



Super Crispy Latkes

MAKES 24 FOUR-INCH LATKES

- 5 lbs** Russet potatoes (about 10 orange-sized)
- 1** large onion, chopped to small dice
- 2** eggs
- 3 Tbs** flour
- 2 tsp** salt
- 1/2 tsp** baking powder (optional)
- 3** scallions, green tops (optional)
- 2 cups** vegetable oil for frying

Peel potatoes and grate using the largest holes of a grater. Line a bowl with a clean kitchen tea towel draped over the rim and add potatoes. Wrap the potatoes in the tea towel and squeeze out as much moisture as you can. (You may need to use a second towel—there might be more than a cup of liquid.) Discard liquid and put potatoes back in bowl.

Add the diced onion, and sprinkle flour, salt, and baking powder (it's optional, so don't worry if you don't have any) over the potatoes. Beat the eggs until blended and add to the mixture. Stir to thoroughly integrate all the elements. Let sit for 15

minutes, stirring once or twice. Chop the scallions into 1/4-inch pieces, discarding white bottoms. Add to the mixture just before cooking and stir thoroughly.

In a 12-inch nonstick frying pan, pour oil to a depth of 1 inch. Heat until oil reaches 350°. Add a heaping serving spoon of potato mixture, and press flat into the oil with back of spoon. Each latke should be about 4 inches in diameter. Cook no more than 6 at a time in the pan. The latkes will bubble vigorously. Leave them alone to cook, but after a minute or so, shake the pan gently to ensure they aren't sticking.

When latkes are brown on the edges, about 2 minutes, turn them over using a spatula and a fork. After another minute or so, the latkes will be golden brown. Move them to a baking tray lined with paper towels to drain. Put the tray in a 200° oven to keep warm until ready to serve.

Serve with applesauce and sour cream.

TRADITIONAL HANUKKAH POTATO PANCAKES CAN VARY IN ALL KINDS OF WAYS—from the size of each one to the coarseness of the potato shred.

THESE LATKES ARE MEANT TO BE CRUNCHY AND AIRY, NOT LIKE A POTATO CAKE. They should be shredded with the coarsest shredder disk of a food processor or the largest holes in a manual shredder. When they are ready to fry, they are laid gently into the oil, a large spoonful at a time, and pressed flat to form a lacy pattern of loosely intertwined shreds, allowing oil to cook them all around.

Many recipes direct you to get rid of the extra starch by soaking the potatoes in warm water first, but that isn't necessary; what matters much more is extracting as much water as possible from the shredded potatoes, and paper towels just won't work. Using a tea towel like a screw press—twisting the top so liquid is forced out of the cloth—is the easiest way. You might even need two towels to get the liquid out.

TO VEER OFF THE TRADITIONAL PATH, try adding 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese to the batter for a nuttier taste, or add some shredded sweet potato to the mix for a sweeter latke. Traditional accompaniments are sour cream and apple sauce, but there are some interesting alternatives. Go Chinese with orange sauce, or try the plum sauce usually served with Peking duck.