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EC9995 French Fried Foods

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A black and white illustration featuring french fries and onion rings. In the upper left, a wire mesh basket contains several onion rings. Below them, a long, wavy chain of french fries extends from the left side towards the bottom right. A large, dark, curved banner is positioned in the center-right, containing the title 'French Fried Foods' in a stylized, cursive font. The banner is decorated with small icons of a fork and a spoon. The background on the right side of the banner has a halftone dot pattern.

French Fried Foods

EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

French Fried Foods

Ethel Diedrichsen, Extension Nutritionist

Who can refuse those tempting, delicious, golden brown foods cooked in deep fat? They are so good! And they are good for you. They have shortness, a crusty flavor, and a pleasing texture that you will like. When properly fried, these foods are not harmful or difficult for a normal person to digest.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Frying kettle with heavy straight sides, small in diameter
Frying basket
Deep-fat frying thermometer
Tray covered with absorbent paper
Slotted spoon or tongs



CHARACTERISTICS OF FAT SUITABLE FOR DEEP-FRYING

Does not smoke at frying temperature (350° to 390° F).
Is odorless.
Gives no undesirable flavor to cooked foods.
Does not absorb strong food flavors, nor carry the flavor of one food to another.
Retains a clear color throughout the frying period.
Is suitable for re-use after frying.

Excellent choices of fat include high quality lard, corn or cottonseed oils, and hydrogenated fats. Any one of these can reach a high temperature

before it begins to smoke. When fat becomes too hot it "breaks down", the color darkens and the smoking temperature is lowered. Food cooked in this fat will pick up unpleasant flavors and absorb more fat. Food cooked at too low a temperature will also absorb more fat because a longer time is required for browning. The frying temperature can be measured accurately with a deep-fat frying thermometer. Without a thermometer, the bread cube test can be used as a guide.

Frying temperatures for different foods are as follows:

	Thermometer	1/2-inch bread cubes turn golden brown in
French fried potatoes, croquettes	375°	40 seconds
Fritters, doughnuts	365°	50 seconds
Chicken (uncooked spring chicken)	350°	60 seconds

When the fat has reached the proper temperature, lower the food slowly in a frying basket. Fry until done and golden brown in color. Then lift the basket, hold for a few seconds, and place the food on absorbent paper to drain. Hot foods may be kept a short time in a warm oven before serving.

For more attractive and better tasting fried foods:

1. Have the food as dry as possible.
2. Bring the food to room temperature before frying.
3. Remove loose crumbs before frying.
4. Fry pieces of the same size together.
5. Do not fry too much food at one time.

When cooking is finished, the fat should be cooled and strained through several layers of cheesecloth. Potatoes should not be used to clarify fat. They contain a large amount of water which will speed up undesirable changes in the fat. The strained fat should be stored in a covered container and kept cold. It may be re-used for deep-frying or used in quick breads, cookies or pudding.

CARE OF LARD IN THE HOME

Lard will keep better if the fat is rendered as soon as possible after it has been chilled. The leaf fat and fat trimmings make the best lard. Fat from very old animals and intestinal fat will have strong odors and flavors and should be rendered separately. This low-grade lard can be used for making soap.

Use an aluminum or rust-free iron kettle for home rendering. Cut the fat into one-inch pieces and put a few handfuls into the kettle. When the fat begins to fry out, the kettle can be filled. Cook slowly until the temperature reaches 250° and golden brown cracklings rise to the top. Stir frequently to keep the fat from sticking or scorching. When done, cool slightly, strain the warm lard through muslin and press out cracklings. Pack the lard in small air-tight containers. When firm, cover tightly and store in a cool place.

Lard will "break down" and become rancid faster if it is exposed to heat, light and air. When this happens a chemical change takes place in the lard and very little can be done to improve its quality. To keep lard from becoming rancid, be sure to use clean, fresh fat; then render and store the lard properly. When using the lard, take it evenly from the top of the jar or can. In this way less fat surface will be exposed to the harmful effect of the air.

You can get still better results if you will add a chemical stabilizer to the lard. Those that are recommended will contain one of the following ingredients.

