

Creative Ways to Celebrate Hanukkah

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Special to the Journal

Andy Goldfarb's love for cooking started as he was growing up, cooking Jewish foods with his mother for all the Jewish holidays. He has maintained many of the same holiday traditions with his own children and they gradually began contributing to the festivities, with new ideas and themes for celebrating. Now, Goldfarb is spreading his love of Jewish tradition with the world, with the recent launch of his new website – breakingmatzo.com, Hanukkah edition.

The original website designed and launched last spring by Goldfarb, 47, focused on the traditions and recipes of Passover, with corresponding accounts on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter. With its success – an impressive 200,000 page views from across the globe in just three-and-a-half weeks – Goldfarb and his family set out to duplicate the project's success with a version for Hanukkah.

The Hanukkah site features unique recipes, such as "Nanna's Puff Pancakes," "Loukoumades" (Sephardic Greek Donuts), and "Apple-Cinnamon Dessert Latkes," along with fun activities for kids, including instructions for making your own acorn dreidels, beeswax candles, and Hanukkah wrapping paper. There is also a more serious section called "Philosophy," which provides thought-provoking information such as "Eight Nights of Hanukkah Conversation," a post that includes a series of discussion questions relating to the holiday. The topic is designed to inspire meaningful discussion among family members by answering questions such as "What would you like to rededicate yourself to?" and "What can we do now to preserve limited resources



Andy Goldfarb, creator of breakingmatzo.com, Hanukkah edition

like oil and help preserve our planet?"

"My overall goal is to make the celebration of Jewish holidays more magical, meaningful and memorable by stimulating peoples' minds, touching their hearts and uplifting their souls," said Goldfarb. With the aid of his website, he hopes to foster "multi-generational anticipation of and preparation for the holiday, and then joy and reflection in its celebration."

The project is truly a labor of love for the Brookline resident and professional business investor. The site is a free online resource, and he says he receives no monetary compensation from users or advertisers. Rather, he spends countless hours developing the site – creating recipes, dreaming up discussion points, and shooting videos – along with wife Stephanie, and children Caroline, 19, Lucy, 16, Read, 11, and Jemma, 10. "When we work on the project, it's a rock event," he said. "We are

in the kitchen and the music is blaring. It's a real family affair."

The food category is especially dear to him as he reminisces about those cooking sessions with his mother so many years ago. Shortly before the Hanukkah edition of the site formally launched in November, Goldfarb soft-launched the site at his mother's hospital bedside one night at 3 a.m. He got her enthusiastic approval, but sadly, she passed away shortly thereafter. "My mother loved it and the site has become a tribute to her and everything she taught me and my children over the years."

Many of the recipes featured on the site were greatly influenced by Goldfarb's mother and their time cooking together. There are five types of latkes featured on the site, includ-

ing sweet potato, cheddar and horseradish, traditional, and apple cinnamon, and also a variety of recipes for "sufganiyot," or donuts, such as Loukoumades and jelly-filled.

"We hope to inspire other people to make the holidays fun and engaging—a way of celebrat-

ing the people in your life and creating new memories of cooking together," said Goldfarb. "We want to encourage people to think a little bit about why they do what they do, and in the process, stimulate the mind, touch the heart, and uplift the soul."

APPLE-CINNAMON DESSERT LATKES

Ingredients:

- 5 apples, peeled, cored & grated or spiral cut
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ C. flour
- 1 TBS sugar
- 2 TBS arrowroot flour (helps absorb some of moisture from apples)
- 1 TBS cinnamon vegetable or canola oil for frying
- confectioners sugar for dusting



Directions:

Peel and core apples. Process in food processor with grating blade, grate by hand with box grater or make thin spirals with a spiralizer.

In large mixing bowl, beat eggs and add grated apple and rest of ingredients. Add more arrowroot flour if mixture seems too wet. Form 3" patties with your hands.

Heat 2-3 TBS oil on medium heat in sauté pan. Place patties down directly from your spatula carefully in hot oil and let cook for 3-4 minutes on one side until you can see a little brown peaking out from underneath. It might seem like they are not going to hold together but they will. You may need to just nudge them with your spatula a little. Carefully flip latkes away from your face and cook for another 3-4 minutes.

Remove latkes from pan and place on paper towel lined plate to remove excess oil. Keep warm in oven on lowest setting until all latkes cooked. Serve with sour cream and apple sauce. Sprinkle confectioners sugar on top.

Also see recipe on page 12.



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LOUKOUMADES (SEPHARDIC GREEK DONUTS)

Ingredients:

Donuts:
 1 packet yeast
 ¾ C. water + 2 TBS warm water to activate yeast
 2½ C flour
 2 tsp sugar
 1 egg, lightly beaten
 pinch salt
 vegetable oil for frying

Honey Syrup Options:
 1 C. honey
 1 C. water
 1 TBS rose water or orange juice

Toppings:
 chopped pistachios
 chopped walnuts

Directions:

To Make the Honey Syrup:
 Heat the honey and water until it is well combined. Take off heat and stir in the rose water or orange juice. Set aside.

To Make the Dough:
 Pour contents of yeast packet into a bowl and mix in 2 TBS warm water. Let yeast activate for about 10 minutes. Small bubbles should form.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, egg and salt with a wooden spoon or whisk. Slowly pour in the water until a sticky dough forms. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for an hour.

To Fry the Donuts:
 Heat a deep, heavy pot filled 3” high with vegetable oil to 350°. Wet your hands and dip a large spoon in oil and spoon out some dough into your hands. It’s tricky but try to form the dough into a round then carefully lower into the oil. If they come out in more of a fritter shape, don’t worry. They will still taste delicious.

Move the dough around in the oil with a slotted spoon until the donuts are lightly brown on all sides. Carefully remove from oil with slotted spoon and immediately lower into your honey syrup. Coat generously and place on serving platter or roll them in your favorite nuts.

Eat immediately. They taste best warm.




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