



These chickpea fries are a crispy-creamy snack worth a little frying

By [Joe Yonan](#)

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Active time:

30 mins

Total time:

1 hour

Servings:

4 to 8

Many times, when I write about a recipe that employs frying, I feel almost apologetic. I'm sorry you have to use a lot of oil. I'm sorry that makes the recipe seem not so healthy. I'm sorry it takes longer to clean up. I'm sorry it's intimidating! Perhaps most importantly these days: I'm sorry I don't have an [air fryer](#) and didn't test this in one.

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The truth is, I still consider true frying — with proper technique, including tricks to minimize the absorption of oil, along with the mess — a foundational method that can result in simply delicious, even nutritious, food.

Take these chickpea fries. Made with chickpea flour and based on the panisses of southern France, they come together similarly to polenta fries: you cook up the porridge-like batter, chill it until firm, cut it into sticks, then fry.

The keys are to use just 1 cup of oil in a Dutch oven, whose high sides prevent splattering, and to heat the oil to 350 degrees before you fry. The chickpea batons get crispy on the outside and stay custardy inside, and when you drain them well, the whole batch absorbs a mere 2 tablespoons of the oil. That puts them at only 1 gram saturated fat per serving — including the mayo dipping sauce.

Besides that sauce, which consists of mayonnaise whisked with preserved lemon, I love cookbook author Emma Zimmerman's touch of sprinkles of chopped parsley (along with salt) on the hot fries.

Could you make these in an air fryer? I'm sure you could — there's no way you'll get the same kind of crust, but if it makes these more likely to show up in your kitchen, go for it. In the meantime, I'll be over here frying, draining, dipping and crunching and munching — and this time, not apologizing.

Chickpea Fries With Preserved Lemon Mayo

These are a delicious appetizer, especially when dipped in the accompanying preserved lemon mayo, but they can also make a nice main course with a salad and bread.

Active time: 30 mins; **Total time:** 1 hour

Make Ahead: The batter can be refrigerated for up to 3 days before frying.

Storage: These are best when freshly made, as they lose their crispness after a while, but you can refrigerate them for up to 5 days and reheat in a 350-degree oven. The preserved lemon mayo can be refrigerated for up to 5 days.

Where to Buy: Chickpea flour can be found in well-stocked supermarkets, natural foods stores and in Indian markets (where it is called besan).

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Ingredients

- **2 teaspoons olive oil, plus more for greasing the parchment**
 - **4 cups water**
 - **2 cups (8 1/2 ounces/240 grams) chickpea flour**
 - **1 teaspoon fine salt**
 - **1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
 - **1/2 cup (4 ounces/113 grams) vegan mayonnaise**
 - **2 tablespoons preserved lemon paste (may substitute finely chopped preserved lemons)**
 - **1 cup (240 milliliters) safflower, sunflower or other neutral oil good for high-heat frying**
 - **1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped**
 - **1 1/2 teaspoons flaky sea salt**
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Step 1

Cut two pieces of parchment paper to fit a 9-by-13-inch rimmed baking sheet (a quarter sheet pan) or casserole dish. Use a little olive oil to lightly grease one side of each piece of parchment. Place one parchment piece on the bottom of the baking sheet (oil side up) and reserve the other.

Step 2

In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the 2 teaspoons of olive oil and water. Just before it starts to boil, slowly sprinkle in the chickpea flour while whisking to remove many (if not all) of the clumps and form a smooth batter. Whisk in the salt and pepper and reduce the heat to low. Switch to a wooden spoon and cook, stirring constantly, until the batter stiffens and starts to pull away from the sides and/or bottom of the pan, 10 minutes.

Step 3

Scoop the batter onto the greased parchment in the pan and spread it out evenly as quickly as you can (it will start to firm up as it cools). Place the second piece of paper, greased side down, on the batter and gently press to smooth it out evenly. Transfer the pan to the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, until it has cooled and set.

Step 4

While the batter is cooling, in a small bowl, mix together the mayo and lemon.

Step 5

When the batter has set, remove the top paper and use a butter knife to cut the chickpea block into 24 sticks, each one about 4 inches by 1 inch.

Step 6

Set a cooling rack over a large, rimmed baking sheet next to the stove.

Step 7

In a Dutch oven or other deep pot, heat the safflower oil until it reaches 350 degrees on an instant-read thermometer. (Or you can check by carefully dipping one end of a chickpea stick into the oil; if it sizzles, it's ready.) Working in batches to avoid overcrowding, gently add the chickpea sticks to the oil and cook, turning with tongs when needed, until golden on both sides, about 3 to 5 minutes per side. Using the tongs, transfer to the rack to drain. While hot, sprinkle on one side with the parsley and flaky salt.

Serve hot with the preserved lemon mayo for dipping.

Nutrition Information

Per serving (3 fries plus 1 1/4 tablespoons mayo), based on 8

Calories: 230; Total Fat: 17 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 797 mg; Carbohydrates: 16 g; Dietary Fiber: 3 g; Sugar: 3 g; Protein: 5 g

This analysis is an estimate based on available ingredients and this preparation. It should not substitute for a dietitian's or nutritionist's advice.

Adapted from *"The Miller's Daughter"* by Emma Zimmerman (Hardie Grant, 2022).

Tested by Joe Yonan; email questions to voraciously@washpost.com.

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Tell The Post: What's your most memorable Thanksgiving cooking disaster story?

Even in the most laid-back families, cooking Thanksgiving dinner can feel like a high-wire performance. You're making dishes that you maybe only prepare once a year, often with a house full of family and friends around — and then there's

the pressure overlaying the whole thing, that voice in your head telling you that this is supposed to be a precious memory, so don't screw anything up.

All of that is practically a recipe for a kitchen disaster. We've all had them, or we know them from family lore. Culinary catastrophes can befall even the most confident and experienced of cooks. And since there's only so much you can do to avert them, the best way to handle them is to laugh — and then share them, so we can all join in, with the punchline being "oh look, we're all human, and thank goodness for that!"

We're asking you to submit your own family's favorite tale of Thanksgiving cooking gone awry. We want to hear all about underdone birds, botched gravies and singed stuffings, or the reason no one lets Uncle Louis man the turkey fryer anymore.

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