

Plexa's Cookbook

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Chapter 1

Breakfast

1.1 Crêpes

1.1.1 Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
- pinch of salt
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

1.1.2 Method

- Sift the dry ingredients into a bowl
- Add the eggs and stir until smooth and free of lumps
- Add the milk gradually and mix until the batter is smooth and of the consistency of cream
- Leave to stand for 20 minutes (optional, gives slightly better Crêpes but not necessary by any means)
- When pan is hot and butter has been melted in the pan, pour in mixture and move pan around so that the bottom is completely covered
- The Crêpes are best cooked over a low-moderate heat
- When Crêpe has set, loosen edges turn and cook other side
- Melt a bit of butter in the pan every 2 Crêpes (flavour and prevents sticking!)

1.2 Scrambled Eggs

1.2.1 Ingredients

- 2 Eggs
- 2 Tbsp milk or cream (cream gives a much better result)
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Parsley (optional)

1.2.2 Method

- Place all ingredients into a pot
- Mix ingredients together and turn on heat
- Continually stir with a fork or whisk as the mixture heats up
- As eggs cook, make sure you are constantly stirring and making sure none of it is sticking to the bottom of the pot
- Once eggs have cooked, remove from pot

1.3 French Toast

1.3.1 Ingredients

For 4 Servings

- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp Milk (or Cream)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
- 6-8 slices of bread
- 2 tsp Cinnamon (optional)

1.3.2 Method

- In a bowl beat together the eggs, milk and salt with a fork until combined by not foamy
- Pour mixture into a shallow dish (like a lid)
- Turn each slice of bread in the egg mixture to coat both sides
- Store on a plate or equivalent until it is ready to be cooked
- Cook each piece in a frypan with a small knob of butter (important for crispyness!)
- Piece is cooked when both sides are lightly browned and slightly crispy on the outside

1.4 Hashbrowns

1.4.1 Ingredients

- 3 Medium Sized Potatoes
- Oil (for the pan)
- Salt and Pepper

1.4.2 Method

- Grate the potatoes with a coarse grater (i.e. Cheese grater)
- Remove moisture from potatoes by:
 - Using a potatoe ricer to squeeze out the moisture (best choice)
 - Using (a lot) of paper towels to press out the moisture (time consuming, average result)
 - Refrigerating the grated potatoes for a few hours (like overnight) (can overdry potatoes)
- Add salt/pepper to potatoe mixture
- Add oil to pan and when oil is heated add the potatoe mixture ensuring that the Hashbrown is not too thick in any one place
- Once the underside is cooked, it's usually a cook idea to cut it into quarters and then flip each quarter and finish cooking (adding more oil if necessary)

Chapter 2

Lunch

2.1 Creamy Bacon Pasta Sauce

My choice of pasta for this sauce is penne pasta, although the sauce goes with any type of pasta!

2.1.1 Ingredients

- 500g of Pasta (typically one packet)
- 4 Rashes of Bacon (feel free to add more!)
- 250ml Philadelphia Original Cream for Cooking (else regular Cream should suffice)
- 1 Spring Onion, Chopped
- 2 Tbsp grated Parmesean cheese
- sprinkle of Pepper

2.1.2 Method

- Add water, 2 tsp salt and a dash of oil to a pot and bring to boil
- Add pasta, by the time it's cooked the sauce should be finished
- Cut the bacon into small pieces
- Heat oil in saucepan/pot and add bacon and cook
- Add cream and stir until smooth and bring to a simmer
- Add cheese, spring onions and pepper and stir until cheese is melted
- Drain pasta, return to pot it was cooked in, pour sauce over pasta, toss through, and add serve!

