Fish and Chips has a long tradition in England. The tradition of fish battered and fried in oil may have come from Jewish immigrants who moved to England from Spain and Portugal.[3][2][4] These early Jewish people moved to England as early as the 16th century.

The exact location of the first fish and chip shop is unclear. The earliest known shops were opened in the 1860s. However, fried fish, as well as chips, had existed independently for at least fifty years, so the possibility that they had been combined at an earlier time cannot be ruled out.[11]

Fish and chips became a main meal among the working classes in England because of two important factors. First, fishing techniques improved greatly with ships using special nets to catch many fish at one time. Second, railways were added that moved the fish to the big cities.

Deep-fried chips, which are slices or pieces of potato, as a dish may have first appeared in England in about the same period: the Oxford English Dictionary notes as its earliest usage of "chips" in this sense, in Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities (1859): "Husky chips of potatoes, fried with some reluctant drops of oil".[14]

The modern fish-and-chip shop ("chippy" or "chipper" in modern British slang[15][16]) started in the United Kingdom, although shops

selling fried food occurred commonly throughout Europe. Early fish-and-chip shops had only very basic facilities. Usually these consisted principally of a large pot of cooking fat, heated by a coal fire. The fish-and-chip shop later evolved into a fairly standard format, with the food served, in paper wrappings, to queuing customers, over a counter in front of the fryers. By 1910, there were more than 25,000 fish and chip shops across the country, and in the 1920s there were more than 35,000 shops.[17] As a boy Alfred Hitchcock lived above a fish and chip shop in London, which was the family business.[18] According to Professor John Walton, author of Fish and Chips and the British Working Class, the British government made safeguarding supplies of fish and chips during World War I a priority: "The cabinet knew it was vital to keep families on the home front in good heart, unlike the German regime that failed to keep its people well fed".[2] In 1928, Harry Ramsden opened his fish and chip shop in Guiseley, West Yorkshire. On a single day in 1952, the shop served 10,000 portions of fish and chips, earning a place in the Guinness Book Of Records. Many people in England considered fish and chips chief among the 'home comforts' which acted to satisfy the working classes.[17] During World War II, fish and chips remained one of the few foods in the United Kingdom that was freely available. Prime Minister Winston Churchill referred to the combination of fish and chips as "the good companions".[2] John Lennon[2]

While fish and chips is not as popular now as before for a number of reasons. For example, the price of fish now makes it very expensive for average workers to buy. There are also many alternatives like fast-food hamburger restaurants. Also packaging is also more expensive. However, fish and chips will always be loved by the English as one of their all-time comfort foods.