

BREAKFAST/BRUNCH



Out-of-town company always meant brunch at our house.

“Breakfast is the most important meal of the day,” my grandmother used to tell me when, as a teenager, I told her all I wanted was a glass of orange juice. There was no arguing with her because to a Jewish grandmother if no food passes the lips at those specific times of the day meant for eating (or any other opportune moment they can shove a morsel down your gullet), the world just might come to an end. We’d barter back and forth for a compromise. The bartering was merely a formality because in the end I knew she’d win. “Children are starving in Europe!” she’d exclaim. “Well, why don’t you send them my breakfast and then they won’t be so hungry?” I’d answer back. After about five minutes, I’d skulk over to the table and admit defeat.

When I was little, there was no fighting on weekends because that’s when Grandpa made breakfast. I’d wake up to the smell of pancakes, waffles, or Canadian bacon and eggs wafting in from the kitchen. I’d sit up in bed, call out for my grandpa, and he’d magically appear to piggyback me into the kitchen. I can still remember sitting in the built-in kitchen nook, with the old radio sitting on the table, and listening to my grandparents chatting back and forth in Yiddish. I couldn’t understand a word they were saying, but it didn’t matter because I was too busy stuffing my face to care.

Often, especially when relatives were in town, Sunday brunch was a common occurrence. Grandma would weigh the dining room table down with delectable goodies and then we’d eat until we were ready to plotz. I don’t remember much about my great-uncle Sam, except for the fact that after every meal at our house, he’d ask for a Bromo Seltzer™, down it in one or two gulps, give an earsplitting *grepps* (burp), and retire to the sofa a happy man.

Grandma would make so much to eat that cooking dinner that night was unnecessary. Ditto for breakfast or lunch the next day. Maybe it’s my heritage, but to me there is nothing more comforting than opening the refrigerator and finding dishes full of leftovers that I can nibble on.

Grandma would be so proud.

One-Eyed Sandwiches

The word sandwich may be a bit misleading, as you don't put two slices of bread together to eat a one-eyed sandwich. It's a fried slice of bread with the middle cut out and an egg cracked into the hole. I've also heard this dish referred to as "Ox Eyes" or "Bull's Eyes." Call it what you will—it's a quick and delicious way to start the day.

**1 tbsp. butter, margarine, or nonstick
cooking spray**

2 slices bread

2 eggs

Salt and pepper to taste

Maple syrup, jam, or honey (optional)

In a frying pan, melt butter or margarine (or spritz pan with spray) over medium heat. Punch a hole in middle of each bread slice with small glass. Place bread in warmed pan, and then crack an egg into each hole. Fry until bread is golden brown on bottom then flip over and fry until other side is brown and egg is set in the middle. Season to taste. Remove from pan and serve with maple syrup, jam, or honey. Serves 2.

Old-Fashioned Bagels from Scratch

Believe it or not, long before you could walk into a Starbucks and buy a bagel to accompany your latte, they were actually made at home. Are they time-consuming? Yes. Are they worth the effort? You bet!

8 cups flour
1 tbsp. salt
1 tbsp. sugar
2 cakes of fresh yeast
2 cups lukewarm potato water*
¼ cup oil
4 eggs, slightly beaten
2 qt. boiling water
2 tbsp. sugar

Sift flour, salt, and 1 tablespoon sugar into large mixing bowl. Soften yeast in ⅓ cup potato water, then add to the dry ingredients. Pour oil into remaining potato water, then stir it into flour and yeast mixture. Add eggs and mix well until you have a big ball of dough.

Knead dough on floured surface for about 10 minutes. Since dough must be firm, add a little more flour if necessary. After kneading is complete, place dough in a greased bowl and cover with a towel. Let rise at room temperature until dough rises to the top of the bowl (about 1 hour). Then punch it down and remove from bowl. Knead again until dough is smooth and elastic.

Pinch off pieces of dough and roll in your hands until you have a rope about 6 inches long and about ¾-inch wide. Pinch the ends together so you have a doughnut shape.

Add 2 tablespoons sugar to boiling water and drop in bagels one at a time. Turn them over as they pop to the surface. Boil for about a minute on the second side, then remove from water to a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 450 degrees for about 10 to 15 minutes until crust is golden brown. Makes about 2 dozen bagels

*Potato water is just water in which peeled potatoes have been cooked. You can use plain water if you prefer, but the flavor of the bagel will not be as good.

