

APPLES

Spanish: manzanas **Russian:** yabloki (яблоки) **Vietnamese:** táo

Originating in Central Asia between the Caspian and Black Sea, apples have been around for thousands of years. There are 2500 apple varieties grown commercially in the United States, though only 100 are grown commercially. 60% of apples grown in the United States are in Washington. Globally, there are 7500 varieties of apples grown!

Apples were brought to the United States in the 17th century, and the first apple orchard was planted in 1625. Red delicious is the most common variety of apple grown in the United States. Apples come in all shades of reds, greens, and yellows. The apple tree is small and deciduous, with white and pink blossoms. Trees that are commercially bought have been “grafted” so that there are two varieties in one tree. Grafting is the only way to reproduce a specific type of apple, in other words, a golden delicious apple’s seed will not produce a golden delicious apple tree!

An apple is a colorful and delicious package of nutrition and good eating.

A medium-size apple has:

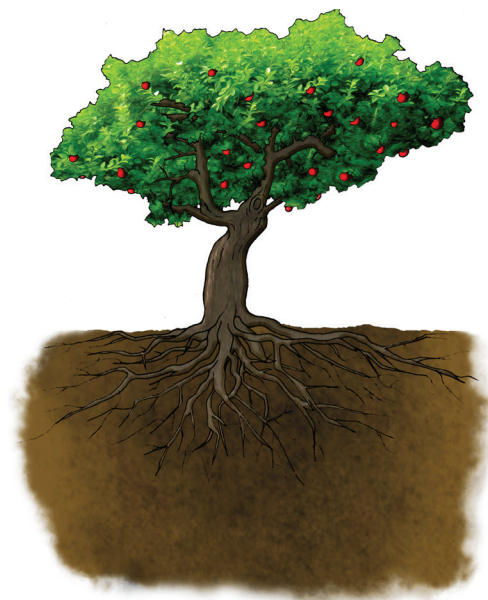
- fiber, nearly 20% of what you need each day
- vitamins including C and beta carotene (if you leave the peel on)
- minerals including potassium
- and only about 80 calories

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/apples/facts.cfm>



FROM SEED TO PLATE



Apple trees take 2-10 years to bear fruit, but can take up to 10 years if grown from seed. While you can grow them from seed, it is much easier to know you will have a delicious and edible apple if you purchase a tree and transplant it. Apples need to be pollinated from different varieties in order to have a good fruit set.

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/hil/hil-8301.htm>

DID YOU KNOW?

Apples, a favorite fruit of the ancient Greeks and Romans, are actually a member of the rose family.

IN THE GARDEN

Apples are delicious picked off the tree! Apple trees need lots of sunshine and space, and are best planted in the early spring. You can plant apple trees with seeds, or purchase a sapling and plant it.



SUN: Plant in direct sunlight. Apple trees should be planted out of the shade from other trees or buildings.



WATER: Young apple trees need about an inch of rain per week. If it isn't raining that much, supplement water needed.



SOIL: Apple trees will tolerate a wide range of soils as long as water and nutrients are not limiting and soil pH is adequate. Avoid heavy, poorly-drained soils and low spots, since apple trees cannot survive if water remains standing in the root zone.



SEEDS: Seeds should be planted in a pot until sprouted into sturdy seedlings; then, they can be transplanted into the ground.



SPACE: Plant seedlings at least 4 feet apart, and remove grass from the surrounding area, as it competes with young trees for water and nutrients.



CARE: Make sure to weed around the planting area, as apple saplings don't do well with competition.



HARVEST: Apples are ready for harvest when they have changed color and become easy to pick off the branch. Apples can be plucked right off, and should be stored in a cool, dark space.

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/hil/hil-8301.htm>

STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Look for smooth skin with few bruises. Too many bruises mean the apple may rot.
- Choose apples with a bright and sparkly color.
- Apples keep best when refrigerated. Store them in a plastic bag or the drawer to keep them fresh.
- Check them often. Remove any decayed apples. One rotten apple can indeed spoil the whole barrel!
- Raw, cut apples may darken. Prevent this by dipping them in a fruit juice - lemon, orange, grapefruit, or pineapple - before adding other ingredients.

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/thriftyliving/tl-apples.html>

IN THE KITCHEN

Apples can be eaten raw, made into applesauce, or even put into a salad! Apples add color and crunch to whatever you eat them with. They are versatile and easy to prepare. Before using, rinse the apple well. Though some people like to peel apples, leaving the skin on adds more fiber and vitamins. Cut apples into wedges for a snack; grate and add to coleslaws or salads; roast for delicious dessert; or heat in a saucepan with water to make fresh applesauce!

Try the classroom recipe at home, with this family-size version:

EASY APPLESAUCE

Serves 4-6

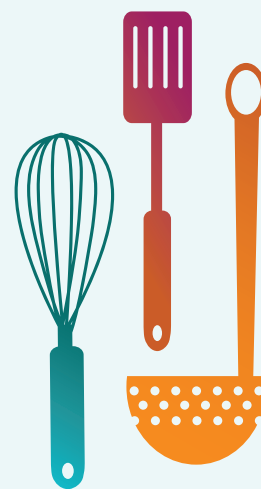
INGREDIENTS

4 medium apples (recommended: fuji or gala variety)
1 cup of water
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

DIRECTIONS

1. Peel and slice apples, removing the core.
2. Place in pot.
3. Add 1 cup of water, 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon and 1/8 teaspoon of nutmeg.
4. Bring to a boil and let simmer until mushy.
5. Let children use a masher to mash up the apples into a sauce.
6. Set aside and let cool.
7. Serve warm or chilled.

Recipe adapted from www.kidsoup.com



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The family newsletter for apples can be sent home at the beginning of the month. The newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Print the first page only, or add photos and stories to the second page and print both sides for families.



GET PARENTS' ATTENTION!

- Attach the newsletter to the child by attaching a string of yarn to the paper and making a newsletter “necklace” or pinning the newsletter to an article of clothing.
- Attach the newsletter to a drawing or other piece of artwork created by the child
- Get a set of “Ask me about ____” stickers or nametags, or use blank nametag stickers to draw attention to the fruit or vegetable of the month. Send each child home with an “Ask me about apples!” sticker for the apple month.
- Offer tastes of the recipe of the month at a parent meeting or when parents pick up their children from your site.

APPLE VARIETIES

Granny Smith • Honeycrisp • Fuji



ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family newsletters engage families as partners in helping children to develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.