

GUILT-FREE FRENCH FRIES

The secret is in the baking.

IT MAY BE AN occupational hazard of being a nutritionist, but folks often ask me to reveal my favorite indulgence. The answer is easy: french fries. It is the one food I literally cannot stop eating when it is in front of me. Their crisp, salty, potato-iness is lip-smackingly irresistible.

When I splurge on fries, I take solace in the fact that potatoes are nutrient- and fiber-rich, with a medium spud having roughly the same amount of vitamin C as a cup of blueberries and more than twice the potassium of a medium banana. Still, I certainly don't need all the oil and calories that comes with frying them.



BY ELLIE KRIEGER

Luckily, I have found a way to satisfy my french fry cravings healthfully. By tossing cut potatoes with a touch of healthy oil and baking them in a hot oven, you get that classic crisp-outside, tender-inside potato experience without the downsides. They are delicious with a simple sprinkle of salt or spiced up with a variety of seasonings.

These “fries” are healthy enough to be in regular rotation at my house, but I never make too many at once, because, I confess, I can't stop eating these, either.

Contributing editor and registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is best known as the host of Food Network's Healthy Appetite. Her most recent cookbook is Comfort Food Fix: Feel Good Favorites Made Healthy.



For a flavor boost, season fries with cheese or spices.



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Crispy Oven Fries

Cooking spray

3 large Russet potatoes, skin on

2 Tbs. canola oil

Salt to taste

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray.

Cut the potatoes into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick matchsticks. Place the potatoes into a large bowl, add the oil and toss to coat. Spread the potatoes on the baking sheet in a single layer. (Use a second baking sheet, if necessary, to avoid layering.)

Bake until golden brown and crispy, 35 to 40 minutes. Season with salt to taste.

Yield: 4 servings

Per serving ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup): 280 calories, 50g carbohydrates, 6g protein, 7g fat (.5g saturated), 4g fiber, 0mg cholesterol, 15mg sodium

ADD ZING TO SPUDS WITH VARIATIONS ON THE BASIC RECIPE:

Old Bay Crispy Oven Fries. After baking the potatoes, sprinkle with $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Old Bay Seasoning (or creole seasoning) instead of salt.

Parmesan Crispy Oven Fries. After tossing with oil, sprinkle $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese onto the potatoes and toss to coat evenly. Bake as directed.

Garlic and Herb Crispy Oven Fries. After tossing with the oil, sprinkle with $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. granulated garlic and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt and toss to coat evenly. After baking, toss with 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley and $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. finely chopped fresh chives.