

Tunisian Fish Cakes with Spicy Lemon Paprika Aioli



Makes about 30 cakes

I found this recipe in the April 2003 issue of Bon Appétit, which means I've been making these fish cakes for more than 20 years!

I usually make them small – about 2 ounces each – but you can make them bigger if you want. I use a measuring scoop to keep them uniform in size, both because they look nice and because they cook at the same rate.

I added the extra step of coating the patties in breadcrumbs. They turn beautifully golden and it gives them a nice little crunch. I don't like cilantro, so I double the parsley.

The recipe calls for store-bought mayonnaise, which I often use, but if you really want to get romantic, try your hand at making your own. The difference between even the best store-bought and homemade with a farm fresh egg is amazing.

Buy tomato paste in a tube, so you can use a tablespoon or two as you need it.

Ingredients

For the Fish Cakes

2 LBS mild white fish fillets, cut into cubes
1 small onion, diced (about 1 C)
6 garlic cloves, diced
3 TBSP fresh parsley
3 TBSP fresh cilantro
1 TBSP cumin
2 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp ground ginger
6 TBSP fine breadcrumbs plus more for coating
1 large egg

About 1/3 to 1/2 C neutral vegetable oil for frying

For the Aioli

1 1/2 C mayonnaise
1/4 C fresh lemon juice (about 1 large lemon)
6 garlic cloves, minced
1 1/2 TBSP tomato paste
1 1/2 tsp hot smoked paprika OR
1 1/4 tsp sweet paprika + 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

Directions

Make the Fish Cakes

1. In the bowl of a food processor, pulse the fish until it's coarsely ground.
2. Add onion, garlic, parsley, cilantro, spices, breadcrumbs, and egg. Pulse until well combined. (At this point, if you have time, put the fish into the refrigerator to firm up.) Meanwhile, make the aioli.
3. Prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper and preheat oven to 350 degrees.
4. Moisten your hands. Use about 2 TBSP fish for each patty. Roll into a ball, then flatten slightly, using your fingers to maintain a sort of hockey puck shape.
5. Press each patty into the extra breadcrumbs.
6. Add oil to a large pan and fry the patties until they're golden brown on both sides. Remove to the baking sheet.
7. When all patties are done, put sheet into oven for 10 minutes. The inside of the patties should measure 135-140 degrees.

Make the Aioli

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl; whisk to combine. Season with salt & pepper. Can be made a day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.



