

What's an Aebelskiver?

by Laurie Lester

My husband, David, was always talking about his mom's Aebelskivers. Well, I never heard of an Aebelskiver...sounds like a tool for cleaning the irrigation ditch. Well, one day she made them for us. Aebelskivers or Ebleskivers are Danish pancakes, spherical culinary wonders, almost like a donut hole. Aebelskivers are traditionally served with raspberry jam and powdered sugar, and sometimes have an apple filling.

The legend of the Aebelskiver: When the Viking men would go on their adventures, they could not take their women to do their cooking for them, nor could they take their cookware, so they used their shields as cooking pans. The Aebelskiver resulted from cooking pancakes in the pit of a well worn shield. The modern Aebelskiver pan is a cast iron pan with 6 to 8 half circles molded into it.

One day while shopping at the Habitat for Humanity Home Store, I found a brand new Aebelskiver pan, mint in the box, and bought it for a song! I also found a darling Scandinavian tole painted plaque for my kitchen that says, "Food should be cooked with lots of love and lots of butter!" My Scandinavian ancestors would be so proud!

If you haven't had the experience of perusing the Grand Junction Habitat Home Store, you are missing out on a lot of great stuff! The Habitat store offers lots of new and used items, from building supplies, appliances and furniture to...cookware & cookbooks! Your purchases help low-income families get a new start, in a new home!

I have been making Aebelskivers for the guests at Willow Pond and they are a hit! The kids, of course, *really* love them. I will be having an Aebelskiver class in the near future, so be sure to check the Willow Pond website, www.willowpondbnb.com in the future, for information on upcoming classes.

Here is a traditional Aebelskiver recipe. Read the instructions thoroughly. While tricky at first, they really are easy enough to make on your own. Remember, you need the special pan to make them.

Danish Aebelskivers:

Ingredients:

1&1/2 C. flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
2 eggs, beaten
2 C. buttermilk

1/2 stick butter, melted
Powdered sugar
Raspberry jam or other preserve

Directions:

Melt butter in microwave safe bowl or cup (About 30 sec.).

Sift dry ingredients, add buttermilk and beaten eggs. Beat with a whisk until batter is smooth.

Heat Aebelskiver pan on medium heat, quickly add to each pan hole - 1/2 tsp. butter and batter, filling

each hole a little over half full of batter.

When the batter is bubbling in the center, the pancake is probably ready to turn. Gently lift a side of the pancake with a little fork or pick and check to see if is golden. If it is firm on the sides and a nice golden color, flip it carefully to make sure it is completely inverted, so the golden cooked side is now completely on top and has no "seams" or holes in the sides. When you flip the pancake, the uncooked batter in the middle will spill into the hole and cook. If the cooked sides are sticking out, you can tuck them in with a fork.

The pancake should be firm enough to invert without falling apart or collapsing. Let the other side cook for a few minutes, check for golden color and remove.

Repeat with butter and batter, until batter is finished.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve with jam.

Tips:

- I use a 1/4 cup measuring cup to ladle out the batter. It's important to add the butter first, but immediately add the batter to prevent the butter from spattering.
- Don't fill the holes too full or the batter will rise over the top of the pan holes, you won't get a round cake and probably will have to clean up some batter mess.
- If the Aebelskivers are too brown, or the pan is smoking, reduce the heat just a little. The center hole and often one or two of the other pan depressions will heat more quickly than the rest. You'll probably want to practice with your pan a few times to get the hang of when you should flip the pancakes, so they won't burn.
- If the pancake isn't firming up enough to turn it without the pancake collapsing -or if it isn't browning --it either hasn't cooked long enough or you need more heat.
- I use small cocktail forks to turn the pancakes. I have a few on hand to make it easier, wiping them clean as I go along. You can use an ice pick or narrow fork. You will probably have to use your fingers along with the fork- to turn the pancake, so be careful not to get burned!
- You can test the pancake with a toothpick to make sure the middle is done (it will come clean), until you get the hang of it.
- If using your pan for the first time, make sure you season the pan. As with all cast-iron pans, you should only need to rinse your pan in hot water and wipe clean with a clean paper towel, re-season with some vegetable oil spray.
- Don't get discouraged! Often, the first batch goes to the *Norse Gods*, so just keep practicing until you get a good round pancake.
- Check E-bay or www.norpro.com for a great deal on an Aebelskiver pan.