Lox, Bagels, and Cream Cheese

Most non-Jewish folk probably consider this to be the ultimate Jewish meal.

6 bagels
8 oz. cream cheese*
½ lb. thinly sliced lox*
6 slices red onion, thinly sliced

Cut bagels in half and spread with cream cheese. Top with lox and onion. Serves 6.

*Some folks prefer more lox, some more cream cheese. Alter the portions to suit your taste.

Rusty's Pizza Bagels

Since pizza came to America back at the turn of the century from Italy, people have been trying to build a better pizza pie. While pizza bagels can't compare to the original pizza pie, they do make quite a good snack.

2 bagels, sliced
½ cup favorite pasta sauce
¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Cut bagels in half and toast them until lightly browned. Spread each slice with pasta sauce and sprinkle on mozzarella cheese. Place on a cookie sheet and broil until cheese is bubbly and slightly browned, watching it carefully in the process. Cheese under a broiler has a tendency to go from underdone to burnt in the blink of an eye.

This is just the basic recipe. Don't limit yourself to just sauce and mozzarella cheese. Be creative! As with regular pizza, pile on the toppings. Serves 2.

Lox, Egg, and Onion Scramble

Aside from smoked whitefish and cream cheese on a kaiser roll, this is my favorite weekend breakfast. Because it's a dish fit for a Jewish Princess, it always tastes better if you can coax someone else to make it for you.

6 eggs
1/3 cup milk or water
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tbsp. margarine or butter
1/4 medium onion, chopped
3 oz. lox, roughly chopped

In large bowl, beat eggs, milk (or water), and salt and pepper thoroughly. Set aside.

Heat butter or margarine in a skillet over medium heat and add onions. Cook until clear. Add egg mixture and lox. Scramble until eggs are set and to your liking. Serve with toasted bagels and sliced tomatoes. Serves 4.

Stanley's Tomato and Egg Pie

Being a writer, producer, director, lyricist, actor, and all-around very busy person, it is a wonder the late Stanley Ralph Ross had any time to cook at all. He said that breakfast was his favorite meal of the day, and this was his favorite breakfast.

2 tbsp. butter
1 can (16 oz.) peeled tomatoes
6 oz. fresh mushrooms
Herbs and spices to your liking
2 oz. freshly shredded Parmesan cheese
3 eggs
6 slices of your favorite cheese

Melt butter over low flame in medium-sized frying pan. Pour tomatoes in the pan and simmer for a couple of minutes, and then add mushrooms. Sprinkle with spices. Add Parmesan cheese and simmer another couple of minutes.

Break eggs onto tomatoes, cover the pan, and simmer for another two minutes. Add strips of cheese in a crosshatch fashion, re-cover the pan, and simmer another two minutes. If prepared correctly, it will be about one-inch high. Serve with fresh fruit, bacon, and toast. Makes 1 to 2 servings.

Fried Salami and Eggs

When my grandfather made breakfast on Sunday mornings, this was one of his favorite recipes. He always served it with a big slice of raw onion on the side. As for me, I like using catsup as well.

4 slices salami
2 eggs
1 tbsp. butter, margarine, or nonstick
cooking spray
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut salami into chunks. In a mixing bowl, lightly beat eggs. Melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat. Add salami to pan and sauté until lightly browned. Pour egg mixture over cooked salami and scramble on medium heat until the eggs are set to your liking. Flip over like a pancake and cook another minute or two. Season to taste. Serves 1.

Pancakes from Scratch

Why bother making pancakes from scratch when there are dozens of perfectly good mixes and batters on the market? Homemade always tastes better because it's made with love.

2 cups flour
½ tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. sugar
1½ cups milk
2 eggs, beaten
2 tbsp. melted butter
1 tsp. oil to coat griddle

Mix and sift all dry ingredients, then add milk and eggs. Mix thoroughly and add melted butter.

Drop pancake batter by the spoonful onto heated, greased griddle or frying pan. When the pancakes start to bubble on top, flip over and cook until golden brown. Serve with your favorite pancake topping. Serves 2.

Leon's Pfannkuchen

Pfannkuchen literally means a big pancake. Leon has been making this Tulper clan breakfast favorite for as long as anyone can remember.

