

Yes it is possible to can your French fries Joseph Parish



Being a prepper, I am always watchful of innumerable ways to store up on food and for being equipped for dealing with an eventual emergency, this is one of those ways. At selected times of the year potatoes can be purchased at an amazingly inexpensive price of less than \$10.00 dollars for a 50-pound bag. Additionally, throughout the year they are readily accessible at your local grocery store and on occasionally may be listed as a sale item. Lastly, you can grow your own in your family garden. If you grow your own potatoes this process for storing them is definitely worth trying but with home-grown potatoes you should be forewarned to allow them to age for several months prior to using them. If using store bought potatoes bear in mind that those which you purchase at the grocery store are likely from last season's harvest and have been stored for 6-8 months prior to reaching the open market.

The dilemma with procuring bulk quantities of potatoes is that the typical family cannot possibly use up such large amounts of potatoes before they start to go bad. I am sure that several of you have seen extra potatoes sprout before they could be eaten, it has happened to me many times. We would buy the 50-pound bags at around \$10.00 per bag and before we finished them off, they start to sprout or go bad. Never fear however, as there is a viable solution to this dilemma. You could readily cut them up into your desired shape and freeze them however a much better solution is at hand.

It does not take much effort to slice your extra potatoes into French fry size pieces and can them in your pressure canner. At some future date when you are ready to use your canned "French fries" it is a simple matter to just bake or fry them to a crispy state as you desire. This is an older process which has been used for years to storing your "spuds" and is actually quite simple. This is likely a procedure you will want to print and save to your survival folder. Let me now proceed with the instructions at this time.

Start by scrubbing your potatoes until they are "squeaky" clean and after they are totally spotless you can slice them into strips using a French fry cutter. Soak the cut fries for 30 minutes in water containing a splash of vinegar in it. Some people prefer to soak their cut potatoes in lemon water in lieu of vinegar or blanching them prior to canning to prevent the potatoes from changing color and turning brown or transforming into mush.

At the conclusion of the soaking time merely drain, rinse, and recover with fresh water. Let them soak for a few minutes more in the fresh water and again drain and rinse them. Place your potatoes into sterilized, clean jars standing them upright. This process works best if the containers used are wide mouth jars rather than regular neck versions and by simply laying the jars on their side you can easily slide the fries in. Get the French fries in the jars as tightly as you possible however do not stuff them in so tight that they start to break. Add one teaspoon of salt to each jar and finally pour hot boiling water to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the top. You could add a touch of Pickle Crisp to the jar to encourage the fries to stay crispier but if done properly this is not required. Next process the jars in your pressure canner. Fill the pressure canner with the jars as per manufacturer's instructions and place 3 quarts of Water in the bottom of the canner. Heat and allow the steam to start flowing out of the top in a steady manner before placing the weight on it. When the pressure builds up to 10lbs, watch carefully to ensure your temperature remains consistent to keep the pressure consistent. Time needed is 40 minutes at 10 lbs. of pressure.

Now cool and store your jars of potatoes as follows. After the jars have properly cooled, they can be removed from the canner and allowed to cool to room temperature at which time you should ensure that all the seals have set and the lids have been sucked in. It is likely that as you go about your normal kitchen duties you will hear the familiar sound of the lids "Pinging" as they start to cool. If you encounter one which has failed to seal properly you can either use it immediately or store it in the refrigerator for as much as one week. When preparing to can your potato, it is important that the rim of the jar be nick free with no debris remaining on it or chips along the edge of the glass. The jars will never seal property if there are obstructions between the glass rim and the rubber seal.

When you are ready to eat your French fries open the jar, drain the contents well, rinse the fries to remove any salt residue and cook in hot oil for easily made French fries. You should place the fries on a rack to allow them to drain for a bit or you could even pat them dry prior to frying. Potatoes stored in this manner fry up great and produce a nice golden-brown skin. They are crunchy on the outside and soft inside affording the cook a wonderful way to save time.

Here are a few precautions which I recommend that you keep in mind. First, be very careful in mixing potato varieties. If at all possible, use a single variety of potato. Use a smaller fry cutter and not the larger size one. Do not over pack your jars. Do not include any slivers, edges, or small ends in your can which the cutter may have created. Use only the best fry pieces that you can find. If you loosely pack the jars, they will process well producing no mush and avoiding breakage. In the end the labor will award you with several quart jars of fine-looking French fries suspended in a clear water base. Failure to follow these hints can result in a fair amount of mushy potatoes and many broken pieces being processed. Good luck and enjoy your canned French fries.