

# Draniki Kartofel'nyye

## The National Belarussian Dish

(Belarus)

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Belarus is a country in Eastern Europe. Belarus borders Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine. Belarus's culture is incredibly old, however its freedom is not. Its land was held by the Kingdom of Lithuania, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, and finally, the Soviet Union. Belarus only became a free country in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed. However, most of its history began in February of 1918, when Germany captured Minsk during World War I, otherwise known as The Great War back then. The Germans allowed Belarussian schools to teach Belarussian, something the Russians did not allow. Eventually, in December of the same year, the Germans decided Belarus, and a few other occupied territories, were obsolete and abandoned them, leaving a power vacuum.

During World War II, things were much different. When Germany occupied Belarus during Operation Barbarossa, 9,000 villages had been burnt down, 380,000 citizens sent away for slave labor, and thousands more killed. After the war, Belarus became one of the founding members of the United Nations Organization, now known as the UN. Even with that, the economy was almost destroyed, the industry was only at 20% power compared to its pre-war status. The reactor explosion at Chernobyl a few decades later, also affected Belarus, quite a lot in fact. Belarus got more radiation than all the other countries affected, combined. A quarter of Belarus's land had to be closely monitored by radioactive sensitive equipment, and over a hundred thousand citizens had to be permanently moved. Then, on August 21, 1991, Belarus declared its independence from the Soviet Union.

Dranikies are incredibly simple dishes, made out of potatoes, as well as a few extra ingredients. This dish is considered the National Dish of both Belarus and Slovakia. However, they are made in a lot of different countries in slightly different ways. Countries such as: Britain, Israel, Poland, Ireland, Korea, Czechoslovakia, and Iran all make their own variant. The differences are slight between the recipes, but only Belarus and Slovakia have these Potato Pancakes as National Dishes. The word Draniki, comes from the Russian word for grate, like a cheese grater, but for potatoes. The potatoes are the main ingredients, which is why the word Kartofel'nyye is being used, as it means "made out of potato." The reason why the National Dish is made of potatoes, is because

in the Eastern Block, and Soviet Russia, had incredibly cold temperatures, and one of the only crops to survive well enough in the harsh, cold weather, was the potato. It was so resilient in fact, that it can be hard to eat a meal in post-Soviet countries, without coming across a potato. The reason why Draniki became a National Dish, was because it was a popular, easy to make, breakfast food, that people enjoyed to eat.

### **Ingredients:**

5-6 medium sized potatoes  
1 small onion (or 1/2 a medium sized onion)  
1 carrot  
1 egg  
3 tablespoons all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
cooking oil

### **Instructions:**

Peel potatoes, onion, and carrot.

Grate the potatoes and onion on a shredder blade on a food processor into one bowl.

Puree the shredded potatoes and onion, but do not create a liquid, in the food processor.

Grate the carrot on the shredder blade in the food processor, and add the shredded carrot into the same bowl as the pureed potatoes and onion.

Add the egg and salt, mix well, and then add the flour, and continue mixing.

Pour about 2 tablespoons the cooking oil on a pan that is on medium-high heat. Heat the pan, and add 1 tbsp of potato mixture at a time on the pan.

Flip the pancakes once the edges of the pancakes become golden-brown, and take them off once that side has had its edges become golden-brown.

Repeat the same procedure with the rest of the batter. Serve traditionally with sour cream.

**Tips:** The carrot is not mandatory, however it makes the Draniki more presentable. Garlic can be added to give a unique taste, except it is not liked by everyone. I personally like to eat Draniki with guacamole and fried egg. When you make the puree with the potatoes and onion, you must strain it to not have too much of a liquid. Onion in the puree, prevents the potatoes from browning.