



Alliance for Potato  
Research & Education

## Get the Facts on French Fries

French fried potatoes are made from fresh white potatoes. Like potatoes cooked by other methods, French fried potatoes provide important shortfall nutrients and are now prepared with healthier oils. Innovations in food science and technology are driving continuous improvement to ensure this nutritious and popular vegetable continues to align with dietary guidance. When eaten in moderation, French fries can be part of a healthy, well-balanced diet.

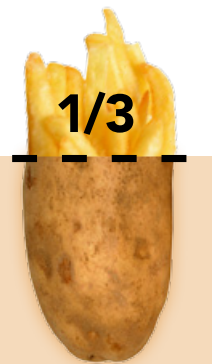
### Innovation

Improvements in coatings, cooking methods and cooking oils are enhancing the nutritional profile of potato products.

- All leading manufacturers and most restaurant operators now cook French fries in trans fat-free vegetable oils which contain beneficial mono- and polyunsaturated fats.<sup>1</sup>
- A 2013 CDC study showed that trans fatty acids were reduced by 88% in French fries and other potato products between 2007 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to transforming the nutrient profile of cooking oils, emerging technologies using new frying techniques can reduce fat absorption as much as 50% compared to traditional frying methods.<sup>3</sup>

French fries are  
made from whole  
white potatoes.



In the United States, about 1/3 of potatoes are grown for use as French fried potatoes, either oven-baked or deep fried.

### Typical nutrition profile of today's cooking oils<sup>4</sup>

**16%**  
saturated fat

**37%**  
polyunsaturated  
fat

**41%**  
monounsaturated  
fat



**0** grams trans fat  
**0** mg cholesterol

<sup>1</sup> Harnack L, Oakes M, French S, Cody D, Montgomery M, Pettit J, Kind D. Poster Presentation: Trends in the Fatty Acid Composition of Frying Oils Used at Leading Fast Food Restaurants over the Past 12 Years Based on French Fries as a Proxy Indicator. 34th Annual National Nutrient Databank Conference. Grand Forks, ND, July 12-14, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Otite FO, Jacobsen MJ, Dahmubed A, Mozaffarian D. Trends in trans fatty acids reformulations of U.S. supermarket and brand name foods from 2007 through 2011. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2013; 10:120198

<sup>3</sup> Decker EA, Ferruzzi MG. Innovations in Food Chemistry and Processing to Enhance the Nutrient Profile of the White Potato in All Forms. *Adv Nutr* 2013, 3455-3505

<sup>4</sup> Based upon fatty acid data for Fast foods, potatoes, french fried in vegetable oil. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 2012. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 25, <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnre/nd/>

## Nutrition

Like all forms of potatoes, French fries deliver meaningful amounts of key nutrients such as potassium and fiber. In fact, frying, because it reduces water, increases the concentration of many of the important vitamins and minerals in potatoes. Gram-for-gram, French fries provide more potassium than most other vegetables.<sup>5,6</sup>



U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 2010. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 23. Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>  
 \*Quick Service Restaurant


## Consumption

Potatoes in all forms are consumed well within current dietary guidance.

- Research shows that, on average, Americans get about 1.5% of their calories a day from French fried potatoes. Given that Americans consume an average of 2,080 calories per day, this represents about 31 calories a day.<sup>5</sup>
- NHANES survey data suggest that about 1 in 8 males and 1 in 10 females consumes French fries on a given day.<sup>5</sup>
- Even men and women who consumed the most French fries (90th percentile of consumption and above) consumed just 134 and 118 calories/day, respectively, which is equivalent to about half of a small serving from a fast-food restaurant.<sup>5</sup>


**Oven-Baked Fries** (over 90% of fries served in schools)  
 small serving, 74 grams<sup>6</sup>

• 116 calories	• 330 mg potassium (10% DV)
• 3.6 grams fat (0.8 g saturated)	• 1.9 g fiber (8% DV)
• 0 mg cholesterol	• 5% DV Magnesium
• 0 g trans fat	• 6% DV Vitamin B <sub>6</sub>
	• 16% DV Vitamin C



**Deep-Fried Fries**  
 small serving, 71 grams<sup>6</sup>

• 222 calories	• 410 mg potassium (14% DV)
• 10 grams fat (1.6 g saturated)	• 2.7 grams fiber (10% DV)
• 0 mg cholesterol	• 6% DV Magnesium
• 0 g trans fat	• 13% DV Vitamin B <sub>6</sub>
	• 6% DV Vitamin C



**French fried potatoes, including both oven-baked and deep-fried, are not among the top 10 sources of saturated fat in the diet.<sup>8</sup>**

**NHANES data show that French fried potatoes are significant contributors of desirable fats in the diet, including omega-3s and oleic acid, a monounsaturated fatty acid.<sup>7</sup>**

**French fried potatoes can be a part of a healthy, well balanced diet, and research shows they are consumed in moderation by most Americans.<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>5</sup> Storey ML, Anderson PA. Contributions of white vegetables to nutrient intake: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2009-2010. *Adv Nutr* 2013; 4:3355-3445.  
<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 2012. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 25, Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>  
<sup>7</sup> Food sources of Oleic Acid Among the US Population; Food sources of total omega 3 fatty acids, 2005-2006. Risk Factor Monitoring and Methods Branch Website. Applied Research Program. National Cancer Institute <http://riskfactor.cancer.gov/diet/foodsources/>, Updated May 21, 2010. Accessed May 6, 2013.  
<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. 7th edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010. Chap 3, pp.26