1. Nordihydroguaiaretic acid. Sometimes called "NDGA".
2. Propyl gallate. Available under various trade names.
3. Butylated hydroxyanisole. Usually sold in combination with another antioxidant.
4. Hydrogenated vegetable shortening.

Adding two or three pounds of hydrogenated vegetable shortening to 50 pounds of lard is an easy and inexpensive way to keep lard fresh. The shortening is mixed with the hot rendered lard just before settling and separating the cracklings. This method will double the keeping time of the lard.

COVERINGS OR COATINGS FOR FRIED FOODS

With the exception of potatoes, food is generally dipped in some type of coating before being fried. The coating material combines with the hot fat to make a crisp, thin, tasty crust which adds to the flavor of the food.

Flour. Flour with or without salt and pepper is the easiest coating for chicken, fish, liver, and many vegetables. Simply shake the food in a paper bag with the flour.

Batter. Thin batter is an easy way to get a uniform coating. This is ideal for shrimp, scallops, fruit, and "southern fried" chicken.

Cornmeal. This is the traditional coating for fish. Use half as much cornmeal as flour to avoid a dry, hard crust. This may be used with or without a previous dipping in egg or milk.

Crumbs. Crushed cereal flakes or potato chips, or dried bread or cracker crumbs may be used. Home-prepared crumbs should be sifted for best results.

Eggs and Crumbs. Slightly beaten egg, diluted with 2 tablespoons of water or milk is the best coating for croquettes. The egg forms a smooth fat-proof coating which "seals in" flavor and moisture. Wet foods, such as oysters, are sometimes rolled in crumbs first, then in egg, and again in crumbs.

Recipes

FRIED CORNMEAL MUSH

Pour cooked mush into mold rinsed with cold water. Let stand overnight in refrigerator. Cut into 1/4-inch slices and dip in flour. Place several slices in frying basket and lower carefully into hot fat (375°). Cook until slices are golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper and serve with sirup or jelly.

FRENCH TOAST

6 slices dry bread
2 eggs, beaten
1/4 cup milk

1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt

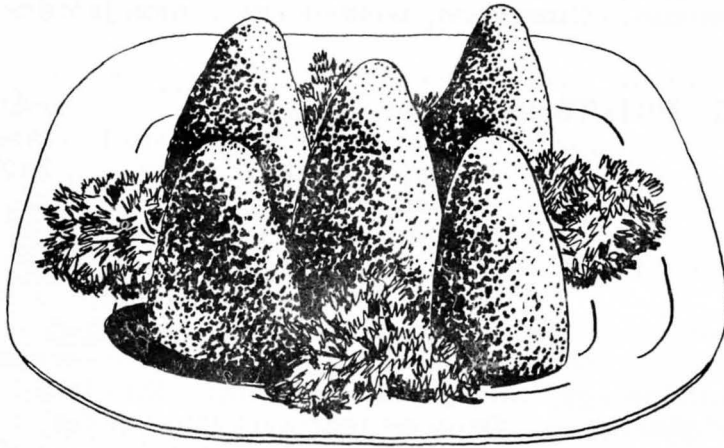
Trim crust from bread, if desired, and cut into triangles. Combine eggs, milk, sugar and salt. Dip bread into egg mixture, covering well. Place in frying basket and lower into hot fat. Cook at 375° from 1 to 2 minutes, until the toast is golden brown in color. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve with jelly or jam.

SALTED PEANUTS

Select shelled unroasted peanuts. Fry in deep fat at 350° from 6 to 7 minutes until the peanuts are light brown in color. Drain on absorbent paper and salt to taste.

CROQUETTES

Croquettes are real money savers. Almost any chopped vegetable, meat or fish can be used with success. For shaping, croquettes are usually rolled into balls first, then formed into rolls, cones, or flat cakes. They will hold their shape better if allowed to stand for 30 minutes or more before frying.



2 cups minced chicken, meat,
fish, cheese, nuts
or

1 cup meat and
1 cup cooked rice or potatoes
or
6 hard cooked eggs, finely chopped

1 tablespoon seasoning (as parsley,
onion, horse-radish, pimento)

For coating:

1 egg, blended with
2 tablespoons milk
1 1/2 to 2 cups dry crumbs

Thick White Sauce

3 tablespoons fat
4 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 cup milk

Melt the fat, blend in the flour; add seasoning and milk. Cook, stirring constantly until thick and smooth. (Reduce salt to 1/2 teaspoon and omit pepper when seasoned meat is used.) Makes 1 cup of white sauce.

