

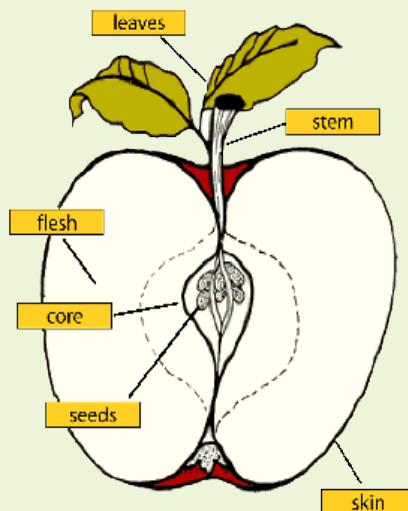
Apples

Did You Know

- The wild ancestors of apples grow in the mountains of central Asia.
- There are over 7,500 varieties of apples grown worldwide and 2,500 are grown in the US. However, only a handful of varieties are commonly found in grocery stores today. Check out Orange Pippin online for listings and descriptions of apple varieties (www.orangepippin.com).
- Apples were brought to the United States in the 17th century.
- The Bitterroot Valley and other areas in the western and south central part of Montana are the largest apple producing areas in the state.
- Apples are a good source of fiber and contain vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C and potassium. Most of the apple's nutrients are located just below the skin and are removed when peeled. Potassium is an electrolyte and is needed for many functions in the body, including the electrical activity of the heart.

Grow Your Own

Planting the seed from your favorite apple variety will not grow that same variety and will likely produce apples that are bitter. To get a desired variety of apple (such as Sweet Sixteen), the trees have to be grafted. This means taking a branch from the desired variety and attaching it to a root to form a new tree. Growing apples requires planting more than one variety of tree to ensure pollination. Purchase one-year-old trees of different varieties that possess multiple branches and are certified to be disease resistant, especially to Fire Blight. Plant in early spring, allowing 35-45 feet of growth space for standard-size apple trees, less for dwarf varieties.



Buying Tips

Choose firm, shiny, smooth-skinned apples with intact stems. Apples should smell fresh, not musty. Remove apples with bruises or rot from the bag or container so they do not spoil the other apples. Refrigerate apples in a plastic bag, away from strong-smelling food. Store away from other fruits, as apples naturally produce ethylene, which may cause other fruits to prematurely ripen. Eat within three weeks. Prevent cut apples from browning by dipping them in lemon juice.

Cooking

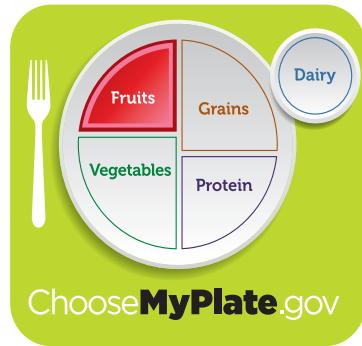
"Branch out" and try a different way of cooking and eating apples! Try baking larger apples by removing the core with a knife, leaving 1/2 inch of the apple core intact at the bottom. Put a small amount of seasoning in the hole. Place apples in a baking pan and add 3/4 cup water to the pan. Bake at 375°F for 30-40 minutes or until desired tenderness is achieved.

Conversation Starters

- Apples**
What Am I?
I have skin but I'm not a person
I can be peeled but I'm not a potato
I'm a fruit but I'm not an orange
I grow on trees but I'm not a banana
I'm usually red or green but I'm not a grape
Source: Riddles for Kids (<http://riddles-for-kids.org/apple-riddles>)
- Ideas:** Ask your child how homemade applesauce is different than store bought applesauce. Why are apple peels healthy? (Most of the nutrients lie in or just beneath the peel.)

Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit: mtharvestofthemonth.org.



ChooseMyPlate.gov

Applesauce



Servings

6

Ingredients



4 medium apples



1 cup of water



1/4 tsp of cinnamon



1/8 tsp of nutmeg

Tools



Peeler



Large Pot



Knife



Masher



Cutting Board

Directions

1. Peel and slice apples, removing the core. Leaving the peel on will result in chunkier applesauce and will retain more nutrients and color.
2. Place in pot.
3. Add water, cinnamon, and 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.



2 Montana Harvest of the Month: Apples



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org

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