

Pommes Frites | French Fries

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 45 minutes | Total Time: 2 hours

Chef's Notes

When cooking the first batch, use a timer so you can gauge how long each additional batch will take.

The fries are best served, piping hot, right out of the oil. If you need to, you can keep them warm in the oven while you finish cooking them; but they may lose some crispiness.

Step 1: Preparing the Potatoes

- 4 large russet potatoes

To make French fries, it's best to use high-starch potatoes, such as russet potatoes.

First, peel the potatoes, if desired, and store in cold water. Before cutting each potato, dry it and then cut a bit off one side to prevent it from slipping. Cut the potato into strips about 3/8" -inch by 3/8" -inch wide. The potatoes can be cut any size you like. Just make sure they're evenly cut so they cook at the same rate. You can also use a mandoline to cut the potatoes.

Place the potatoes into the water to prevent browning and also to rinse off the excess starch and surface sugars. The potatoes can be cut and stored in the refrigerator up to one day in advance.

Step 2: Heating the Oil

- frying oil (grapeseed or peanut)

To begin, attach a thermometer to a large, heavy-bottomed pot. to ensure an accurate reading, make sure the prong does not touch the bottom of the pot.

Pour enough oil to reach about 2" -inches high. Heat the oil over medium heat until it reaches between 300° to 325° degrees Fahrenheit or 150° to 170° degrees Celsius.

Step 3: Blanching the Potatoes

To blanch the potatoes, first set up a baking tray with paper towels or a clean kitchen cloth. Then gather a spider and make sure the oil is at the correct temperature.

Dry a handful of potatoes with another clean kitchen cloth. The potatoes must be dry so they don't splatter once they hit the oil. Working in small batches, place the potatoes onto the spider and gently lower them into the oil. Blanch for about 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or just until softened slightly. You might also want to use a timer so you can time each batch. This will ensure that all of the potatoes cook evenly.

When blanching the potatoes, they should not turn golden at all. When they are ready, remove them from the oil and place onto the baking tray. The potatoes should be just cooked through but still have some resistance when you squish them. Continue to blanch the potatoes in batches, making sure the oil has returned to the proper blanching temperature each time before adding more. If the oil is too cold, the potatoes will absorb too much oil and be greasy.

Once all of the potatoes have been blanched, arrange them on the tray so they don't stick together. Then chill in the refrigerator for at least an hour to ensure they are nice and cold. However, they can be stored for up to one day before cooking. Chilling the potatoes allows them to dry and, therefore, brown better once they are returned to the oil for the final cooking.

Step 4: Cooking & Serving the French Fries

- sea salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Once the potatoes have completely chilled, heat the oil to 400° degrees Fahrenheit or 200° degrees Celsius. Gather a large, stainless-steel bowl.

When the oil is ready, fry the potatoes for the second time. Place a handful of the potatoes onto the spider and lower into the oil. It can take anywhere from 1 1/2 to 5 minutes, depending on how crunchy you like your fries and how thick they were to begin with. Once crisp and golden, remove them from the oil and place them directly into the bowl. It's important to season the potatoes while they're nice and hot to ensure the seasoning sticks. Then give them a toss and serve immediately while you cook the next batch.