3 egg yolks
2 tbsp. matzo meal
3 egg whites
¼ stick butter

Beat egg yolks and then add matzo meal. In a separate bowl beat egg whites until firm and then gently blend into yolk mixture.

Melt butter in a frying pan and pour in egg mixture. Brown the bottom, then flip over and brown the other side. Serve with jelly or powdered sugar. Makes 1 BIG pancake.

Judy's Hungarian Pancakes (Palacsinta)

Simply put, Hungarian pancakes are crepes with a wonderfully delicious nut and honey filling.

3 eggs
1¼ cup flour
1 cup milk
½ cup cold water
1 tsp. sugar
Pinch of salt
1½ tbsp. sweet butter, melted

Combine all ingredients in electric blender. Blend until smooth. Set aside at least 1 hour.

Brush a 7- to 8-inch skillet with oil (any kind except olive oil) and heat over moderately high heat. Pour in 3 teaspoons of batter, quickly tilting pan to cover with a thin film. Sauté crepe about one minute until brown, turn, and bake other side about ½ a minute. Transfer to plate. Continue with rest of batter, stacking crepes with waxed paper between each one. Makes about 12 crepes.

NUT FILLING

1 cup chopped walnuts
Clear honey
Warm milk

Blend nuts with enough milk and honey to make a spreadable paste. Spread a little of the paste, to taste, over each crepe. Fold each crepe in half, and serve immediately.

You can also fill crepes with your favorite crepe filling. Serves 6.

Grandma's Cheese Blintzes

When it comes to cheese blintzes, there seems to be some controversy about whether or not to add raisins. The frozen variety doesn't come with raisins, and neither do the blintzes at our local delicatessens. But to me, a cheese blintz without raisins is like gefilte fish without horseradish.

**1 pound dry cottage cheese or hoop
cheese**
1 egg yolk
1 tbsp. melted butter
1 tbsp. sugar
Pinch of salt
½ cup raisins

Combine all ingredients. Set aside.

BLINTZES

1 cup flour
½ tsp. salt
4 eggs
1 cup water or milk
Butter
Sour cream for garnish

Sift together flour and salt. Beat eggs, then add liquid and continue beating. Gradually add flour to egg mixture, stirring constantly until the batter is smooth and on the thin side.

Lightly grease 6-inch skillet or crepe pan with butter. Heat the skillet over medium-high heat. Pour about ½ cup of batter into skillet and swirl batter around to completely cover the bottom of the pan. Quickly pour out any excess batter.

Fry until blintz begins to blister and the edges curl away from the side of the skillet. Flip out of the pan onto a plate or dishtowel, using wax paper between each to avoid them sticking together. It's okay if the top of the blintz is slightly moist. Pan should be regreased about every three or four blintzes. When all blintzes are fried, place 1 tablespoon filling in the center of each blintz on the browned side. Raise bottom flap of dough to cover filling. Fold over each side so they meet in the middle, then roll up like a jelly roll. Serve with sour cream. Serves 6.

Blueberry Blintzes

For those who were raised on cheese blintzes, these sweet delights are a nice change of pace. The sweetness of the berries is wonderfully complemented by the tartness of the sour cream garnish.

2 cups blueberries
2 tbsp. sugar
2 tbsp. flour

Mix berries, sugar, and flour in a bowl. Toss well and set aside.

BLINTZES

1 cup flour
½ tsp. salt
4 eggs
1 cup water or milk
Butter for frying
Sour cream for garnish

Sift together flour and salt in a small bowl. In a larger bowl, beat eggs, then add water (or milk) and continue beating. Gradually add sifted flour and salt to egg mixture, stirring constantly until batter is smooth, not lumpy. It should be thin.

Lightly grease a 6-inch skillet or crepe pan with butter. Heat the skillet over a medium-high heat. Pour about ½ cup of batter into the skillet and quickly swirl the batter around to completely cover the bottom of the pan, and pour out any excess batter.

Fry until the blintz begins to blister and the edges curl away from the side of the skillet. Flip out of the pan onto a dishtowel. Use wax paper between layers to keep blintzes from sticking together. Only one side of the blintz should be browned. It's okay if the top of the blintz is slightly moist. Repeat until all batter is used up. Pan should be regreased about every three or four blintzes.

