

# America's 10 BEST FRENCH FRIES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEVI BROWN

If you ask most Americans if they want fries with that, the answer will be “Yes!” And folks don’t really care what form they’re in. They’ll take them thick or thin, crinkled or straight, naked or loaded, from fancy restaurants or roadside shacks. Unless the fries are under-cooked or under-salted, they’re pretty much delicious. We are aware, in other words, that naming the 10 best french fries in the country is a little crazy. We did it anyway, and we enjoyed everything we ate along the way. Here are our favorites.



Grand Rapids, MI

## HopCat Crack Fries

HopCat’s founders settled on the final recipe for their crack fries (named for how addictive they are) while sitting around a table drinking beer—which could explain why the fries are battered in light beer before they’re sprinkled with black pepper seasoning. Some people order extra toppings, like cheese sauce, jalapeños and onion, and almost everyone orders a cold one on the side. The owner’s favorite: An IPA called Huma Lupa Licious by Michigan-based Short’s Brewing Company. *Multiple locations; hopcat.com*





Chicago

**Susie's Drive Thru Cheese Fries**

Susie's has been serving french fries in crunchy flour tortilla shells for 40 years. You'll be lucky to nab a seat (the place has just three stools inside and a few picnic tables outside), so plan to grab and go. Owner Kathy Ninos says plenty of people finish the cheese-smothered fries before they've even left the parking lot. 4126 West Montrose Ave.; 773-283-6544



West Mifflin, PA



**The Potato Patch, Kennywood Park Bacon + Cheddar Fries**

The longest lines at Kennywood Park aren't for roller coasters or arcade games; they're for french fries. The Potato Patch sells about half a million servings every summer, and visitors sometimes wait more than an hour for a carton of freshly cut fries topped with melted cheddar and chopped bacon. If you don't have the time, you can hit up a local market instead: Pennsylvania-based Giant Eagle sells them frozen. 4800 Kennywood Blvd.; kennywood.com



Cincinnati

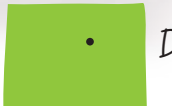


**Habits Café Sweet Potato Fries**

At Habits Café you have your choice of fries: plain, Texas, Cajun...but you'd be wise to choose sweet potato, in part because of the side of spiced apple butter. Owner Mark Rogers tested all sorts of cuts on the fries before going with crinkle-style: The grooves help hold the sauce. 3036 Madison Rd.; habitscafe.com



Denver



**Steuben's Gravy Cheese Fries**

Purists like Steuben's fries just as they come, covered in brown gravy and melted mozzarella, but chefs here will top them with anything you want, like green chiles, fried eggs or bacon. It's never too early to put in your order: "Sometimes we get the first one at 10 o'clock on a Saturday morning," says executive chef Brandon Biederman. "You can kind of guess what they did the night before." 523 East 17th Ave.; steubens.com



Philadelphia

**The Continental Szechuan Shoestring Fries**

You can't ignore the french fries at The Continental: They're served in 10-inch-tall heaps and they end up on just about every table. "If people haven't heard about the fries, they order them when they see them come out of the kitchen," says executive chef Jamie Wolf. The lacy fries, which come drizzled with a spicy mustard sauce, were originally just on the dinner menu, but they've become so popular that they're now sold at lunch, too. 138 Market St.; continentalmartinibar.com



Austin

**Hyde Park Bar & Grill Hyde Park Fries**

Bick Brown is fanatical about french fries, and when he opened Hyde Park Bar & Grill in 1982, he wanted the place to be famous for them. His are soaked in buttermilk, then breaded and fried and served with his special sauce, a mix of mayo, jalapeños and dill. The sauce originally came on a chicken sandwich, but customers liked it so much they started requesting extra for their fries. "Now if we don't bring it out with their order," Bick says, "people holler, 'Where's my special sauce?'" Two locations; hpbng.com





San Francisco



**AT&T Park**  
**Gilroy Garlic Fries**

No one has to walk too far to buy a basket of garlic fries at AT&T Park, home of the San Francisco Giants. There are 25 spots around the stadium dedicated just to the local favorite, made with garlic from nearby Gilroy (home of the legendary garlic festival). Breath mints are free for the taking at every serving window. 24 Willie Mays Plaza; [sanfrancisco.giants.mlb.com](http://sanfrancisco.giants.mlb.com)



Portland, OR



**'Reel M' Inn**  
**Jojos**

If you haven't tried jojos, you should. And this is where you should taste your first one. The supersize versions of a wedge-cut fry are a local specialty in the Pacific Northwest, and 'Reel M' Inn makes some of the biggest ones around. The cooks quarter seven-inch potatoes (one order comes with all four pieces), then batter them and fry the wedges skin-on. Just beware: The wait can be long on busy nights. "We've got just one fryer," says owner Paul Meno, "and that thing goes nonstop from open to close." 2430 Southeast Division St.; 503-231-3880



Seattle

**Luc**  
**Soufflé Potato Crisps**

The process of making a puffed-up potato, called pomme soufflé, is so difficult to master, chef Thierry Rautureau fried every batch himself for the first three months they were on the menu. The potatoes are poached in oil (they have to be stirred constantly so they don't get crisp), then deep-fried until they puff up. Thierry has since passed the torch, but not to just anyone: A dedicated fry guy comes in to prep the potatoes every day. 2800 East Madison; [thechefinthehat.com](http://thechefinthehat.com)

