

= Freedom fries =

Freedom fries is a political euphemism for French fries in the United States . The term came to prominence in 2003 when the then Republican Chairman of the Committee on House Administration , Bob Ney , renamed the menu item in three Congressional cafeterias in response to France 's opposition to the proposed invasion of Iraq . Although originally supported with several restaurants changing their menus as well , the term fell out of use due to declining support for the Iraq War . Following Ney 's resignation as Chairman in 2006 , it was quietly reverted .

= = Background = =

= = = French war opposition = = =

Following the September 11 attacks by Al @-@ Qaeda and the declaration of a " War on Terror " by President George W. Bush , an invasion of Iraq was proposed . During the United Nations Security Council deliberations , French Minister of Foreign Affairs Dominique de Villepin made it clear France would neither support nor participate in the invasion . This caused some Americans to accuse France of betrayal , reigniting prior anti @-@ French sentiment in the United States .

= = = Initial renaming = = =

Renaming was initiated in February 2003 by Beaufort , North Carolina " Cubbie 's " restaurant owner Neal Rowland , who said he was motivated by similar actions against Germany in World War I , when " sauerkraut was called liberty cabbage , and frankfurters were renamed hot dogs " . In an interview about the name change , Rowland commented " since the French are backing down [ from the war ] , French fries and French everything needs to be banned " . In March 2007 , Rowland obtained a trademark registration for the term " freedom fries " .

= = U.S. House adoption = =

On March 11 , 2003 Republican U.S. Representatives Bob Ney and Walter B. Jones directed the three House cafeterias to change all references to French fries and French toast on menus , and replace them with Freedom fries and Freedom toast , respectively . Jones chose to follow Cubbie 's example by circulating a letter to his colleagues advocating their renaming because , he said , " the French were ' sitting on the sidelines . ' " As Ney was Chairman of the United States House Committee on House Administration , the action did not require any vote , as the committee has authority over House cafeterias . According to a statement released by Ney , the renaming was intended to express displeasure with France 's " continued refusal to stand with their U.S. allies " . The statement further read : " This action today is a small but symbolic effort to show the strong displeasure many on Capitol Hill have with our so @-@ called ally , France . " When asked about his view on the change , Jones said it was a " lighthearted gesture . "

= = = Reactions = = =

In response to the change , French Embassy spokeswoman Nathalie Loiseau commented " It 's exactly a non @-@ issue ... We focus on the serious issues " , and noted that fries originated in Belgium . She then remarked that France 's position on the change was that they were " in a very serious moment dealing with very serious issues , and we are not focusing on the name [ Americans ] give to potatoes . " After the name reversal , an Embassy spokeswoman said : " our relations are definitely much more important than potatoes ... and our relations are back on track . "

The very first episode of Anthony Bourdain : No Reservations , an American travel and food show , was broadcast during this era . Freedom fries was shown as an example of the then @-@ current

frosty relations . It was named " Why the French Don 't Suck " .

In a 2005 opinion poll by Gallup , participants were asked if they felt the renaming of French fries and toast was " a silly idea or a sincere expression of patriotism ; " 66 % answered it was silly , 33 % answered it was patriotic , and 1 % had no opinion . Several restaurants followed the Houses ' change , and the name is still used by Geno 's Steaks and the chain restaurant Toby Keith 's I Love This Bar & Grill . Opposing the name change , The Saturn Cafe in Santa Cruz , California , changed their menu to " Impeach George W. Bush fries . " While Reckitt Benckiser , maker of French 's mustard , were sufficiently concerned about the movement to publicly clarify that its brand derived from a family name .

Massachusetts Democratic Congressman Barney Frank noted that the change made " Congress look even sillier than it sometimes looks . " New York Democratic Congressman José Serrano characterized the renaming as " petty grandstanding " , and urged fellow legislators to concentrate on more pressing issues .

In the March 15 , 2003 episode of Saturday Night Live , Tina Fey reported this on the satirical Weekend Update : " In a related story , in France , American cheese is now referred to as ' idiot cheese ' . " The 2006 documentary Freedom Fries : And Other Stupidity We 'll Have to Explain to Our Grandchildren directed by Carl Christman took a comedic viewpoint on American consumerism and patriotism . In the episode " Stan Knows Best " of American Dad ! , after being asked how his French toast is , the main character Stan remarks : " Smelly and ungrateful ! But this American toast is delicious . " In the comic strip Doonesbury , the characters Mark Slackmeyer and Zonker Harris criticized the name change in French . Slackmeyer said that , translated , the U.S. liberated France in World War II ; and that many French newspaper headlines after 9 / 11 were " We are all American . " At the end , he states that the anti @-@ French were " jingoistic , self @-@ regarding conquer @-@ monkeys ! " The French American indie band Freedom Fry chose their name based on the Freedom Fries phenomenon . In 2005 , Robert Plant and his band Strange Sensation released Mighty ReArranger , which contained the track " Freedom Fries ; " an anti @-@ war song , its lyrics contained : " Freedom fries and burns and scars , the liberator goes too far . "

= = = Policy reversal = = =

On August 2 , 2006 the House cafeteria menus were changed back without any announcement . The change was made by the new House Administration Committee Chairman , Vern Ehlers , who replaced Ney following his resignation due to a scandal . When asked about his decision , Ehlers responded , " It 's no big deal ... It 's not news . " When asked about his opinion on the " freedom fries " episode , Walter B. Jones responded , " I wish it had never happened . "