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BELGIAN BUTTERMILK WAFFLES WITH GLAZED BANANAS

MAKES 8 WAFFLES

Active time: 30 min Start to finish: 30 min

Food Editor: Maggie Ruggiero

Father: Joseph Schwarz, Queens, NY

In 1964, my family visited New York's futuristic World's Fair. Living in Queens, where the fair was held, made us feel like the space age was upon us, and for years afterward we would drive by the famous Unisphere. My dad never got to explore space in his lifetime, but his love for waffles, sparked by the fair's Belgian pavilion, never waned.

For waffles

- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **2 tablespoons sugar**
- **2 teaspoons baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon baking soda**
- **¾ teaspoon salt**
- **2 cups well-shaken buttermilk**
- **¾ stick (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted and cooled to room temperature**
- **2 large eggs**
- **Vegetable oil for waffle iron**

For topping

- **2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- **2 firm-ripe large bananas, cut diagonally into ⅓-inch-thick slices**
- **1¼ cups pure maple syrup**

Special equipment: **a waffle iron (preferably Belgian-style)**

Accompaniment: **sour cream or whipped cream**

Make waffles:

▶ Put oven rack in middle position and put a large metal cooling rack directly on it. Preheat oven to 250°F and preheat waffle iron.

▶ Whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl.

▶ Whisk together buttermilk, melted butter, and eggs in another bowl, then whisk into flour mixture until just combined.

▶ Brush hot waffle iron lightly with vegetable oil and pour a slightly rounded ½ cup of batter into each waffle mold (see cooks' note, below). Cook waffles according to manufacturer's instructions until golden and cooked through, about 3 minutes. Transfer as cooked to rack in oven to keep warm, keeping waffles in 1 layer to stay crisp. Make more waffles in same manner.

Make topping:

▶ While last batch is cooking, heat butter in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until foam subsides, then add banana slices in 1 layer and cook until golden, about 1 minute per side. Remove from heat and add syrup to skillet.

▶ Spoon bananas over waffles, then drizzle with warm syrup before serving.

Cooks' note:

If using a regular waffle iron (not Belgian), batter will yield about 14 waffles using ⅓ cup per waffle.

MARY'S BELL COOKIES

MAKES ABOUT 5 DOZEN COOKIES

Active time: 1½ hr Start to finish: 1¾ hr

Food Editor: Ian Knauer

Father: Robert M. Knauer, Allentown, PA

As a mother of seven, my grandmother was always in the kitchen and often made these bell-shaped cookies. Now, when I make them for my father from her handwritten recipe, he says the taste takes him back to his childhood.

For filling

- **⅓ cup packed light brown sugar**
- **1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened**
- **15 to 18 maraschino cherries (from a 10-oz jar), including 3 tablespoons juice**
- **1½ cups finely chopped pecans (5 oz)**

For cookies

- **3 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon ground ginger**
- **½ teaspoon baking soda**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **½ teaspoon instant-coffee granules or instant-espresso powder**
- **1¼ cups packed light brown sugar**
- **1 cup vegetable shortening (preferably trans-fat free), at room temperature**
- **¼ cup dark corn syrup**
- **1 large egg**
- **1 tablespoon heavy cream**

Special equipment: **a 2½-inch round cookie cutter; a small offset spatula**

Make filling:

▶ Stir together brown sugar, butter, and 3 tablespoons cherry juice until combined, then stir in pecans. Set cherries aside.

Make cookies:

▶ Put oven racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat oven to 350°F.

▶ Whisk together flour, ginger, baking soda, salt, and coffee.

▶ Beat together brown sugar and shortening in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, 6 to 8 minutes. Add corn syrup, egg, and cream and beat until combined well.

▶ Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture, then mix until combined.

▶ Roll out one third of dough between 2 sheets of wax paper to ⅛-inch thick (about 15 by 11 inches). Chill dough on wax paper on a baking sheet until slightly firm, about 10 minutes. Cut out as many cookies as possible with cutter and transfer with a metal spatula to 2 ungreased large baking sheets, spacing them ½ inch apart. Roll out, chill, and cut remaining dough in same manner. Reserve scraps.

▶ Center ½ teaspoon nut filling on lower half of each cookie, then, using spatula, fold sides in toward center to form a cone. (Dough may crack along fold; part of filling will be exposed; see Kitchen Notebook, page 160, for more information on filling and forming cookies.)

▶ Stem and quarter cherries. Place 1 cherry quarter over exposed filling on each cookie to make bell clapper.

▶ Bake cookies, switching position of sheets halfway through baking, until edges are pale golden, 12 to 16 minutes total. Transfer to racks to cool completely.

▶ Reroll scraps, then make more cookies in same manner (reroll only twice), baking them on cooled sheets.

Cooks' note:

Cookies keep in an airtight container at room temperature 3 days.

GRILLING PROCEDURE

If using a charcoal grill, open vents on bottom of grill, then light charcoal. When charcoal turns grayish white (about 15 minutes from lighting), hold your hand 5 inches above grill rack to determine heat for charcoal as follows:

Hot: When you can hold your hand there for 1 to 2 seconds

Medium-hot: 3 to 4 seconds

Low: 5 to 6 seconds

If using a gas grill, preheat burners on high, covered, 10 minutes, then, if necessary, reduce to heat specified in recipe.