

POTATO & PEA PAKORAS

This recipe was adapted from three recipes. The filling and chutney are from unknown sources and the batter/coating is adapted from Charmaine Solomon, The Complete Asian Cookbook. Along with the guidance of a young Indian clerk at the local Indian Grocery.

FILLING

6 Large Yukon Gold Potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 teaspoons of ground cumin
1 teaspoon coriander
1/2 teaspoon of ground turmeric
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
3 cloves garlic, crushed and minced
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 cup frozen peas (you can add more if you like) (DO NOT use canned peas)
1 teaspoon salt (do not combine with other spices)

Peanut oil for frying

Put all your spices and garlic in a small bowl. This is standard in Indian cooking as you need them at the ready quickly to use. You do not want to be measuring them out as you go.

Place your potatoes in a large pan, cover with water and boil until just tender, (about 15 minutes). When done drain and set aside in a large bowl.

In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add the frozen peas, stirring until tender. Then add the spices and garlic stirring constantly for about 20 seconds. The spices should become fragrant, but be careful not to burn them. Remove from heat and add salt.

Pir Peas and spices over the warm potatoes and gently fold in the spices, oil, and peas. Do not crush the peas. Taste adjust with additional salt if needed.

Set aside. This can be done well ahead of time. But if you need to refrigerate, you will need to bring to room temperature before coating and frying.

Options: You can add other vegetables if you like. In the picture I added “al dente” cooked broccoli and cauliflower

BATTER

1 1/2 cups chick pea flour*
1 teaspoon garam masala
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 clove garlic, crushed and minced
1 cup water (DO NOT add all at once - see below)

Add flour and spices to a Sifter or Sieve and sift mixture into a large bowl. Add water gradually until your batter is similar to a thick yet pourable batter. (You want the batter to be able to provide a nice coat on the potatoes mixture.) Set aside allowing the batter to stand for 30 minutes.

While the batter is resting, form the potato and pea mixture into golf ball sized portions. You will want to get them all ready at this time.

Heat the peanut oil in a deep pan that can hold about 2 inches of oil. Test oil by dripping a small drop of batter into the oil. When the oil immediately begins to bubble and fry the batter it is ready. Maintain a moderate heat throughout the frying process.

Once the oil is hot you are ready to get started frying.

Before you start to fry... whisk the batter again a few times.

Take a potato ball and flatten to about 5/8ths inch thick. Dip into batter to completely cover and fry until golden brown on each side. (about 30 seconds per side). Do not crowd your pakoras in the oil. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on a rack over a paper towel. Once drained put into a warming draw or 250 degree oven to keep warm.

Serve immediately with a Cilantro/Mint Chutney.

* Sold locally at Indian grocery stores, some major grocery chains may have in the specialty flour section along with gluten free flours or you can order online at nuts.com)

CILANTRO/MINT CHUTNEY

This can be made ahead of time. I usually make it first thing in the morning on the day I will serve it.

1 hefty bunch of fresh cilantro - rinse and remove stems just above the band holding the bunch together. Then pull leaves off all of the thicker more fibers stems leaving only the thin tender ones.

1 bunch of fresh mint - rinse and completely remove stems

1 fresh small Serrano chili pepper, seeded. This is all about your heat tolerance if you like hot leave the seeds, if you don't you want to only add half of the pepper first and taste. Adjust according to your palate.

Juice from a half a lemon (at least three Tablespoons)

1 inch of fresh ginger, peeled

1 1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cumin seeds

1 teaspoon olive oil

1 teaspoon sugar

Pinch of asafetida (hing)*

1 small golfball-sized tomato

In a food processor blend ginger, salt, cumin seeds, oil salt, sugar and asafetida until a paste (Mine has never made a paste so get it at least well blended.)

Add cilantro and mint a little at a time until completely blended. adding a tablespoon of water if needed to help blend. (no more than 3 tablespoons if needed) Continue until all cilantro and mint are blended in.

Add tomato and blend in.

Taste and add additional salt, chili pepper or lemon juice to your taste.

Chill until ready to serve.

Note: The oil and the sugar are important components to help the chutney maintain its bright green color.

* available at your local Indian grocery or online