

Apples are nature's delicacy

Fall — from leaves turning to autumn colors to evenings making s'mores, you just can't get enough of it. The sunsets are gorgeous, family reunion meals are sinful and the warm flavors of autumn speak to us.

One of my favorite fall foods is apples. As a girl I recall going with my grandfather to pick apples at a local orchard. I was amazed at the different colors. Once home, we ate ripe, raw apples, then made apple pie with the flavors all mellowed together, making me want more.

The saying, "as American as apple pie," symbolizes America. About 10,000 apple varieties are grown worldwide, more than 7,000 of them in the U.S.

Native Americans knew what they liked, and they spent much time cultivating apples. There are 25-30 kinds of wild apples grown throughout the world, seven in the U.S. One of these, crab apples, are a small, sour, hard fruit, ancestor to many varieties of apples grown today. Though they are tart, I like crab apple jelly.

I am sure your family has favorite apple recipes. We are really lucky now that we can enjoy apples year round. They may not be grown locally, but they have great qualities. From Granny Smith, one of my favorites, to Pink Lady, a newer variety, you can find many flavors and colors in local stores.

MARY KATE RIDGEWAY



Food for Thought

Apple Dumplings

1-1/2 cups plain flour
1/2 cup vegetable shortening
1/3 cup milk
2 cups packed chopped apples
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 cups water
2 cups sugar
1 stick butter

Use a pastry blender to combine first 3 ingredients. Roll into a crust like for a pie. Using a rolling pin, roll out into a piece about 9x13 inches.

Combine apples and cinnamon, sprinkle on top of crust and roll up jelly roll fashion. Cut into 12 pieces, 1-1/2 inches thick. Place in 9x13-inch pan.

Bring to a boil, water, sugar and butter. Pour over apples and crust. Bake 30-45 minutes at 400°F until lightly brown.

Apple Cranberry Salad

2 small packages cherry gelatin
2 cups hot water
1-1/2 cups sugar
Juice of 1 lemon
Juice of 1 orange
2 cups ground fresh cranberries
2 cups chopped apples
1 cup chopped pecans
Pinch of Salt

Dissolve gelatin in hot water, set aside to cool.

Combine all remaining ingredients.

Add this to the thickened gelatin and pour into a glass serving dish or congealed salad mold.

Serves 10.

MARY KATE RIDGEWAY, a retired Extension leader, is a freelance home economist and educator.

On the light side

I have always loved the texture of risotto, and recently I started working on the concept of dessert risottos, replacing the usual stock and wine that are called for with apple juice and milk. This creamy creation with cinnamon and raisins is also a wonderful breakfast or brunch dish. Leftover risotto can be chilled and served like a traditional rice pudding.

JEANNE JONES



Cook It Light

Dessert Risotto

2 tablespoons butter, divided use
3/4 cup arborio rice
1/3 cup raisins
1/4 cup apple juice
4 cups skim milk, heated
1/4 cup dark-brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a large, heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add rice and raisins, cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add apple juice, continue cooking until all of it is absorbed. Add 1/2 cup hot milk, cook until almost dry. Add brown sugar, cinnamon and another 1/2 cup milk; again, reduce until almost dry.

Start adding hot milk, 1/2 cup at a time, always stirring frequently and allowing most of it to be absorbed before adding more. Don't allow the last addition of milk to be absorbed completely; risotto should have a creamy, cereal-like consistency. Remove from heat, stir in remaining tablespoon butter and the vanilla. Serve warm.

Makes 4 servings, each with about: 343 calories; 6 gm fat; 20 mg cholesterol; 196 mg sodium; 60 gm carbohydrates; 11 gm protein; 1 gm fiber.

Festive Apple Salad

4 apples, chopped into small pieces
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 carrot, shredded
1 cup raisins or cranberries

1/2 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
1/2 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt
1/3 cup light mayonnaise

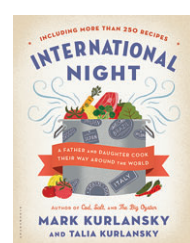
Sprinkle apple pieces with lemon juice. Add carrot, raisins and/or cranberries and walnuts. Combine yogurt and mayonnaise, stir into apple mixture. Keep refrigerated.

Makes 8 servings, each with about: 169 calories; 5 gm fat; negligible cholesterol; 102 mg sodium; 31 gm carbohydrates; 3 gm protein; 3 gm fiber.

JEANNE JONES is an author and acknowledged leader in the field of light cuisine. Send recipes for revision to: Cook It Light, (The Paris Post-Intelligencer), P.O. Box 1212, La Jolla, CA 92038. Include a stamped (61 cents), self-addressed envelope.

COOKBOOK REVIEW

Culinary wanderlust



Once a week in the Kurlansky home, Mark spins a globe. Wherever his daughter Talia's finger lands — Morocco, French Guiana, Kazakhstan — becomes the theme and cuisine of that Friday night's dinner. Their tradition of "international night" has resulted in the father/daughter duo's cookbook, *International Night: A Father and Daughter Cook Their Way Around the World* (2014, Bloomsbury Publishing).

