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[return to Chocolate-Pecan Pancakes](#)



CHOCOLATE-PECAN PANCAKES

Serves 4; prep time: 35 minutes; total time: 35 minutes

Surprise everyone at the dinner table with a stack of fluffy chocolate pancakes; they're especially good drizzled with hot fudge sauce.

- 1 cup all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 large egg
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Confectioners□ sugar (optional)
- Hot fudge sauce (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 225°. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, granulated sugar, cocoa, baking powder, and salt. In another bowl, whisk together milk, egg, melted butter, and vanilla; pour over flour mixture, whisking to combine. Fold in chocolate chips and pecans; let batter stand until slightly thickened, 5 to 10 minutes.

2. In a large nonstick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat until a water droplet sizzles; swirl to coat bottom of pan with oil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Spoon four small mounds (1 heaping tablespoon each) of batter into skillet. Cook until bubbles appear in center, 3 to 4 minutes. With a thin spatula, flip pancakes; continue cooking until set, 3 to 4 minutes more.

3. Transfer to a baking sheet; cover loosely with foil; place in oven to keep warm. Repeat with remaining oil and batter in three more batches (adjust heat as necessary to avoid overbrowning).

4. Stack 4 pancakes on each plate, sprinkling each layer with confectioners□ sugar, if desired. Serve immediately, drizzled with hot fudge sauce, if desired.

Note: After cooking each batch of pancakes, wipe the skillet with a damp paper towel; this will help prevent the next batch from turning too brown.