

Potato pancakes and sauce for the Feast of St. Hildegard

St. Hildegard of Bingen was a visionary, mystic, composer, artist, writer, botanist, Benedictine nun and all around Renaissance woman. Respected and revered by people from many different faiths, she wrote about the healing powers of herbs and holistic medicine, and composed choral music still loved and relevant today.

She started having visions at the age of 3, making her a perfect saint to celebrate with your kids. She was also a little different, very bold for a woman in her day, and, as mentioned, extremely talented – characteristics with which some kids can identify.

In her visions, she saw the light of God, which she called the “Living Light,” and later wrote three volumes describing and interpreting her mystic abilities and the Scripture. She was a force of feminine strength that stood up to the patriarchy of the Church. In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI named her one of only four women to be declared a doctor of the Church.

To celebrate the feast of St. Hildegard Sept. 17, my children and I are making plum applesauce and “kartoffelpuffer” (German potato pancakes).

The pancakes are an obvious nod to St. Hildegard, but did you know Bingen is a town on the Rhine River and is known for its lush landscape and perfect environment for several fruits? Grapes are a major crop, and plum trees dot the hillsides. Using plums in this applesauce gave it the rosy color the kids love. These potato cakes with sauce can be enjoyed as a snack or as a side dish to a meal (maybe schnitzel!).

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Called "kartoffelpuffer," these German potato pancakes can be served as a side dish, and paired with homemade plum and apple sauce.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Makes 2 dozens servings

Ingredients

Plum Apple Sauce

- 5 apples pink lady, cored and chopped, with skin on
- 1 plumb pitted and chopped
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 pinch salt

Kartoffelpuffer

- 2 cups onion grated
- approximately 12 potatoes grated gold potatoes, should yield 3 quarts
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1 1/2 cup oil. A neutral flavored oil for frying, such as vegetable oil, is best. Use approximately 1 1/2 cups for a 16 inch pan

Instructions

Plum Apple Sauce

1. Add all ingredients to a pot, cover and cook over medium-low heat until the apples are fork tender, approximately 15 minutes.
2. In a food processor, blender, immersion blender or even with a potato masher, puree or mash (depending on chunky or smooth preference) to desired consistency.

Kartoffelpuffer

1. Using the medium holes (looks like large rain drops), grate the onion and squeeze out any excess liquid. Repeat this step with the potatoes.
2. Combine the nutmeg, salt, pepper, eggs and flour with the potato and onion.
3. Squeezing any excess liquid from the mixture, form patties approximately 1/4 inch thick and 2 1/2 inches wide.
4. In a pan on medium-high heat, warm the oil and cook the patties until golden brown, approximately two to three minutes on each side.

As my son enjoys cracking the eggs, and my daughter stirs and blends, we begin our conversation about St. Hildegard. She was a wonder woman who knew her talents were a gift from God. Although her visions and explosions of creativity exhausted her at different times throughout her life, she found encouragement from her faith and friends at the abbey.

While enjoying these special treats with your kids, you can read to them [“Hildegard’s Gift” by Megan Hoyt](#). With its brightly colored pictures illustrating her view of God’s ultimate harmony in his creation, the book addresses in a way appropriate for young children the specialness of identifying and embracing God’s-given talents.

*Holy Spirit, giving life to all life, moving all creatures,
root of all things, washing them clean, wiping out their
mistakes, healing their wounds, you are our true life,
luminous, wonderful, awakening the heart from its ancient
sleep.*

– St. Hildegard of Bingen