

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Air-Fryer French Fries

SERVES Serves 2 to 4

TIME 1 hour (28 minutes cook time)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

After years of turning out fries of every stripe, we know a good fry when we taste one: the browned, crisp exterior, the fluffy center. And we know that achieving this ideal requires a few tricks, typically a presoak and a two-part frying. But who can argue with the promise of fries cooked with minimal effort or oil? So, holding doubts in check, we set out to create the ideal air-fryer French fry. Some recipes called for hours of prework. Others had you throw the potatoes in the basket and cross your fingers. From dry, hollow sticks to limp, greasy planks, not one passed muster. Seventy pounds of potatoes later, we learned that air-fryer fries require the same tricks as their deep-fried cousins: soaking, a low-temp fry to par-cook the spuds, and a high-temp fry to crisp them. But we found shortcuts: A rinse and a 10-minute soak in hot water was sufficient. Cutting thick fries prevented hollow centers and yielded a great crispy-fluffy ratio. Still, our fries tasted lean. A second toss in a bit of oil and salt in between fryings proved the solution, producing crisp, perfectly seasoned results. Excellent homemade fries had never been easier.



INGREDIENTS

- ☐ 1½ pounds russet potatoes, peeled
- ☐ 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ☐ Salt and pepper

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

✳ Frequently tossing the potatoes ensured the most even cooking and the best browning. We found tossing the fries in a bowl, rather than in the basket, yielded the best results and the fewest broken fries. Do not clean out the tossing bowl while you are cooking; the residual oil helps the crisping process.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Cut potatoes lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick planks. Stack 3 or 4 planks and cut into 1/2-inch-thick sticks; repeat with remaining planks.

2 Submerge potatoes in large bowl of water and rinse to remove excess starch. Drain potatoes and repeat process as needed until water remains clear. Cover potatoes with hot tap water and let sit for 10 minutes. Drain potatoes, transfer to paper towel-lined rimmed baking sheet, and thoroughly pat dry.

3 Toss potatoes with 1 tablespoon oil in clean, dry bowl, then transfer to air-fryer basket. Place basket in air fryer, set temperature to 350 degrees, and cook for 8 minutes. Transfer potatoes to now-empty bowl and gently toss to redistribute. Return potatoes to air fryer and cook until softened and potatoes have turned from white to blond (potatoes may be spotty brown at tips), 5 to 10 minutes.

4 Transfer potatoes to now-empty bowl and toss with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Return potatoes to air fryer, increase temperature to 400 degrees, and cook until golden brown and crisp, 15 to 20 minutes, tossing gently in bowl to redistribute every 5 minutes. Transfer fries to large plate and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.