

STYLE & TRAVEL

Turning Breakfast Into an Event Every Day

TRICKS OF THE TRADE:

Ruth Reichl
Food Writer

By SANETTE TANAKA

Making breakfast, let alone two hot dishes every morning, is a challenge for most people. Food writer Ruth Reichl says the payoff is well worth it.

Ms. Reichl, editorial adviser to the Gilt Taste website and former editor in chief of Gourmet magazine, sees breakfast as a chance to touch base with her family at the start of each day. “When you’re a restaurant critic, you’re not home at night, so breakfast became really important for us,” says Ms. Reichl, 64.

Her go-to breakfast is pancakes, black beans with a fried egg on top and freshly squeezed orange juice. Ms. Reichl streamlines her cooking by preparing some of the food ahead of time. She always likes to have a big pot of black beans on hand. She makes pancake batter and stores it in the fridge for the week. But timesavers like pancake mixes aren’t worth it. “All they’ve done in the mix is combine the flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. They’ve saved you maybe 10 seconds,” she says.

For pancakes, Ms. Reichl uses a whisk to combine ingredients so the batter is smooth and without lumps; it should be thick and pourable, like



Ruth Reichl, far right, doesn’t skimp on breakfast, using good maple syrup on pancakes, above, and fresh black beans with a fried egg, below right. The key to cooking pancakes: Flip them once all the bubbles pop, below left.



heavy cream. Halfway through cooking, add milk to even out the batter. The hardest part is regulating the heat of the pan, she says. And everyone likes their pancakes cooked differently. Her son likes his under-cooked, while her husband likes them a little burned. “This is a Nick color,” she says, flipping a caramel-colored mini pancake and, nodding to a dark



brown one, “This is a Michael.” Ms. Reichl loves her custom-made copper pan engraved with her name. “It’s the hottest pan I have ever encountered. It’s totally responsive,” she says. But if you don’t have copper, you can use a well-tempered, cast-iron skillet, too. Avoid using non-stick pans because they don’t give pancakes crisp edges, she says.



Ruth Reichl

- ◆ Editorial adviser to Gilt Taste and former editor of Gourmet magazine
- ◆ Former restaurant critic for the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times
- ◆ Judge for Bravo reality show ‘Top Chef Masters.’
- ◆ First book, ‘Mmmmm: A Feastyari,’ published in 1972
- ◆ In June, Gilt Taste launched an iPad app that features motion-detecting, touch-free page turning for recipes

she’s short on time, boils them for two minutes and soaks them for an hour. Hold off on seasoning them until the end, she says, to lock in the flavor. Then top with a fried egg and salt. To wrap up the meal, use a juicer (Breville makes good ones) to squeeze fresh orange juice.

Ms. Reichl likes to serve each item as it’s ready, especially pancakes, which are best when “hot and crispy.” Putting them in the oven to keep warm causes them to lose steam.

She has a no-frills approach to setting a table. She’s not a fan of flowers on the table and prefers to decorate by “bringing out bowls of lots and lots of food so it looks really abundant.” She loves condiments, setting out bottles of syrup and hot sauce, as well as jars of salsa and jam.

The way to make a good breakfast every day is to keep it simple, but adapt as needed. “The first time you make something, follow the recipe, then figure out how to tailor it to your own tastes,” Ms. Reichl says.

To spice up the beans, she adds in a little cream sherry, soy sauce, miso or fish sauce, “which smells terrible but adds a wonderful flavor.” To cut calories for the pancakes, substitute vegetable oil for butter and skim milk for whole milk. But never skimp on good maple syrup: “Use jam, put some fruit on top or use something salty instead of sweet. But don’t go to artificial. Be more creative than that.”

Her biggest piece of advice: Stop worrying about making it perfect. “People are so used to eating terrible pancakes, no matter how you mess up, they’re going to be great. And if you make fresh orange juice, they’ll be over the moon.”

For Ruth Reichl’s pancake recipe, visit, [WSJ.com/Food](#).

Asia Scene: Summer Street Style in Seven Cities

The hot, humid summer in most Asian cities usually results in street fashions that are still dressy—unlike America’s casual summerwear—and lighter in colors and fabrics than in cooler months. Here, a look at some fashion-forward urban dressers and what they’re wearing. For more looks, go to [blogs.wsj.com/scene/tag/scenestyle](#).



Beijing
Wang Lian, a jewelry designer, wears a necklace and pendant of her own design and shoes bought on Taobao, the shopping website.



Seoul
Ji-min Jung, a student, wears H&M pants, Nike shoes and a shirt bought online.



Tokyo
Fernada, a sales assistant, wears a Ted Baker cardigan and dress and Benetton shoes.



Taipei
Ray Hsieh, a project executive, wears Sperry shoes, a Zara shirt, Uniqlo pants; jacket from a street market.



Shanghai
Wen-Xi Chen, an art director wears an All Saints top, H&M bracelet and a Cedar bag.



Hong Kong
Anthony Hill, a designer, wears a Hill jacket and pocket square, G.H. Bass shirt, denim, shoes and glasses from Persol.



Singapore
Velda Tan, a fashion label owner, wears a Love, Bonito dress, Rolex watch, Balenciaga bag and Sam Edelman shoes.

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