

Sweet Potato Latkes

While typically made with white potatoes, I've been doing sweet potato latkes for years. My son doesn't even know anything different, so to him, latkes are always made with sweet potatoes. His conclusion - they're delicious! First, If you want your latkes to look more like traditional white potato latkes, use Japanese Sweet Potatoes or Hannah Yams that have a tan-colored flesh. They also tend to be a little more dry which works best in latkes. However, any sweet potato will do.

For frying, it is important to get the oil hot enough and also important to keep it evenly hot. I find that a cast-iron skillet works best since cast-iron distributes heat more evenly and creates a crispier texture than other pans. Finally, for the Vegans out there, I find that the egg-free latkes are every bit as good as the traditional ones. Egg allergies or a vegan coming for dinner won't hold you back this year because now you also have a delicious option for them. Try both and make your own conclusion.

Sweet Potato Latkes (Makes about 8 servings (about 32 latkes))

2 medium sweet potatoes (8 cups grated)

1 medium onion

2 eggs (optional)

1 cup chickpea flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

1/2 to 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil or neutral-

tasting oil like Avocado oil or high-oleic safflower

Grate sweet potatoes (I leave the skin on) in a food processor with a grating attachment or use a large cheese grater. Move grated sweet potatoes to a bowl. Grate the onion, and drain any excess liquid. Then combine with the sweet potatoes. It isn't as important to squeeze the water out of them as with traditional latkes because sweet potatoes don't hold as much water. The chickpea flour will be enough to absorb the small amount of excess liquid. However, if you grate your potatoes and find them a bit wet, wrap them in an absorbent cloth and squeeze out the liquid a bit.

Add eggs (if using), and mix well. In a separate bowl, combine chickpea flour, baking powder, salt, and pepper. Mix flour into the sweet potato and onion mixture, working with a spatula or your hands until liquid is absorbed and you can form patties. The patties will be fairly loose and will not stick together like hamburger patty would. If you let the batter sit too long, you may squeeze out a bit of liquid from each patty. The frying will cause them to stick together though. Just make sure they completely brown and lift easily from the pan before turning them. Heat 1/2 cup oil in a large cast-iron skillet since cast iron is superior for holding and evenly distributing heat. Form about 3 tablespoons of potato mixture into flat patties then place them in hot oil. First, cook on one side until fully brown, then turn and brown the other side. Remove from heat and place on a strainer or grate since excess oil will need to drain. Place in a 200 to 250°F oven to keep warm until serving. If you have the option, convection is best to keep them dry and crispy. Add extra oil as needed to the skillet as you fry each batch, and make sure the oil is hot enough when you add the latkes. The oil should sizzle when a latke is added but not smoke. Finally, serve hot with applesauce or sour cream.