

CRÈME FRAÎCHE

A Versatile Cream Sure to Delight



French for “fresh cream,” crème fraîche originated in Normandy and is used lavishly in sauces, drizzled over vegetables and spooned on fresh fruit. It is a thickened cream in which lactic acids and naturally occurring bacteria have been allowed to slowly develop into a slightly tangy, nutty flavor and velvety rich texture, ranging from that of sour cream to almost as solid as room-temperature butter. With its higher fat content, crème fraîche is ideal for cooking as it won’t separate or curdle under high heat like sour cream and yogurt.

CRÈME FRAÎCHE FACTS



To make crème fraîche, cream is pasteurized and then seeded with a starter culture, much the way yogurt and cheese are made. The cream is then left until slightly soured and thick.

Crème fraîche is less acidic than buttermilk, yogurt or sour cream, although in general crème fraîche and sour cream are interchangeable in recipes. It is thicker, has a richer flavor, and is less tangy than sour cream.



In France, crème fraîche was traditionally made from unpasteurized cream that naturally contained the right bacteria to thicken it. Since cream is pasteurized in California, crème fraîche is made by adding fermenting agents to cream, such as lemon, with the necessary bacteria.

Crème fraîche will have the fat content of the cream used to make it, typically about 30%, and does not contain any added thickeners.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store crème fraîche in the refrigerator, which is typically set at 38-40°F. Keep it tightly sealed in the container and it will typically keep for up to eight weeks.
- If separation occurs, gently stir the liquid back into the crème fraîche.
- If any mold forms on the surface of the crème fraîche, discard it immediately.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Back-of-the-House

Crème fraîche is the ideal flavorful addition for sauces, soups, meats, fish and desserts because it can be boiled and reduced without curdling. Its tangy flavor and luxurious texture adds acidity and richness to a wide variety of dishes.

- For breakfast, serve hot pancakes or warm scones with plenty of crème fraîche. Any omelet is enhanced with a dollop of crème fraîche. Crème fraîche can be whipped by itself and used as a stand-alone topping.
- Stir crème fraîche into foods like risotto, soups and creamy pasta sauces just before serving to add richness, balanced with a mildly tangy flavor.
- Include the appealing flavor of crème fraîche in mashed or au gratin potatoes.
- Gently toss grilled vegetables with a little crème fraîche and season with coarsely ground pepper.
- For desserts, whip crème fraîche with a small amount of sugar and a dash of vanilla and serve chilled on fresh berries or peach shortcakes.

Front-of-the-House

Crème fraîche is a delicious topping that adds a burst of flavor to a variety of appetizers, sides and desserts. Operators can impress patrons by offering crème fraîche alongside sour cream – they're often interchangeable as some like the tanginess of sour cream, while others like the richness of crème fraîche. Crème fraîche can be spooned over fresh fruit or cooked vegetables and is often used as a garnish with soups. It can be used anywhere you might use sour cream, like over a baked potato or a range of ethnic foods that favor creamy toppings.

WHAT'S TRENDING

A New Menu Favorite

Restaurant operators are finding creative ways to showcase crème fraîche on menus, starting with appetizers. The delicious cheese is appearing on more cheese plates and a favorite pairing with caviar. Another fresh discovery is as a secret ingredient in macaroni and cheese.

Added to Beverages

Gourmet coffee shops are adding crème fraîche to coffee beverages. It's also found favor with mixologists adding it to cocktails.



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