



Larry's Latkes

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What makes the old new?

Lots of Latkes

Did the Maccabees of Hanukkah fame eat latkes? Not hardly! Fried Hanukkah treats sizzled onto the scene much later, in the 14th century. It was the Italian Jews who began this tradition, but with ricotta pancakes, not potatoes. Potatoes would later become one of Europe's staple crops, so European Jews worked with what they had, frying up the type of latkes we know and love today. Whether you top yours with applesauce or sour cream, latkes fried in oil serve as a reminder of the Hanukkah miracle of the small jug of oil that lasted eight days. Larry would surely agree – miracles never tasted so good. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/larryslatkes.

HANDS ON!

Make Potato Stamp Art

Got an extra potato left over from making latkes? Use it to make stamps to decorate for Hanukkah. (This requires a grown-up's help.)

Supplies:

- Potatoes
- Paring knife (for grown-up use only)
- Cookie cutters – variety of shapes
- Paint
- Paintbrushes
- Paper

Have a grown-up cut a potato in half. Press a cookie cutter as far as you can into the potato's inner surface. The grown-up can cut around the outer edges of the cookie cutter. Remove that excess, and then pull away the cookie cutter. There should now be a raised portion of potato in the shape of the cookie cutter – this is your stamp. Cover the shape with a small amount of paint and stamp onto paper. Use your potato stamps to make Hanukkah decorations, wrapping paper, and more. Happy Hanukkah!

New and Old Go Hand in Hand

After years of making potato latkes, Larry starts to wonder, "Is there more?" He may not realize it, but Larry's cooking experiment of combining tradition with innovation is in keeping with Jewish history. The holiday of Hanukkah is itself an innovation. There is no Biblical commandment to celebrate Hanukkah, as the historical events occurred after the Bible was canonized. Ancient rabbis recognized the Hanukkah story as being so essential to the survival of the Jewish people that they created an official holiday. So, the next time you're cooking latkes and you feel like throwing in some creative ingredients, know that you're in good company.

Secret Ingredient

Not just any old latke recipe will do for Larry; it has to be his beloved Granny Gator's secret recipe. The Hebrew word for latke – *leviva* – may hold a secret as well. Take a look at the first part of the word and you'll see *lev*, which means "heart" in Hebrew. This gives us a clue that maybe the most important secret ingredient in Larry's latkes is the heart he puts into his cooking. Sometimes the dishes that are cooked by people who love cooking, or who love us, are the ones that taste the very best. Just as the Hanukkah candles light up the darkness of winter, the heart we put into making a beautiful holiday for our loved ones can make everything brighter (and tastier!). *Betei'avon* – enjoy your meal!

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHAT parts of Hanukkah do you look forward to?

WHAT holiday traditions does your family have? (Any secret recipes?)

IF you were Larry, what type of new latke would you want to create?