Add meat and seasonings to white sauce. Chill and shape. Dip in egg and milk mixture; roll in dry crumbs until uniformly coated. Place in wire basket and fry in deep fat (365° - 375°) from 2 to 5 minutes until golden brown. Serve hot.

FRITTERS

Are you looking for something tasty, something different? Then try fritters. Your family will enjoy them as a main course or as a dessert. Among the many foods which can be used are:

Fruits: Apple, banana, blueberries, fruit cocktail, orange, pineapple.

Vegetables: Carrots, cauliflower, corn, eggplant, summer squash.

Others: Clams, crabs, oysters, scallops.

The larger slices or sections are dipped in the Thin Batter (page 5) and fried at 375° for 2 or 3 minutes.

One cup of smaller or diced pieces are blended with the Thick Batter (page 5), then dropped by teaspoon into hot fat (365°) and cooked 3 to 5 minutes.

THIN BATTER

1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 egg, beaten slightly
1/2 cup milk
1 tablespoon melted fat

THICK BATTER

1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 egg, beaten slightly
1/3 cup milk
1 tablespoon melted fat

Sift dry ingredients together. Mix egg and milk and combine with flour mixture. Add melted fat and stir until smooth. Cinnamon, nutmeg, or lemon juice may be added if desired.

PINEAPPLE FRITTERS

1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

1 egg, slightly beaten
1/3 cup milk
1 tablespoon melted fat
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup shredded pineapple,
drained

Mix and sift dry ingredients. Combine egg, milk, and melted fat. Stir into dry ingredients. Add the lemon juice and pineapple. Drop by teaspoon into hot fat, cooking 3 or 4 at a time. Turn when they come to the surface. Fry at 365° until delicate brown in color, about 5 minutes. Lift from basket, allow to drip briefly, and drain on absorbent paper. Dust with powdered sugar. Serve hot with lemon or fruit sauce or sirup.

CORN FRITTERS

1 cup flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

2 cups fresh or cream-
style canned corn
2 eggs beaten
2 tablespoons melted fat

Sift dry ingredients together. Mix corn, eggs, and melted fat; then stir in dry ingredients. Drop the corn batter into the hot fat by tablespoons. Fry at 365° about 4 minutes, until golden brown. Serve hot with sirup or serve plain as vegetable.

SEAFOOD FRITTERS

1 cup minced fish or seafood -
clams, scallops, crab
1 cup flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 eggs, beaten
1/4 cup shellfish liquid
or water
1/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon melted fat

Drain liquid from shellfish. Sift dry ingredients together. Combine egg and liquids and stir into flour mixture, making a smooth batter. Add melted fat and minced seafood. Drop batter by teaspoon into hot fat (365°) and fry to a golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain on absorbent paper; sprinkle with paprika and serve hot with tartar sauce.

MEATS

Cutlets. Cut veal steaks into serving-size pieces. Dip in eggs, slightly beaten with 2 tablespoons milk, then coat with crumbs or flour. Fry about 4 minutes at 375°.

Tenderloin. Flatten slices of pork tenderloin to 1/2 inch thickness. Coat with egg and crumbs. Fry at 375° about 4 minutes.

Liver. Cut liver into thin slices or into strips 1/2 inch across. Shake in seasoned flour and fry, one layer at a time, at 365° about 4 minutes.

Frankfurters. Deep fried "franks" are as delicious as those broiled over an open fire. Drop in hot fat just long enough to heat through, 375° for 2 minutes. Serve at once while plump and very hot. For "pigs in blankets" dip in batter before frying.

POULTRY

Broilers. Cut 1 1/2 to 2 pound chickens into serving pieces or quarters; shake in seasoned flour, and brown in hot fat (375°) 7 to 12 minutes.

Fryers. Cut 2 1/2 to 3 pound chickens into serving pieces. Shake in seasoned flour or dip in batter and slip one at a time into fat at 350°. Cook until tender, 12 to 20 minutes.

