

Millions of French fries wash up on UK beach

22nd January 2026



Visitors to a UK beach saw an unusual sight earlier this week. The shoreline was covered in French fries ("chips" in British English). Thousands of bags of chips washed up on a beach in the county of Sussex. The bags were in shipping containers that fell off cargo

ships in the English Channel. Bad weather caused three of the containers to fall into the sea. Currents and tides carried one of the containers and the chips to the shore. Joel Bonnici, a local man, was the first to find the chips. He said: "From a distance, it looked like the golden sand of a Caribbean beach, but on closer inspection, we saw not just the chips, but chip bags." He added: "In some areas, the chips were 75 cm deep."

Volunteers are helping to clean up the beach. Many people came to the beach to help the clean-up. Mr Bonnici said the chips were an environmental hazard. He said: "Removing the plastic bags is a priority." He is worried about a colony of seals that live near the beach. Bonnici said: "If the seals see the bags, they will play with them or try to eat them." A local official warned people to be careful if they go to the beach. She said: "Please keep dogs on leads as some of the food items washing on to the shoreline may be harmful to them." She asked people to "report any new debris". The chip spill is the second such event in Sussex recently. Last month, thousands of bananas washed ashore.

Sources: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [msn.com](https://www.msn.com) / [theargus.co.uk](https://www.theargus.co.uk)

Writing

The UK word "chip" is better than the American English word "French fry". Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

beach / unusual sight / French fries / shipping / tides / sand / Caribbean / chips / clean-up / environmental hazard / plastic bags / seals / dogs / debris / bananas

True / False

- 1) Visitors to a beach saw people cooking millions of French fries. T / F
- 2) Millions of bags of chips washed up on the beach. T / F
- 3) The fries came from a shipping container from a cargo ship. T / F
- 4) The chips made the beach look like the Caribbean's golden sand. T / F
- 5) The fries were good news for seals, who had lots of food to eat. T / F
- 6) A local official said dogs should be on leads so they do not attack seals. T / F
- 7) The official asked people to report any seals they find eating chips. T / F
- 8) Thousands of bananas washed ashore last month in the same county. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. unusual | a. drop |
| 2. beach | b. community |
| 3. fall | c. places |
| 4. find | d. assisting |
| 5. areas | e. waste |
| 6. helping | f. strange |
| 7. hazard | g. dangerous |
| 8. colony | h. danger |
| 9. harmful | i. shore |
| 10. debris | j. discover |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of chips or fries?
- c) What are the differences between chips and French fries?
- d) What things have you volunteered for?
- e) What kind of hazard might the chips be?
- f) What do you know about seals?
- g) Who should pay for the clean-up of the spilt chips?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a chip maker?

Phrase Match

1. Visitors to a UK beach saw
 2. shipping
 3. bad
 4. From a
 5. In some areas, the chips
 6. Volunteers are helping to
 7. the chips were an environmental
 8. Removing the plastic bags is a
 9. keep dogs on
 10. thousands
- a. clean up the beach
 - b. weather
 - c. were 75 cm deep
 - d. leads
 - e. containers
 - f. priority
 - g. an unusual sight
 - h. of bananas
 - i. hazard
 - j. distance

Discussion – Student B

- a) Do you prefer the UK English 'chips' or American English 'fries'?
- b) What do you think of beaches?
- c) What would you do if you saw a beach covered in chips?
- d) When was the last time you went to a beach?
- e) What do you think of Caribbean beaches?
- f) Have you ever seen anything strange on a beach?
- g) What is the best thing to eat with chips?
- h) What's the best thing to put on top of chips?

Spelling

1. The renisheol was covered in French fries
2. The bags were in shipping aitrsecnno
3. cogar ships
4. currents and tside
5. on closer cneptionis
6. in some reasa
7. the chips were an environmental azdahr
8. Removing the plastic bags is a iyroiptr
9. a nolcoy of seals
10. a local lfficoia
11. report any new eibrsd
12. the second such event in Sussex yleenctr

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. d	7. h	8. b	9. g	10. e

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What is 'French fries' in British English?
2.	Where in the UK is the beach on which the fries washed up?
3.	What fell off of cargo ships in the English Channel?
4.	Who is Joel Bonnici?
5.	How deep were the fires and bags in some places?
6.	What did volunteers go to the beach to do?
7.	What did Joel Bonnici say was a priority?
8.	What might eat the fries?
9.	What did an official request people to do to dogs?
10.	What washed ashore at another beach last month?

Speaking – Chips

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to put on chips at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| • Mayonnaise | • Ketchup |
| • Vinegar | • Salt |
| • Cheese sauce | • Curry sauce |
| • Chili | • Gravy |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.