



J-Dog's people fries

By Susie Iventosch

One of our good friends recently told me that she's had breakfast at the Village Inn Café in Orinda pretty well every morning for over 15 years! When I heard this, I remembered that owners Kathy and Kurt Bellows are the parents of my daughter's very best friend from kindergarten, Kimberly.

We'd moved away from the area sometime during their first grade year, so I'd kind of forgotten that they owned the restaurant. Whenever Courtney and Kimbers (as my daughter used to call her) wanted to have a play date, I'd bring my two little boys (who are now 18 and 20) in tow. This year, the girls will both graduate from college. My, how time flies ... but I di-

gress.

The Village Inn, serving breakfast and lunch, is famous for its breakfast potatoes, according to my friend. When I phoned the restaurant to see how they're made, Kathy said, "They're not like regular hash browns. Kurt slices them and cooks them on the grill and people really do seem to love them."

This all brings me back to my youngest son Joel, who as a toddler always loved chatting with Kathy when we visited the Bellows' house. And now, he makes amazing potatoes, too. Hmm ... I wonder if he learned this trick at their house when I wasn't watching!

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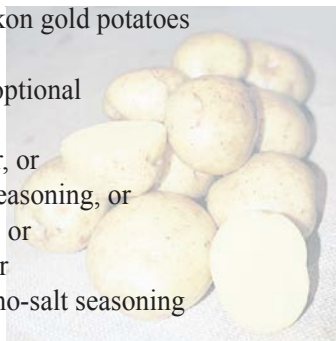
Try as we may to raise civilized children, they still end up with names like "J-dog" or just plain "Dog." While I don't pretend to understand the "dog" thing, it's actually kind of funny. With a little good grooming, this generation of "dogs" can be inspired to prepare some excellent people treats, like these homemade, oven-baked fries that Joel (dog), conjured up.

This recipe calls for approximately one medium-large potato, per person. If your family really loves fries, you may want to consider preparing two potatoes per person.

Ingredients for six servings

6 medium to large russet or Yukon gold potatoes
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard *optional

1 teaspoon each salt and pepper, or
2-4 teaspoons Montreal steak seasoning, or
2-4 teaspoons Cajun seasoning, or
2-4 teaspoons Lemon pepper, or
2-4 teaspoons of your favorite no-salt seasoning



**Seasoning options – according to your own taste – use any or all of those listed, or come up with your own favorite seasoning, and adjust seasoning quantities by experimenting to suit your taste.

Directions

Clean and slice unpeeled potatoes into strips ½ inch wide by 1/8-¼ inch deep and the full length of the potato. Place potato strips into a gallon-size Ziplock baggie. (You may need two Ziplocks depending upon how many potatoes you prepare.)

Drizzle oil (and Dijon if you choose) over potatoes in baggie and zip bag shut. Knead bag to distribute oil and mustard over potato slices. Open baggie to add seasonings, re-zip and again knead baggie to spread seasonings over

potatoes.

Spread potatoes onto a greased baking sheet, (we use PAM) making sure that potatoes are just a single layer deep. You may need a second baking sheet.

Bake in a 400-degree oven for 20-30 minutes, or until potatoes are easily pierced, but beginning to get a bit crunchy on the outside. You should turn potatoes with a spatula at least once or twice during baking to make sure all edges get a little crispy. Serve immediately, piping hot.



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