2.2 Chicken and Sweet Corn Chowder

2.2.1 Ingredients

- 2 tbsp butter
- 300g Chicken Breast Fillets, thinly sliced (might like to add more chicken, it can't hurt)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 medium potatoes, chopped
- 1 410g can whole kernel sweet corn, drained
- 2 Tbsp cornflour
- 2 cups milk
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley (optional)

2.2.2 Method

- Heat the butter in a large saucepan.
- Add the chicken and cook over medium heat until it is golden. Remove from the pan and set aside.
- Add the onion to the saucepan and cook for 3 to 4 minutes.
- Add the chicken stock and potatoes, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Mix the cornflour with a small amount of the milk, then stir in the remaining milk.
- Add to the soup mixture with the sweet corn and chicken.
- Reheat, stirring constantly, until the soup thickens
- Season with salt and pepper and stir in the parsley. Add a little more milk if it is too thick.

2.3 Self-Crusting Corn Quiche

2.3.1 Ingredients

For 6 servings

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 2 cooked potatoes, cubed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk
- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup self raising flour
- 440g can creamed corn
- 1 cup tasty cheese (or suitable flavourful cheese)
- 1 thinly sliced tomato (optional)

2.3.2 Method

- Cook the onion in the butter until tender but not brown
- Add cubed potatoe and heat through
- Mix the milk, eggs, salt and flour until blended
- Combine with the onion mixture, the creamed corn and cheese
- Pour into a buttered 23cm metal pie plate or solid-bottomed flan dish
- Put thin slices of tomato in a circle on the top
- Bake at 210°C (410°F) for 20-30 minutes or until filling is set in the centre

2.4 Orange Glazed Chicken Wings

2.4.1 Ingredients

- 12 whole chicken wings
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Oragne Juice Concentrate
- 3 Tbsp hoisin sauce
- 2 tsp honey (be liberal!)

- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp rice wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

2.4.2 Method

Wings

- Remove the tips of the wings and discard.
- Using kitchen shears, or a knife, separate the wings at the joint.
- Steam the wings for 10 minutes
- Remove, pat dry and refrigerate for atleast an hour
- Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C)
- Roast wins on a rack, 20 minutes each side

Sauce/Glaze

Start this during the second 20 minutes of cooking

- Place the orange juice concentrate, hoisin sauce, honey, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar and red pepper flakes into a small saucepan
- Stir to combine and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat.
- Reduce the mixture to about 1/2 cup (approx. 5 to 10 minutes).
- Remove from the heat and allow to cool at least 5 minutes.
- Remove the wings from the oven and transfer to a large mixing bowl along with the glaze and toss to coat
- Serve warm

2.5 Fried Potatoe Slices

2.5.1 Ingredients

- Potatoes!
- Salt/Oil

2.5.2 Method

- Boil potatoes whole until they are just about cooked
- Remove from pot and cut into slices
- Add about 1 Tbsp Oil to a pan and fry slices in the pan
- Remove from pan, place potatoes on a paper towel, salt the potatoe slices and enjoy!

Chapter 3

Dinner

3.1 Glazed Pork Fillets

3.1.1 Ingredients

- 500g Pork Fillets (roughly 2 fillets)
- 1 Onion
- 1 Tbsp Lemon Juice
- 2 Tbsp Apricot Jam
- 2 Tbsp Light or Dark Soy Sauce

3.1.2 Method

- Peel and chop onion
- In a pot or something similar, add everything but the pork and stir over low heat until the jam has melted.
- Place pork in greased, shallow oven-proof dish in a single layer.
- Pour the sauce over the top and bake, uncovered, in a moderate oven (around 350F/180C) for about 25 minutes, or until pork is tender.

3.2 Bearnaise Sauce (for Steak)

3.2.1 Ingredients

- 3-4 Pieces of Steak (fancier cut, the better)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ shallot, peeled and finely diced
- 2-3 peppercorns
- Tbsp white wine vinegar or tarragon vinegar
- 2 Tbsp water
- 125g butter, melted
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 Tbsp chopped tarragon
- 1 Tbsp Chervil or chives (can reduce to 2 tsp)

3.2.2 Method

Steak

- Season the steaks with salt, pepper and oil.
- Heat a heavy-based frying pan or grill until very hot.
- Add the steaks and cook to your liking
- Stand 2-3 minutes before serving. (adds tenderness!)

