

Chanukah Lights and Latkes



In many Jewish households, the two are inseparable. The traditional potato pancake is easy enough to make, although there's plenty to debate when it comes to the best way to make them.

Purists prefer the more rustic texture that comes with hand grating potatoes on the biggest holes of a box grater (skinned knuckles are a small price to pay, they say), while others opt for the ease of the shredding blade on their food processors. One school of cooks adds flour or matzah meal to the mix to thicken the batter, while others feel that this is an unnecessary addition. And then there's the potato: All purpose? Baking? Yukon Gold? All will make delicious latkes, so long as you squeeze out the excess moisture from the grated potatoes. And as yummy—and traditional—as latkes made with white potatoes are, there are plenty of other options in the vegetable bin.



In an effort to add some ease and variety to your Chanukah celebration, the Emanu-El Eats cookbook committee has put together these tips and recipes for you. And, if you have some special Chanukah recipes, then let us know. We'd like to include them in the Emanu-El Eats cookbook.

LATKE COOKING TIPS:

- To lessen the chance of potatoes turning brown, grate the onion first and have all the other ingredients ready so the grated potatoes aren't exposed to air any longer than necessary.
- While adding a pinch of baking soda to the potato-onion mixture helps keep the potatoes from turning brown, we prefer a tip we learned long ago from Marlene Sorosky, author of a number of cookbooks, including *Fast & Festive Meals for the Jewish Holidays*. She advises dissolving a vitamin C tablet in 2 tablespoons of hot water and then stirring this into the shredded potatoes.
- Fry the latkes in very hot oil—either vegetable or olive—and turn them only once. The hotter the oil and the less turning leads to a crisp rather than soggy, oil-laden latke.
- As soon as the first batch of latkes are cooked, drain them on paper towels and then place them on a cookie sheet and keep them warm in a 250 degree F oven while cooking the next batch.



(continued)

Classic Potato Latkes

Makes 12 to 16 latkes

- 1 medium onion, peeled and grated or chopped fine
 - 2 pounds all-purpose or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated
 - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - 2 to 3 tablespoons flour or matzah meal, optional
 - Oil, for frying
 - Applesauce and/or sour cream, for serving, optional
1. Place the grated onion and potato in a clean tea towel or several layers of paper towels and squeeze out excess moisture.
 2. Place drained onion and potatoes in a large mixing bowl. Add beaten eggs, salt, pepper and flour, if using, to the potato mixture and mix gently.
 3. Heat a quarter inch of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough that a drop of batter sizzles, gently spoon about two generous tablespoons of batter into the hot oil for each latke, flattening the pancakes with the back of the spoon. Do not crowd the pan. Fry latkes until golden on each side, turning once, about 3 minutes. Remove latkes from pan as they are done and drain on paper towels.
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Sweet Potato Latkes

Makes 12 to 16 latkes

- 1 medium onion, peeled and grated or chopped fine, or 4 scallions, chopped fine
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger, optional
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 to 3 tablespoons flour or matzah meal, optional
- Oil, for frying
- Applesauce and/or sour cream, for serving, optional

1. Place the grated onion and potato in a clean tea towel or several layers of paper towels and squeeze out excess moisture.
 2. Place drained onion and potatoes in a large mixing bowl. Add minced ginger, if using, beaten eggs, salt, pepper and flour, if using, to the potato mixture and mix gently.
 3. Heat a quarter-inch of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough that a drop of batter sizzles, gently spoon about two generous tablespoons of batter into the hot oil for each latke, flattening the pancakes with the back of the spoon. Do not crowd the pan. Fry latkes until golden on each side, turning once, about 3 minutes. Remove latkes from pan as they are done and drain on paper towels.
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Carrot and Parsnip Latkes