When all blintzes are fried, place 1 tablespoon filling in the center of each blintz on the browned side. Raise the bottom flap of dough to cover filling. Fold over each side so they meet in the middle, then roll up like a jelly roll. Lightly fry blintzes in oil or butter, or place in casserole dish and bake at 425 degrees until lightly browned. Garnish with sour cream. Serves 6.

Grandma's Easy French Toast

French toast is probably no more French than French fries or French's™ mustard, but it is a filling and delicious way to start the day. When Grandpa took a weekend off from cooking, this was Grandma's specialty.

2 eggs, beaten

1/8 cup water

1/8 tsp. vanilla or almond extract (optional)

1/8 tsp. Cinnamon

2 slices thickly sliced egg bread*

1 tbs. butter or margarine for frying

Powdered sugar

Beat eggs, water, vanilla, and cinnamon together in a flat dish. Place bread slices in mixture until fully soaked through on both sides.

Melt butter in frying pan or griddle over medium heat. Transfer bread slices to frying pan and fry until lightly browned on both sides (about 2 minutes per side). Place on plate and top with powdered sugar. Serve with maple syrup, jam or honey. Serves 2

*Thick slices of cinnamon raisin bread also work well.

Aldean's Knishes

A knish is similar to a baked won ton or pierogi. While there are many, many fillings for knishes, there are only two types of knish dough: yeast and plain pastry. Both are quite delicious, and it's just a matter of taste which one you'll like best. This is the plain pastry version.

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
2 eggs, beaten
1 tbsp. oil or schmaltz
2 tbsp. water
1 egg yolk diluted with 1 tbsp. water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift together all dry ingredients in a bowl. Make a well in the center and add eggs, oil, and water. Mix thoroughly until dough is formed.

Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and with a rolling pin roll out to about ⅛-inch in thickness. Cut into squares or rounds using a knife, cookie cutter, or a glass.

Fill each knish with 2 tablespoons filling (see following three recipes), then moisten edge of the dough with a little water. Fold over and pinch edges together to form a tight seal. Many people like to crimp edges with a fork. This is not only decorative, but ensures a strong bond. Brush the knish with diluted egg yolk. Place on well-greased cookie sheet and bake for about 25 minutes or until golden brown. Makes about 18 knishes.

Aldean's Favorite Knish Fillings

POTATO FILLING

½ cup chopped onion
3 tbsp. butter or margarine
1 cup mashed potatoes
1 egg
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper

Sauté onions in butter until translucent, and transfer to a large bowl. Add potatoes, egg, salt, and pepper and mix until mixture is light and fluffy.

CHEESE FILLING

1½ cups diced onions
4 tbsp. butter
2 cups dry cottage cheese or hoop cheese
1 egg
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tbsp. sour cream

Sauté onions, then beat in remaining ingredients until smooth.

CHICKEN FILLING

1½ cups cooked ground chicken
¾ cup mashed potatoes
1 egg
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper

Mix all ingredients until smooth.

Aldean's Knishes II

These knishes are made with yeast dough. Aside from taking time to let the dough rise, they are no more difficult to make than their pastry dough cousins.

1 tbsp. sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup lukewarm water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salad oil or schmaltz
1 cake of yeast
2 eggs slightly beaten
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour

Dissolve sugar in water, add salt, schmaltz, and yeast. Let stand until yeast is softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in eggs, then flour, blending in the flour a little at a time to make a soft dough. Turn dough out on a lightly floured board and knead until smooth and elastic. Add more flour as needed. Place dough in a greased bowl, cover with a dishtowel, and allow to rise in a warm place until it doubles in size (about 1 hour).

Punch down dough and remove from bowl. Roll out very thinly on a lightly floured board until you have a rectangle of about 15-by-24 inches. Brush dough with melted fat or oil and place a row of filling (about 1 cup) 1 inch from the edge of dough, then roll up like a jelly roll (about 3 turns). Cut the roll into 1-inch pieces. Stretch dough up and over edges of each piece to seal in the filling.

Brush knishes with melted fat and place on greased cookie sheet, about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch apart. Let rise for about 30 minutes, then bake in a 375-degree oven for about 25 minutes, or until knishes are golden brown. Makes about 8 dozen knishes.

