

Crêpeaffaire

Do you know the difference between a French crêpe and a traditional British pancake? One man who possibly knows everything there is to know about crêpes is Daniel Spinath (main picture), the founder and managing director of Crêpeaffaire, the London based eatery brand which launched in 2004 and now operates six sites across the capital.

'To go' food

"French crêpes, which originated in Brittany in France are much larger and thinner than the traditional British pancakes and are usually served folded," explains Daniel Spinath. "This makes them ideal to eat in or to take away, particularly since we have developed special take-away packaging. They're great for 'to go' eating, as there's no mess. Although the ingredients are much the same, a crêpe is a light, delicate pancake whereas the British equivalent tends to be much smaller and thicker."

Growing up, Daniel spent many family holidays in France and recalls enjoying the tasty crêpes that adorned so many of the café menus there. Then, after a career in corporate life, he decided to venture into completely new territory by developing a new branded eating concept based around the humble crêpe which provided a healthy alternative to the sandwich, bagel, burger and pasty.

"While crêpes are primarily seen as sweet snacks, we also offer a full range of savoury crêpes that are ideal for breakfast, lunch or dinner. From chicken to eggs to vegetarian options, all made with fresh ingredients and organic flour, anything goes," says David.

After six years, Crêpeaffaire now operates outlets in prime shopping and travel destinations including Spitalfields Market, Bluewater and Westfield shopping centres, Hammersmith, Soho and St Pancras station and can count Billy Zane, Jonathan Ross and Christina Aguilera among its fans.

"As our locations are quite diverse, from the high street to shopping centres to travel and market sites, so is our clientele. At Spitalfields, for example, we are in the centre of a market which attracts an artsy crowd, especially at weekends, but it is also a great business area, so we tend to have a very mixed regular client base, it doesn't matter though as everyone loves crêpes!" David continues.

Re-invented

Crêpeaffaire feels that it has re-invented the simple crêpe, turning it into healthy fast food meal with broad appeal across generations and nationalities.

Their crêpes are made with organic flour and baked on the premises using a special and very fast machine which is on show and does not require any fat in the production process. They are then finished on a hot plate where the fillings are then added. This process ensures

speed, hygiene and a constant quality. Moreover, it allows Crêpeaffaire to have locations which require no extraction and thus opens a wealth of opportunities for brand presence normally closed to traditional crêperies.

With over 30 crêpes on the menu, plus a 'make your own option', and some daily specials, there is something to tempt both a sweet and savoury palate. The prices range from £3 to £5. Specials

Crêpe with banana and chocolate filling teamed with New Forest blueberry ice cream.





include a breakfast crêpe called The Londoner, filled with free-range scrambled eggs, bacon and cheese, plus a range of other savoury options. There is also The Spargo, which features slices of ham, asparagus, cheese and Bearnaise sauce, which all melts together just like an omelette filling.

The extensive range of sweet crêpes includes classic ingredients such as butter, lemon and sugar or Nutella, plus some more imaginative combinations such as fresh strawberries and cream, banana and Grand Marnier, caramel, apple and almonds.

“Our entire food and drink offering is based on wholesome, healthy lifestyle choices,” explains Daniel. “We pick natural food and drink products because they reflect the Crêpeaffaire ethos. Where possible we have these items supplied in an own brand format. Where we work with outside brands, we make sure that these reflect our brand values. For example, we only use Puro fair-trade organic coffee, in support of rain forest in coffee-producing countries.”

Ice cream

“We also recently introduced a range of New Forest Ice Creams to the menu as they fitted the quality benchmark we have set. New Forest Ice Cream is a second generation family run business which appealed to me. Their ice creams are all made in the New Forest, and avoid the use of GM ingredients, artificial colours and flavourings. With fresh Channel Islands milk and double cream they are a real dairy ice cream with a lovely full, rounded flavour,” says Daniel.

“We have a scooping station stocked with vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, mint choc chip, blueberry and honeycomb New Forest Ice Creams. In some locations for example, at Spitalfields, we wheel the freezer to the outside eating area to attract the passing trade. We scoop



Outside the Spitalfields outlet.

into take away cones and tubs and also offer a range of ice cream desserts which are served at the table. The ice cream range is also used to make our delicious and creamy shakes.”

Crêpeaffaire recently took delivery of branded tabletop ice cream menus supplied by New Forest Ice Cream, and which features the complete range of ice cream desserts so that customers can ‘see before they buy’ (to request free samples, or for further information about New Forest Ice Cream call 023 8087 1508, or visit www.newforesticecream.com).

“As we also serve the ice creams as a topping with the crêpes, we have picked a selection of flavours that look colourful in the scooping station and go with most crêpe fillings,” adds Daniel.

Needless to say, Crêpeaffaire offers a take-away service across the menu

for customers on the go, and also offers a ‘call and collect’ service in all of its stores.

“Over the last few years, we have learned a lot about making and selling crêpes, serving the customer and running a growing food retail business. Today, all our stores are operated with a clear set of systems and procedures to ensure consistently high standards in product quality, customer service, hygiene and safety. The Crêpeaffaire business model is now available as a franchise to selected investors/operators. Becoming a Crêpeaffaire franchisee means being involved with a young and dynamic brand whose primary mission is to provide entertainment for the taste buds,” concludes Daniel Spinath.

Further information about Crêpeaffaire can be found by visiting www.crepeaffaire.com.