



General Produce

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BATTER UP!

What is it about **battered fried foods** that make them so darn irresistible? The craveable and nearly addictive **crunchy texture** is deeply satisfying.

The batter itself is the vehicle that binds all of the **spices, herbs, and condiments** and forms the crust that coats the food inside the batter.

It may hardly matter what the food is that gets the **batter** and **fry treatment**. Just give us the plate full of goodness right out of the fryer.

Beer to **buttermilk**, and lots of ingredients in between, are main wet components to a secret batter. **Flour** is the main dry element. To lower oil absorption, lower the gluten factor. Try adding a **cornstarch, rice flour or cornmeal**.

Adding a leavening agent like **baking soda** to the batter mixture will reduce the amount of oil absorbed into the food. Blotting the food after frying will also reduce oil absorption.

Chicken, fish and **shrimp** are popular protein candidates for **tacos, salad toppers** and **fried finger foods**. The act of eating with our hands makes these delicacies ever so inviting. Nothing gets between a girl and her **Korean fried chicken wing**.

Zucchini, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, onions, and artichokes are starters for vegetables. A **deep-fried green bean** borders on being a religious experience.

A **Japanese tempura plate** or **Italian arancini bowl** demand a dipping sauce accompaniment.



These tasty bites invite sharing and a social dining activity. Break out the fondue pots for a completely retro skewered meat and veggie fried food event. **Small portions** are perfect for the oil pot.

In traditional frying, the specific **oil** is especially important.

Regardless of choosing **sunflower, olive, sesame, peanut, or vegetable oil**, there is a distinct flavor that adds another layer of goodness.

The thought of this messy cooking method can be mitigated by the simplest of measures. Use a pot that is heavy, broad and deep, like a well-made stockpot.

Once selected, add a fair amount of oil to this deep and wide pot. This will contain big splatters and keep the kitchen relatively neat.

Most batter recipes are pretty straightforward and no nonsense. A way to **Iron Chef** up the ante is to add a splash or two of Siracha, maybe some diced **chili peppers** or minced **fresh herbs**.

The craze of **air fryers** has, no doubt, allowed consumers to enjoy an undeniable delicious version of fried foods. The popular appliance still won't create the texture and taste of deep-fried dishes using oil. Perhaps a healthier version, but nonetheless, still not the same.

Having our favorite fried foods in **moderation** is a way to enjoy these **guilty pleasures**. In between frying, use the oven or grill to cook up variety.





Apples & Pears: Late storage apples of specialty apples are on final promotional opportunities. We have **SugarBee and Rocket apples** rolling in multiple packs/styles. Finish the season strong on snack and healthy eating options.

USA storage pears are winding down with three varieties still left to promote: **Green Anjou, Bosc and Red Anjou**. This market will slowly advance and remain tight. **California Bartletts** are in bloom now. This new crop will start in mid-July.

Avocados: Demand is currently stable ahead of the anticipated ramp up for Cinco de Mayo pulls. Supply has stabilized, and the industry is adjusting to last week's larger harvests. *Mexican* volume is decreasing weekly as the season progresses, but *new crop California* and *offshore* is continuing to build. Markets are steady at higher levels, but poised to rise again when the Cinco De Mayo pull hits. *Peru* is just around the corner, with fruit expected to arrive in volume late-May/early-June. Sizing is expected to peak at 60/70s; which is not normal for Peruvian fruit coming into the states.

Berries: Over the next few weeks, *Central Mexico* and *California* should have better availability on both **blackberries** and **raspberries**. Light local **blueberry** numbers are coming out of *California*, as well as some *offshore* and *Central Mexico*. *Georgia* and *Florida* crops are ramping up. Peak production should begin next week.

Strawberry growing districts of *Santa Maria, Oxnard, Salinas, and Watsonville* look to stay dry over the next few weeks. This, and warmer weather will help pick up volume. The heavy rains last week didn't help current stands. Quality will improve with better color and size as we get into better extended weather.



Citrus: *California Navel oranges* are starting to show some limited availability. With export done and good domestic demand, we are starting to experience shortages on certain sizes and grades. A few factors are playing a role in the shorter supplies. A slowdown in harvest and weekly production is the main factor. The start of export **Valencia oranges** is

another. *California* began harvesting **Valencia oranges** last week. Peak sizes 113s/138s/88 limited on 72s and larger.

Choice grade navels are very limited. **Navel oranges** are currently peaking on 72s and larger; 88/113/138s are extremely scarce. **Large navels, Cara Cara oranges** and **lemons** are still promotable. Overall, **lime** quality is good, sizing is small. As May

approaches, expect the market to continue to soften. **Star Ruby grapefruit** are now available in good supplies. Quality is good. Grading more towards fancy. Peak sizes 40s/36s/48s/32s.

Grapes: Growers toured table grape vineyards in the *Coachella Valley* this week with reports looking great in terms of the upcoming *California* yields, sizing, and quality. We are tentatively scheduled to start the week of May 12th on greens, the following week May 19th on red varieties. **Organic grapes** will start by the week of May 26th with both colors. **Imported grapes** will remain very tight through the end of the Chilean deal in early May. Mexico is expected to start in mid-May. Current arrivals are good quality; high priced.



