Latkas

Equipment:

Medium to large frying pan—cast iron best

Pancake turner

Medium to large bowl

Mixing spoon

Box grater

Cutting board

Kitchen knife

(cut resistant kitchen gloves. Optional, but useful if you do a lot of grating).

Ingredients:

6 large potatoes, russet preferred

1.5 tsp salt

2 eggs, slightly beaten

I medium union

Ground black pepper

2 tablespoons white flour or matzo meal

Oil for frying, light olive oil works well

1. Decide if you want to use peeled potatoes or if you want to leave skin on. Either works well. Either peel potatoes or scrub them well.

2. Grate potatoes and peeled onion on finest side of box grater. (This is the hardest part of recipe. Some people use the coarser sides of grater. This is easier but does not yield “real” latkes. You wind up with something closer to home fries.)

3. Put grated potato-onion mix in bowl. The mix will be watery. Squeeze out water by hand by tilting bowl or use a fine strainer. You may have to repeat removal of water from batter as you fry latkes.

4. Add other ingredients and mix—flour or matzo meal, salt, pepper, eggs.

5. Form latkes by hand (about 4 inch diameter) and fry on medium heat with 1/8 inch hot oil. Fry until very brown and crisp on both sides. Press down on latkes with pancake turner to make them thinner. Blot oil with paper towels.

6. Eat when hot.

Notes:

* You can use only one egg, if desired. Or omit eggs entirely for vegan recipe. Doesn’t taste too different without eggs.
* Ingredient amounts can be cut in half for fewer latkes.
* Not surprisingly, latkes (placki) are a mainstay of Polish cuisine. By far, the best latkes I’ve had were in modest Polish cafes. They are sometimes served with a creamy mushroom sauce on top. Or with sour cream and caviar.
* The Chinese also eat them. Add chopped garlic and chopped green onions to batter. Eat with dipping sauce made from soy sauce, sesame oil, a little sugar and hot sauce.

.