FISH AND SEAFOODS

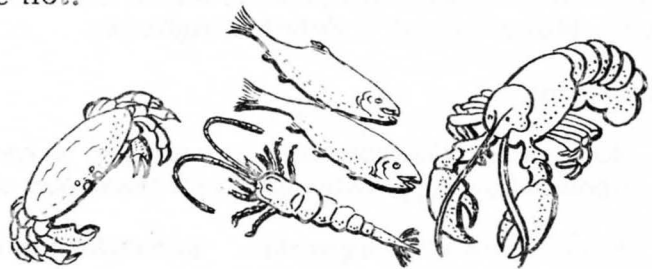
Fish Cakes. Use any cooked fish. Blend 1 cup flaked fish with 2 cups mashed potato and 1 egg. Season to taste. Shape into patties or drop by tablespoon into hot fat. Fry about 3 minutes at 370° until golden brown. Serve with tomato sauce or lemon.

Fish Steaks or Fillets. Cut fish into serving-size pieces, 1/2 inch thick or less. Use any desired coating - cornmeal and flour, crumbs, flour, or egg and crumbs. Put only one layer in basket at a time. Cook to even golden brown (370°) about 5 minutes. Serve piping hot, with lemon or sauce.

Shrimp. Fry shrimp before or after cooking. Dip in batter, shake in flour, or follow egg and crumb coating. Fry raw shrimp at 350° about 5 minutes and cooked shrimp at 375° about 3 minutes. Serve hot.

Oysters

- 1 quart oysters
- 2 eggs beaten lightly
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 cups crumbs.



Drain oysters. Mix eggs, milk and seasonings. Dip oysters in egg mixture and then in crumbs. Fry in hot fat (375°), until delicately brown, about 2 minutes. Serve piping hot with lemon wedges or tartar sauce.

VEGETABLES

Potatoes. Soak cut potatoes two hours in salt water, using 1 tablespoon salt to 1 cup of water. Drain potatoes and wipe with a cloth. Lower basket of potatoes into hot fat (375°) slowly to prevent sputtering of fat. Fry to golden brown, stirring occasionally with a fork. Drain, lay on absorbent paper, sprinkle generously with salt and serve at once.

Potato Chips. Cut crosswise as thinly as possible (1/16 inch thick) with a vegetable slicer or paring knife.

Shoestring Potatoes. Cut with slicer or knife into strips 1/8 inch across and 2 inches long.

French Fried. Cut into strips 1/4 inch across.

Onion Rings. Slice large peeled onions about 1/4 inch thick. Separate into rings and dip in milk. Drain slightly, and dip in seasoned flour, in beaten eggs and crumbs or batter. Fry at 375° until the rings are a delicate brown. Drain and serve while hot.

Fried Egg Plant. Cut small egg plant into 1/2-inch slices and peel. Larger fruit may be cut into 3-inch strips, 1/2 inch thick. Shake in seasoned flour or dip in batter and fry in hot fat (375°). Spread on absorbent paper to drain and keep hot for serving.

NUT DOUGHNUTS

2 cups sifted enriched flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/4 teaspoon ginger
3/4 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon shortening
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts
(may be omitted)

Sift together flour, baking powder, spices and salt. Cream together shortening and sugar. Add egg and beat until light and fluffy. Add flour mixture to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Gently stir in nuts. Chill 1 hour or longer. Roll about 1/2 inch thick. Cut with floured doughnut cutter and let stand 20 minutes before frying in hot fat (375°). As soon as doughnuts rise to top of fat, turn. Turn frequently until doughnuts are golden brown. Dust with confectioner's sugar or granulated sugar while still warm or frost with confectioner's sugar icing when cool. Makes about 2 dozen doughnuts.

Variations:

Sour Milk Doughnuts. Substitute sour milk for sweet milk. Use 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon soda.

Sour Cream Doughnuts. Substitute sour cream for milk, omit shortening, and use 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon soda.

Chocolate Doughnuts. Substitute 4 tablespoons cocoa for 5 tablespoons flour. Sift cocoa with the other dry ingredients.