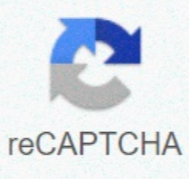




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Air fryer baked apple slices

For anyone looking to change up the way they cook, or who needs to make dinner in a hurry, or simply wants a healthier way to prepare what they might have previously deep-fried, air fryers have become a must-have kitchen gadget. For anyone who needs to make dinner in a hurry, or wants a healthier way to prepare food they might previously have deep-fried, or just wants to change-up the way they cook, air fryers have become a must-have kitchen gadget. The best air fryers use convection technology to push hot air around your food, enabling you to cook all kinds of foods, from fries and burgers to fish and vegetables, quickly and healthily. However, because they work in a different way to a traditional range, hob or oven, cooking with them calls for a slightly different approach.Air fryers are now available from lots of leading kitchen appliance brands, including Ninja Foodi, Tefal, GoWise, and Philips, but although they've grown enormously in popularity in the last couple of years, they haven't been around that long compared to many other home appliances. They started to become popular around a decade ago, with Philips creating some of the first machines.Whether you're using an air fryer for the first time, or just need some handy hacks for getting the most out of the one you already have, keep reading to find out everything you need to know about how to use an air fryer. If you've just bought an air fryer and you haven't used it yet, it's a good idea to start by giving your new appliance a quick clean. This will ensure that it's ready to use, and will also help to remove that plastic 'new appliance' smell you get with a new product. Different models will vary in terms of cleaning instructions, but most will have a removable basket or drawer that's suitable for washing. This can be done with warm soapy water, but bear in mind that the baskets are finished in a non-stick coating, so you'll need to avoid using abrasive cleaners or harsh scrubbing brushes, as these can damage the coating and potentially make the appliance unusable. Some air fryer baskets are suitable for dishwashers, but always check the instructions for each individual product. Make sure the basket is fully dry before you place it in the air fryer, then you can plug the machine in and switch it on. One of the advantages of using an air fryer is that you won't need to preheat it for 20-30 minutes, as you need to do with many ovens. If this is your first time using your air fryer, it's advisable to let it run for a few minutes before you use it, which like washing will help to get rid of any new product odors. After this, you shouldn't need to preheat your air fryer unless the manufacturer's instructions say so.(Image credit: Instant Pot)How much oil do air fryers use? Depending on what you're cooking, some air fryers don't require you to use any oil at all, relying entirely on hot air to cook your food. You'll often need to add a small amount of oil though, and many models come with a small measuring spoon so that you can add just the right amount to your food. Some air fryers also come with recipe books, or basic instructions for cooking popular dishes such as fries, frozen foods, and meat. Some frozen fried foods will have plenty of fat in them already, so there's no need to add additional oil to help with the cooking process. Foods that might require a little oil include homemade fries. Don't be tempted to grease the air frying basket, as this can affect the air fryer's performance.The amount of food you can fit in an air fryer depends entirely on the size of the model you choose. The capacity is normally measured in quarts in the US, or liters in the UK. You can get air fryers as small as 1.2 quarts / 1.15 liters, and they range right up to 12 quarts / 11.5 liters, and even smaller models should be able to cook enough fries to serve two people. These machines aren't really designed to cook enough food for a crowd, however. What's key here is not to overfill the air fryer basket. Doing this will result in slower cooking times, and you might end up with food that isn't evenly cooked all the way through. If you're going to be cooking for a family, consider choosing a larger-capacity model so that you don't have to cook in batches. Try to spread out the food in the basket so that the hot air can reach all sides of the food for fast and even cooking. Your air fryer will come with instructions on how long to cook the most popular kinds of food, and you'll notice that the cooking times are much shorter than you can expect from a traditional oven. You'll need to take into account the shorter cooking time if you're also creating side dishes separately - for example, if you've got fries in the air fryer but meat in the oven, it may be that you don't need to start cooking the fries until the meat is almost done. It might take a bit of getting used to so that