



Latkes Four Ways

Almost every ethnic group has their own version of potato pancakes. Eastern European Jews call theirs latkes. And of the many foods associated with specific Jewish holidays, latkes hold a special place in American and European hearts at Chanukah.

Latkes are very personal. How do you like them? Large or small, dense or lacey, spicy or sweet, with sour cream or applesauce—the possibilities are endless. Even among the three of us there's debate. Still, we came up with four latke recipes we all love, including one we think is the best basic latke recipe ever, and that you can also do ahead. One thing we do agree on is that smaller is better. Smaller latkes cook faster, absorb less oil, and are crispier. However, if you love 'em big, go for it. Just cook them at lower heat and increase the cooking time.

The Best Potato Latkes

After years of dealing with the discoloration that begins almost as soon as you grate the potatoes, we came up with a great technique so you can prepare the mixture hours ahead. We layer the latke components in a container with the potatoes at the bottom. This seals the potatoes away from exposure to air, preventing browning. Once refrigerated, the prepared ingredients can be stored for up to a day before frying. Mix the ingredients just before cooking.

MAKES FORTY-EIGHT 1½-INCH OR TWENTY-FOUR 3-INCH LATKES

- 3 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and placed in a bowl of water to prevent discoloration
- 2 small onions
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons matzah meal, unbleached all-purpose flour, or potato starch
- 1 to 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill or flat-leaf parsley, or both
- 2 extra-large eggs, beaten
- Grapeseed oil for frying
- Freshly ground black pepper

With a box grater or a food processor, grate the potatoes and onions into the same bowl and mix to combine. With your hands or with a towel, squeeze out excess moisture and transfer the mixture to the bottom of a tall narrow container. Sprinkle on the salt, matzah meal, dill, and parsley (to taste), covering the potato mixture completely. Pour the eggs on top and spread them with a spoon to fully cover the ingredients below them; don't mix. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 1 day, until ready to fry. Just before frying, mix ingredients to combine completely. Follow the cooking instructions on page 74 to fry in grapeseed oil, then season with additional salt and black pepper to taste.

Beet Latkes

The color of these latkes is as festive as the latkes are delicious. If you grate the beets by hand, wear gloves, as the beets will turn your hands pink. Serve with applesauce, yogurt, or sour cream.

MAKES THIRTY-TWO 1½-INCH OR SIXTEEN 3-INCH LATKES

- 2 pounds beets, peeled
- 1 small red onion
- ¼ cup unbleached all-purpose flour

recipe continues

- 4 extra-large eggs
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Grapeseed oil for frying

With a box grater or a food processor, grate the beets and onion into the same medium bowl to combine. Add the flour, eggs, and dill and mix together. Season with salt and pepper. Follow the cooking instructions below to fry in grapeseed oil.

Curried Sweet Potato Latkes

These latkes have become the most requested in our houses. Trust us on this one—the sweet and savory pancakes are real crowd-pleasers. The batter can be made a day ahead, as sweet potatoes do not oxidize: a big help! Serve with homemade Chutney (see page 188) and yogurt.

MAKES THIRTY-TWO 1½-INCH OR SIXTEEN 3-INCH LATKES

- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled
- 4 extra-large eggs
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 to 3 teaspoons curry powder
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup cornmeal
- 2 to 3 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
- Grapeseed oil for frying

With a box grater or food processor, grate the potatoes. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the cilantro and curry powder (to taste) and beat. Season with salt and pepper, add to the grated potatoes, and mix. Stir in the cornmeal and flour. Follow the cooking instructions at right to fry in grapeseed oil.

Parsnip and Potato Latkes

Parsnips and potatoes combine well together, giving these latkes a hint of sweetness.

MAKES THIRTY-TWO 1½-INCH LATKES OR SIXTEEN 3-INCH LATKES

- 1 medium potato (8 to 10 ounces), peeled
- 2 medium parsnips (1 pound total), peeled
- 1 large carrot (about 4 ounces), peeled
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 extra-large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 to 2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh dill
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Grapeseed oil for frying

With a box grater or food processor, grate the potato, parsnips, and carrot into the same medium bowl to combine. With your hands or with a towel, squeeze out excess moisture and transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Add the lemon juice, flour, eggs, thyme (to taste), dill, salt, and pepper and stir to mix. Follow the cooking instructions below to fry in grapeseed oil.

Cooking Instructions

Prepare a baking sheet for draining the latkes by lining it with paper towels or parchment paper. Preheat the oven to 200°F.

Heat ½ inch of oil in a deep heavy skillet over medium-high heat until hot (test with a drop of batter—if the oil sizzles, it's hot enough. Taste this tidbit when cooked through to check salt and pepper seasoning. Adjust to taste before cooking rest of the latkes). Spoon heaping tablespoons of the batter into the oil leaving ½ inch between pancakes and fry about 2 minutes. When the edges start to turn golden, flip the latkes once and then flatten slightly with the back of a spoon. Continue frying until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Transfer to the lined baking sheet to drain. Work in batches to fry the remaining batter, keeping the finished latkes warm in the preheated oven. Season with additional salt and black pepper to taste. Serve hot with accompaniments.