

Syrniki, Slavic Farmers Cheese Pancakes

Serves 4-6 | 10 minutes prep + 20 minutes cook time

Last year a customer came into the store every week and bought several pounds of Gina Maria Farmers Cheese. Curious, I finally asked her what she was making, and she answered, “syrniki.” My blank look prompted her to pull up a video on her phone of women shaping and frying the Eastern European cheese pancakes. She gave me some tips for making them, and I took home some of the cheese and cooked a batch. I was hooked.

While cooks in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, and other Slavic cultures typically use butter, our syrniki cook in extra virgin olive oil. We’ve streamlined the traditional recipe, which calls for shaping the batter into cakes and rolling them in flour before cooking, and just spoon dollops of the soft batter directly into the pan.

1 lb Gina Marie Russian-style farmers cheese

2 eggs

¼ cup AP flour

2 tablespoons superfine or powdered sugar

2 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon kosher-style sea salt

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil to cook

Jam and Greek-style yogurt or sour cream to serve

Step 1 Use a food processor to break up the cheese by pulsing briefly a few times.

Step 2 Add the eggs and pulse to blend, then scrape into a bowl.

Step 3 Blend in the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.

Step 4 Heat the olive oil in a skillet. Use 2 spoons to form golf-ball size balls, slide them into the hot oil, and gently flatten them to about ¾ inch thick discs.

Step 5 Cook for a few minutes, then gently lift the edge of the first pancake to check browning. If brown, gently flip and cook for another few minutes. The cooked pancakes can be held in a warm over while you cook the rest of the batter. Serve warm with jam and Greek-style yogurt or sour cream.