



Petite Parsnip Latkes

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** 4 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

fry: to cook in a pan in a small amount of fat.

drop: to let a small amount of solid or liquid food drop into another food or onto a pan to cook, like dropping a spoonful of batter onto a baking sheet or skillet or letting a bit of extract or food coloring drop into a mixture.

Equipment

- Large skillet + lid
- Large mixing bowl
- Grater or food processor
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Liquid measuring cup
- Heat-resistant spatula turner

Paper towels

Large plate

Ingredients

Petite Parsnip Latkes

1 lb parsnips (or sweet potatoes or carrots)

2 green onions

2 T all-purpose flour ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 2 T gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)******

4 large eggs ******(for EGG ALLERGY sub 1/4 C Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce OR 1/4 C prepared applesauce + a bit of water as needed)******

2 tsp salt + more for sprinkling

1/2 tsp ground black pepper

1 C vegetable oil****** for frying

Food Allergen Substitutions

Petite Parsnip Latkes

Gluten/Wheat: For 2 T all-purpose flour, substitute 2 T gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

Egg: For 4 large eggs, substitute 1/4 C Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce OR 1/4 C prepared applesauce + a bit of water as needed.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil (can heat to a higher temperature without smoking) for vegetable oil.

Instructions

Petite Parsnip Latkes

intro

"Shalom," which can mean "Peace," "Hello," and "Goodbye" in Hebrew. Latkes (LOT-kehks) or potato pancakes are traditionally eaten during Hanukkah, a Jewish festival celebrated for eight days in December.

scrub + grate + chop

Scrub **1 pound of parsnips** (no need to peel) and coarsely grate them with a large grater or food processor. Chop **2 green onions** (use white and green parts). Combine in a large mixing bowl and set to the side.

whisk + add + stir

Whisk together **4 large eggs** and add **2 teaspoons salt** and **1/2 teaspoon black pepper**. Add to the bowl with the parsnips and green onions, along with **2 tablespoons of flour** and stir well.

frying safety

Make sure always to have your skillet lid nearby. Smoke and splatter are hazardous and need to be treated with care. As soon as you finish using the fryer oil, turn the skillet off to ensure it cools as quickly as possible.

heat + drop + flatten

Heat enough **vegetable oil** to generously cover the bottom of a frying pan and then, once the oil is hot, carefully drop roughly **1 tablespoon of the parsnip mixture** in the pan and flatten it with a spatula. Continue dropping tablespoons of latke mixture about 2 1/2 inches apart in the pan, flattening each as soon as you drop it.

scrumptious science

Frying is a cooking method that relies on the principles of heat transfer and chemical reactions to cook food. When food is submerged in hot oil, the high temperature causes water to evaporate rapidly, creating steam and forming a crust. This process and the Maillard reaction (a chemical process that occurs when food is heated, causing browning and development of complex flavors) contribute to the characteristic crispiness and flavor of fried foods.

fry + rest + sprinkle

Fry the latkes about 2 minutes on each side until golden brown. Remove each and let them rest on a paper-towel-lined plate to soak up excess oil. Sprinkle with a tiny bit of salt before serving if desired. Serve with **Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce** and **Cinnamon Sour Cream!** "Ze ta'im" (Zeh tah-EEM) or "It's delicious" in Hebrew!

Featured Ingredient: Parsnip!

Hi! I'm Parsnip!

"What's shaped like a carrot, looks like a carrot, and cooks up like a carrot, but isn't orange and doesn't taste like a carrot? Parsnips! I'm a root vegetable and a close relative of the carrot, but I have an ivory or yellow-cream hue with a sweet, nutty, peppery flavor. While not nearly as popular as my cousins, I used to be quite popular with everyone."

History & Etymology

Parsnips are root vegetables native to Eurasia (the landmass that includes Europe and Asia).

Parsnips are believed to have been grown by the ancient Romans. However, some confusion exists about whether they were parsnips or carrots because both vegetables were called "pastinaca" in Latin, and carrots were white or purple then.

Because of their sugar content, parsnips were used as a sweetening agent before cane sugar was imported to Europe in large amounts.

British colonists introduced parsnips to the United States in the 17th century. In the middle of the 19th century, potatoes took their place as a starchy food staple.

The Guinness World Record for the longest parsnip belongs to Joe Atherton from Malvern in Worcestershire, England. He grew a parsnip in September 2017 that was over 21 feet long!

The word "parsnip" is from the late Middle English "passenep," (influenced by the word "nepe" for "turnip" because it was mistakenly thought to be a type of turnip), from the Old French "pasnaie," from the Latin "pastinaca" (related to "pastinare," meaning to "dig and trench the ground").

Anatomy

Parsnips (*Pastinaca sativa*) are from the Umbelliferae family, named for its umbrella-like flower clusters.

Other common members of this family include celery, carrots, and parsley.

The parsnip plant is biennial, which means it blooms in its second year and then dies afterward. They have a long growing period, and roots are ready for harvest about 16 weeks after planting.

Near-freezing temperatures will cause the starch in the parsnips to change to sugar, giving them a stronger and sweeter taste.

The leaves and shoots of the plant have a sap that can cause skin and eye irritation, so gloves are recommended when handling the plants.

Parsnip plants are vulnerable to damage by the larvae of various winged insects, diseases, fungi, and viruses.

Wild parsnip plants are considered an invasive species in non-native areas.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

If growing parsnips in your garden, pick them when the root is at least one inch in diameter. In the grocery store, look for small to medium-sized parsnips that are firm, not limp or shriveled. They should be without blemishes, cracks, or cuts. If they still have their tops, those should be fresh and green.

Store unwashed parsnips in a cold, dark place with high humidity, like the crisper drawer in your refrigerator.

Parsnips can be eaten raw but most commonly are cooked. They are sweeter when cooked.

There's no need to peel parsnips; just scrub the skin with a brush, trim top and root end, and cook.

You can cook with parsnips in the same way you cook with carrots or potatoes. They can be baked, boiled, fried, grilled, roasted, or steamed. They can be chopped and added to soups and stews. They can be puréed, like mashed potatoes. Grated parsnips can replace potatoes in latkes (potato pancakes).

Nutrition

Parsnips are high in fiber, vitamins, antioxidants, and minerals, especially potassium. Since many of these nutrients are close to the skin, it is best to scrub the parsnips rather than peel their skin.

They are good for the heart because of their vitamin C and folate content; however, vitamin C can be lost in cooking water.

The antioxidants in parsnips may offer protection against cancer and inflammation. Their fiber content can help aid in digestion and lower blood cholesterol levels.