

The Great Latkes Topping Debate

Moment Magazine convenes experts combining Jews' favorite pastimes —arguing and eating—in a spirited debate over latkes toppings.

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, December 11, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Combining what many believe to be Jews' favorite pastimes eating—arguing and eating—a panel of experts convened by Moment Magazine this week held a spirited debate, moderated by C-SPAN Communication's Director Howard Mortman, over the best topping for a latke. Following the debate a virtual audience voted on their preference.

Traditional favorites applesauce and sour cream came in at 33% to 30%. Ketchup suffered a significant defeat, despite a brilliantly argued defense that pointed out the vitriol that ketchup-on-latkes eaters are routinely subjected to. Apple sour sauce came in third with 25% of the vote, followed by hot sauce and ketchup.

Comedian and author Barry Friedman argued for applesauce based on the major role the apple plays in biblical and world history. "Where would we be if Eve listened to God and didn't take the fermented regular cream and feed it to Adam, what would have happened if Isaac Newton had been sitting under a cow? If Steve jobs had started a company called thick dairy, you see my point? Sour cream simply does not show up in any of our great books."

Dahlia Lithwick, a senior editor at Slate, began by arguing that a choice must be made, that we can't just agree that sour cream and applesauce win. "That's the kind of kumbaya attitude that the Talmud deplors. Being Jewish is about making the hard choices. Sacrifice your first born son, don't sacrifice your first born son. Cook the calf in its mother's milk, or don't. You don't get to do both; we are not an either-or people."

She said that it was time to "stop the tyrannical march of the apple in its attempt to take over the entire Jewish calendar."

"And indeed I would submit for the court today that sour cream's destiny in life is to make not-very-good foods taste delicious from the baked potato to black beans to borsch. Sour cream is less of a food than an Alchemist, transforming EHH food into delicious food. And as such, I would submit that a better inquiry today is not whether sour cream makes the best topping for latkes so much is whether the latke is the best bottom for sour cream."

Moment Deputy Editor Sarah Breger made a valiant effort defending the role of ketchup on the

Hanukkah table. "It's become hard for those of us who put ketchup on our latkes to feel safe, sharing our preferences. We often warn about the closing of the American mind and how a culture of fear has crept into the public square stifling debate. And I fear that this plague has now entered into our discussion of latke toppings."

Rabbi Doug Sagal of Congregation B'nai Israel in Rumson, NJ who noted that he was the only person on the panel with advanced Talmud training, argued the case on behalf of hot sauce. "What is not known except by the greatest of scholars is that there were not four questions at Passover, but rather five, the fifth being on all other nights, we avoid spicy foods because we Jews all have chronic intestinal issues. Why on this night, do we eat spicy condiments until the sweat pours down dad's bald head?"

Meet the Latkes children's book author Alan Silberberg took direct aim that a choice between toppings should be made. "We do not need to continue being pulled apart by this fake rivalry.

"My only choice, apple-sour sauce, the best of both worlds, two separate entities joined together to become something new, something distinct that celebrates the best of both without erasing the unique creation that God intended."

[Watch the debate.](#)

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Moment is a fiercely independent magazine that provides award-winning, in-depth reporting on the issues that concern, excite and inspire American Jews. It was founded in 1975 by Elie Wiesel and Leonard Fein and has been run by Nadine Epstein since 2004. Its publishing imprint, MomentBooks

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