Melons: The availability of **Mexican cantaloupes** by the end of the month is expected to ease the tight market situation. Current offshore fruit quality is solid with Brix of 12- 15%.

Due to lower yields from *offshore* growing regions, **honeydews** are expected to remain tight for a few weeks. By Mother's Day, growers hope to see improvements. Currently, *Mexican* honeydews are starting to enter the market, bringing some relief.

With additional suppliers available from *Nogales*, the **watermelon** market has started to normalize. Pricing will continue to drop over the next two to three weeks as volumes rise.



Seasonals: **Stone fruit** season is about to start. *California Cherry* orchards are starting to color up. Anticipation for promotable volume in May looks promising. Volume is projected to peak from May 16th through the 25th with promotable volume through this entire time frame. Quality is expected to be

excellent. The first harvest of **yellow peaches** will be next week. **Apricots** and **yellow nectarines** are 10 to 14 days away.

Weather in the tropics has caused **pineapple** to mature faster than normal causing lower yields. This is expected to last through out Mother's Day demand. Impacted are both 6 count crowned and 7 count crownless. Pineapples of special varieties (pink) are in high demand. We get very few and they go fast.

Mango volumes are starting to pick up out of *Mexico*. Pricing on larger fruit is more expensive and tighter in supplies. Mostly 10/12's available on Tommy Atkins

Tomatoes: Demand exceeds on **rounds** and **Roma tomatoes**. Prices are steady at elevated levels. The price of bigger fruit is higher. *Mexico's* quality is hit or miss. There is plentiful supply of **snacking tomatoes**. No changes until *Baja* and *California* get going in May

Asparagus: Supplies continue to be steady to slightly lighter due to *Caborca* coming to an end. *California* season is expected to be short as many growers have skipped over crops and harvesting due to poor returns in the past few years. *Washington* has started and *Michigan* is still a month out, depending on weather.

Broccoli, Cauliflower & Celery: **Broccoli** supplies and markets continue to be steady. Supplies should start to increase with better weather forecasted. **Cauliflower** has made the seasonal transition from the desert to the valley. Supplies are improving daily.

Conventional Celery is steady from *California*, *Mexico*, and *Florida*. Pricing is slightly up over the month and looks to continue until the full *California* transition in the first week of June.

Lettuces: Multiple **iceberg** shippers have had problems harvesting quality product due to rains and cool weather in the *Salinas Valley*. Anthracnose has arisen, causing quality issues. Currently, it is unclear the extent of the damage, but multiple shippers are experiencing yield problems. *Santa Maria* is not having these issues but less product is grown in this region.

Leafy varieties and supplies continue to be choppy with recent weather causing disease and supply issues. Markets have reacted and have climbed early in the week. Expect an unstable market in the near term.

Mixed Vegetables: The **chili pepper** market is escalated. Weather in the growing regions of *Mexico* this season has caused a supply gap. Production has significantly fallen, causing prices to rise on all varieties. Expect high markets over the next four to six weeks, as we transition to new growing regions of *Chihuahua* and *Baja*.

The **green bell pepper** market is expected to hold steady over the next week as *Coachella* season begins on Monday. The **colored bell** pepper market remains depressed. *Canada* is now in full production contributing to overall supply availability. **Organic green** and **colored bells** out of *Mexico* are very limited.

There is a steady **cucumber** supply on both coasts. For the summer/fall season, *Nogales* will operate through May, and *Baja* will operate through June. The quality is good. **Green onion** markets are tighter due to mildew issues and lower yields; expected to remain strong into next week.

Brussels sprouts and **green beans** are available for spring promotions. **Organic Green Beans** out of *Mexico* will have good volume and quality up to the end of April. We will then see some gapping for two to

three weeks until *California* starts.



Onions & Potatoes: The *California Desert* will begin shipping *new crop onions*. Supplies of *Texas* and *Mexican* onions are increasing. The price remains high, but it is trending downward. **Sweet Vidalia onions** will be in house next week

for a new option.

New crop **Tasteful Selection potatoes** are starting up this week. We've got many sku's, including **organic** options.

17299 – OG 12/24oz Honey Gold

15663 – OG 12/24oz Sunrise Medley

17301 – OG 12/24oz Ruby Sensation



AMISH ONION FRITTERS

INGREDIENTS:

- 2/3 Cup all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2/3 Cup whole milk
- 2 cups white onions, chopped (about 1 medium onion)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Oil for frying, as needed



METHOD: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cornmeal, baking powder, and milk. Add onions and salt and pepper and stir to combine.

Meanwhile, heat about 1/2-inch of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Once oil reaches 175°F, drop batter by the tablespoon into the hot oil, spreading the fritter out slightly. Brown on both sides until crisp.

Remove to a paper towel to drain. Serve hot and enjoy!

SERVES 6

Recipe adapted by **Just A Pinch**



Enjoy this week's update



MARKET REPORT

For updated prices and availability contact

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“EATING is a necessity, but COOKING is an art”

