

Irene F. Goodman

In this inaugural column, I wish to celebrate our wonderful Rabbi for all that she IS and all that she DOES for our congregation, with her spiritual leadership, wisdom, creativity, sense of humor, and open heart.

I am excited to contribute to the renovation fund in her honor because I have been hoping for a kitchen renovation deserving of our wonderful community -- a functional place to prepare Onegs and meals, treats for various Jewish holidays, and a place to teach our school students about Jewish food traditions. In our Eitz Chayim home, the kitchen has the potential of being transformed to match our beautiful sanctuary. While our beautiful sanctuary is the *heart* of our synagogue, the renovated kitchen can be the place to feed our Jewish *souls*.

The recipe I selected is one that quite a few of you have tasted: Cauliflower Cake. It's a real crowd-pleaser from Yotam Ottolenghi's vegetarian cookbook, *Plenty More*. It has eggs and cheese, but vegans could substitute vegan cheese and egg alternative/replacer. If you don't eat onions, you can substitute red or orange or yellow peppers for the onion both sautéed and some slices used as decoration on the top.

Cauliflower Cake

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small cauliflower, outer leaves removed, broken into 1 1/4-inch florets (about 4 cups)
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided (can substitute sea salt)
- 1 medium red onion
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- Melted unsalted butter, for brushing
- 1 tablespoon white sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon nigella (also known as black caraway), cumin, or black sesame seeds
- 7 large eggs
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups coarsely grated Parmesan or aged cheese
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- Freshly ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 400°F. Meanwhile, prepare the cake.
2. Place the cauliflower florets and 1 teaspoon of the salt in a medium saucepan. Cover with water and simmer over medium-high heat until the florets are quite soft, about 15 minutes. They should break when pressed with a spoon. Drain and set aside in a colander to dry.
3. Cut 4 round slices, each 1/4-inch, off one end of the onion and set aside. Dice the rest of the onion and place in a small frying pan with the oil and rosemary. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until

soft, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool. Meanwhile, line the base and sides of a 9 1/2-inch springform pan with parchment paper. Brush the sides with melted butter, then mix together the sesame and other seeds and toss them around the inside of the pan so that they stick to the sides.

4. Transfer the onion mixture to a large bowl. Add the eggs and basil and whisk well to combine. Add the cheese, flour, baking powder, turmeric, remaining 1 teaspoon salt, and plenty of pepper. Whisk until smooth. Add the cauliflower and stir gently, trying not to break up the florets.
5. Pour the cauliflower mixture into the pan, spreading it evenly, and arrange the reserved raw onion rings on top. Bake until golden brown and set, about 45 minutes. A knife inserted into the center of the cake should come out clean. Let cool at least 20 minutes before slicing and serving. It needs to be served just warm, rather than hot, or at room temperature.

RECIPE NOTES

Baking pan options: If you don't have a springform pan, you can just use a regular 9-inch cake pan or even an 8-inch square pan, but still line with parchment paper first.

Storage: Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.