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**The Gersky Gazette**

*Another year down...*

December 2009

It's been quite a busy year here at Gersky's Catering.

We started off with [Champagne Punch](#) and [Chocolate Bark](#), not to mention some fun and instructional videos, like [How to Melt Chocolate](#). Springtime saw our [Matzo Apple Cakes](#) and [Brunch Recipe Guide](#), a special feature for Mother's Day. We gave your grill a tune-up this summer with our [Kebab Sampler](#), and a delectable [Pumpkin Crème Brule](#) this fall.



Now comes the tricky part: We're trying to top ourselves, and are hard at work on a brand-new lineup for 2010.

From all of us at Gersky's Catering, thank you for subscribing to our gazette. We hope you have a happy holiday season and a healthy new year.

See you in 2010! - The Gersky's Staff

**Holiday Profile**

*Hanukkah*

This December 10th (or the 25th of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar) marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah (or Chanukah to some). Hanukkah, unlike the major Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover, is not mentioned in the Old Testament. In fact, it is a relatively "new" holiday, dating back to only the 2nd century BC.



Hanukkah, which means "dedication" or "consecration," marks the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was destroyed by the Greeks. This rededication was also marked by the "miracle of the oil." As legend has it, the Maccabees, who had retaken the temple, had only enough oil to fuel the eternal flame for one day, yet it miraculously lasted for eight. It is because of this miracle that we celebrate Hanukkah for eight days and nights.

The oil also plays a large part in the food eaten during Hanukkah. Two of the main foods eaten are latkes—potato pancakes—and sufganiyot—jam-filled doughnuts that are deep-fried in oil.

We also celebrate by spinning the dreidel—a 4-sided top, with a Hebrew letter (the first letter of a single word) on each side. Those sides, together, read *Nes Gadol Haya Sham*, which means *A Great Miracle Happened There*. However, if you were playing in Israel, the sides of the dreidel would read *Nes Gadol Haya Po- A Great Miracle Happened Here*.

So whether this is your first Hanukkah, or you're a seasoned dreidel hustler, enjoy the "Festival of Lights" with your friends and family, and maybe have a latke or two on us.

**All About...**

*Latkes*

Latkes, the crispy potato pancakes enjoyed at Hanukkah-time, have a history and tradition far richer than the



## Another year down...

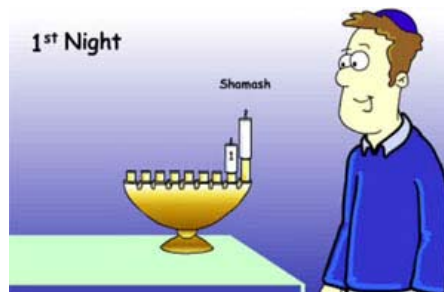
lackluster potatoes they are made of. While in the U.S. we associate them with Hanukkah, they, like many other foods associated with Jewish holidays and gatherings, have origins throughout Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Germany, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic all boast the potato pancake as part of their national cuisine-especially in Belarus, where it is their national dish. A common theme, regardless of location, is the inclusion of some kind of topping for the pancakes, usually applesauce or sour cream, something cool to balance the hot and crispy pancakes.



More than just another dish on the table, the latke has transcended the limitations of the kitchen, and has been firmly planted in the debate arena. In 1946, the University of Chicago held the first annual Latke- Hamantash Debate (hamantaschen are the triangle- shaped cookies traditionally eaten during Purim) to argue the question of which food held more meaning in the grand scope of Jewish cuisine. Over the past 60 years, the debate has expanded to over a dozen universities, including Harvard, Princeton, and MIT, and in 2005 the University of Chicago published a book on the subject, collecting the best arguments from both sides of the aisle. (For more information on this debate, you can check out the book [here](#))

**"How To:"*****Light the Menorah***

Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah doesn't have to be an ordeal. Whether you use candles, oil, or even electric light bulbs, this easy-to-follow video will take all the trouble out of candle lighting.



And if you're a little rusty on the blessings, refresh your memory with [help from MyJewishLearning.com](#).

**Recipe of the Month*****Latke Sampler******Southwestern Potato Pancakes with Spicy Tomato Relish*****Ingredients:****Relish:**

2 cups plum tomatoes, diced  
1/2 small yellow onion, chopped  
1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped  
1 cup water  
1/4 cup canola oil

**Pancakes:**

5 potatoes, peeled and grated  
1 small yellow onion, minced  
2 jalapenos, seeded and minced  
2 eggs, lightly beaten  
3 tablespoon flour  
Salt and pepper  
Canola or Olive oil  
Hot sauce (optional)

**To Make:**

For the relish, blend tomatoes, onion, jalapeno, and water until smooth. Heat canola oil over medium heat and cook tomato puree about 15 minutes. Cool and set aside.

For the pancakes: In a large bowl, season the potatoes with salt and pepper (and hot sauce, if desired). Mix in the onion, jalapeno, and eggs. Sprinkle flour on top and mix thoroughly.

### Another year down...

Form the mix into approximately 3-inch rounds. Heat oil over medium heat, and fry cakes for about 3 minutes per side, or until golden brown. Serve with the cooled tomato relish.

Our sampler doesn't end there. [Click here](#) for our Veggie Feta Cakes and Sweet Potato Cakes with Cilantro Lime Yogurt.

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