

# Twisted Frying



by L. J. Gouveia

**T**HE Indians have their pakora, the Japanese their tempura, the English and those indomitable Scots Irish brought us their fritters. Here's how we're keeping the frying tradition alive today.

The Texas State Fair is ground zero for fried food novelties. In 2008, Glen Kusak won notoriety with his deep-fried bacon, which has also been credited to Sodolak's Original Country Inn in Snook, Texas. The following year, Abel Gonzales introduced fried butter: deep-fried balls of butter-rich batter.

Other fair-booth novelties are deep-fried Coke (balls of batter flavored with Coke, fried and topped with Coke syrup), deep-fried pizza slices, cupcakes, gummy bears, cookie dough balls, cheesecake (on a stick, no less), cookies, Twinkies, TastyKakes, candy bars, and even deep-fried ice cream, which actually originated in Mexico.

At Max's Wine Dive, in Austin, they make their Texas Poutine appetizer by shaping grits into planks and frying them, then stacking them in a shallow pool of brown gravy and cheese curds, topping with sliced onion and pickled jalapeños. It shouldn't work, but it does.

At Frank, also in Austin, the Carolina Pork-It is a Vienna beef hot dog link, cut open and stuffed with white cheese, wrapped in bacon, deep-fried, then nestled into green chile pimento cheese on a hot dog bun, and topped with grilled, sliced coleslaw with just a hint of horseradish. Surprisingly tasty.

Of course we have to include fried pickles. They're common enough in the

South not to be that twisted, but we often see wary tourists take photos of them, cautiously nibble one, then happily scarf down the rest. Like many fried foods, they taste better than they sound and are rather habit-forming.

Another cafe fried favorite is fried macaroni and cheese—the Southern answer to fried mozzarella. Small bricks of macaroni and cheese are breaded and fried. The crispy cornmeal crust is a perfect counterbalance to the creamy inside. Paula Deen's site has a recipe for it (with bacon!). So wrong but so right.

Rocky Mountain Oysters have nothing to do with the ocean. These are fried testicles of bull, buffalo or boar. Also known as Prairie Oysters. They're a little harder to find in cafes and restaurants these days. They're not popular much beyond a delicacy or novelty.

The novelty factor is of course the main idea behind most twisted fried foods. And it's easy and fun to experiment at home.

A simple pancake batter is best for most deep-fried goodies. Refrigerate battered items for at least 15 minutes to help the batter stick when it hits the hot oil.

Instead of batter-dipping, small sandwiches or other assembled bits fry better when wrapped in an eggroll or wonton wrapper.

Softer items, like cheese, do well if rolled in panko breadcrumbs and pan-fried in a little oil. A few of those in a salad will make you forget all about those sad little packaged croutons (which are also fried). A similar treat

is deep-fried guacamole bites: small scoops of guac wrapped in cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese, dipped in breadcrumbs, and deep-fried. Serve with a side of ranch dressing and possibly a tray of attractively arranged statin drugs.

Sweets like Peeps, cheesecake, cookies, etc., should be dipped in egg whites and graham cracker or cookie crumbs rather than egg, flour or breadcrumbs.

Then, of course, there's the Cajun contribution to Thanksgiving: the deep-fried turkey. Lafayette chef Pat Mould is touted as "the king of Cajun fried turkey." The bird is injected with a potent blend of Cajun spices, then lowered by a hook into a large metal pot of boiling oil and deep-fried for 35-45 minutes. The result is amazingly flavorful and juicy. Besides, it frees up the oven on the kitchen's busiest day. Check out YouTube for cautionary tales about why this must be done outside and what happens if you don't get it right. Better yet, pre-order it online from one of the many Cajun restaurants who have it down to a science.

For more twisted fried devilment (or ideas) visit [ThisIsWhyYoureFat.com](http://ThisIsWhyYoureFat.com).

The South takes a lot of ribbing about our propensity to deep-fry anything we can fit into a fryer (or hoist into some contraption). But it's not just us, not by a long shot. In Asia, they fry spiders, flowers, bugs, silkworms, and even monkey toes. ■

Above photo © Feng Yu | Dreamstime.com  
Fried pickle photo by Heidi Romney  
Fried ice cream photo from [deep-fry.com](http://deep-fry.com)

## Deep-Fried Pickles

2 eggs	1 cup cornmeal
1 cup buttermilk	2¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce	1 tsp salt
½ tsp Tabasco sauce	¾ tsp ground black pepper
¾ tsp cayenne pepper	1 32-oz. jar of dill pickle slices
¼ tsp seasoning salt	Vegetable oil for frying
¼ tsp garlic powder	Salt and pepper to taste



In a large bowl, combine the eggs, ¼ cup of the flour, buttermilk, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, cayenne pepper, seasoning salt, and garlic powder.

In another bowl, combine the cornmeal, 2 cups of flour, salt, and black pepper.

Preheat the oil in a deep fryer or cast iron skillet to 365° F (180° C). Shake excess liquid off the pickles and then dip them into the milk mixture. Then dredge them in the flour mixture.

Deep-fry until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with ranch dressing.

—Heidi Romney, [YumztheWord.blogspot.com](http://YumztheWord.blogspot.com)

## Deep-Fried Ice Cream



4 scoops of well-frozen ice cream (any flavor)  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 cup of crushed corn flakes  
Vegetable or canola oil for frying  
Chocolate sauce and maraschino cherries for topping

Make four perfectly round (if you can manage it) scoops of ice cream and put them in the deep freezer for 15 minutes.

Give the scoops an egg wash, then roll them in the crushed corn flakes to give them a nice coating. Then put them back in the deep freezer for 20 minutes.

Repeat this whole process twice, so the ice cream will be thickly coated with the corn flake mix.

Heat the oil and make sure it is burning hot. (at least 350 to 365° F).

Deep-fry the ice cream quickly for 5-8 seconds until crispy on the outside.

Serve immediately, with a drizzle of chocolate sauce and a maraschino cherry on top.

—Deep-Fry.com

Useful Links: [www.deep-fry.com](http://www.deep-fry.com) [www.delish.com](http://www.delish.com) [www.friedtwinkies.com](http://www.friedtwinkies.com) [www.seriousseats.com](http://www.seriousseats.com)  
Chef Patrick Mould's Cajun Fried Turkey: [www.ifood.tv/recipe/cajun\\_fried\\_turkey](http://www.ifood.tv/recipe/cajun_fried_turkey)  
Paula Deen: [www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/paula-deen/ladys-fried-mac-recipe/index.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/paula-deen/ladys-fried-mac-recipe/index.html)