From Belgium to Ethiopia, Cuba to Norway, each of 52 menus is a full-course dinner of exotic cuisine in more than 250 recipes along with fun facts about each country.

Mark Kurlansky recalls his grandmother "stretching leaves of strudel dough over the backs of her small hands on a metal table. It was a very long process, especially when you consider that it takes at least ten leaves to make a strudel. Fortunately, you can get satisfactory results with frozen phyllo dough, easily available in grocery stores. ... Talia is ... the fourth generation in my family to make strudel, though the line probably extends even further back."

Apfel Strudel

6 apples (like Cortlands), peeled, sliced off core, chopped in half
1/4 cup walnuts, finely chopped
1-1/2 cups sugar
2 tablespoons cinnamon
14 sheets of phyllo dough
10 tablespoons butter, melted
1 egg yolk
Dash of milk
Whipped cream

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apple slices, walnuts, 1 cup sugar and cinnamon.

Place 2 sheets phyllo dough on a baking sheet, pile filling in a column in the center. Fold over the double sheets to cover filling. Brush top of dough with melted butter, gently roll over the strudel, being careful not to tear the pastry.

Brush with butter again. Cover with a sheet of dough, tuck the sides under. Brush with butter, turn and brush again, cover with another sheet of dough, and repeat the process with at least 6 more sheets of dough.

With the last one, instead of brushing it with butter, brush it with an egg yolk beaten with a dash of milk and sprinkle sugar on top. Bake for 1 hour until golden brown.

Serve with big clouds of whipped cream.

RECIPE ROUNDUP



Gluten-Free Apple Pie Omelet

FROM CAROL KICINSKI, WWW.SIMPLYGLUTEN-FREE.COM

1 medium apple, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
2 teaspoons pure maple syrup
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 large organic pastured eggs
2 tablespoons cream, milk or dairy-free milk

Salt and pepper
1 teaspoon butter or dairy-free butter
3 tablespoons grated cheddar cheese or dairy-free cheese substitute
2 tablespoons toasted walnuts, roughly chopped, optional

Place apple slices in a small, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook 5 minutes until they soften and start to brown. Add maple syrup and cinnamon, toss to coat, cook another 30 seconds then remove from heat. Set aside.

Separate eggs, placing whites in one mixing bowl and yolks in another. To yolks add cream and a pinch of salt and pepper, whisk to combine.

With a handheld mixer or whisk, beat whites just until soft peaks form. Fold egg whites into yolk mixture. Melt butter in a 5-inch, non-stick pan over low heat. Add egg mixture to pan, cook 3 minutes. Sprinkle cheese over the top, layer on the cooked apples and cover the pan. Cook 5-6 minutes or until eggs are set and bottom is golden brown. Slide omelet onto a plate, fold half the omelet over the other half. Serve immediately with chopped walnuts on top if desired.

Makes 1 serving.

Lowfat Individual Apple Pies in their Own Shells

FROM FRANCISCOHEN.COM

Pie crust
6 Granny Smith apples
1/4 cup sugar

1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Filling: Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut off the top of 4 apples, remove the inside with a spoon or scooper. Be very careful, as to not puncture the peel.

With 2 additional apples, remove the skin and slice very thinly. These apple pieces will be the filling for the mini apple pies. Throw apple slices in a bowl, mix with sugars and cinnamon. Scoop mixture evenly into each of the 4 hollow apples.

Topping: Roll out pie crust, slice into 1/4-inch strips. (A strip of pastry can also be added inside the top of apple like a liner to add a little more texture/sweetness to pie.)

Cover top of the apple in a lattice pattern with pie crust strips.

Place apples in an 8x8 pan, add just enough water to the cover bottom of pan. Cover with foil, bake 20-25 minutes. Remove foil, bake additional 20 minutes until crust is golden brown and sliced apples are soft.

Apple Cider Vinaigrette Dressing

FROM MICHIGANAPPLES.COM

2 cups fresh apple cider
1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt sprinkle of ground

clove to taste
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup sugar
1-1/4 cups vegetable oil

Mix together all ingredients (except oil) until sugar is dissolved. Will refrigerate up to one week.

Makes 8 servings (2-1/2 cups).

Choosing apples



BRAEBURN

Sweet-tart, spicy flavor, good for snacking and baking.



HONEYCRISP

Sweet, slightly tart flavor, good for snacking, baking and applesauce.



GALA

Sweet flavor, good for salads, snacking, baking and applesauce.



GOLDEN DELICIOUS

Very sweet, good for snacking and applesauce



JAZZ

Sweet-tart flavor, good for snacking and baking.



CRIPPS PINK LADY

Tangy-tart, sweet flavor, good for snacking, baking and applesauce.



GRANNY SMITH

Very tart flavor, excellent for baking, snacking and salads.



RED DELICIOUS

Mildly sweet flavor, good for snacking and salads.

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