

FAMILY

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An apple for almost everyone's taste

With the arrival of autumn, apples will begin filling the produce aisle in supermarkets. And apples seem to be the most beautiful and colorful of the entire section.



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Apples come in all shades of reds, greens, and yellows and varieties range in size from a little larger than a cherry to as large as a grapefruit. While grown in all 50 states with approximately 2500 varieties grown in the U.S., the top apple producing states are Washington, New York, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Of these home-grown apples, 61% are eaten as fresh fruit while 39% are processed into apple products such as sauce, juice and cider.

The history of apples usually brings to mind the legendary Johnny Appleseed, and while his contributions in planting orchards throughout the nation were vast and his path through the East and Midwest is today dotted with many monuments honoring his work, apple history has many interesting details.

Archeologists have found evidence that humans have been enjoying apples since 6500 B.C. It is believed the apple tree originated in an area between the Caspian and Black Sea and were a favorite fruit of ancient Greeks and Romans. And with Thanksgiving just around the corner, it is important to note that the pilgrims planted the first apple trees in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

When choosing apples, remember some are best for eating, others are best for cooking, and some varieties are suitable for both. Popular varieties such as the "Red Delicious," "Golden Delicious," "Winesap," "Rome Beauty" and "Granny Smith" are good examples.

"Red Delicious" apples are easy to identify by the five distinct bumps on the blossom end of each fruit, and their sweet, crisp, juicy, low-acid taste makes them an excellent choice to be eaten raw but not a good choice for cooking.

The "Winesap" apple has a deep red color, a winey and tart taste and is good for eating and cooking but not satisfactory for

baking.

The "Rome Beauty" apples have a mild flavor that is best savored after cooking or baking.

The "Granny Smith" apples are available most of the year and are firm and tart with a freckled green skin. They are excellent for eating and cooking and are often specified in pie recipes because they hold their shape and flavor when cooked.

Despite the variety you take home, remember to choose firm apples free of bruises, decay, broken or shriveled skin.

Regarding nutrition, apples are delicious, easy to carry for a snack, low in calories, a natural mouth freshener, sources of vitamin A and C, thiamin, iron, calcium and fiber. Regarding consumer economics, the apple also makes for an inexpensive snack.

Due to many variables such as moisture content, size and variety, specific yield equivalents as to quantities to purchase are difficult to estimate, but approximately one pound equals three medium apples, one pound equals 1 1/2 cups applesauce, and 2 pounds (6-8 apples) equals a 9-inch pie plate.

One final interesting note in the event an "Apple Bobbing Contest" is in your schedule for an Autumn Harvest Festival or you want to have an advantage the next time playing trivia, 25% of an apple's volume is air. Hence, that is why they float.

Remember there is an apple available to suit almost everyone's taste, so have an apple today. For an apple and pear recipe flyer, please contact the extension office at 903-657-0376.

Traditional Apple Pie

Servings: 8 • Preparation: 30 mins.
Bake: 50 mins. • Oven: 375 degrees F

Ingredients

prepare a double-pie crust

6 cups thinly sliced, peeled cooking apples (about 2 1/4 pounds)

1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional)

3/4 cup sugar

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Directions

1. Prepare and roll out pastry for double pie crust. Line a 9-inch pie plate with

half of the pastry.

2. If desired, sprinkle apples with lemon juice. In a large mixing bowl stir together sugar, flour, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Add apple slices and, if desired, nuts. Gently toss until coated.

3. Transfer apple mixture to the pastry-lined pie plate. Trim pastry to edge of pie plate. Cut slits in remaining pastry; place on top of filling and seal. Crimp edge as desired.

4. To prevent over-browning, cover edge of pie with foil. Bake in a 375 degree F oven for 25 minutes. Remove foil. Bake for 25-30 minutes more or until top is golden. Cool on a wire rack.