

# Fresh Cut French Fries

Making fresh cut fries can be one of the most intimidating concepts for many in the food service business. It does not have to be that way!



Give your customers what they want. Say, Idaho® Potatoes.

Famous



Potatoes

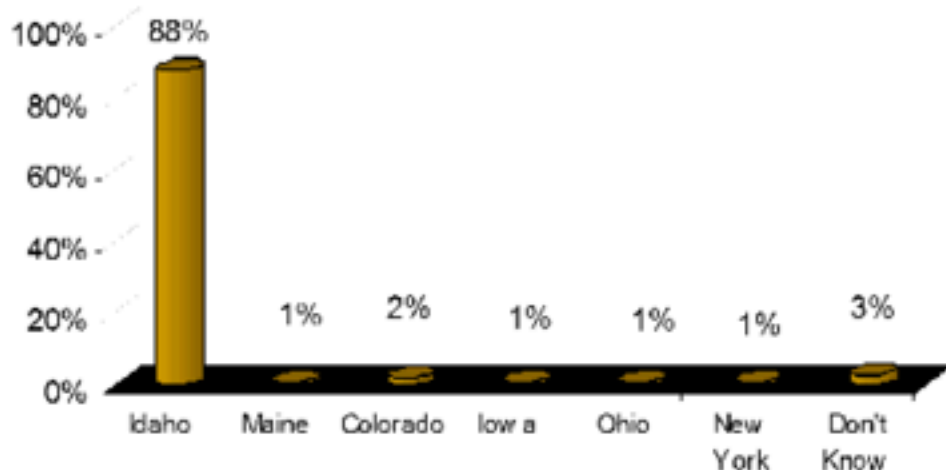
©2008 Idaho Potato Commission P.O. Box 1088, Boise, ID 83721 (208) 334-2300 [www.idahopotatoes.com](http://www.idahopotatoes.com)

Start with the right potato...



- When asked about potato growing regions, nearly 9 out of 10 consumers mentioned Idaho.

### Top-of-mind Potato-Growing Region (unaided)





# Popularity of Potatoes in USA

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- Per capita disappearance/consumption

- Potatoes

- 113.1 pounds total, 76.7 pounds processed

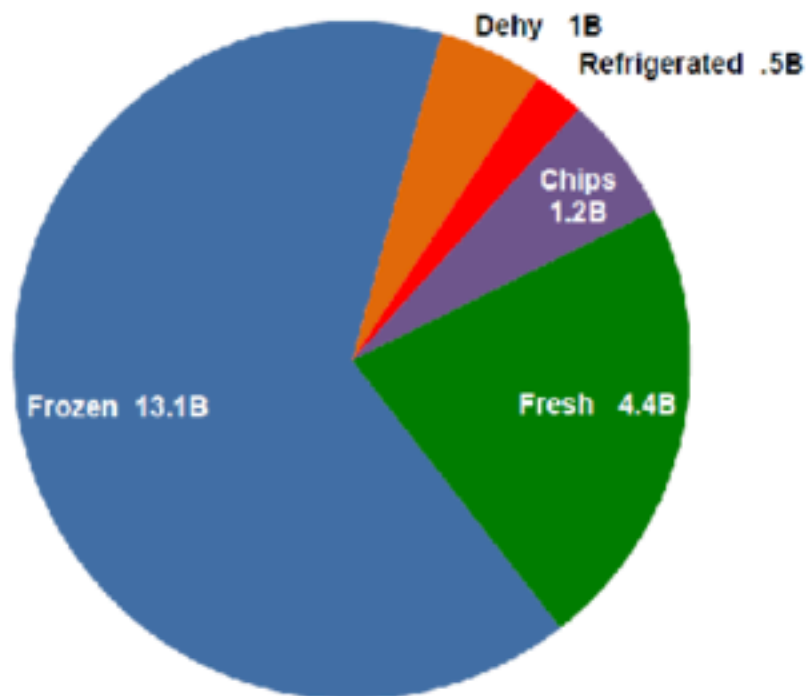
- Note, on average it takes 2 pounds of fresh potatoes to make 1 pound of frozen fries
    - It takes 4 pounds of fresh potatoes to make 1 pound dehy
    - Idaho produces 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total crop

- Starches

- Potatoes 113, Rice 35, Pasta 25, Beans 6.1

## Foodservice Potato Volume

Breakdown by Type (20.2B total)



Technomic Inc.

71% of Foodservice potato volume can be fried

# HOW TO MAKE THE BEST FRESH CUT FRENCH FRIES

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- When ordering, start with the right potato
  - Potato quality characteristics profile
    - Length, shape (oval), shallow eyes
      - No. 2 grade tastes the same as No. 1
      - No. 2 has less yield but may be more economical
    - Variety
      - Russet Burbank traditionally preferred in foodservice
      - Ranger, Alturas, Umatilla, Russet Norkotah
      - Chipping potatoes, Yellow flesh

# WHEN YOU RECEIVE POTATOES, CHECK THEM

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- High solids are key to a perfect fry
  - Measurement ratio of starch to water
    - 21% is ideal. Test to check on specific gravity
      - Combine 1 cup of salt with 9 ½ cups of water in a clear container
      - Add a potato. High solids potato will sink to the bottom. Low solids potato will float.



# NOT ALL POTATOES ARE STORED ALIKE

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- Potatoes stored too cold make lousy fries with dark streaks
  - Under 40°F the starch converts to sugar
  - Ideal storage for fresh fries usage is 55°F
  - A simple test
    - Use the diabetic strips for glucose urinalysis. Cut the raw potato in half, place strip on interior surface and take a reading. If dark brown, it contains sugar!



