



FRENCH FRIED POTATOES

The Curing and Frying Thereof

Potatoes vary greatly; there are natural variations of variety, size, shape and chemistry due to the location and time of their growth and the soil they are grown in and the potatoes you choose for frying must be a variety suitable such as Russet, Cobble, Katadan, Burbank Russet, (Idaho, California White, Colorado White, Washington White) etc.

The condition under which any potato has been stored also affects its chemistry.

Potatoes stored cold develop a form of sugar which may get to as high as 5 or 6 percent by weight. Such potatoes will not make golden crispy French fries. The highest the sugar content can be for French fries is 3%.

The sugar content of potatoes can be reduced by storing the potatoes in a warm place 70°F to 80°F. When potatoes are stored in a warm place the sugar reduces.

Why is this knowledge necessary if you are going to fry really nice French fries? Because you simply cannot make good or even fair French fries out of high sugar potatoes – it can't be done.

Since it is necessary to control the sugar – how? - By storing your frying potatoes warm (70°F - 80°F) for 2 or 3 weeks before you fry them.



Fried 4½ minutes at 335°F

Dark, greasy. This potato has high sugar.



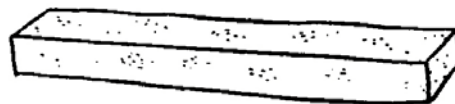
Fried 4½ minutes at 335°F.

This potato has been cured (kept warm) for 5 days. See how the ends are white while the center is dark. The dark lines on a slant are sugar lines, the center of this potato is limp and greasy.



Fried 4½ minutes at 335°F.

This potato is nearly ready, only the center shows sugar; only the center is limp and greasy.



Fried 4½ minutes at 335°F.

This is it! The sugar is down to under 3%. No dark lines. No greasy appearance. A crisp delicious mealy goldness.

Even using properly cured potatoes some cooks can still produce “not so crisp” French fries. There are 3 reasons why potatoes are ruined: 1. force frying, 2. under frying, 3. improper blanching.

Force frying means the cook tries to make the French fries get done quickly by using high temperature and small batches. These potatoes can look beautiful in the kitchen but in the length of time it takes the waiter to serve them, they go limp. The trouble is the moisture in the potato was not sufficiently evaporated and properly combined - the crust that is formed when the potato is fried becomes soggy as steam continues to issue from the potato through the crust. The potato becomes limp and greasy because the internal steam pressure prevents the fat from being absorbed into the potato properly. The fat is forced by the steam pressure to the surface. And a potato, which if fried only ½ minute

or 1 minute longer would have been perfect, was ruined by trying to speed up the frying time.

Underfrying means simply not frying the potato long enough to thoroughly cook it or give it the proper color, or both. This potato is pale, limp and greasy. The solution is just that the potato should be fried 1½ to 2 minutes longer.

Both the force fried potato and the underfried potato are greasy - why? Because potatoes to be properly fried must absorb fat - yes, fat up to 10% of the finished fried weight of the potato. It is absorbed fat that makes a good French fry. The fat must penetrate and form a crust.

We did not believe this at first - we had to run many tests before we were ready to say, "Golden crispy delicious French fries absorb more fat than limp, greasy, soggy ones." The fat remains on the surface of the greasy potatoes. It is absorbed into the crisp ones.

There is another reason for poor French fries and that is improper blanching. Blanched potatoes must be spread out so they can cool off, without steaming themselves. When the blanched potatoes are dumped in a pile, the center ones get further cooking from the residual heat which causes additional steam to be issued from the potato. This steam ruins the surface which has started to crust during blanching and the potato acts like a sponge and absorbs too much fat when finished off.

Frying of food is the process of combining a proper proportion of fat with the food while subjecting it to heat for cooking. This, you see, is the reason that any short cut methods are doomed to failure. The proper temperature must be used for the proper length of time to fry good food, and the Keating Instant Recovery® Fryer with timers and indicating lights assures properly fried foods.

Fry ¾ inch potatoes for 5 to 5½ minutes at 335°F. Larger or smaller sizes require longer or shorter time. Spread blanched potatoes out on a

large surface until they are cooled. Do not dump in a pile. Blanch at 300°F for 6 minutes - finish at 330°F for 2½ minutes.

CHICAGO PROCESS OF FRYING POTATOES

In and around Chicago are many RED HOT STANDS where frankfurters and French fried potatoes are sold. The more successful of these stands use 5000 to 8000 pounds of potatoes each week.

Two or three 14" Keating Fryers are used to prepare potatoes by a two-stage process. One or two fryers are used for blanching at a very low temperature, 275°F. Two baskets at a time are blanched for 4 minutes and the baskets placed on the basket hanger. Additional baskets are blanched and are nested into those on the basket hanger so that as many as 8 baskets of blanched potatoes are *hanging*.

As orders are received, baskets are used one or two at a time. These are finished off at 350°F for 4 minutes.

The potatoes are placed in the Keating Keep Krisp and served as required.

The advantages of this process are many.

First - you have all the potatoes you need when you need them.

Second - the potatoes are crisp and stay crisp when wrapped in paper napkin (serviette) they use for service.

Third - many varieties of potatoes which would not otherwise fry crisp do crisp-up well with these low temperatures.

Fourth - the fat break down is negligible.

You should try the Chicago Process - it's good, fast, easy and economical.

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