

Latkes Don't Always Have To Be Made Out of Potatoes

BY JENN LOUIS

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Butternut squash latke with gorgonzola dolce and maple syrup

Growing up in the 70s, many people didn't have great cooking skills, including my stay-at-home mom. We did have a big kitchen, so we used one of those plug-in frying pans for latkes because she swore they made less of a mess than a regular frying pan. The resulting potato cakes were thin, soggy, and greasy.

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As time went on and my passion for cooking developed, I started to think about better recipes and methods for making latkes. I really like a nice crispiness on the outside while the inside is nicely cooked through. I also realized that I like mine a little fatter, heartier, and meatier.

MAKE: Celeriac-Carrot Latkes with Creme Fraiche and Pear Sauce [↗](#)

You don't always have to use plain potatoes for latkes. You can cook latkes along with the seasons; think butternut squash, celery roots, carrots. Your body will thank you as these vegetables offer more nutrients than potatoes. Not to mention that when you use other root vegetables, you are building more flavor. When pairing drinks with these latkes, try a good, dry, English-style cider. Or Champagne, since I think Champagne goes well with everything.

MAKE: Butternut Squash and Potato Latkes with Gorgonzola Dolce and Maple Syrup [↗](#)

I guess you can say that competing on *Top Chef Masters* helped me to think outside the box, even with latkes.

This year for Hanukkah, I'm trying to cook a different Israeli dish every day of the week (we'll see how that goes during weeknights). I've been fortunate enough to visit Israel a few times now and taste the amazing flavors of Israel firsthand. I just made a pot of some amazing Yemenite-style chicken soup with cumin, coriander, caraway, and turmeric, and it is calling my name.

As told to Javier Cabral