

Old Solar Farm Potato Pancakes and Applesauce

Latkes, or potato pancakes, are a traditional treat, prepared an infinite number of ways all over the world. How you make them depends on your heritage, personal tastes and willingness to experiment. The proportions of the ingredients vary too, depending on the variety of potato (and its moisture content), the relative humidity and altitude. I don't use any leavening in my latkes, but you can if you want them fluffier.

Latkes at our place consist of unpeeled, raw potatoes (put through the grating blade of the food processor twice), onion and garlic (grated first with the regular blade), egg, fresh parsley, flour and freshly grated pepper. I don't put salt in the batter, but add a little at table, along with the requisite sour cream and homemade applesauce. (See recipe below.)

Some approximate proportions and directions follow. You can add many things to the basic batter. One recipe I encountered recently included grated pears! Sounds exotic! Some other additions might include aromatic herbs (oregano, basil, sage, rosemary), grated nuts or sunflower seeds. Traditional latkes use matzo meal instead of flour.

Potato Pancakes

Grate or finely chop some onion and garlic. We like a lot of both, but suit your taste.

Grate enough potatoes to make 4 to 6 cups. Add one or two slightly beaten eggs and a tablespoon or two of flour.

Add finely chopped parsley if you have it.

Add salt and pepper to taste and mix well.

Scoop three or four tablespoons of batter into sizzling oil and with a fork, back of a spoon or spatula and press down into about a 4-inch round pancake in the frying pan. (We use canola oil because it can take high heat without smoking.) Latkes take patience (at least 3 minutes or so on each side for the first ones in the pan). If you try to turn a latke too soon, it will fall apart.

After frying, you can keep the latkes warm in a 150 degree oven until you've cooked enough for your needs. The batter keeps in the refrigerator a few days, so you can make several meals out of one big batch.

Check out other approaches to making potato pancakes at the following site:

<http://www.ctbites.com/home/2011/12/19/latkes-recipe-co-tabouli-grills-chef-judy-roll.html>

Warning: Take a break after eating a few latkes. They taste so good, you want to keep going, but beware of overeating. Latkes expand in the stomach.

Now for the homemade applesauce:

Simple Applesauce

It is very satisfying to turn a bag of not-so-good looking apples (seconds from the orchard or the eating ones that have gotten soft or bruised) into a delicious food. Children love applesauce and it is good for them. Applesauce also makes a tasty addition to many meals. Of course, you can use perfectly good apples to make delicious applesauce too. And feel free to use a mixture of apple varieties.

Put a half-inch or so of water or cider in the bottom of a large heavy bottomed pot or kettle.

Wash the apples if needed. Cut them in half and fill the pot, removing any damaged parts.

Bring to a boil and turn down to a simmer until the apples are very mushy.

Process the apples through a Foley Food Mill or strainer into a bowl.

We add nothing: no sweeteners or spices. However, you can add whatever suits your fancy, including but not limited to, honey, maple syrup white or brown sugar, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, mace, allspice or ginger.

Eat the applesauce right away, refrigerate it or freeze in containers. Applesauce freezes extremely well, so make a lot and put it away for another day!