



## The Story of Fast Food French Fries

Who doesn't enjoy the salty crunch of a hot French fry? When you go to your favorite fast food restaurant, no matter where it is, you know you can count on the fries to taste just right. How do they get them perfect every time? What is the story behind the fast food French fry?

### Potato Varieties

There are over 4000 kinds of potatoes grown in the world. Your fast food French fries are made from only four kinds. These four kinds of potatoes make perfect fries that are crispy on the outside and fluffy on the inside. Fast food restaurants buy a *lot* of potatoes. In fact, the demand is large enough that most potato farmers in the US only grow these four kinds in large **monocultures**.

Potatoes are strong plants that will grow in cold and dry areas. Potato farmers in other parts of the world do not even need to water their fields! Fast food French fry potatoes, have to be perfect, though. The only way to make sure that the potatoes are exactly the same is to water the plants for part of the year. In addition to using extra water, the farmers use chemical pesticides. Once the potatoes are grown, they are dug up using large farm equipment and trucked to French fry processing plants.



## French Fry Processing Plant

The French fry processing plant is a maze of conveyer belts and tubes where the potatoes ride from one step to the next. To get the perfect French fry cut, the potatoes are shot through a special knife at 60-70 miles per hour! The perfect slices are mixed together with many ingredients, including a sugar that helps create the perfect golden color. They also add a chemical called sodium acid pyrophosphate to keeps the fries from turning gray. Finally, the fries are partly fried in a vat of three kinds of oils and other ingredients. One of the ingredients is a chemical to keep the mixture from foaming. The partially cooked fries are frozen, packaged, and trucked to fast food restaurants across the country, sometimes hundreds or thousands of miles. That's a lot of gasoline!



## Deep Fry

To finish the cooking, the fries are deep fried in an oil mixture at the restaurant. This oil mixture also includes the chemical that prevents foaming. They are salted and served to you piping hot. Thanks to a few chemicals along the way and a strict system that requires consistency at every step, you know exactly what to expect when you bite into that crispy, golden fry.