

Area Chefs Share Blueberry Brunch Dishes

Written by Leslie Horn

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BLUE HILL — On a visit to Toddy Pond last summer, Sarah Pebworth found a perfect recipe to serve for breakfast at the Blue Hill Inn.

After an idyllic afternoon on the pond, one of the innkeeper's friends whipped up a blueberry buckle with fresh blueberries they had picked earlier in the day.

At the Blue Hill Inn, innkeeper Sarah Pebworth prepares

blueberry buckle as a specialty breakfast dish. — LESLIE HORN

“It was the experience and the beautiful summer day,” Pebworth said of the dessert she serves as a breakfast bread. “It felt how I wanted guests to feel.”

Blueberries are a hallmark of summer in Maine, the top producer of the wild fruit. Blueberry pancakes, blueberry muffins and blueberry scones are ubiquitous. It's common to see muffins wrapped in cellophane at gas station counters. Although these morsels are often delicious, an extra amount of care goes into blueberry breakfast items that transcend the old regulars.

A few restaurants and hotels in the Downeast region take pride in their unique takes on blueberry breakfast dishes.

Pebworth's blueberry buckle isn't an exact replica of the recipe she sampled that day on Toddy Pond, but it's what she pulled together after doing her own research. She suggests adding more sugar to make it into a delectable dessert.

Blue Hill Inn's Blueberry Buckle

Batter:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter

- 1 egg
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tsps. vanilla (optional)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsps. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 cups blueberries

Topping:

- ¼ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup dark brown sugar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. freshly ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup butter, softened

Preheat oven to 350 F degrees. Grease one 8-by-8-inch pan or one large pie plate.

Batter: Cream sugar, butter and egg. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, baking powder and salt. Stir into sugar mixture, alternating with milk and vanilla. Fold in blueberries. Use a spatula to scrape batter into the greased pan.

Topping: Combine sugars, cinnamon and butter. Spread evenly over the batter.

Bake 25-35 minutes, until the edges are browned and a toothpick comes out clean in the center.

Innkeeper Judith Stanley said this blueberry butter is “unique like we are. It’s one of the most popular things at the Ivy Manor Inn and Michelle’s Fine Dining and it’s always received with ‘Can I get some more?’”

Ivy Manor Inn’s Blueberry Butter

Yields 1 lb.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 lb. butter
- ½ cup fresh honey

In a food processor, blend 1 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen) until the skins disappear.

In a blender add 1 pound butter and the blended blueberries.

Add ½ cup fresh honey into blender with blueberries and butter.

Blend until the color is even.

Store back in a container until hardened. Scoop with melon ball scoop or put in a pastry bag and create rosettes.

Bar Harbor Inn’s executive chef, Louis Kiefer, contributed his brunch recipe for blueberry crepes.

“It just sort of elevates your blueberry pancake to a more sophisticated level,” Kiefer said. “There’s nothing better than Maine blueberries, without question.”

Blueberry Crepes

Filling:

- 4-5 lb. Dried blueberries
- 1-2 qt. Simple syrup
- 1-2 lb. Mascarpone cheese
- Lady fingers, crumbs, as needed

Sauce:

- 1½ cup crème fraiche
- Lime juice as needed
- 1 lb. cream cheese, whipped
- Confectioners sugar, as needed

Steep berries in simple syrup until very soft, then take off heat. Drain if necessary and cool. Add enough of the mascarpone to coat the berries and dust lady fingers, to absorb excess liquid. Let rest and fill crepes. Mix together crème fraiche, whipped cream cheese. Add lime and confectionery sugar to taste.

Last March, Pamela Parker and Bryan Stevens bought the Kingsleigh Inn in Southwest Harbor. They spent eight years running the Primrose Inn in Bar Harbor, where they perfected the craft of a gourmet breakfast. One of the dishes featured is panna cotta with blueberry sauce.

“Panna cotta is like a cross between pudding and jello,” Pamela said. “There’s some nostalgia, it’s kind of a retro thing.”

Parker said that the key to this recipe is to use high quality vanilla.

Panna Cotta

- 4 cups heavy cream or half & half (or combo)
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tsps. vanilla
- 2 packets powdered gelatin
- 6 Tbsps. cold water

Heat the heavy cream and sugar in a saucepan or microwave. Once sugar is dissolved, remove from heat and stir in the vanilla extract.

Lightly oil eight custard cups or medium-sized glass baking dish with cooking spray, such as Pam. Sprinkle gelatin over the cold water in a medium-sized bowl and let stand 8 minutes.

Pour the very warm panna cotta mixture over the gelatin and whisk until the gelatin is completely dissolved.

Divide panna cotta mixture into the prepared cups or pour into baking dish.

Chill overnight. Unmold custard cups onto plates and serve with a drizzle of fruit sauce and fresh fruit. If using baking dish, cut into squares.

Blueberry Sauce

- 1½ cups blueberries
- 2 Tbsp water
- ½ tsp cornstarch
- 2 Tbsps. sugar
- 2 tsp. lemon juice

Bring to boil all items except lemon juice. Boil 1-2 minutes until berries burst. Remove from heat and stir in fresh juice. Let cool slightly then puree, strain and chill.

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