EASY BEEF AND POTATO FILLING

2 cups chopped onion
2 tbsp. shortening
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups mashed potatoes
1 tbsp. salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pepper
5 cups sautéed ground beef
1 egg

Sauté onions in shortening until translucent, then add remaining ingredients and blend well. Makes about 6 cups.

Rusty's Chicken Wings

When it comes to cooking, my mother's method was to make it taste good and get it done fast. These delicious wings prove that you don't have to have dozens of ingredients to end up with a tasty finger food.

16 chicken wings
1 tsp. garlic powder
Honey

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lay out wings in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle with garlic powder and drizzle with honey. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until skin is brown and crispy. Serves 4.

Judy's Chopped Chicken Liver

There are as many versions of chopped chicken liver as there are cooks that make it. Judy's parents were Hungarian, hence the addition of paprika.

1 lb. chicken livers
2 tbsp. chicken fat or butter
2 hard-boiled eggs
1 small onion
4 sprigs parsley
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. paprika

Rinse chicken livers with cold water and drain on absorbent paper. Melt chicken fat (or butter) in skillet over low heat. Add livers, turning occasionally, and cook 5 to 10 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove from heat and set aside until livers are cool.

Finely chop chicken livers, eggs, onion, and parsley. Mix ingredients together in a bowl. Chill in refrigerator for about 4 hours to allow flavors to blend. Serve with crisp, dry toast. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Grandma's Sweet and Sour Meatballs

Grandma's meatballs were a family favorite, and she made them often. She usually served them as an appetizer, but they're also quite good as a main dish served with boiled potatoes or rice on the side to sop up the gravy.

1 lb. ground beef
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp. breadcrumbs
1 egg
1 tsp. salt
Pepper to taste
1 tbsp. schmaltz or shortening
2 cups hot water
1 lemon, thinly sliced and seeded
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup raisins

Mix together beef, onion, breadcrumbs, egg, salt, and pepper. Form the mixture into balls (any size you choose will work).

In a Dutch oven or heavy skillet, brown meatballs in shortening. Then add water, lemons, sugar, and raisins. Bring to a boil, then cover and reduce heat and simmer for about 45 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Judy's Sweet and Sour Meatballs

As with most Jewish recipes, there are many versions of sweet and sour meatballs. Instead of boiling the meatballs in a broth, this recipe calls for baking them first and then adding them to the sauce.

2 lb. ground meat
½ cup breadcrumbs
½ cup catsup
2 eggs
1½ tsp. garlic or seasoned salt

Mix all ingredients together. Using a measuring teaspoon as a guide, form small meatballs, then place them in shallow baking pan and bake in a 500-degree oven for 10 minutes. While meatballs are baking, make the sauce.

SAUCE

¼ cup chicken broth
¼ cup brown sugar
¾ cup vinegar
1 tbsp. soy sauce
1 tbsp. catsup
4 tbsp. cornstarch
1 green pepper (sliced)
1 red onion (sliced)
**2 cans (14 oz. each) chunk pineapple,
drained**

Blend all ingredients except for pineapple, green pepper, and red onion; cook sauce until it thickens. Let cool, and then add green pepper and red onion. Add pineapple chunks and meatballs to the sauce. Place all in fondue pot or chafing dish to serve. Serves 6 to 8.

Carrie's Matzo Pizza

While Carrie's version of the classic pizza is unique, it's very tasty, a great finger food, and a wonderful way to use up all that leftover Passover matzo.

- 2 matzos**
- 1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste**
- ¼ lb. cooked ground beef**
- ¼ lb. mozzarella, cheddar, or provolone cheese, shredded**

Spread matzo with a layer of tomato paste. Top with ground beef and cheese. Bake in a 400-degree oven until cheese melts. Serves 2.

Judy's Broccoli Corn Bread

Plain old corn bread recipes leave themselves wide open for experimentation. Jalapeño corn bread, for instance, has been recently making a name for itself among gourmets. Judy's broccoli corn bread is for those with a more sensitive palate.

- 1 package (10 oz.) chopped broccoli, cooked and drained**
- 1 stick margarine, melted**
- 4 eggs, beaten**
- 1 large onion, chopped**
- ¾ tsp. salt**
- 6 oz. sour cream**
- 1 package of your favorite corn bread mix**

Mix all ingredients. Pour into 8½-by-11-inch greased pan and bake at 350 degrees until set. Serves 4 to 6.