

Dreidel helps commemorate Hanukkah

Dreidel is a game played to commemorate the miraculous victory of a faithful few over the might of the Greek Empire. The dreidel is a four-sided spinning top, called a "vavon," in Hebrew. On each side is a Hebrew letter: Nun, Gimel, Hay and Shin. The letters stand for the phrase, "Nes Gadol Hayah Sham" - a great miracle happened there. It is traditionally used to play a lively Hanukkah game.

Each player places some raisins, nuts, or chocolate coins (Hanukkah gelt) into a kiddy, and the players take turns spinning the dreidel. "Nun" means you win nothing, and you lose nothing. "Gimel" means you take all, "Hay" means you win half of what is in the kiddy. "Shin" means you lose, and must put more into the kiddy.

The Syrians decreed that the teaching or studying of Torah was a crime punishable by death or imprisonment. But the children defiantly studied in secret; and when Syrian patrols were spotted, they would pretend to be playing an innocent game of dreidel.

It's that time of year again, the beginning of the holiday season, when we are again getting together with family and friends, socializing and enjoying favorite foods. Hanukkah, the Jewish holiday, features Latkes, a traditional dish, yet these crispy pancakes or fritters can be prepared year round and enjoyed by all. They are usually high in fat because they are fried in oil. But with a bit of tweaking, they can be prepared in a different manner, using less fat, adding more healthful ingredients to the mix, and baking them instead of frying.

These baked potato-and-veggie pancakes might very well start a new tradition in your family. Added to the traditional Hanukkah meal, they offer extra nutrition as well as a pleasant surprise. In addition to the potato-and-carrot combination, you might want to try grated sweet potatoes or zucchini with the spuds. Favorite accompaniments for any of these versions include applesauce or sour cream.

If you want the pancakes even crispier, simply pop them under the broiler for about a minute after baking. They're guaranteed to fly right off the serving plate.

POTATO-VEGGIE PANCAKES

Canola oil cooking spray
6 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled

2 large carrots, scraped
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley, finely minced
1/4 cup green onion, finely chopped
2 large eggs, beaten
1 tablespoon canola oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Reduced-fat sour cream or applesauce, for garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 450°F. Spray large non-stick baking sheet with oil spray.

Using a food processor or large hand grater, coarsely grate potatoes and carrots.

Place grated vegetables in large sieve. Set sieve into large bowl so it nestles securely. Hand-squeeze vegetables to wring out as much liquid as possible. If vegetables still feel wet, pat dry with paper towels.

Transfer vegetables to mixing bowl. Stir in flour, parsley, onion, eggs, oil, salt and pepper, making sure ingredients are well combined. Spoon small mounds of potato mixture on baking sheet to form 2 1/2-inch pancakes, leaving 1 inch between each.

Bake latkes until golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes per side, turning once with spatula. Transfer to plates or platter and serve at once with sour cream or applesauce, if desired.

Makes about 16 pancakes or 8 servings.

Nutritional information per serving: 131 calories, 3 g. total fat (less than 1 g. saturated fat), 22 g. carbohydrate, 4 g. protein, 2 g. dietary fiber, 178 mg. sodium.

Recipe courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research.

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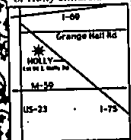
Food merchants dressed in period costumes will serve hot & hearty delights. Local shops are filled with gifts for everyone on your holiday shopping list. Experience traveling musicians, carolers, jugglers, and Father Christmas among the strolling Dickens characters. After strolling through 40 specialty and antique shops, you'll find a carriage ride the perfect ending to a fine day!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARADE

The parade features Santa, his live reindeer, floats decorated in the old fashioned look keeping in tradition with the Dickens era. After the parade, the reindeer will be in a tent next to Joseph's Oak Shop on Saginaw St. for the children to get an up close look.

DOWNTOWN DECORATIONS

Decorations on shops in downtown Holly reflect the decorations popular during the time of Dickens in England. There are lights on trees, buildings and lamp posts, cedar garlands on buildings and light posts, also decorated with bows in burgandy and gold. In the middle of downtown is the big Christmas tree decorated with the handwork of Holly children.



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