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mouth during mastication. However, for optimal restoration of the characteristics of a freshly prepared fried potato cake, a cake of the thickness of that of the above example should be rehydrated, as indicated, for about 30 to 60 seconds and then the excess, unabsorbed water should be poured off so that the potato cake will not become soggy. Thinner cakes will require proportionately shorter rehydration times and thicker cakes will require proportionately longer rehydration times.

While the foregoing example discloses the use of degerminated corn meal as a component of the potato cakes, it is feasible to substitute therefor an approximately equal proportion of pregelatinized corn flour without pre-cooking the slurry or suspension thereof to gelatinize the corn.

While the foregoing general description of our invention and the recited example use the term "potato cake," it will be understood that the latter term is used in a general sense and encompasses a number of geometrical configurations, such as discs (patties), spheres (balls), or other suitable shapes.

Throughout this specification and the claims, percentages or parts are by weight.

It will be seen that we have provided a simple and highly efficient method of providing instantly rehydratable freeze-vacuum-dehydrated fried potato cakes. The resulting products are highly palatable and useful in rations and can be prepared for eating even under rugged field conditions, so long as some water (preferably hot) is available. They also may be eaten dry.

It will be understood that various changes in the details, materials, and conditions used in preparing the food products of this invention, which have been herein described in order to explain the nature of the invention, may be made by those skilled in the art within the principle and scope of the invention as expressed in the appended claims.

We claim:

1. Process of making dehydrated potato cakes comprising, uniformly mixing precooked potato particles with a suspension of comminuted and gelatinized corn in water to form a mixture comprising at least about 6 percent

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gelatinized corn and having a total water content of not less than about 75% and not more than about 80%, forming said mixture into cakes, frying said cakes to form a porous crust thereon, and freeze-vacuum-dehydrating said fried cakes to a water content below about 3 percent; whereby instantly rehydratable storage-stable shape-sustaining dehydrated potato cakes are obtained, which upon rehydration have the appearance, texture and flavor of freshly prepared potato cakes.

2. Process according to claim 1, wherein said mixture comprises from about 6 percent to about 12 percent gelatinized corn.

3. Process according to claim 1, wherein said potato cakes are deep fat fried prior to freeze-vacuum-dehydration.

4. Process according to claim 1, wherein said potato cakes are dehydrated to a moisture content not exceeding about 2.5 percent.

5. Process according to claim 1, wherein said dehydrated potato cakes are packaged in the absence of atmospheric oxygen.

6. Process according to claim 1, wherein said potato particles are precooked by treating said particles with water at from about 200° F. to about 210° F. for about five minutes.

References Cited

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