

# 1 Herbed Fries

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| 2 pounds  | large russet potatoes, peeled | 10 small cloves | garlic, peeled                    |
| 30        | sage leaves                   | 6               | dried chili peppers               |
| 15 sprigs | thyme                         | 12 cups         | vegetable oil                     |
| 10 sprigs | rosemary (3 inch)             |                 | kosher salt & fresh ground pepper |

## Procedure

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- 1 Using a mandoline (or incredible patience & skill) cut potatoes into 1/2 inch wide by 1/16 inch thick fries. Very difficult to safely cut last 3/4 inch or so of potato. I prefer just to toss and save on band aids. As potatoes are cut place in a bowl of water.
- 2 Carefully dump out water and add fresh. Dump water and repeat rinse until water is clear. Refill bowl and let soak at least 30 minutes. Can store in fridge for a day or so.
- 3 Wash herbs and dry very well.
- 4 Dump fries into a strainer and shake a bit to remove as much water as possible. Let drain for about 5 minutes, shaking a few times. Lay a large towel out on counter. Cover with paper towels. Lay the fries out a handful at a time in a single layer. Cover with a few more sheets of paper towels and roll loosely. Let sit 10 minutes or so. Unroll. If fries are still wet repeat layering and rolling with paper towels. Fries must be perfectly dry or the steam will cause oil to foam too much and possibly boil over and catch fire. Thank goodness for baking soda. When you think they are dry enough allow to air dry another 10 minutes.
- 5 Pour oil into a very large deep pot. Should be only a third full of oil. You need a good six inches of headroom. Insert a candy thermometer. Over high heat bring oil to 375.
- 6 While oil is heating, set up cooking area. Line a large sheet with paper towels. Have a spider/flat strainer nearby. On a large plate have herbs, garlic and chilies. I like to have a serving plate warming in the oven.
- 7 When oil is hot, add about 1/5 of the fries a handful at a time. Wait a few second between additions. Oil will foam up a few inches for about 15 seconds (eternity). Oil temp will also drop. If oil foams closer than an inch from top of pot, turn off flame. Carefully stir once or twice for even cooking. After 90 seconds, edges will begin to turn golden, add 1/5 of herbs, garlic an chili. Cook for about 90 seconds more until a lovely pale golden.
- 8 Carefully scoop out, allow to drain a bit and toss onto paper towel lined sheet. Season promptly with salt and pepper. Eat!

Yield: 3-4 servings

## Author Notes

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A salad spinner does a fine job of drying fries.

Todd and I discovered these at Cesars Tapas bar in Berkeley. They are perfect with champagne and friends.

At the bar they are brought out with a side of aioli...nice but not necessary. Sriacha mayo is also tasty.

When oil is completely cool, strain out chunks and store in a dark place. Can be used several more times.

Great variation: Omit herbs, garlic and chili pepper. After frying, season well with salt, pepper & chili pepper flakes ( or alleppo pepper is super to use, lots of flavor with mild heat). Serve at table with a bottle of rice wine vinegar so guests can sprinkle on to taste.

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