

Baked Pancake with Cucumber Salsa

My girlfriend, Lisa, came to visit and offered to make brunch. She made an oven pancake but served it savory instead of the usual sweet. Oh it was fantastic. A baked pancake is one big, puffy round, baked in the oven rather than on top of the stove. Also known as a "Dutch Baby," it looks and tastes like a delicate, oversized popover. This savory version is very popular because it is easy and fast to assemble and ready to serve in 20 minutes, giving the cook time to brew the coffee and set the table. Make the vegetable-laden Cucumber Salsa the night before to develop its flavor. You will love this.

Yield: Serves 4

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 eggs

3/4 cup milk

2/3 cup unbleached all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons whole-wheat flour

1/2 cup grated Monterey jack or crumbled goat cheese, such as French Montrachet or domestic chabi

Cucumber Salsa, following

1. Place the butter in 1 large or 4 individual gratin dishes, or in a 10-inch cast-iron skillet or deep pie plate. Place on the center rack of a preheated 400° oven to melt the butter.
2. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, using a whisk, or in a blender or food processor, beat the eggs until foamy, about 1 minute. Add the milk and flours. Beat hard just until smooth.
3. Remove the hot pan from the oven and carefully pour in the batter. The pan will be less than half full. Bake 15 minutes, until puffy and golden. Sprinkle with the cheese and bake 5 minutes longer to melt the cheese. Serve immediately, cut into wedges and topped with spoonfuls of Cucumber Salsa.

Cucumber Salsa

Yield: About 1-1/2 cups

1 English cucumber, seeded and chopped

1 slightly underripe medium tomato, seeded, peeled, and chopped

1 fresh mild poblano, New Mexico, or Anaheim green chile, roasted, peeled, and minced (see page xx)

3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro

2 tablespoons good-quality olive oil

1 tablespoon red wine or apple cider vinegar

1/4 teaspoon crushed hot pepper flakes, or to taste

1 small clove garlic, minced

Mix all ingredients together in a small bowl. Refrigerate, covered, 2 hours to overnight to meld flavors.