



*a  
blanket  
statement*

Making someone breakfast in bed sends a clear message of love, even if it gets crumbs on the sheets

**I**n the introduction to her new book *Breakfast in Bed*, Jesse Ziff Cool, chef/owner of Flea St. Cafe in Menlo Park, catalogs all the people with whom she advises sharing the gift of breakfast in bed: “With a sweetheart who needs to feel your love in a new way, with a spouse who needs strength to face a tough day, with a sick child who needs a little extra TLC, with an aging parent who needs to be reminded of her importance.”

When you broach the subject of breakfast in bed with just

about anyone, folks are wont to sigh and get a little moony-eyed recalling the early morning nourishment they’ve enjoyed while prone. It’s a kindness as rare as hen’s teeth. It can be cereal sloshing on a teetery tray, or just a mug of coffee and buttered toast—either way it sends a message of love.

Perhaps the best advice is to keep it simple but always include a dab of color (a bowl of fruit? a single fresh flower?) and prepare something savory and something sweet to gently wake up all of your loved one’s senses. All recipes serve two.

### Fluffy French Toast

The best thing about French toast is that it makes a virtue out of slightly stale bread. Adding a little of this or a little of that to the batter is a matter of taste, but Bradley Ogden's technique which he perfected years ago while at Campton Place—baking them after quickly frying them—makes for light, puffy toast.

- 4 1-inch-thick raisin bread slices, slightly stale
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup half and half
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons Grand Marnier
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated orange peel
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- pinch ground cinnamon
- pinch ground nutmeg

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Beat together half and half, eggs, Grand Marnier, sugar, orange peel, vanilla extract cinnamon and nutmeg to blend in medium bowl. Soak the bread slices until saturated but not totally mushy.

Heat a large, ovenproof skillet over moderate heat. Add the butter, tipping to cover bottom of pan. Add the bread slices to the skillet and lightly brown one side (about 2 minutes). Turn slices, cook other side for one minute and place whole skillet in the oven for about 10 minutes or until they're cooked through. Top the slices with a pat of butter, a sprinkle of confectioners' sugar and a drizzle of warmed maple syrup, or if you have the time, make a fruit compote as a topping.

### Fruit Compote

March is a terrible month for fruit. Winter fruit has come and gone and spring fruit has yet to grace the stores. A dried fruit compote is nothing to sniff at, though, harkening back to the fruits of summer.

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup red wine
- juice of one orange
- zest of one lemon
- zest of one orange
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 vanilla bean, split
- 4 whole cloves
- 4 whole allspice berries
- 1 cup dried apricot halves
- 1 cup dried pear halves, roughly chopped
- 1 cup dried peach halves, roughly chopped
- 1 cup dried cherries

Put first nine ingredients in large saucepan. Cover and cook over moderate heat until the sugar dissolves completely.

