



Fries with That?

May 27, 2015

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French fries, pommes frites, chips...or just **fries**...are indisputably one of the most popular foods in America with the average American consuming nearly 29 pounds of fries a year.

While fries may or may not have originated in France, Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing fries to America. Jefferson had them during his term as the American Minister to France and loved them so much that in 1802 he asked the White House chef to prepare what he described as “potatoes deep-fried while raw, in small cuttings” for a dinner event. However, fries didn’t really catch on until the 1900s.

Fast forward over 100 years and fries are now a staple in most American’s diets and are a lot of people’s favorite “vegetable.” A medium-sized potato contains about 150 calories and is fat-free. An equivalent serving of fries contains **over 500 calories** with 30% or more coming from fat.

Commercially prepared fries generally contain numerous additives that were carefully calibrated by food manufacturers to truly make them “irresistible.” Many fast food restaurants also spray their fries with a sugar solution during the packaging process to produce the infamous golden color when fried. No wonder we can’t say no when asked, “would you like fries with that?”

Fun Fact: Even though fries are eaten worldwide, the way they’re served is not universal. Americans generally dunk theirs in ketchup, the French like to add mustard, while the Brits prefer vinegar. In Japan, you’ll see fries paired with green curry or soy sauce and in Canada they’re topped with gravy and cheese curds.

Source: [“Are French Fries Truly French?”](#) National Geographic, January 2015

You CAN Have Fries with That

While there really is no true replacement for the mouthwatering, “batons of deep-fried potato,” there are ways you can prepare fries at home to make them healthier while still tasting great.

One great alternative is oven “fries.”

- Simply cut potatoes into wedges or thin spears (whatever shape you prefer your fries; thinner cut, matchstick style fries tend to crisp up the best)
- Toss with olive oil and spices (salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, chili powder, etc)
- Place in a single layer on a foil lined baking sheet, making sure they don’t touch or overlap
- Bake in a 450 degree oven, tossing at least once, for 30-45 minutes or until crispy and golden brown

Another option is to make fries from something other than potatoes- carrots, green beans, parsnips, squash, even eggplant. Try the recipes in this blog post for a few versions of vegetable fries. Coming in 100-150 calories per serving, you’ll save close to 400 calories by making this swap. Plus, “fries” really can be your kids’ favorite vegetable with these recipes!