Bernaise Sauce

- Put the shallots, peppercorns, vinegar and water in a saucepan and simmer over a low heat
- When liquid has reduced to 2 Tbsp of liquid, drain.
- Melt the butter
- Mix the egg yolks with the strained, reduced vinegar in a double saucepan or heat-proof bowl
- Place over a saucepan of simmering water and gradually whisk in the melted butter to make a thick sauce.
- Stir in the chopped herbs.
- Season with salt and pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice.

3.3 Devilled Carrots

3.3.1 Ingredients

- 1-2 Carrots, sliced, cooked to your liking
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tsp Mustard

3.3.2 Method

- Add everything into a pot, and heat
- Stir the sauce to combine mustard/sugar and eventually it will turn into a syrup
- Serve when heated to your desired temperature!

3.4 Meatballs

To make a plain mince, just drop the breadcrumbs, egg and herbs from the recipe. Don't roll into balls, just cook the mince in a frying pan and add some kind of sauce to it (I don't have a great tomato sauce yet - sorry!).

3.4.1 Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp oil
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped (red or white)
- 500g beef mince
- 1 egg
- 1 cup soft breadcrumbs (optional)
- 1 tsp mixed herbs (optional)

3.4.2 Method

- Mix all ingredients together in a small bowl.
- Combine well and roll into balls (size of your choosing)
- Heat the oil in a frying pan on a medium heat and cook the balls for approximately 15 minutes or until no longer pink inside.
- Serve with pasta, or whatever you like!

3.5 Roast Chicken and Veges

I don't really like Pumpkin at all, nor any of the other roasted veges. But the same basic principle can be applied to cook them as well.

3.5.1 Ingredients

- Whole Chicken
- Butter, lots of it
- Seasoning (either get it premade for the roast, or use chicken salt, paprika and herbs)
- A good number of potatoe, cut into small pieces
- Kumara (Sweet Potatoe - get the purple kind, its the best), cut into small pieces
- 1 tsp Salt (possibly more if you have a lot of veges)
- Garlic Pepper (optional, but kickass)

3.5.2 Method

Roast Chicken

- Preheat oven to 350°F/180°C
- Get your Chicken out, and make a small incision right on the top of the bird
- Poke your fingers around inside the Chicken to free the skin from the meat - try not to tear the incision any bigger (usually a good idea to use gloves when doing this)
- Cut about 4-6 small sticks of butter and place each stick underneath the skin as far away from the incision as possible (this keeps the bird moist while cooking!)
- Cover the outside of the bird in butter (do it!)
- Season the bird with your seasoning (it should stick to the butter)
- Cook the bird uncovered in the oven for 25-30mins per 500g or until cooked (i.e. juices run clear and not pink)

Roast Veges

The trick to crispy veges is to remove as much water content from them as possible before roasting - this can be achieved via paper towel or refrigerating them for at least an hour. The red potatoes tend to be the best ones to roast (so buy that kind if you want roasties!)

- Place cut and dried vegetables in a roasting tray/dish
- Cover with oil, and toss the vegetables about in the oil to ensure they're all coated
- Sprinkle with salt and garlic pepper (I'm quite generous when I do this) - garlic pepper adds an entire new dimension to the flavour of roasties - I strongly recommend you add it
- Roast in the oven at 180°C for 20 minutes
- Flip/roll roasties around to minimize sticking and even out the browning/crisping of veges
- Return to oven and cook for a further 15-20 minutes (cranking the temperature up to say, 240 for the last 5 mins can also help crisp the veges but don't do that with the chicken still inside!)