you can ensure all elements of your meal are ready at the same time. If you're cooking an entire meal in your air fryer, to help make sure everything's ready at the same time, some brands have designed appliances with multiple cooking zones. For example, the Ninja Foodi Dual Zone Air Fryer can cook two dishes at once, and you can even have them cooked using different cooking methods.Things to avoid when using an air fryerWhile air fryers are designed to make cooking food easier, there are still a few things to keep in mind when you're using one. First up, as we mentioned above, it's super-important to avoid overfilling the frying basket. While it might be tempting to pile food into your fryer so that you can prepare everything at once, you'll likely end up waiting longer for it to be cooked - and what's more, your food may not be evenly cooked.Unlike some of the best Instant Pots, air fryers are not the kind of appliance you can fill up and forget about. These machines do require you to keep an eye on your food, and you may be required to give your food a shake around every so often, while if you're cooking meat such as steak, you'll need to flip it over halfway through cooking. When it comes to choosing the right kind of oil for your air fryer, most oils, including vegetable oil, olive oil, and peanut oil will be suitable, as long as they can withstand high temperatures, but again check your fryer's instructions, as particular oils may be recommended for some food.Don't miss the best air fryer deals We include products we think are useful for our readers. If you buy through links on this page, we may earn a small commission. Here's our process.Share on PinterestIt's a cruel fact of life: fried food is so good for your taste buds (and nucleus accumbens), and so not-great for pretty much all the rest of you. Sure, you can bake things instead of frying them, but it's just not the same. Enter: the air fryer. Is it worth getting one? That depends—but Prime Day sales could certainly be one motivating factor.After being inundated with slow cooker and Instant Pot content from every corner of the internet, you may have kitchen gadget fatigue by now, but allegedly, this other wunder-appliance can turn out all the crispy, crunchy fried foods you love with way less fat. (Despite its many virtues and seemingly miraculous culinary capabilities, the Instant Pot only very recently got a crisping function, in the form of an air fryer lid attachment; the Duo Crisp is currently on sale for \$99 at Walmart. There's also now a stand-alone Instant Pot air fryer too.)Share on PinterestInstant Pot Vortex Plus 7-in-1 Air Fryer Oven, \$119 from WalmartThis 7-quart model from the makers of the Instant Pot even includes a rotisserie function for perfect chicken.Buy NowThe air fryer works by circulating super hot air around foods with just a thin coat of oil (some recipes add no oil at all), so you're looking at at least around 70 to 80 percent less fat than traditional deep frying would use.It's also much less terrifying than a pot of viciously bubbling oil that can spatter and burn, and fairly easily catch fire, and there's no need to wrangle with disposing a quart of smelly used cooking grease once you're finished.Naturally, air fryers can handle healthier versions of all the usual suspects, from chicken nuggets and egg rolls to potato chips and french fries, whether freshly made or frozen. But wait—as with any other infomercial-worthy product, there's more!A bit, yes. The air fryer, like the Instant Pot, does also make quick(er) work of cooking in general. That's thanks to the fact that air fryers reach high temperatures in mere minutes (unlike many ovens that can take 10-15 minutes just to preheat), and then that hot air is circulated for faster cooking all around. Since almost everyone is pressed for time these days, shaving even just a few extra minutes off of the dreaded waiting-for-dinner limbo is a bonus.You can use an air fryer to make a range of other non-fried foods, like pizza, bacon, roasted garlic, toasted nuts, Brussels sprouts, and even cakes. Why would you do that, you may ask? Well, why not? It could be a boon to those with tiny kitchens and those with no stoves at all, and potentially a good summer option for anyone, since it wouldn't heat the whole room like a traditional oven. Plus, if you commit to buying an appliance, the ideal aim is to use it as often as possible in order to feel you've gotten your money's worth.In fact, the first two things I made in mine were toasted marshmallows and ersatz doughnuts. Crispy tofu and crisped-up Trader Joe's appetizers came later. All were delicious.Dash Deluxe Electric 6-Quart Air Fryer, \$99.99 from AmazonIf you prize aesthetics as well as performance, this adorable aqua air fryer has solid ratings and a mid-century vibe.Buy NowPrices vary widely, but expect to spend at least \$60; one top-rated model on Amazon is currently \$85.99, but similar models run closer to \$100—and some, like the Ninja Foodi