# RECONDITIONING

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- If you find that the potatoes delivered to you were stored too cold:
  - Place in a dark, well ventilated room at 60-70°F for 5-7 days
    - This will burn off much of the sugar
  - You can also blanch the cut potatoes in hot water (170°F) for several minutes to leach out the sugars

# PREPARATION OF POTATOES

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- Take out of storage
  - from a dark, cool area
- Check your cutting blades
  - and replace if necessary
- Cut the potatoes into strips
  - rinse in cold water and place in chilled water (iced is ok during the summer)
- Place in water to prevent darkening
  - add citrus acid (2 tbs to gallon) or vinegar (1 tbs) to the water
- Spin dry before blanching

# CRISPER FRENCH FRIES

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- Blanch potatoes in hot oil to pre-cook before peak periods:
  - Russet Burbank, Ranger, Umatilla, Alturas
    - 325°F for three to five minutes - 9/32", 3/8" and 7/16"
  - Russet Norkotah,
    - 300-325°F for five to seven minutes
- Doneness test: bend not break

# CRISPER FRENCH FRIES

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- Once blanched,
  - Cool to room temp in uncovered containers, then refrigerate
- Final fry at 350°F for 2 to 4 minutes
  - Suggest using a timer, once ideal is determined
  - The primary purpose of frying is to remove moisture or to “cook” the potato



# OTHER FRY TIPS

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- Overfilling fry basket results in limp fries
- Do not leave finished fries in basket over fryer
- Salt away from the oil
- Don't bag loose fries until ordered
- Filter and change oil frequently



# TYPICAL YIELDS

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- Using 80 count Russet Burbank
  - 38.2 pounds total
- 97.9% yield after cutting, with skin on
- 51.1% yield after frying
- Labor time of .9 hours
  - to wash, trim, cut, blanch, fry and serve
- Oil usage of 2.5 lb
- Total fry time around 5 min

# TYPICAL FOOD COSTS

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- Fresh potato is 80% of total, rigid container is 13 to 15%, the remaining balance is oil
- The selling prices
  - At one day events or stadiums for fresh cut fries typically run 10-12% cost,
  - Amusement parks are 13-20%,
  - Non-commercial and QSR's are 18-23%
- Conclusion: fresh cut fries are profitable!

# CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

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- Hot product
- Length
- Attractive color
- Good flavor
- Crispness
- Homemade appearance

# OPERATOR WANTS

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- Consistent quality
- Maximum yield
- Quick preparation
- Minimum oil usage/breakdown



# ADDED BENEFITS

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- Using and listing Idaho® potatoes on menu adds value four ways\*
  - Increased sales
  - Premium pricing
  - Differentiation
  - Quality “halo” effect

*\*Brand value assessment study by the Boston consulting group*



# WHAT WE LEARNED TODAY

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- Test for high solids
- Test for detecting refrigerated potatoes
- Method of reconditioning potatoes
- Tips on preparation - sharpness of cutting blade, keeping potatoes white when stored in water, frying with half empty baskets for crisp product
- Use Idaho russets for the best fries

# WHO SPECIFYS IDAHO FOR FRESH CUT FRIES?

- **Gourmet Burger/Sandwich Concepts**
  - Five Guys, Wingstop, Elevation, Mooyah, Wings N Things, Steak Escape, Mighty Fine, Meatheads, Burger Fi, Burger Monger, Cheeburger Cheeburger, Good Times, Penn Station, Pirmati Bros, South Philly Steak & Fries
- **And, surprise... In N' Out** (7 of 12 months)
- **Many other chains and independents:**
  - Houston's, Ted's Montana Grill

# Loaded Fries (Poutine)





# Sources for Best Practices

- Potato101.com
- Dr. Potato blog at [idahopotato.com](http://idahopotato.com)
- Foodservice Toolkit at [www.idahopotato.com/foodservice](http://www.idahopotato.com/foodservice)



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# Frying using Premium Oils

Chef Newman Miller, Executive Chef, Bunge



# Why Premium Oils?

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## 1. **Functionality**

- Heat stability – Less smoking and no gunk build up
- Oxidative stability – Longer fry-life

## 2. **Fry-life**

- Less oil purchased – lower annual cost
- Fewer oil changes – reduced labor and safety risk
- Improved Sustainability – less waste and transportation

## 3. **Government Legislation**

- Menu labeling will bring greater attention to fats
- Restrictions on 'bad' fats

## 4. **Health Claims**

- Zero trans fat
- Low saturated fat

# Flavor and Back of House Performance

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- Canola – Most stable at high heat and little to no scorching
- Soy – Great for everything from Frying applications to vinaigrettes and sauté applications
- Corn – Favored in the south for it's color and flavor for frying
- Sunflower – While not much is available Sunflower is a great healthy oil perfect for frying...

# Sunflower Oil

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# Trenchermen – Canola Oil





# International Fried Potatoes



# Cal Pep – Olive Oil



# Europe, Asia, and Oil

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- In Europe Canola Oil is leading oil used in restaurants for cooking
- In India Canola is valued for its heart healthy attributes and neutral flavor
- In China Soybean Oil is most commonly used
- While Olive Oil is popular it is still too expensive and temperamental to use for day to day use

## Takeaways – Frying Oil for Potatoes

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- Don't try and dictate to customers
- Make it taste good first
- Use the highest quality ingredient for the highest quality end product