



Alliance Française– Lansing

February 2020 Newsletter Bulletin de février 2020

Calendrier

dimanche	lundi	mardi	mercredi	jeudi	vendredi	samedi
						1
2 <i>Chandeleur</i>	3	4 Conversation entre amis. Chez Kelly 18:30	5	6 Conversation Café at the café in Schuler's Bookstore in Meridian Mall 3:00-4:30	7	8
9	10 French Club East Lansing Public Library 19:00-20:00	11	12	13 Conversation Café at the café in Schuler's Bookstore in Meridian Mall 3:00-4:30	14	15
16	17	18 Conversation entre amis. Chez Carr 18h30	19	20 Conversation Café at the café in Schuler's Bookstore in Meridian Mall 3:00-4:30	21	22 AF-Lansing Soirée Host: Amy Kilbridge Program: NOLA - Culture and Cuisine
23	24 French Club East Lansing Public Library 19:00-20:00	25	26	27 Conversation Café at the café in Schuler's Bookstore in Meridian Mall 3:00-4:30	28	29

The following article is copied in full from *France-Amérique*. Alliance Française–Lansing has a subscription to the magazine. Contact Nancy Kelly if you would like to borrow the magazine.

La Chandeleur: The Day to Flip Crêpes

January 29th, 2020 by Juliette Démas

#Gastronomy

While Americans watch expectantly for the groundhog to emerge on February 2, the French will be flipping crêpes with their families. Known as Chandeleur in French and “Candlemas” in English, this event mixes pagan, Celtic, and catholic influences, and is named after the candles used for a pagan ritual celebrating the arrival of the harvest. In 472, Pope Gelasius I decided to combine this celebration with that of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple 40 days after his birth. Today in France and Belgium, this “festival of light” is a chance to indulge in delicious crêpes!

The French crêpe is a cousin of the American pancake, but is much thinner. No raising agent of any kind is used, and this difference is what makes the U.S. versions thicker and more consistent. Pancakes are also associated with breakfast and brunch, whereas crêpes can be enjoyed at dinner, for dessert, or even as a snack.

“Crêpes have been around since time immemorial; their origins date back even further than bread,” says Martine Bleuzen du Pontavice, a culinary writer and buckwheat specialist. Crêpes exist in a multitude of forms all over the world, including Russian blinis, Mexican corn tortillas, Ethiopian injera flatbread, and even puffed rice cakes and cassava bread. “If there is grain, there will be a type of crêpe,” she says.

Brittany is the French region where the most crêpes are consumed. These variants are made using whole-wheat flour and accompanied by a sweet topping. Those made with buckwheat are known instead as *galettes*, and are thicker with a fluffier texture. These savory versions are traditionally served with ham, an egg, and cheese for a main meal, but there are countless different recipes from andouille sausage to vegetables and even raclette. “With the gluten-free trend, restaurants are now offering sweet *galettes* as a dessert,” says Martine Bleuzen du Pontavice.

The Ancient Superstition Behind Flipping Crêpes

The recipe couldn't be simpler, and requires 3.5 tablespoons of butter, 2 cups of milk, 1 3/4 cups of flour, and 3 eggs. Sweeten the batter to taste, but don't forget that these whole-wheat crêpes are served with jam, chocolate, sugar, or honey. “You can also add different flavors to the basic batter,” says Martine Bleuzen du Pontavice. Vanilla, rum, beer, and certain locally-made liquors such as calvados are popular options. As for resting the batter, the specialist says she has “never found that it made the slightest difference.”

Chandeleur is also the chance to revive an ancient superstition: If you successfully flip a crêpe with the pan in your right hand while holding a coin in your left, you will have a prosperous year! If you want to stack all the odds in your favor, put the batter through a sieve or a blender to ensure it has a smooth consistency. Then pour a ladle of batter into a hot pan with butter, and turn it to ensure the whole surface is covered. When the edges start to brown, it's time to flip it over — or gently turn it with a spatula if you are feeling cautious. And if you botch any of them, then don't worry! In Breton farms it is customary to say that “the first crêpe is for the dog, and the last ladleful is for the cat!”

The Food Section: Crêpes (recipe by Alton Brown, Food Network)

Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup flour (*for gluten-free crêpes, Nancy Kelly suggests Namaste all-purpose gluten free flour blend: (2/3 Namaste to 1 cup regular flour)*).
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- Butter, for coating the pan

Serves: 17 to 22 crepes

In a blender, combine all of the ingredients and pulse for 10 seconds. Place the crepe batter in the refrigerator for 1 hour. This allows the bubbles to subside so the crepes will be less likely to tear during cooking. The batter will keep for up to 48 hours.

Heat a small non-stick pan. Add butter to coat. Pour 1 ounce of batter into the center of the pan and swirl to spread evenly. Cook for 30 seconds and flip. Cook for another 10 seconds and remove to the cutting board.

Lay them out flat so they can cool. Continue until all batter is gone. After they have cooled you can stack them and store in sealable plastic bags in the refrigerator for several days or in the freezer for up to two months. When using frozen crepes, thaw on a rack before gently peeling apart.

*Savory Variation Add 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 cup chopped fresh herbs, spinach or sun-dried tomatoes to the egg mixture.

*Sweet Variation Add 2 1/2 tablespoons sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 2 tablespoons of your favorite liqueur to the egg mixture.

The Board of Directors:

- Welcomed new board member **Caroline Bruce**
- Acknowledged the hard work of **Amy Sheppard** in managing the *Conversation Entre Amis* last year
- Say *Merci* to **Nancy and Brian Kelly** for hosting the January soirée. There were great conversations, lots of laughs and amazing food. Icing on the cake, there was a *galette des rois* and the happy queen took home the charm and her crown! She was sad to learn that her reign would only last another couple of hours. ;-)
- Say *Merci* to **Dina Foster** for the outstanding presentation at the January soirée on the Dreyfus affair and the vivid conversation.
- Will continue to focus this year on developing family-friendly events that highlight francophone cultures. If you would like to be part of the committee or have ideas about holidays that we should celebrate, please email Gaëlle and Yasmina at president@aflansing.org.

Remember to pay your dues!

This newsletter goes only to members. Please ensure that you will continue to receive the newsletter by paying your Alliance Française dues.

\$10 – student
\$20 – individual
\$35 – family
\$50—sponsor

Send a check payable to Alliance Française-Lansing; AF-Lansing, PO Box 27274, Lansing, MI 48909 or use a credit card at <http://paypal.me/AFLansing>.