Multi Cooker, hover around or even top \$200 (but to be fair, it does have more functions than plain old air fryers). Right now, you can find some good Prime Day deals on air fryers, including at Best Buy.Bella Pro Series 4.2-Quart Air Fryer, \$30 (originally \$60) from Best BuyThis mid-size model is on sale for a great price right now.Buy NowPay attention to size, too; the standard seems to be around 3.5 to 3.7 quart capacity across brands, but you can find "XL" versions that go up to 5.3 and 5.8 quarts, and even really large 16-quart models. I have a 6-quart model and personally wouldn't want it to be any smaller, but am usually cooking for two to three people, so YMMV.Bottom line: Is it worth it? As with many things, you truly have to try it yourself before you can say. If you already have a convection oven, there's no need to bother, since air fryers are really just mini versions of them (though sometimes you might prefer to use a smaller appliance for mini meals and snacks). Otherwise, some potential drawbacks to consider would be the extra counter and cabinet space the appliance takes up (ours is larger than I was imagining when I ordered it and we store it on a shelf in the garage when not in use); the reality that most models can't cook a large amount of food at one time; and the fact that they can produce uneven results, depending on what brand and size you purchase.And even some avowed air fryer fans admit that the taste and texture of air-fried foods aren't exactly like what you'd get with eight inches of oil and a metal basket—yet many are willing to make that small compromise for the benefits of relatively healthier eating and easier, less-messy cooking.Presto Fry Daddy Electric Deep Fryer, \$33.94 from AmazonWhen the ultimate crunch is more important than health-consciousness, only true deep-frying will do.Buy NowYou still can't live on air-fried chicken alone (at least probably not for very long). But you can enjoy all your favorites a little more frequently and with fewer potential consequences—health and safety-wise—if you embrace the power of air frying.I don't regret buying mine (especially since it was on sale), and I've been pleased with the results (especially the lack of preheating required), but also don't feel like I couldn't live without it.If you already have an Instant Pot or other pressure cooker, you can also buy a Mouthy CrispLid that will essentially turn it into an air fryer when you want to use that function. Read our executive editor's Mouthy review for more info.Still on the fence? Check out some of what it can do and see if that'll sway you.Here's a handful of home-cooked examples of its abilities to ogle—and maybe try for yourself soon:Air Fryer Sriracha-Honey Chicken WingsShare on PinterestKaren's Kitchen StoriesThe air fryer promises to make crispy chicken wings easy and healthy, and you can coat them with all kinds of flavors, but this spicy-sweet honey-Sriracha sauce is especially appealing. Get the Air Fryer Sriracha-Honey Chicken Wings recipe.Air Fryer Coffee and Chili Rubbed Rib-Eye Steak and French FriesShare on PinterestMontreal Food DivasYou can make both this juicy steak and oil-free fries to go with it in the air fryer, though not at the same time (and not if you're keto). Sub in air fryer sweet potato fries on the side if you prefer. Get the Air Fryer Coffee and Chili Rubbed Rib-Eye Steak and French Fries recipe.Air Fryer Parmesan Dill Fried Pickle ChipsShare on PinterestThe Creative BiteBring the state fair into your home kitchen and make fried pickles! (You can also make more universally appealing and reasonably healthy potato chips in the air fryer if you like.) These are coated in dill-parmesan breadcrumbs, so they're really rather fancy, as frickles go. Get the Air Fryer Parmesan Dill Fried Pickle Chips recipe.Air Fried SamosasThese crispy dough pockets of spiced potatoes make a great accompaniment to Indian food, of course, and they are much healthier than delivery or take-out versions. Get the Air Fried Samosas recipe.Keto Air Fryer Shrimp ScampiShare on PinterestTwo SleepersYes, it does seafood too—beautiful air fryer fish and chips for sure, but you can think even further outside the Gorton's box and make shrimp scampi, in only 8 minutes. Add some mashed cauliflower if you're keeping keto, or serve it over pasta if not. Get the Keto Air Fryer Shrimp Scampi recipe.Air Fried Churros with Chocolate SauceShare on PinterestPlated CravingsHonestly, these could be reason alone to buy an air fryer: squiggles of crisp cinnamon-sugar-dusted dough, with an orange-accented dark chocolate dipping sauce to make you swoon. Get the Air Fried Churros with Chocolate Sauce recipe.Air Fryer Air Baked Molten Chocolate CakeShare on PinterestMomma Told MeWant to make mini molten chocolate cakes without heating up your kitchen, and in only 20 minutes? With an air fryer, you can do it any time! Get the Air Fryer Air Baked Molten Chocolate Cake recipe.

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