Crispy Shrimp Cakes With Chile-Lime Mayo

Serves 2 to 3

3 to 5 large original or lightly salted rice cakes

1 pound shelled large raw shrimp (20 to 24), coarsely chopped

¼ cup minced shallot (or use onion or scallion)

6 tablespoons chopped cilantro

6 tablespoons chopped basil leaves, more for serving

3 tablespoons minced jalapeño or red chile pepper

2 ½ teaspoons fish sauce

 Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

½ cup mayonnaise

1 lime

 Safflower, peanut or grapeseed oil, for frying

 In the bowl of the food processor (or you can use a blender), add the rice cakes and pulse until you get 1 1/4 cups rice cake crumbs. Return 1/4 cup crumbs to the food processor, reserving the remaining 1 cup for coating the cakes.

 Add shrimp, shallot, 4 tablespoons each of the cilantro and basil, and 2 tablespoons jalapeño to the crumbs. Add 2 teaspoons fish sauce, and a pinch each salt and pepper. Pulse until the mixture forms a coarse, chunky paste. (Be careful not to overprocess; if using a blender, scrape down the sides frequently.) Transfer to a bowl, cover and refrigerate while you make the sauce (at least 15 minutes and up to 24 hours).

 In a small bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, remaining cilantro, basil, jalapeño and fish sauce. Zest the lime into the bowl, then cut the naked lime into wedges and squeeze in some juice. Salt to taste. Reserve extra lime wedges for serving.

 Spread remaining 1 cup rice cake crumbs out onto a plate or sheet pan. With wet hands to keep shrimp paste from sticking, form 2 tablespoons of shrimp mixture into a 1/2-inch-thick patty and put it on top of the crumbs. Repeat with remaining shrimp mixture, re-wetting your hands as necessary. Turn the patties over in the crumbs to coat both sides.

 Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Fry patties in batches until golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Serve shrimp cakes topped with more basil leaves, with chile-lime sauce for dunking and lime wedges on the side for squeezing.

Tip

*Original, whole grain or brown rice cakes (either the thick or thin kind) all work well here. If you can’t find rice cakes, use 1 1/4 cups panko or cracker crumbs instead. The cakes won’t be quite as crisp, but they will still taste great.*