

### Where to buy things

I have a Go Wise Air Fryer purchased through Amazon. It appears the difference between models is the **basket size**. But larger basket size means more counter space taken up. GoWise is the company that sponsors vegan cookbook author JL Fields.

Walmart and similar stores carry them and prices probably do not vary much between the venues.

I consider an Instapot/electric pressure cooker a kitchen **TOOL**. I consider an Air Fryer a **TOY**.

In this lesson Air Fryer will be abbreviated as AF.

### Cooking Background

One of the common complaints of several models is how fast the basket paint flakes. Although dishwasher safe, I find it easy enough to wipe the spray or sauce off with a paper towel then wash in the sink. This way dishes do not bang against it in the dishwasher and so far I have had no flaking issues.

While advertised as a FRYER, without the concentrated fat called oil that imbibes food with concentrated calories and prevents sticking, oil also imparts flavor. So **if you think the flavor will be the same as a deep fried product you will NOT be happy with your purchase**. If you simply want crispy food without the oil, calories and mess, then this might be a fun toy for you.

It works by having a burner with fan at the top of the assembly. Food's close proximity to the burner combined with the circulating heat will warm, brown and basically dry out the food giving a fried like resemblance but without a fried sheen.

#### What is an AF?

It is a mesh basket, designed for solid foods. You can buy bowls or use anything that fits in the fryer that allows some room for the air to circulate and is **oven safe**.

#### How do I get ready to use the AF?

To provide a "solid" surface over the basket (that has holes in it for air circulation) you can cut the bottom out of a **disposable pie pan** and insert it on the basket to cover most but not all of the basket.

Like an oven, some recipes call to preheat the AF for about 5 minutes. I have not found the need to do so.

**Adapting recipes:** The majority of recipes call for 400 degrees. General advice is to take your oven recipe and decrease the temperature by about 30 degrees and cut the time in half and adjust from there. I generally find an AF "recipe" for a similar food and try its temperature and set the timer for several minutes less than that recipe so I can check along the cooking process in case significantly less time is required for my food.

Some but NOT all recipes do better with a quick spray of canned oil. Try it first with a quick spray and then without. If not needed, save the time and mess.

I recommend getting a **small kitchen timer**. Dollar Tree has one (for a dollar!) that is pocket size and easy to use. This way you can set your timer and not occupy your oven's timer if you happen to also be using your oven. You may find it easier to set the AF for the TOTAL amount of cooking time, and then set your timer for the shake/flip time. This way all you need to do is open the basket, adjust food and close basket. If you set the AF timer, the AF will turn off, you may not hear the AF beep, and then you have to program the AF for the balance of the recipe.

#### How do I cook using the AF?

Most recipes will be improved if you **stop the cooking midway and shake/flip** the product to allow airflow to

previously 'hidden' food surfaces. Some recipes need shaking/stirring multiple times to get optimal crispiness.

**Cooking time factors:** Denseness of the food (thin tofu/potatoes cook faster than thicker slices), volume of food (just covering the basket vice basket 1/2 full) number of times shaken (an extra shake or flip helps things cook more evenly/all sides).

Sometimes a **minute in the microwave** to defrost a frozen item in its middle before popping into the AF will ensure crisp but not overcooked exterior and heated interior. Defrosting frozen products is often not recommended as the outside will become sticky or breading will fall off a product.

**FAILS:** Things that have NOT AF'ed well: store bought dessert hand pies, homemade hash browns, even after soaking them before frying them, they turned into shoe string potatoes.

### Which Button?

Each AF will differ, but most have a start button. **To stop** it you can either press the start button to "pause" or simply open the basket drawer.

Most AF will have presets. Many have a French fry preset with something like 400 degrees for 20 minutes. If you need 400 degrees, you can press this button and adjust the time down as needed.

Many AF if you do not use a preset will automatically go to 370 degrees which converts to 200 degrees Celsius for the rest of the world's recipes.

## Cooking

### Tofu(?!?)

Tofu? No one thinks tofu when you think AF. But Air Frying tofu is almost enough to push me from calling an AF a tool instead of a toy. If you like the deep fried tofu in a Chinese restaurant dish, this comes really close. It is also now my teens favorite/7 day a week lunch food.

**Without an AF the best** way to have tofu in a dish is to freeze the tofu<sup>i</sup> solid for 2 days, defrost it, gently squeeze all the water out of it, and then cube it. Once frozen then defrosted and drained, it acts like little sponges to soak up the wonderful flavor of your sauce. It also forms a firmer texture and is less wiggly in the event you have an eater with "texture issues".

With a commercial/restaurant quality flame stove and wok, you can deep fat fry tofu. Here, the cornstarch coating on the tofu provides a surface for the sauce to adhere to so that the tofu bites have flavor via the coating.

**With an AF**, just a light dusting of cornstarch (which happens to be high calorie) on the refrigerated, drained and cubed tofu, you get a crispy on the outside but soft on the inside texture. You do not get the same level of flavor infusion as the other two methods, so the frozen method is still how I prepare stir fries at home. But for pot lucks or guests I would probably AF the tofu.

For tofu cubes<sup>ii</sup>, drain refrigerated tofu, chop into cubes. Mix enough soy sauce and rice vinegar (2T & 1T) in a bowl with a lid and toss the tofu in the mix gently. In another bowl, toss the tofu with some cornstarch. Spray the basket, put in the package of tofu cubes. Cook for 18-20 minutes. Shake tofu about every 4 minutes to expose new surface areas. Once cooked to level of crispiness desired, add to your dish.

My kids love **BBQ tofu sandwiches**. Take refrigerated tofu, slice, cook at 400 degrees for 9 minutes, flip, coat with sauce of choice from BBQ to wing sauce or even Korean Marinade/BBQ sauce. Cook another 8-10 minutes depending on tofu thickness. Take out and coat the uncoated side, serve!

Other family members love AF tofu bacon. Same recipe<sup>iii</sup>, just crispier without risk of burning from overcooking!

I love Popeyes tofu<sup>iv</sup> and Po Boys<sup>v</sup>. Even sprayed with oil I did not see enough of a difference to warrant the time



**Resources available:**

Like vegan Facebook sites? There is a vegan Air Fryer site started by famous vegan cookbook author JL Fields<sup>x</sup> FAQ by a vegan blogger.<sup>xi</sup>

*Videos:*

Becky at her web site Glue & Glitter<sup>xii</sup> has vegan AF and non-AF recipes and a link to her MANY Youtube videos, many of which are for the AF.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.veganaugusta.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Tofu-basics.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69l3NsZ1YfA>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.veganaugusta.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Fake-bacon-strips.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.veganaugusta.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/popeyes-bake-or-AF.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> [www.veganaugusta.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Po-Boys.docx](http://www.veganaugusta.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Po-Boys.docx)

<sup>vi</sup> [http://www.nutritionmd.org/recipes/view.html?recipe\\_id=629](http://www.nutritionmd.org/recipes/view.html?recipe_id=629)

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.veganaugusta.com/vegan-air-fryer/>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.veganaugusta.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Doughnuts.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4\\_IEU3tR8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4_IEU3tR8s)

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheVeganAirFryer/>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://cadryskitchen.com/2017/02/09/air-fryer/>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://www.glueandglitter.com/>