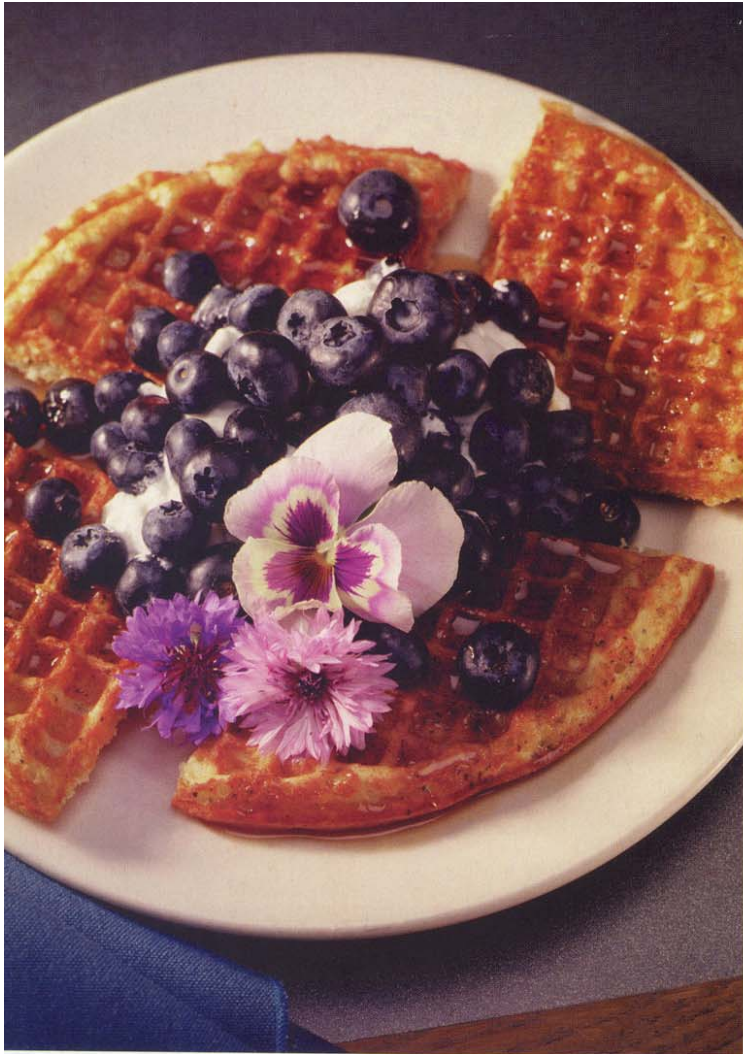


Increase heat and boil for one minute. Add dried fruit and simmer over low heat for about 30 minutes. Strain the liquid, reserve the fruit, and bring the liquid back to a boil over high heat, reducing it in volume by half. Pour it over fruit and refrigerate. Be sure to remove the cloves, cinnamon, allspice and vanilla bean before serving. Compote will last at least one week.

### Shrimpy Asparagus Omelet

In her seminal book *Morning Food*, the reigning queen of breakfast, Margaret Fox of Cafe Beaujolais, describes the secret to making omelets—flipping. She writes, "Make the three-dollar investment (in three dozen eggs), wait until no one is around to snicker, spread plastic on the floor if necessary and go for it. It's like learning to swim or ride a bike. Somewhere between the third and twelfth try, suddenly you're doing it." For those who still haven't mastered the flip, this omelet's for you.

- 1/2 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch lengths
- 1 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 leek, sliced thin
- 1 cup cooked bay shrimp
- salt and pepper, to taste



2/3 cup coarsely grated Gruyère  
 1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon leaves, or to taste  
 4 large eggs, separated  
 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Steam the asparagus in a covered saucepan for five minutes, then plunge into ice water. Pat dry. Melt one tablespoon butter in a skillet. Cook leek over moderate heat for five minutes. Toss in shrimp, season with salt and pepper, and remove from heat. Stir in cheese, tarragon and reserved asparagus. Set mixture aside.

In a bowl whisk the egg yolks with the flour and salt and pepper to taste until the mixture is lemon-colored. In another

bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt until they hold stiff peaks. Fold the whites into the yolk mixture gently but thoroughly.

Heat remaining butter in an oven-proof skillet. Pour egg mixture into the skillet, spreading it out evenly. Bake the omelet in the preheated oven for about eight minutes, or until it is puffed. Spoon the filling down the middle of it, and with a spatula fold the omelet in half to enclose the filling. Bake the omelet for one minute more until the cheese is melted and the omelet is cooked through.

#### Buttermilk Waffles

Waffle irons are among the most often chosen kitchen gadgets on bridal registries—waffles are alive and well in America. Williams Sonoma and other posh kitchenware stores offer waffle irons that make decorative, even heart-shaped waffles. To me, even regular old square waffles are festive and romantic.

1 cup all-purpose flour  
 1 tablespoon sugar  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1 cup well-shaken buttermilk  
 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) melted unsalted butter  
 1 large egg, beaten lightly

Preheat a well-seasoned or non-stick Belgian or standard waffle iron.

In a large bowl whisk together all ingredients, stirring until smooth. Using a 1/2-cup measure, pour batter into Belgian waffle iron, a little less batter for standard irons. Cook according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer waffle to a baking sheet and keep warm in a preheated 200-degree oven.

Serve with regular maple syrup, or with blueberry syrup made by simmering 1/2 cup halved blueberries briefly in 1/2 cup pure maple syrup. Garnish with more blueberries.

#### Simple Crêpes

Once you get the knack, crêpes are as easy to make as pancakes, but oh-so-much more sophisticated. These are about as simple as crêpes get, and can even be made a day ahead of time and gently rewarmed. Refrigerate them stacked between sheets of waxed paper.



2 large eggs  
1 teaspoon sugar  
pinch salt  
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 1/4 cups (or more) milk (do not use low-fat or nonfat)  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon grated lemon or orange peel  
4 tablespoons butter  
1 cup strawberry jam  
1/3 cup powdered sugar  
1 cup whipped cream

Whisk eggs, sugar, and salt in large bowl. Gradually whisk in flour, then milk and vanilla extract. Strain into medium bowl. Add zest and let stand one hour.

Add enough milk to batter to thin it to consistency of

heavy whipping cream. Heat an eight-inch non-stick skillet over moderate heat until hot. Brush skillet lightly with melted butter. Remove skillet from heat. Pour scant 1/4-cup measure of batter into skillet, tilting and rotating skillet quickly to cover bottom.

Return skillet to heat and cook until top appears dry, about 45 seconds, while loosening sides of crêpe with spatula. Turn and cook until brown spots appear on second side, about 30 seconds. Slide crêpe onto a cookie sheet and keep warm in preheated 200-degree oven. Make more crêpes in same manner with remaining batter, brushing skillet lightly with butter for each.

Spread one tablespoon jam over each crêpe, fold crêpe in half, then fold in half again to form a triangle. Serve warm, sprinkled with powdered sugar and topped with a spoonful of whipped cream.

