

MINI-LATKES WITH SOUR CREAM AND IKURA

You can't have Hanukkah without potato latkes, but you can have potato latkes all-year-round. My mini-version is great for a cocktail party, especially served alongside some champagne. If you're feeling rich, it's great to top them with sour cream and a few ikura pearls. Ikura pearls are those big plump delightful orbs of salmon roe that you most often find in Japanese restaurants. But lately, I've been able to find them in Asian and non-Asian markets. They add a nice hit of salt with each bite. Of course, you can use real caviar or lumpfish as well.

The big tip for this dish is to make sure you've squeezed out as much water as possible from your grated potatoes and onion. This prevents splatters and increases the crispiness, because no one wants to eat a soggy latke.

INGREDIENTS (Makes 16 minis)

- 2 russet potatoes
- 1 medium yellow onion
- 1 medium egg, beaten
- 3/8-cup panko
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- zest of 1/2 lemon
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- fresh ground pepper
- canola oil for frying

FOR GARNISH

- sour cream
- ikura

- 2 tablespoons chives, finely chopped

PREPARATION

Peel potatoes and onions. Grate all with the large hole side of a box grater. (NOTE: This can also be done in a food processor, but it does tend to make the vegetables a bit too mushy for my taste.)

Place in strainer and squeeze out as much water as possible. I often go the extra step and squeeze them in a clean dishtowel. Once well drained, empty the onions and potatoes into a large bowl. Stir in the egg, panko, baking powder, lemon zest, salt, and pepper. Set batter aside for 10 minutes.



Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter, fill the cutter with a small handful of the mixture, pressing down so that the latke is about $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Tamp it down tightly. Repeat until you have about 16 pieces.

Fill a large skillet with a 1/4-inch of canola oil. Heat over medium-high heat until very hot, but not smoking. Test with small piece of batter. If it sizzles, it's hot enough.

Working in batches and using spatulas, gently place the cut pieces into the skillet making sure not to crowd them. Lightly press down with the spatula to flatten them. Fry until browned on one side, flip, and continue to fry until other side is browned, about two-minutes each side.

Drain on paper towels and season with a light touch of salt. Keep warm in a 200-degree oven.

TO SERVE

Place the latkes on a platter. Top each with a dollop of sour cream. Gently place a few ikura pearls on top of the sour cream. Garnish with chives.

