



Department
of Health

Tips on chips

Use best practice and improve
the flavour!



Following these tips when you're frying can help you:

- make your chips crispier and tastier
- lower the amount of saturated fat and salt in a portion

Achieve at least 5 tips. Tick the box when you have achieved each tip and try to add a new tip every month. You may already be achieving several of these tips but be prepared to go further and make real changes to help your customers stay healthy.

1. Use thick, straight-cut chips

These absorb less fat, so you use less oil and it's healthier for your customers.

Make your chips using a cutter with at least a 14mm (just over ½ an inch) cross section.

2. Fry at 175°C

Getting oil to 175°C (350°F) before you start frying gives you crispier, more appealing chips that absorb less fat. That means you use less oil.

Each time you fry a new batch, let the oil come back up to 175°C before you start.

Overloading your fryer, or adding too much food when you're frying, makes the temperature of the oil drop. That makes the chips greasier and uses more oil. If you use baskets, they shouldn't look more than half full.

3. Check the temperature

Make sure the temperature on your range is accurate. You can do this by heating the oil and testing the temperature in the middle of the oil with a catering thermometer. If you have a range with a thermostat, make sure the probe is clean when you drain the fryer. You should have the thermostat checked as part of a regular service of your equipment.

4. Cook for 5-6 minutes

The cooking time for chips will depend on the type of potato you use, but for thick-cut fresh potatoes cooked at 175°C it's about 5-6 minutes, until the chips are a pale, golden colour. If you cook them straight through and take them out of the oil as soon as they are cooked, they will absorb less fat. And you will use less oil.

If you decide to blanch some chips to help with a busy service, then you should still use best practice when you blanch and fry at 175°C, allowing the oil to come back up to temperature between batches. This will reduce the fat absorption and help prevent greasy chips.

5. Bang, shake and drain chips

By shaking the chips and banging the wire scoop several times, you can reduce fat absorption by 20% and make your chips crisper. This is because chips carry on absorbing fat after they come out of the fryer. If you bang and shake you'll use less oil, need to top up less often, and need to empty the drain in the chip box less often.

6. Look after your oil

Try to change your oil before it foams, froths or smokes. It will also change colour, smell rancid or fishy when you heat it and will affect the flavour of the chips.

Follow these tips to keep your oil fresh for longer. Then you will use less oil.

- Don't heat your oil above 175°C.
- Dry fresh chips for as long as possible after soaking. If you use a potato preparation you will be able to dry your chips for longer.
- Keep fryer topped up with oil.
- Don't 'idle' a fryer at high temperatures, let it cool to 100°C and cover it.
- Sieve the oil every time you fry a batch and throw the scraps away.
- Filter your oil often, ideally once a day.

For information on changing oil safely, see www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais17.pdf

7. Fry chips on their own

If you fry foods like sausages, chicken and anything in breadcrumbs, don't fry these in the same oil you use for chips as they will affect your oil quality. Gently shake any food in breadcrumbs before you fry it to knock off any loose bits – this will help keep your oil fresh.

8. Use a liquid oil

The more saturated fat in your oil, the more saturated fat there will be in your chips.

Liquid oils such as sunflower and rapeseed have about 10% saturated fat. Solid oils such as palm oil or beef fat have about 50%. Some suppliers provide palm oil blends (a mix of palm and other oils) that have about 30% saturated fat. If you choose sunflower or rapeseed oil, you need to use a 'high oleic' version, as these are more stable (provided you look after your oil well).

Whichever oil you choose, always make sure it is not hydrogenated.

But what about the taste?

Worried that your customers won't like the taste? Did you know that previous winners of the Perfect Portion Awards, voted for by customers, fry with rapeseed oil?

9. Cut down on salt

Lots of people are trying to cut down on the amount of salt they eat. You can help your customers to do this by doing these things.

- Use a salt shaker with fewer holes – just ask your supplier if they provide five-hole tops.
- Ask your customers if they want salt before adding it.
- Don't add salt to batter mix. If you buy batter mix, check the ingredients and try to choose one that doesn't contain added salt or sodium.
- Read the label on foods like sauces, sausages and pies and choose the one with less salt (or it might say 'sodium'). If there's no information on salt, ask your supplier.

10. Size matters

Consider reducing portion sizes across your menu to a level that is acceptable to customers. If customers are tending to leave food on their plates, this is a clear signal that portion sizes are too large and a smaller size would be acceptable.

Offering different portion sizes makes good business sense. Maybe you could offer small cones, for people with smaller appetites, as well as regular and large trays. It might also help your lunchtime trade when some people only want a small amount to eat. Make sure your staff are certain about portion sizes or they could be giving away extra chips.