3.6 Mashed Potatoes

3.6.1 Ingredients

- Potatoes (as many as you want, sliced if you want them to cook quicker)
- Salt
- Butter
- Milk or Cream (Cream is better)

3.6.2 Method

- Put potatoes in a pot, cover with water, add 2 tsp of salt
- Boil until Potatoes are cooked
- Drain Potatoes and return to the pot (off the heat)
- Add about 1 tsp of butter (or more if you like butter like me) and a dash of milk/cream to the pot and mash
- Add more milk/cream if you would like your mashed potatoes smoother (when adding milk always err on the side of caution - you can always add more later!)
- Transfer to a bowl, and serve!

Chapter 4

Dessert

4.1 Rice Bubble Cake/Squares

Can either be eaten by itself, or combined with custard and peaches to create an awesome dessert

4.1.1 Ingredients

Rice Bubble Squares

- 100g (4 ounces) butter
- 6 Tbsp. sugar
- 4 heaped tsp. honey
- 5 cups rice cereal

Rice Bubble Cake

The above ingredients plus

- Custard (about 500ml) - the firmer the better
- Peach Slices

4.1.2 Method

Rice Bubble Squares

- Add the first three ingredients to a large saucepan (large enough to later add the rice cereal) and melt over a medium heat
- Bring the mixture to the boil and allow it to turn over for about four minutes or until the mixture starts to turn brown. Stir occasionally

- Remove from the heat and add the rice cereal. Stir well to evenly mix everything together
- Press the mixture into a lined tin (buttered)
- Before it sets too hard, cut into even squares.

Rice Bubble Cake

- Follow the above up until setting the mixture in a lined tin
- Set the mixture in a lined cake tin creating well in the middle of the mixture (like setting the crust of a pie) making sure that the base is not too thin (it really should be even throughout, but that's difficult in practice)
- Add custard to the cavity and place peaches on top in a geometrically pleasing fashion
- Refridgerate and serve chilled!

4.2 Pavalova

Traditional NZ dessert (suck it, Australia). Basically like a massive meringue and is the culinary highlight of NZ. It's really sweet, but fat free! Serve with either whipped cream/fruit or ice cream.

4.2.1 Ingredients

- 4 large (120 grams) egg whites
- 1 cup (200 grams) superfine (castor) sugar
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon cornstarch (corn flour)

4.2.2 Method

- Preheat oven to 250 degrees F (130 degrees C) and place rack in center of oven. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and draw a 7 inch (18 cm) circle on the paper.
- In the bowl of your electric mixer, with the whisk attachment, beat the egg whites on medium-high speed until they hold soft peaks.
- Start adding the sugar, a tablespoon at a time, and continue to beat until the meringue holds very stiff peaks. (Test to see if the sugar is fully dissolved by rubbing a little of the meringue between your thumb and index finger. The meringue should feel smooth, not gritty. If it feels gritty the sugar has not fully dissolved so keep beating until it feels smooth between your fingers).
- Sprinkle the vinegar and cornstarch over the top of the meringue and, with a rubber spatula, fold in.
- Gently spread the meringue inside the circle drawn on the parchment paper, smoothing the edges, making sure the edges of the meringue are slightly higher than the center. (You want a slight well in the center of the meringue to place the whipped cream and fruit.)
- Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes or until the outside is dry and takes on a very pale cream color.
- Turn the oven off, leave the door slightly ajar, and let the meringue cool completely in the oven. (The outside of the meringue will feel firm to the touch, if gently pressed, but as it cools you will get a little cracking and you will see that the inside is soft and marshmallowy.)
- If syrupy droplets form on the surface of the meringue, you know you have overcooked it; liquid oozing from the meringue is a sign of undercooking

- Leave the Pavlova to cool
- Just before serving gently place the meringue onto a serving plate.
- Whip the cream in your electric mixer, with the whisk attachment, until soft peaks form. Sweeten with the sugar and vanilla and then mound the softly whipped cream into the center of the meringue.
- Arrange the fruit in a geometrically pleasing pattern on top of the cream.
- Serve immediately as this dessert does not hold for more than a few hours - but will still taste good, if not a little mushy, after being refrigerated!

4.3 Chicken and Sweet Corn Chowder

4.3.1 Ingredients

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4.3.2 Method

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