

## Air Fryers

Air fryers cook by circulating extremely hot air around the food. A heating element, much like a stove top burner, is situated above the food and then a fan is used to rapidly move the air around the food. Food comes out crispy on the outside while moist and tender on the inside. Air fryers provide a healthier alternative to conventional frying because they use very little or no oil during the cooking process.

The appliance itself is relatively small. It sits on the countertop like a crock pot and plugs into an electrical outlet. It is not meant to sit on a stove top. The unit contains a basket to hold food, an electric heating element, and a fan to circulate the hot air. Some units have a digital control panel while others have large dials/knobs. All of the units come with an operator's manual and suggested recipes.

I've had experience with two air fryers. Both fryers were 3 quart capacity. One was a digital model and one was not. I found both units easy to operate and very easy to clean. The baskets and basket holders were both dishwasher safe, although I hand washed them as there was hardly anything to wash. I cooked chicken breasts and tater tots in both units for comparison. The chicken breasts were fresh and rather thick. Only two breasts fit into each basket and both units required additional cook time as an internal temperature of 165°F (measured with a meat thermometer) was not achieved on the first go around. This was not a problem though, I simply placed the baskets back into the fryers and cooked for an additional 3-4 minutes. As expected, the outside of the breasts were crispy and the inside was moist. The breasts were not battered, as traditional wet batter is not recommended when air frying. I just chose to season with a little Lawry's. The tater tots were excellent. I couldn't tell that they had not been deep fried in oil....except when I didn't need to wipe my fingers after each bite!

Air fryers are also capable of baking. However, it should be noted that additional equipment may be necessary. Most of your glass baking dishes and muffin tins will not fit into the air fryer basket so you will need to purchase smaller, oven safe bake ware to fit into the basket if you want to bake cakes or muffins. Cookies may be baked on parchment paper. However, the basket can only bake 3-4 cookies at a time (depending on size) and this is probably not worth the trouble. It is much easier to bake 12-18 cookies on a sheet in the oven all at once.

If you are thinking about purchasing an air fryer consider the things below.

- How much money are you willing to spend? Air fryers range from \$99 - \$200 depending on the size, features, and added options.
- How often do you fry food? Will you really use the appliance and get your money's worth?
- How much do you enjoy eating deep fried food? The flavor and texture of some foods, especially meats, are slightly different than conventional frying.
- How many do you cook for? The fryer baskets are relatively small and if you are cooking for a household of 4-6 you will be extending your cooking time. The time required for two chicken breasts was 22-25 minutes.

Whatever you decide, be sure to follow the operating instructions included in the owner's manual. Both units caution not to overfill the basket as foods may not cook evenly or reach the proper temperature, which could lead to foodborne illness. Cooking in small batches is a necessity when using an air fryer.

Reference: <http://bestreviews.com/best-air-fryers>

Source: Annhall Norris, Extension Associate





# EAT SMART TO PLAY HARD



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM | YOUTH TOOLKIT

## CRISPY OVEN ZUCCHINI FRIES

### INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- Pinch of salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 egg + 1 egg white
- ½ cup plain or panko breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Dash of salt
- 4 medium zucchini
- Nonstick spray



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 450° F.
2. In a pie pan, whisk together flour, salt and pepper. In a second pie pan, beat egg and egg white together. In a third pie pan, whisk together breadcrumbs, parmesan cheese, paprika and a dash of salt.
3. Slice zucchini lengthwise into ½-inch thick pieces. Cut into 4-inch lengths and then into “fries” or strips.
4. Dip zucchini strips into the flour, then the egg and then through the breadcrumb mixture. Place on a baking sheet treated with nonstick spray.
5. Bake for 10 minutes. Turn slices and continue baking for another 10 minutes until golden-brown and crisp. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	1 cup (35g)
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>80</b>
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 1g	6%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 190mg	8%
Total Carbohydrate 11g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 56mg	4%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 45mg	0%

\*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Source: Cook Together, Eat Together by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

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