



## Mini Blinis (for caviar)

Makes ~40 bite-size blinis (4–5 cm)

### Ingredients

- 120 g buckwheat flour (about 1 cup)
- 130 g all-purpose/plain flour (about 1 cup)
- 350 ml whole milk, warm (38–40 °C)
- 7 g instant yeast (or 8 g active dry)
- 1 tsp sugar (5 g)
- 1 tsp fine salt (6 g)
- 2 large eggs, separated (room temp)
- 45 g unsalted butter, melted (3 Tbsp), plus a little for the pan
- Optional (richer crumb): 60 g crème fraîche or sour cream (¼ cup)

### Equipment

Small bowl, medium bowl, whisk, rubber spatula, #60 scoop (or 1 Tbsp measure), nonstick skillet or griddle, wire rack, oven.

### Method (step by step)

1. Activate yeast (2 min): In a small bowl whisk warm milk with yeast and sugar. Let stand 2 minutes (it may look slightly foamy).
2. Dry mix (30 sec): In a medium bowl whisk both flours with salt.
3. Make batter (1 min): Pour the milk mixture into the flours; whisk just until smooth. You want a thick, pourable batter.
4. First rise (45–60 min): Cover and let puff up in a warm spot until roughly doubled and bubbly.
5. Enrich (2 min): Whisk egg yolks with melted butter (and crème fraîche, if using). Stir this into the risen batter until uniform.
6. Whip whites (2–3 min): In a clean bowl, beat egg whites to soft peaks.
7. Fold (30 sec): Gently fold whites into the batter in two additions. Don't deflate. Rest 10 minutes (tiny bubbles will form).
8. Preheat & hold: Heat a nonstick skillet over medium. Set oven to 95–100 °C to keep blinis warm; place a wire rack on a tray inside.
9. Cook (per batch ~2–3 min): Lightly brush the pan with clarified butter or neutral oil. Drop 1 Tbsp batter for each blini (4–5 cm).
  - o Cook until edges look set and the surface has bubbles that stay open, ~45–60 sec.
  - o Flip and cook 30–45 sec more. Blinis should be golden with a soft, slightly springy center.
10. Hold: Transfer to the rack in the warm oven while you finish the batch. Don't stack (they'll steam).

### **Serve with caviar (assembly)**

- Temperature matters: warm blini + chilled caviar (right out of the fridge).
- Classic trio: a small smear of crème fraîche, a generous pearl of caviar, a whisper of snipped chives.
- What to skip: strong onion, lemon, or dill on the blini—they can overpower top-grade caviar. Offer them on the side if guests want.

### **Make-ahead & reheating**

- Same-day: Cook up to 4 hours ahead; cool on a rack, then re-warm 5–7 min at 170 °C on a dry tray.
- Freeze: Cool completely, freeze in a single layer, then bag. Reheat from frozen 7–9 min at 170 °C. They should be warm and supple, not crisp.

### **Troubleshooting & pro tips**

- Batter too thick? Whisk in 1–2 Tbsp milk. Too thin? Whisk in 1–2 Tbsp AP flour.
- Pale or tough? Pan too cool or overmixed.
- Grease lightly: too much fat makes lacy edges and uneven browning.
- Use a #60 disher (1 Tbsp) for uniform minis.
- For neutral flavor with great browning, cook in clarified butter.
- Salt is already in the batter; don't add extra on top—let the caviar shine.

### **Quick no-yeast option (when you're in a rush)**

Swap yeast for 1 tsp baking powder + ¼ tsp baking soda and use 300 ml buttermilk (skip rise; rest 10 min). Texture is a bit less airy but still excellent for caviar.