
Crepes Suzette

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 7: Flambé at Home

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Classic French restaurants have mastered the fiery theatrics of this tableside treat—a sophisticated combination of crêpes, oranges, liqueur, and a showy flambé. We wanted to develop a recipe that would comfortably guide the home cook through the flambé process so this dessert could be prepared for an elegant dinner party.

For a foolproof flambé that didn't create a frightening fireball or, conversely, didn't burn at all, we ignited the alcohol (cognac) alone in the skillet before building the sauce. To build a delicate sauce with complex flavor, we enriched a reduction of butter, sugar, and fresh orange juice with additional orange juice, fresh orange zest, and triple sec (not the pricier Grand Marnier or Cointreau). For tender but sturdy crêpes that would stand up to the sauce without turning soggy, we skipped the usual resting of the batter, meant to relax the gluten, before cooking. Then, once the crêpes were cooked, we sprinkled them with sugar and ran them under the broiler for a sweet and crunchy coating.

Serves 6

It takes a few crêpes to get the heat of the pan right; your first two or three will almost inevitably be unusable. (To allow for practice, the recipe yields about 16 crepes; only 12 are needed for the dish.) A dry measuring cup with a 1/4-cup capacity is useful for portioning the batter. Tasters had a slight preference for crêpes made with whole milk, but low-fat or skim milk can also be used.

INGREDIENTS

Crêpes

- 3 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk (see note above)
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour (7 1/2 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons Cognac
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, plus extra for brushing pan

Orange Sauce

- 4 tablespoons Cognac
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 6 pieces
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- 1 1/4 cups fresh orange juice from 3 to 4 large oranges
- 2 tablespoons orange liqueur, preferably triple sec

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **FOR THE CRÊPES:** Combine eggs, milk, water, flour, cognac, sugar, salt, and melted butter in blender until

smooth batter forms, about 10 seconds. Transfer batter to medium bowl.

2. Using pastry brush, brush bottom and sides of 10-inch nonstick skillet very lightly with melted butter; heat skillet over medium heat. When butter stops sizzling, tilt pan slightly to right and begin pouring in scant 1/4 cup batter. Continue to pour batter in slow, steady stream, rotating wrist and twirling pan slowly counterclockwise until pan bottom is covered with even layer of batter. Cook until crêpe starts to lose opaqueness and turns spotty light golden brown on bottom, loosening crêpe from side of pan with rubber spatula, 30 seconds to 1 minute. To flip crêpe, loosen edge with rubber spatula and, with fingertips on top side, slide spatula under crêpe and flip. Cook until dry on second side, about 20 seconds.

3. Place cooked crêpe on plate and repeat cooking process with remaining batter, brushing pan very lightly with butter before making each crêpe. As they are done, stack crêpes on plate (you will need 12 crêpes). (Crêpes can be double-wrapped in plastic and refrigerated up to 3 days. If crêpes have been refrigerated, bring them to room temperature before making sauce.)

4. **FOR THE ORANGE SAUCE:** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat broiler. Add 3 tablespoons cognac to broilersafe 12-inch skillet; set over medium heat just until vapors begin to rise from cognac, about 5 seconds. Remove pan from heat and wave lit chimney match over cognac until it ignites; shake pan until flames subside. (Cognac should burn for about 15 seconds; re-ignite if flame dies too soon.)

5. Add butter, 3 tablespoons sugar, and 1 cup orange juice to cognac; simmer briskly over high heat, whisking occasionally, until many large bubbles appear and mixture reduces to thick syrup, 6 to 8 minutes. (You should have just over 1/2 cup sauce.) Transfer sauce to small bowl; do not wash skillet. Stir remaining 1/4 cup orange juice, zest, liqueur, and remaining tablespoon cognac into sauce. Cover to keep warm.

6. **TO ASSEMBLE:** Fold each crêpe in half, then in half again to form wedge shape. Arrange 9 folded crêpes around edge of now-empty skillet, with rounded edges facing inward, overlapping as necessary to fit. Arrange remaining 3 crêpes in center of pan. Sprinkle crêpes evenly with remaining tablespoon sugar. Place skillet in oven and broil until sugar caramelizes and crêpes turn spotty brown, about 5 minutes. (Watch crêpes constantly to prevent scorching; turn pan as necessary.) Remove pan from oven and pour half of sauce over crêpes, leaving some areas unsauced. Transfer crêpes to individual serving dishes and serve immediately, passing extra sauce separately.

TECHNIQUE

MAKING CRÊPES

For the tenderest crêpes, most recipes call for resting the batter for two full hours to let the gluten relax. Given that our crêpes get crisped under a broiler and are then drenched in a sticky sauce, we wanted just the opposite. No need to rest the batter: Just mix and go.

1. Tilt buttered and heated nonstick skillet slightly to right and begin pouring in scant 1/4 cup batter.



2. Continue tilting pan slowly, in counterclockwise motion, until a thin even crêpe is formed.



3. Loosen edge with heatproof rubber spatula and, with fingertips on top side, grab edge and flip.



TECHNIQUE

FLAMBÉED COGNAC FOR A CROWD

With just a few crêpes in the pan, it's not hard to ignite the cognac. With 12 crêpes, the alcohol gets absorbed

too quickly—yielding a dozen boozy sponges. Our solution was to flambé the cognac separately, then build the sauce in the skillet, spooning it over the crêpes just before serving.

