

Cal-Mex / San Diego

Main Courses

San Diego-Style Loaded Carne Asada Fries

⌚ Prep: 15m 🔥 Cook: 25m ❄️ Rest: 5m ⏏️ Total: 45m 🍴 4 servings



Video ref: Sam The Cooking Guy

MISE EN PLACE / INGREDIENTS [12]

- ☐ 1.5 lbs USDA Choice Outside Skirt Steak
- ☐ 2 tbsp Freshly squeezed lime juice (for carne asada marinade)
- ☐ 3 cloves Garlic cloves, minced
- ☐ 1 tsp Ground cumin
- ☐ 1 tbsp High-smoke-point vegetable oil
- ☐ 1 tsp Kosher salt
- ☐ 1 bag (28 oz) Frozen extra-crispy shoestring or fast-food fries (Ore-Ida Extra Crispy Fast Food Fries)
- ☐ 2 cups Shredded sharp cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese blend
- ☐ 1 cup Fresh lime and sea salt guacamole
- ☐ 0.5 cup Mexican-style sour cream or crema
- ☐ 1 cup Fresh pico de gallo (diced tomatoes, onion, jalapeño, cilantro)
- ☐ 0.25 cup Fresh or pickled jalapeño peppers, thinly sliced

US SUPERMARKET BRAND GUIDE

Extra Crispy Fries: Ore-Ida Extra Crispy Fast Food Fries
Specially battered to stay crunchy under hot carne asada, melted cheese, and salsas. 📍 **Frozen aisle.**

Skirt Steak: USDA Choice Outside Skirt Steak
Coarse grain structure that drinks in marinade and sears to deep caramelized perfection. 📍 **Butcher counter.**

COOKING SEQUENCE & CHECKPOINTS

- 1

Marinate Steak & Bake Extra-Crispy Fries

⌚ 20 min

Toss the skirt steak with lime juice, minced garlic, cumin, vegetable oil, and kosher salt. Meanwhile, bake or air-fry the French fries at 425°F (220°C) until deep golden and audibly crispy, about 18 to 20 minutes.
✓ Checkpoint: Stiff, crunchy golden fries and citrus-seasoned steak.
- 2

Sear the Skirt Steak

⌚ 6 min

Sear the marinated skirt steak in a screaming hot cast-iron skillet or on a grill for 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a cutting board to rest for 5 minutes, then chop into 1/2-inch dice against the grain.
✓ Checkpoint: Charred exterior with juicy medium-rare interior.
- 3

Melt the Cheese Shield

⌚ 3 min

Spread the piping-hot fries on a large rimmed baking sheet, blanket generously with the shredded cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses, and bake at 425°F (220°C) or broil for 3 minutes until bubbling and fully melted.
✓ Checkpoint: Molten cheese blanket adhering to fries.
- 4

Pile High & Serve

⌚ 5 min

Scatter the hot chopped carne asada over the melted cheese. Add large dollops of guacamole, swirls of sour cream, fresh pico de gallo, and sliced jalapeños. Serve immediately.
✓ Checkpoint: Spectacular party platter ready for digging in.

🛡️ **FOOD SAFETY & INTERNAL TEMPERATURE: 145°F (63°C) USDA SAFE MINIMUM FOR WHOLE-CUT BEEF STEAKS WITH A 3-MINUTE REST**
USDA Beef Safety Minimum (≥145°F / 63°C + 3-minute rest) vs Culinary Medium-Rare Target (130°F–135°F / 54°C–57°C): The USDA recommends cooking whole-muscle beef cuts to 145°F (63°C) with a 3-minute rest. Cooks targeting a traditional steakhouse medium-rare texture (130°F–135°F / 54°C–57°C) should use intact, non-blade-tenderized steaks and sear all exterior surfaces thoroughly.

👁️ **MASTER DONENESS CHECKPOINT:**
Ultra-crispy fries holding firm beneath layers of sizzling beef, melted cheese, and chilled guacamole.

🔬 **WHY IT WORKS:**
The Cheese Barrier Technique: Melting the shredded cheese directly over the piping-hot fries in a 425°F (220°C) oven or under the broiler creates a hydrophobic shield that prevents soggy fries when topped with carne asada and chilled salsas.

⚠️ **TROUBLESHOOTING:**
Soggy fries: Bake fries extra crisp, melt the cheese at 425°F (220°C) or under the broiler first, then add warm chopped steak and cold sauces right before serving.