make cookies on a waffle iron.

And because you are heating them with direct heat on both sides, they actually cook faster and are crispier than regular cookies you bake in the oven.

They are easy to make and easy to clean up, and are decidedly different. They are chocolate chip cookies, but more fun.

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The history of the Bohnenkamp Building



GINNY MAMMEN
OUT AND ABOUT

Crossing the street to the northwest corner of the 1300 block of Adams and Elm in downtown La Grande is the building known as the Bohnenkamp Building.

The original three-story brick building at 1301 Adams Ave. was constructed for William H. Bohnenkamp in 1900 to replace a small wood-frame building which had been his previous place of business. To tell the story of the building is to know the story of the man who constructed it and made it a La Grande establishment/institution for many decades.

William H. Bohnenkamp was born at Dyersville, Iowa, in 1867 to German immigrants William J. Bohnenkamp, a farmer, and his wife Josephine. Young William was not quite 20 years old when in 1869 he married Genevieve Mountford, age 18, in Carroll, Iowa. Shortly after their marriage, and Genevieve came west by train to begin their married life in La Grande. For an Observer news article first years later they told of their first impressions of La Grande, then a town of about 1,800 people.

"Instead of the paradise they had pictured Oregon, they found everything drab and gray. Day after day it rained. Mud filled the streets. Soggy clouds blotted

out the mountains. It was a back-ground fit for the sorriest case of homesickness. If we can just save enough money to get back home to Iowa we'll go home and never come back," they said of their thoughts at the time.

For nine years William worked for the O. W. Railroad, holding many positions, from machinist's apprentice to foreman. In the 1893 City Directory William was listed as a machinist. By the time the young couple did make their trip back home to Iowa situations had changed and they returned to La Grande.

In 1896 William learned that the La Grande Hardware company was moving to Boise. He bought out some of their goods and started his venture into the hardware business which he located in the Huntington Building across Adams Avenue. He was there for about four months when a small frame building at the northwest corner of Adams and Elm became available. The owner, Bohnenkamp's competitor, T. N. Murphy, was moving to his new location at 1201 Adams, a block up the street. William bought the little building and the lot and he and Genevieve moved their business to this new location. The first year was quite successful. They made \$21,612.25, which would be equivalent to \$728,324 today.

This new location was sufficient for a short period of time, but as business began to grow over the next four years William needed more space. He couldn't

shut down his store so in 1900 he moved the little building into the street to operate his business there while he constructed a three-story brick building. For the next 13 years everything went along smoothly and then, in September of 1913, fire broke out and the two top stories were severely damaged. The building was rebuilt, adding a fourth story. Prior to the fire, the upper floors offered office space to a variety of professional offices.

The store kept growing and by 1920 the need to extend the business display space was being felt. The ground floor of the Masonic Building next door had at the time one space vacant and the other housed the Christy Variety Store, which was ready to deal. William and Andrews Variety Store went together to purchase the entire stock and fixtures from Christy. Then W.H. Bohnenkamp expanded into the two spaces, making it the largest store outside of Portland. The store utilized this extra space for a number of years. This former expansion currently houses JaxDog Cafe and Books, and Find Your Why Travel.

W.H. Bohnenkamp died in 1937 after a life of service to his community as both a businessman, builder and civic leader. He was serving on the La Grande City Council when in 1904 a new City Hall was to be constructed and in 1910 when various streets including Adams Avenue were being paved.

Genevieve and W.H. raised



Fred Hill Collection

The Bohnenkamp Building was constructed in 1900 at Adams and Elm.

three sons, Chase, Lynn and Hal, in their Second Street home known as "The Castle." All three boys came into the business over the years selling furniture, hardware and appliances. Hal became a graduate of a Chicago school of undertaking and opened his own undertaking business at Fifth and Spring. The caskets were on display and sold at the Bohnenkamp store.

The store, also known as Hometown Hardware, providing goods and services to generations of the community, closed in the late 1970s and the last of the Bohnenkamp brothers died in 1986. The Bohnenkamp families and the store played an active part in the La Grande community for many years.

Keep looking up! Enjoy!

Correction for Feb. 8, 2022, article:

The grocery business at 1204 Spring, which originated as Chris' Foods, was sold to Art Komma, operator of Hub City Lockers, in 1963 and the name was changed to Hub City Food. The building was sold by the Christiansen family to the Presbyterian Church in the early 1990s to house the Presbyterian Friendship Center. The Book "Charge it Please" was compiled by Robert Bull and other members of the community involved with the Union County Historical Society.

Ginny Mammen has lived in La Grande for more than 50 years and enjoys sharing her interest in the history of people, places and buildings.