

then top each with 2 bacon slices and 1 tomato slice. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top, dividing evenly. Top each with one of the remaining bread slices, buttered side up.

Place 2 sandwiches on the preheated panini press and close the lid. Cook according to the manufacturer’s instructions until the bread is golden and the cheese is melted, 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer the sandwiches to a cutting board and cut in half. Repeat with the remaining sandwiches. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Homemade Juices and Smoothies

Freshly made juices taste incomparably better and are more nutritious than their bottled or canned counterparts. And they’re quick and easy to prepare at home with an extractor or juicer. You can use a single type of fruit or combine the juices from different fruits and vegetables, such as carrots, pineapples and oranges.

Smoothies, made by blending fruit with yogurt, juice or milk, are perfect for a breakfast-on-the-go or a healthful after-school snack. The combinations are endless, from raspberries and blueberries to mangoes and bananas. Try the simple recipes featured here, then use your imagination to create your own delicious blends.

Banana-Strawberry-Peach Smoothies

Banana gives this smoothie a more creamy consistency. Other berries, such as raspberries or blueberries, can be used in place of the strawberries, and other stone fruits, such as nectarines and apricots, can replace the peach.

In a blender, combine the bananas, the 4 to 6 strawberries, the ½ peach and the peach nectar, and process until thick and creamy. Divide between 2 tumblers. Garnish each glass with a peach slice and a strawberry and serve immediately. Serves 2.

Variations:

Banana-Strawberry-Mango Smoothies: Replace the ½ peach with ½ mango and the peach nectar with mango nectar.

Banana-Pineapple Smoothies: Substitute 1 cup frozen pineapple cubes for the strawberries and peach. Add ¼ cup plain yogurt and only ¼ cup peach nectar. Other types of nectar, such as mango, can also be used in place of the peach nectar. Garnish each glass with a pineapple chunk speared on a cocktail pick.

Banana-Kiwifruit Smoothies: Substitute 1 cup frozen kiwifruit cubes for the strawberries and peach. Substitute ¼ cup coconut milk and ¼ cup kiwifruit nectar for the peach nectar. Garnish each glass with thin kiwifruit slices.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Breakfast and Brunch*, by Georgeanne Brennan, Elinor Klivans, Jordan Mackay and Charles Pierce (Oxmoor House, 2007).

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“A satisfying morning meal can set the tone for the rest of the day. Even on a busy weekday, I like to start off with a satisfying breakfast. If you’re not in the habit of cooking for yourself or your family in the morning, you’re guaranteed to be tempted to change your ways by the recipes and ideas from this class.”

— Chuck Williams

The Benefits of the First Meal

Nutritionists champion the importance of breakfast for good reason. It stimulates the body’s metabolism, boosts energy and alertness, and helps both adults and children stay focused and productive throughout most of the day. Eating well in the morning also helps stave off unwelcome midday energy slumps caused by low blood sugar.

Ingredients for Banana-Strawberry-Peach Smoothies

1½ very ripe bananas, peeled and frozen

4 to 6 strawberries, hulled and frozen, plus 2 strawberries for garnish

½ peach, pitted, plus 2 thin slices for garnish

¾ cup peach nectar

Ingredients for Whole Wheat Pancakes

1 cup whole wheat flour

1 cup all-purpose flour

2 Tbs. sugar

1 Tbs. baking powder

1½ tsp. baking soda

1½ tsp. kosher salt

1 cup wheat bran

1¾ cups whole milk

¾ cup plain yogurt

½ cup buttermilk, plus more, as needed

3 eggs

6 Tbs. (¾ stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Canola oil or clarified butter for cooking

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Technique Class: Fresh Starts—Weekday Breakfasts

About Pancakes and Waffles

In many ways, pancakes and waffles are quick breads made on the stovetop, in the case of the former, or in a special appliance, in the case of the latter. Batters for both are prepared following the quick-mixing method used for muffins and other quick breads: dry ingredients are stirred together in one bowl, the wet ingredients are blended in another and the two are then combined. You need to blend the dry and wet ingredients quickly, just until the dry ingredients are moistened. You will see some lumps, but don’t continue stirring to eliminate them.

Tip: Make-Ahead Batter

To reduce the early-morning prep time for pancakes, waffles or quick breads, start the night before. Measure and combine the dry ingredients in one bowl and the wet ingredients in another. Cover both bowls and refrigerate the wet ingredients. In the morning, just whisk them together to form the batter.

Whole Wheat Pancakes

Pancakes are popular for breakfast and, by using our make-ahead batter tip (above), they’re easy to enjoy on weekday mornings. The whole wheat makes these pancakes hearty, healthy and delicious. Top with fresh fruit for a welcome change.

Preheat an oven to 200°F.

In a large bowl, sift together the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add any bran left in the sifter from the wheat flour and the 1 cup wheat bran. In another bowl, whisk together the milk, yogurt, the ½ cup buttermilk, the eggs and melted butter. Pour the milk mixture into the flour mixture and stir until just combined. Do not overmix.

