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## Lemon Ricotta Pancakes

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 14: Elegant Brunch Favorites

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Light, fluffy ricotta pancakes are more sophisticated than traditional pancakes, making them perfect for special occasions, but you have to get the balance of cheese and structure just right or your pancakes will fall flat. We compensate for the extra weight of the ricotta by doubling the amount of egg whites and whipping them for added lightness. To ensure maximum lift, we add plenty of lemon juice and baking soda, which combine to produce carbon dioxide that super-inflates the egg foam. Warm fruit compotes provide the perfect finishing touch.

### Makes twelve 4-inch pancakes; serves 3 to 4

An electric griddle set at 325 degrees can also be used to cook the pancakes. We prefer the flavor of whole-milk ricotta, but part-skim will work, too; avoid nonfat ricotta. Serve with honey, confectioners' sugar, or one of our fruit toppings (see related content).

### INGREDIENTS

- 2/3** cups (3 1/3 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 1/2** teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2** teaspoon salt
- 8** ounces (1 cup) whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 2** large eggs, separated, plus 2 large whites
- 1/3** cup whole milk
- 1** teaspoon grated lemon zest plus 4 teaspoons juice
- 1/2** teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2** tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4** cup (1 3/4 ounces) sugar
- 1 - 2** teaspoons vegetable oil

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 200 degrees. Spray wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet with vegetable oil spray and place in oven. Whisk flour, baking soda, and salt together in medium bowl and make well in center. Add ricotta, egg yolks, milk, lemon zest and juice, and vanilla and whisk until just combined. Gently stir in melted butter.
- 2.** Using stand mixer fitted with whisk, whip egg whites on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high and whip whites to soft, billowy mounds, about 1 minute. Gradually add sugar and whip until glossy, soft peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer one-third of whipped egg whites to batter and whisk gently until mixture is lightened. Using rubber spatula, gently fold remaining egg whites into batter.
- 3.** Heat 1 teaspoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Using paper towels, wipe out oil,

leaving thin film on bottom and sides of pan. Using  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measure or 2-ounce ladle, portion batter into pan in 3 places, leaving 2 inches between portions. Gently spread each portion into 4-inch round. Cook until edges are set and first side is deep golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Using thin, wide spatula, flip pancakes and continue to cook until second side is golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes longer. Serve pancakes immediately or transfer to prepared wire rack in preheated oven. Repeat with remaining batter, using remaining oil as needed.

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## TECHNIQUE

### WHY SO LIGHT?

Here's how we keep the wet, milky ricotta from weighing down the pancakes.

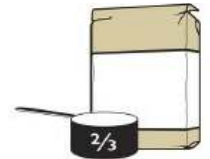
**LOTS OF WHIPPED WHITES:** Just as when making soufflé, we whip the egg whites—in this case, four of them—which creates an egg foam that lightens the batter.

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**NOT TOO MUCH FLOUR:** A moderate  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of flour adds enough starch to shore up the egg foam's structure but not so much that the pancakes become bready.

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**AN ACID PLUS A BASE:** Lemon juice not only contributes tangy flavor but also reacts with the alkaline baking soda to produce carbon dioxide that inflates the egg foam.

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