Makes 12 to 16 latkes

- 1 medium onion, peeled and grated or chopped fine, or 4 scallions, chopped fine
 - 1 pound carrots, peeled and coarsely grated
 - 1 pound parsnips, peeled and coarsely grated
 - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - 2 to 3 tablespoons flour or matzah meal, optional
 - Oil, for frying
 - Applesauce and/or sour cream, for serving, optional
1. Place the grated onion, carrots and parsnip in a large mixing bowl. Add beaten eggs, salt, pepper and flour, if using, and mix gently.
 2. Heat a quarter-inch of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough that a drop of batter sizzles, gently spoon about two generous tablespoons of batter into the hot oil for each latke, flattening the pancakes with the back of the spoon. Do not crowd the pan. Fry latkes until golden on each side, turning once, about 3 minutes. Remove latkes from pan as they are done and drain on paper towels.
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Cheesy Zucchini Latkes

Makes about 20 latkes

- 2 pounds zucchini, peeled and coarsely grated
- ½ pound all-purpose potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

- 1 medium onion, peeled and grated or chopped fine, or 6 scallions, chopped fine
 - ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
 - 1 egg, lightly, beaten
 - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - ¼ cup flour or matzah meal
 - 2 teaspoons sugar, optional
 - Oil, for frying
 - Applesauce and/or sour cream, for serving, optional
1. Place the grated zucchini and potato in a clean tea towel or several layers of paper towels and squeeze out excess moisture.
 2. Place drained zucchini and potatoes in a large mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice and mix. Add the grated onion, Parmesan cheese, egg, garlic, salt, pepper, flour and sugar, if using, and mix gently but well so that all the ingredients are blended.
 3. Heat a quarter-inch of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough that a drop of batter sizzles, gently spoon about two generous tablespoons of batter into the hot oil for each latke, flattening the pancakes with the back of the spoon. Do not crowd the pan. Fry latkes until golden on each side, turning once, about 3 minutes. Remove latkes from pan as they are done and drain on paper towels.
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Secret Ingredient Applesauce

Serves 12 as a condiment for latkes; 6 as a dessert

Note: Applesauce is a traditional accompaniment to latkes. The addition of pears and the spices make this version especially tasty. Most people never will guess that the “secret” ingredient is pear.

- 3 pounds of fruit as follows: 5 or 6 apples, any variety, and 1 or 2 ripe pears
- 1 lemon
- Water or apple juice
- ½ cup brown or turbinado sugar, to taste, optional
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice or cloves

1. Quarter the apples and pear(s); remove cores and seeds. If you will be using a food mill to mix the cooked fruit, then you do not have to peel the apples and pear(s). If you will be using a sieve, peel the fruit before cooking.
2. Cut the zest of the lemon into small strips, avoiding the white pith below the skin. You should have 1 tablespoon of the peel. Juice the lemon.
3. Place the apples, pear(s), lemon peel and lemon juice into a heavy saucepan. Add enough water or apple juice until it is one inch below the top of the fruit. Cover and cook the fruit at a simmer over a low flame for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the sugar, if using, and the spices. Continue cooking the fruit until it is very soft, about 15 minutes more, stirring occasionally. Cooking times will vary according to the variety of fruits used. When the fruit is very soft, remove it from the heat and allow to cool briefly.
5. Put the fruit through a food mill or a sieve with medium, not fine, mesh. If desired, add more sugar while applesauce is still warm. Taste for seasoning and adjust as desired.

EMANU-EL EATS is a labor of love undertaken by a dedicated group of Temple members and staff.

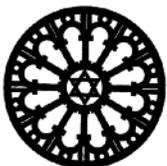
Food always has been an important part of Jewish life and culture, nourishing the soul as well as the body. In recognition of this and of the diversity that is the Emanu-El community today, work has begun on a cookbook that will pay tribute to the comforting foods of our varied past traditions and the excitement of modern Jewish cooking. We hope that as many of you as possible will volunteer to share favorite recipes, be recipe testers and contribute in other ways as this exciting project evolves. We will keep you apprised of developments in the monthly Bulletin and on the Temple website (www.emanuelnyc.org).

**Mail your favorite family and original recipes to:
Emanu-El Eats
c/o Temple Emanu-El
One East 65th Street
NY, NY 10065**

Or, complete our online form. Click "Community" → "Emanu-El Eats."

Please include your name, contact information, and a brief explanation of how you devised or came to the recipe and why it is special to you. If it is based on a recipe you found in a cookbook or magazine but you have tinkered with it to make it your own, then please include the original source of the recipe, and tell us how you've changed it.

We look forward to hearing from you!



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