

Cheese Blintz Soufflé

Makes 6 to 8 servings



For the crepes

2 eggs, at room temperature
¾ cup (180 ml) whole milk
¼ cup (60 ml) warm water
¾ cup (95 g) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons (55 g) butter, melted

For the cheese filling

¾ pound (340 g) farmer cheese
½ cup (115 g) fromage blanc or crème fraîche
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)
2 tablespoons butter, melted, for the baking dish

For the custard

2 eggs
3 tablespoons sugar
¾ cup (150 g) sour cream

To make the crepe batter: In a blender, combine eggs, milk, water, flour, sugar, salt, and 2 tablespoons of the butter and blend until smooth, about 10 seconds. Scrape down the sides of the jar and blend again briefly. You should have 2 cups (480 ml) of batter the consistency of thin cream. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or up to overnight.

To make the crepes: Line a sheet pan with parchment paper. Stir the crepe batter to reblend. Heat a 6- or 7-inch (15- or 17-cm) crepe pan or skillet over medium-high heat. When a tiny drop of water flicked into the pan skitters immediately, you are ready to cook. Brush the pan lightly with a bit of the remaining butter. Pour in about 2

tablespoons of the batter and immediately tilt the pan to distribute the batter evenly. Cook until the edges of the crepe are lightly crisped, the top surface no longer looks wet, and the underside is light golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip the crepe and lightly brown the second side, about 1 minute. Flip the crepe, browner side down, onto the sheet pan.

Repeat with the remaining batter, brushing the pan with melted butter only as needed to keep the crepes from sticking, placing them in a single layer on the sheet pan. Begin stacking the second layer on the coolest crepes. You should have about 12 crepes (you will only need 9 crepes for the dish; consider the extras as insurance or a bonus). When completely cool, the crepes can be arranged in a single stack, covered, and refrigerated for up to 1 day. To freeze the crepes, layer them with parchment paper. *continued »*

To make the filling: Use a wooden spoon or rubber spatula to beat together the cheeses, egg, sugar, salt, and the cinnamon, if using.

To assemble the dish: Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Brush the 2 tablespoons melted butter over the bottom and sides of an 8-inch square flameproof baking dish. Lay 3 crepes, browner side down, in a single layer on the bottom and one third the way up the sides of the pan, generously overlapping 2 of the crepes to fit and cutting the third crepe in half to fit, so that the bottom of the baking dish and the lower third of its sides are lined. Spoon half the cheese filling over the crepes and use an offset spatula to smooth the surface. Cover with a second layer of 3 crepes, browner side down. Spoon the remaining filling over the crepes. Top with the remaining 3 crepes, browner side up. (The dish can be made to this point 1 day ahead, covered, and refrigerated. Remove from the refrigerator 1 hour before baking.)

To make the custard: In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs and sugar until thickened, then whisk in the sour cream until well blended. Pour evenly over the casserole. Bake until the custard is puffed and set, about 45 minutes. Heat the broiler and place the casserole under the broiler until the custard bubbles and is browned in places, about 2 minutes. Cut into squares to serve.

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