



## A WORD ON PAN FRYING, DEEP FRYING & CONFIT

Ah, the joy of the crispy golden delicious flavor of properly fried foods. It has been said that anything fried tastes good. Some of our favorite foods, from French fries to fried chicken, utilize the techniques of pan & deep frying.

**Pan frying** is cooking foods about a third to half deep in hot fat; around 300-350°. It is a good choice for larger pieces of proteins & produce that need time to cook through, or for delicate items (such as sole filets). It is also ideal for thin, flat-shaped foods, such as meat cutlets or eggplant slices.

**Deep frying** is cooking foods completely submerged in hot fat usually around 325-395° (the lower temperatures are for things such as doughs & fritters that take a longer time to cook through or contain high sugar contents). It is well suited for items that cook relatively fast & are desired to have an extra crisp exterior. They are both great ways to cook foods quickly; due to the high cooking temperature of the oil.

**Here are some tips & tidbits to make these techniques easy as can be:**

- If properly done, deep fried foods do not absorb much oil. When the oil is hot enough, the food cooks quickly & the steam coming out helps to keep the oil from soaking in.
- Choose fats with high smoking points for frying (ex. grapeseed, vegetable/soy bean, sunflower, peanut, etc.).
- Using a candy or fry thermometer is a good way to be sure of the fat's temperature.
- When pan frying, flat sided cut items (ex. steaks, eggplant) or shaped items (ex. corn fritters, crab cakes) should be cooked ½ deep in oil. Odd shaped items (ex. chicken drumsticks) should be cooked a third deep in oil.
- Adding food to the cooking oil lowers the temperature of the oil. It is wise to start with a slightly higher temperature than needed & work in small batches to increase the oils recovery time. Also using a large amount of oil for deep frying helps maintain a steady fat temperature.
- Breading or flouring an item helps it keep its internal moisture by providing a protective barrier.
- If breading items, make sure to shake off excess breading before frying. Skim out any leftover particles from the oil to keep from burning & give the oil an off flavor.
- Don't use the same oil to fry strong & mild flavored items. As well, strong flavored fats will impart their flavors to foods cooked in them.
- Season items as soon as they are removed to their draining area to help the seasonings to adhere to the surface.
- Be careful not to let the fry fat smoke. It will cause it to have strong off flavors, break down its chemical composition, and give it the potential to burst into flame. If this is to happen, use a damp kitchen towel to cover the pot to quench the fire.

**Confit** is to slowly simmer an item in fat (many times its own fat) until very tender. This lends to a soft & very rich texture & flavor. Confit needs to be done at relatively low temperatures to ensure that the food does not dry out. This technique can be used on proteins as well as produce.