

the world's largest fry

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A warm summer breeze blows past, beckoning us to join it in its drunken jig down the busy strip. Saturday night sparkles before us, and we laugh as we walk, holding hands and delighting in the moment. Before us a glowing sign proclaims the presence of food within.

Steam rises from the basket of fries, and I hear the fizz of the colas as the waiter sets them on the table. "Will that be all?" he asks. I dismiss him with a nod, breathing in and out, juggling a hot, salty French-fry on my tongue. "Careful honey they're hot!" I warn my four year old daughter as I squirt a blob of catsup into the far corner of the fry basket. The delicious aroma of French-fries fill the air, and my mouth moistens in anticipation of another deep fried treat.

I gaze across the table adoringly; my daughter's sparkling blue eyes captivate me with their perfection. I gaze at her hypnotically as she tosses her head from one side to the other, shifting her waist-length pony tails behind her shoulders in order to avoid the catsup and steaming fries.

"Do my straw for me Daddy!" my daughter commands. I oblige her by tapping one end on the table and unsheathing the straw. "I can do it now," she insists, taking the straw from my hand and plunging it into the icy depths of her soda.

I sip my cola as I glance around the diner, its tawdry adornments assault my senses with nightmarish fifties kitsch. A large ceramic pig smiles maniacally in my direction, as if expressing its utter delight at having been painted in bright, unnatural colors.

My attention is drawn by a rhythmic tinkling. "Don't play with your straw honey, or I'll have to take it away," I warn, spoiling Jessica's game of spear-the-ice-cube. She glares at me with momentary resentment, and sinks into a Raggedy Ann like posture.

"Look at the size of this fry, its giant!" I proclaim with a distracting

amount of enthusiasm. Her eyes dart towards the basket of fries, taking the bait of the new biggest-fry-hunt game. Abruptly she sits up, as if summoned by the strings of an unseen puppeteer. “Oh yeah,” she challenges, “This one’s lots bigger than your one!” I concede it is, and congratulate her on her big-fry hunting prowess.

Together our eyes survey the tangle of fries with hawk-like intensity. Suddenly I spot a prospective candidate, partially concealed near the bottom of the basket. Tentatively, I give the fry a little tug. There seems to be no end to this fry! It is huge! It is magnificent! It is the mother-of-all-French-fries! I imagine myself pulling on it hand over hand, and triumphantly posing next to it for a photograph in the Guinness Book of World Records.

“Look what I got Jessie!” I gloat, gleefully dangling my prize before her. “I got the biggest fry ever!”

“Gimme it, its mine!” she proclaims emphatically. “Give it to meeee!”

Suddenly a tiny well aimed hand darts out, snatches away my deep fried trophy, and pops it into an already giggling mouth. I am frozen. My fingers grasp my now imaginary French-fry; my face an exaggerated portrayal of shock and dismay. Together we burst into a joyous duet of laughter, prompting a few over the shoulder glances from some nearby patrons. “Would you like anything else?” asks our waiter, as Jessie slurps the last of her cola from her glass.

“No, we’re fine,” I reply as I reach for the check, glancing down momentarily to glimpse the price of two colas and a basket containing the world’s largest fry.