

Sweet Potato Pancakes

Grade Level: 6-8

Total Lesson Time: 40-60 minutes

Cooking Time: 20-30 minutes

Recipe Level: Intermediate



Background

This lesson is part of WHL's 'Chef in the Classroom' series. It's nicely suited for a fall or winter-time lesson as maple syrup and sweet potatoes are highlighted, two items usually locally available September - January in Wisconsin.

These pancakes are perfect for breakfast, an afternoon snack, or even served with vegetables and turkey. Whipping the egg whites separately is a new technique for many students and it makes the pancakes very fluffy. Since sweet potatoes are added, these have less sugar than some pancakes and also have more nutrients! Eat them with cinnamon-sugar butter, toasted nuts, cranberry sauce, maple syrup, or even eat them plain.

Ingredients per group of 4

1 cup flour	1 cup mashed sweet potato*
1 teaspoon baking powder	1/2 cup milk
pinch of salt	1/4 cup maple syrup
pinch of cinnamon	2 egg yolks
pinch of allspice	2 egg whites
pinch of cloves	

*To make mashed sweet potatoes, boil them in a pot of water until they are soft or bake them in the oven like a baked potato. Then peel the skin off, mash them, and put them in a blender or a food mill to make them smooth.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Gain comfort with basic cooking techniques.
2. Strengthen communication and team building skills.
3. Demonstrate ability to prioritize and follow recipe steps.
4. Understand the function of various tools and cooking techniques.

Equipment

For each work station:

- griddle or frying pan
- 3 mixing bowls
- measuring cups and spoons
- rubber spatula
- wooden spoon
- pancake spatula or flipper
- whisk / electric hand mixer

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Preparation

1. Sweet potatoes should be baked or boiled and mashed ahead of time.
2. Students should be divided into groups of four and given roles such as recipe manager, ingredient manager, chef, and clean-up manager. All students should share work, but separate roles will help with accountability.
3. Students wash hands.
4. Discuss proper methods of handling ingredients.

Procedure

If you only have a 40 minute period, mixing the batter is demonstrated by teachers and students cook the pancakes. A period of 50-60 minutes will allow enough time for students to complete all steps of the recipe including clean up.

1. Introduce activity and main components of the recipe. Highlight the use of any local, seasonal ingredients and their source.
2. Review student groups and roles. Distribute recipes, one per group, and students prepare cooking stations.
3. Ingredient managers should use measuring cups and mixing bowl to collect all needed ingredients and bring them back to their station.

Making the Recipe

Mixing:

1. In one bowl, mix together the dry ingredients: flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves.
2. In a second bowl, mix together the wet ingredients: mashed sweet potato, milk, maple syrup, and egg yolks.
3. In a third bowl, use a whick or electric beaters to whip the egg whites until they are very fluffy and foamy. This step takes some muscle and persistence, so take turns.
4. Mix the dry ingredients into the wet mixture.
5. Gently fold the whipped egg whites into the batter, taking care not to deflate the air bubbles.
6. Preheat the pan to medium heat on the stove.
7. Add a little bit of butter or oil to the pan so that the pancakes won't stick.
8. Pour about 1/4 cup of batter onto the hot pan.
9. It's ready to flip when you see air bubbles rising to the surface of the pancake, and when the edges begin to look brown.
10. Flip the pancake, cook for about a minute on the second side, depdnging on how hot the pan is.
11. Remove pancake from heat and repeat with the rest of the batter.

Tasting Notes

While eating, students should discuss what they taste, and use descriptive vocabulary to talk about what they like or don't like. Have student record their thoughts in their food journals.

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