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BY ASHLEY AUSTIN

French revolution

Who can resist a hot stud? Oops, I mean spud, specifically of the peeled, sliced and fried variety.

Thomas Jefferson is rumored to have served French fries in Monticello at the turn of the 19th century, but they didn't go platinum in America until our boys in blue fell for frites during World War I.

The origin of the fry stands in dispute, with both France and Belgium claiming dibs. My vote goes to France because, until they were temporarily renamed "freedom fries" by the red states, the French had a lock on brand recognition. Regardless of who deserves credit, here are three great spots for spuds.

Tribute's • 2272 N.W. Kearney St.

This little slice of New York serves high-carb, high-fat, high-taste pizza, subs and chili cheese fries. The gang at Tribute's has filled the place with enough East Coast iconography to make you feel like you just crossed 4,345 miles by stepping over the threshold. Be ready to order your hot pastrami and chili cheese fries when you reach the counter, because the tempo here is upbeat. These fries are much like your traditional fry—a little thicker than the shoestring and covered in meaty chili and melted cheddar. They are the perfect hangover fare after a night on Stark Street and can be enjoyed while people watching at the bar facing the street.

Fire on the Mountain • 4225 N. Interstate Ave.

Since New Year's Eve, Sara Sawicki and Jordan Busch have kept their place packed with buffalo wings, fries and, for you Southern transplants, sweet tea. Wings and hot sauce are serious business here, but the fries have been given ample consideration with a little help from the folks at Russell Street BBQ. The hearty fries are cut with care and take a day to prepare for the fryer. They arrive at your table piping hot after being tossed in a special mix of sugar and sodium. If you aren't in the mood for traditional fries, then choose between tater tots and sweet potato fries. Those brave of stomach should try a fried Twinkie for dessert.

Red Robin • 1139 N.E. Grand Ave.

Founded in 1969 in Seattle, Red Robin has grown to a 200-plus chain serving burgers and bottomless fries. Those in the know order their fries as an appetizer when the drink order is taken. This ensures ample personal potato time before your burger arrives. The Double R is known for its special seasoning salt, which should be generously distributed as soon as the basket arrives at your table. Falling under the "steak" classification, the fries are long and wide with a crisp outer shell encasing the soft, flaky, mashed potato inside. The best part of the experience is that it doesn't have to end until you—or, more likely, your stomach—say so. **J**