



Crispy Panko Potato Latkes

Source: adapted from Tori Avery and Joe Levitch
Bob and Robin Young, Boise, ID *The Captain's Shack*
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Servings: 12 Prep: 30 min Cook: 30 Min

Ingredients:

1¼ lbs Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes, not peeled
½ lg Red Onion or White Onion
¾ c Panko Bread Crumbs
2 lg Eggs, beaten
1 T dry Potato Starch or Cornstarch
2 T All Purpose Flour
Celtic Sea Salt and fresh ground Tellicherry Black Pepper
Olive Oil or Grapeseed or Peanut oil for frying

Directions:

Before you begin making the latkes, place your wire cooling rack close to the area where you will be frying the latkes. Place a layer of paper towels below the cooling rack to catch excess oil.

Grate the potatoes using a hand grater or food processor shredding attachment with fine holes. Place grated potato into a bowl and immediately cover with cold water. Meanwhile, grate the onion using the same grater or attachment you used for the potatoes (fine holes for small shreds). Drain the potato shreds in a colander. Rinse and dry the bowl used to soak the shreds and set aside.

Place drained potato shreds and grated onion in the center of a clean tea towel or multiple layers of cheesecloth. Wrap the shreds up in the cloth, twisting the cloth to secure the bundle, and squeeze firmly to remove excess liquid from the shreds.

Pour potato and onion into the clean, dry bowl. Stir the shreds with a fork to make sure the grated onion is evenly mixed throughout the potato shreds.

Pour oil into skillet to a depth of ¼ inch. Heat slowly over medium to about 365° F. While oil is heating, use the fork to stir the panko breadcrumbs, beaten eggs, dry potato starch (optional), flour, salt and pepper into the potato shreds. The dry potato starch helps to hold the latkes together, but it's not required. Add salt and pepper to taste. I add about ¾ tsp of salt and a ¼ tsp of pepper. You can sprinkle on more salt to taste after cooking, if desired. Take care to make sure the egg and seasonings are fully mixed throughout the potato shreds.

Scoop up 3 tablespoons of the potato mixture. I do this by using a cup measuring cup and filling it of the way full. Squeeze the mixture firmly in your palm over an empty dish to remove any excess liquid. Shape the potato mixture into a tightly compacted disk. You can also use an egg ring and form the latkes into a packed patty.

Place the disk carefully into the hot oil. Latkes can break apart at this point, they're very delicate. If you can get them into the hot oil in one piece, chances are they will stick together--frying them is like the "glue" that holds them together. It takes a gentle touch, and it may take you some practice to get the "feel" for it.

The oil should sizzle but not pop when the latke hits it; if the oil jumps wildly or smokes, it is too hot. If it only bubbles weakly, the oil is not hot enough. Use the first latke to test the oil temperature, and don't fry a whole batch until the temperature is right.

Continue shaping the latkes in this way, using 3 tablespoons of potato mixture for each latke. Fry in batches of 4-5 latkes at a time (no more than that-- don't crowd the pan) for 2-3 minutes per side till brown and crispy. Note: If your latkes aren't holding together, stir more potato starch into the mixture, 2 teaspoons at a time, till the batter "holds." You can also add another egg to the mixture and more panko, if needed.

Remove the latkes from the pan using metal spatula and place them on wire cooling rack to drain.

Serve the latkes fresh within 10 minutes of frying them, if your cooking schedule permits. If you need to make them ahead, fry them 4 hours or less before serving. After letting the latkes drain on the wire cooling rack, place them on an ungreased, unlined cookie sheet. Leave them at room temperature till ready to reheat. Place in a 375° F oven for about 10 minutes (7 if using a convection oven), until heated through, just prior to serving.

Serve latkes with applesauce and sour cream.