Green Onion Pancakes (makes ~6 large pancakes)

This is my favourite recipe for green onion pancakes. During the pandemic I’ve found firing up these in a well-seasoned pan serves as a panacea during these tough times when you might feel like the world itself has pancaked you. Some may enjoy crispy thin scallion cakes, but this recipe involves a yeast-based dough so be prepared to wait on it to rise. In the end, you’ll get a beautiful pancake – crispy on the outside, layered and chewy on the inside, and packed full of flavour. Of course, you can add whatever flavours you like – basil, rosemary, parmesan or even pancetta!

**Ingredients:**

* 1 packet yeast
* 1 tsp salt
* 1 tbsp sugar
* 6 cups warm water
* 12 cups flour
* Sesame oil
* Roasted sesame seeds
* Pancake ingredients - ~1cup finely chopped scallions per pancake. Substitute with smaller amounts of rosemary, basil, or hot peppers.

**Equipment:**

* 2 large mixing bowls
* A large rolling sheet/surface/silpat
* 1 large frying pan (or a deep, flat wok – but that’s really just a pan with curved edges)

**Making the dough:**

Mix the salt, sugar, 5.5 cups water, and packet of yeast. You can premix the yeast with some warm water to check that it is still active – if it bubbles and foams, you are good to go. Combine the liquid mixture in a large bowl and mix briefly until roughly incorporated. Let sit for 10 minutes.

After resting the dough, knead it until you get a slightly bouncy texture. Split the dough into two well-oiled (vegetable oil) mixing bowls. Cover with damp paper towel or damp kitchen cloth and sit for 1-2 hours to double.

**Making the pancake:**

Split each dough ball into thirds. On a well-floured rolling sheet/surface, roll a dough ball into a rectangular shape of roughly 2:1 ratio. Brush sesame oil along the dough’s surface, and sprinkle liberally with salt, black pepper, and green onions (or other ingredients). A note about green onions – they can be watery so if you use too much, you’ll find your pancake comes out soggy, and uncooked. Less is more in this case.

Roll the dough somewhat tightly lengthwise to create a long kind of spring roll. Next coil in a circular shape starting from one side and moving in an outwards direction to form a circular shape. Pinch the outer end of the dough to the main body of the coil and place to rest on a lightly floured surface. It will continue to puff up while you work the remainder of the dough balls.

**Cooking the pancake:**

While your coiled dough sits for another 5-10 minutes, lightly oil a large pan with vegetable oil and bring it up to medium heat. Take your coiled cake and sprinkle liberally with sesame seeds before flattening it with a roller – stretching its size to about 2x it’s original diameter or to whatever will fit in your pan. This is where some experimentation is involved but you generally want a pancake about 1cm thick – it will rise again as you cook it to about 2 cm! If your coil was too big, then use less dough on the next one.

Cook the first side until you can begin to see the edges of the pancake on the top side starting to look cooked (~ 3-4 minutes). The bottom should be nicely browned and crisp. You may need a very large spatula to flip! Cook the remaining side another 3-4 minutes and place on a cooling rack ~3-5 minutes before slicing into triangular wedges with a sharp cleaver.

While cooking your cakes, you can roll/coil/flatten the remaining dough, like an assembly line. I usually get about 2 coils prepared before starting to cook.

You can slice cooled pancakes in half and store two halves in a Ziplock freezer bags for a few months. Try to remove any excess air before freezing. Reheat in a pan (~2 minutes per side on medium heat) or 10 minutes in a 325F oven. Enjoy!

A picture containing food, oven, cooking, bread

Description automatically generated