Place a griddle over high heat until hot. (To test, flick a little water onto the griddle; it should skitter across the surface.) Lightly oil the griddle. For each pancake, pour about ¼ cup of the batter onto the griddle and spread it slightly with the back of the measuring cup. Cook until bubbles form and break on the surface, about 2 minutes. Flip the pancakes and cook until the other sides are golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes more. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet and keep warm in the oven. Repeat to cook the remaining batter, oiling the griddle as needed. If the batter begins to thicken, thin it with a little more buttermilk. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Breakfast Comforts*, by Rick Rodgers (Weldon Owen, 2010).

About Grains and Cereals

Grains and cereals are a classic choice for breakfast and brunch. Not only are grains hearty, economical and satisfying, but they are easy to cook, whether you are serving them on their own or as the foundation for another recipe. For cooking oatmeal, cornmeal and grits in many breakfast recipes, your most practical piece of equipment is a heavy saucepan or one with a heavy bottom.

Homemade Granola

Any of the following ingredients may be added to the granola in balanced quantities to taste: chopped dried fruits, dark raisins or golden raisins; chopped nuts; and/or wheat flakes or oat bran. Also try different honeys, such as lavender or orange blossom, or substitute maple syrup for the honey. When trying new additions, be sure to maintain an appealing proportion of crunchy ingredients in the final mixture.

Preheat a broiler. Place the broiler pan on the lowest rack.

In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, wheat germ, walnuts, sesame seeds, coconut and pumpkin seeds. Spread the mixture in an even layer on a large, rimmed baking sheet. Keeping the broiler door ajar, broil, shaking the pan every 30 seconds while keeping the mixture in an even layer, until crisp and golden but not charred, 2 to 3 minutes. Watch the mixture carefully so it does not burn. Transfer to a large plate to cool, then place in a large bowl.

In a small saucepan over low heat, combine the oil, honey and cinnamon and heat until warm, about 2 minutes. Add half of the honey mixture to the granola and toss thoroughly to combine. Add just enough of the remaining honey mixture so that the granola clumps slightly but is not soupy. Stir in the currants. Serve the granola with milk or yogurt and sliced fresh fruit. Serves 4.

Note: The granola will keep in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Breakfast*, by Brigit L. Binns (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

Banana-Oatmeal Power Cookies

These cookies have it all—nuts, grains and fruit. Their portable size makes them perfect for quick weekday breakfasts on-the-go.

Preheat an oven to 325°F. Lightly grease 1 or 2 baking sheets or line each with a Silpat nonstick liner.

In a bowl, stir together the flour, coconut, oats, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. In a large bowl, cream the brown sugar and butter with a wooden spoon until fluffy. Add the banana and egg and beat with a fork until blended. Stir in the flour mixture, about ½ cup at a time, then stir in the apricots and walnuts.

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Spoon the dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheet(s), spacing the cookies about 2 inches apart. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes, switching pan positions halfway through baking if 2 pans were used.

Remove from the oven and let the cookies cool on the baking sheet(s) on a wire rack for about 5 minutes. Transfer the cookies to the rack and let cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days. Makes about 18 cookies; serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Outdoors Series, *Cabin Cooking*, by Tori Ritchie (Time-Life Books, 1998).

Sandwiches for Breakfast

Why not start the morning with a sandwich? Several fillings layered between bread or rolled in a tortilla wrap make a complete dish in a handheld package. Some sandwiches and wraps can easily be prepared the night before and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator, then either enjoyed on-the-go or quickly heated for a hot breakfast.

Breakfast Panini

Taking a fresh approach to the morning meal, we have transformed the classic combination of bacon, eggs and toast into a sandwich that is cooked to crisp perfection on a panini press.

Preheat an electric panini press on high heat according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Place the bread slices on a cutting board. Brush one side of each slice with melted butter. Turn one slice over and sprinkle with the cheese. Top with the bacon and fried egg, and season with salt and pepper. Top with the arugula and the other bread slice, buttered side up.

Place the sandwich on the preheated panini press and close the lid. Cook according to the manufacturer’s instructions until the bread is golden and the cheese is melted, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer the sandwich to a cutting board and cut in half. Serve immediately. Serves 1.

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Cheddar, Bacon and Tomato Panini

These satisfying grilled sandwiches combine sharp cheddar cheese, crisp bacon and juicy tomatoes.

Preheat an electric panini press to 375°F according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Brush one side of each bread slice with the melted butter. Place the slices, buttered side down, on a clean work surface. Sprinkle 2 Tbs. cheese on each of 4 slices,

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Ingredients for Breakfast Panini

2 slices white bread or brioche, each ½ inch thick

Melted unsalted butter for brushing

3 Tbs. grated cheddar cheese

2 bacon slices, fried until crispy

1 fried egg

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

¼ cup arugula

Ingredients for Cheddar, Bacon and Tomato Panini

8 slices country-style bread, each ½ inch thick

2 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted

10 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

8 bacon slices, fried until crisp

4 large tomato slices, each halved crosswise