

EMILY'S FAVORITE LATKE RECIPE

Latkes are flexible: there are loads of ways to make them, and all are delicious. Here is the recipe I use with my family.

1 pound russet potatoes, shredded
1 large yellow onion, chopped
1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon salt, plus additional salt
1/4 cup matzoh meal or flour
1/3 cup olive oil
1/3 cup peanut oil



Put on an apron. Make sure there is an adult around to take charge of frying. Making latkes gets messy, and hot oil is dangerous.

Once you have your apron and your adult, wash the potatoes, but don't peel them. Shred them using a food processor or a grater.

Peel and chop the onion. It's fine to grate it, too, if you want.

Mix the potato and onion together in a bowl and let them sit for half an hour. The mixture will "weep": there will be a bunch of liquid at the bottom of the bowl. Drain it off, pressing down to squeeze the last of the moisture out.

Stir the egg and 1/2 teaspoon salt into the potato-onion mixture.

When it's all coated with the egg, stir in the matzoh meal or flour.

Heat the two oils in a frying pan that has deep sides.

Line a baking sheet with thick paper towels. Preheat the oven to 250°F and put a casserole dish inside.

When the oil is nice and hot, spoon a large amount of the latke mixture carefully into the pan. Press it down gently to flatten the pancake. It should immediately sizzle and begin to turn golden around the edges. If it does not, then wait and let your oil heat up some more.

When your trial latke sizzles and has turned a nice brown on the bottom side, flip it very gently. Let it cook until golden on the other side, and then transfer it to the baking sheet. The paper towels will soak up the extra oil.

Now make some more latkes! You can probably do four at a time. Let them all drain on the paper towels. As they drain, sprinkle more salt on them. Flip them on the paper towels. Sprinkle salt on their other side. Fried potatoes and salt are the best of friends.

Transfer those drained, double-salted latkes into the casserole dish that's sitting in your warm oven.

Now make some more latkes! Keep transferring them into the oven after draining and salting.

When you have a nice pile of hot latkes in your oven and no more mix in your bowl, serve the latkes with applesauce and sour cream.

PAUL'S COMMENTS ON EMILY'S LATKE RECIPE

The way we make latkes in our house (well, really it's mostly my wife Deborah who makes them, but I participate) is a lot like Emily's but with some differences. We don't use an actual recipe, but go by feel and memory, which Emily probably does, too, but you have to write an actual recipe if you're going to give your recipe to other people!

We do peel our potatoes.

We use four medium potatoes to one onion, one egg, and to ¼ cup matzoh meal

We use a food processor's chopping blade to process the potatoes, in short bursts, being careful not to chop too fine (how can you tell? Trial and error, I guess), and also to chop the onions. (A friend of ours used to use his grandmother's wire grater, which produced a wonderful, different texture, but I bought one and tried it, with gluey results.)

We put the chopped potatoes in a colander in the sink to let the liquid drain out for at least five minutes. Same with the onions.

We add pepper as well as salt to the batter before frying the latkes, and then sprinkle more salt on the latkes when they are done.

We don't fry in two oils, but just use a high-heat oil like canola. We don't pour that much oil into the pan at the beginning, but as frying goes on and the oil goes off with the latkes, we keep adding more.

Instead of paper towels to absorb the oil from the fried latkes, we use paper grocery bags that we have anyway from the grocery store.

Latkes can be frozen and reheated; they're almost as good as the first time.

