

Guess How Many Apple Varieties There Are: 75, 750, 7500 or 75,000?

Hint: You could eat a different apple every day for more than 19 years, and never eat the same kind twice!

Give up? Well there are 7,500 varieties worldwide. The United States grows 2,500 of these. And we are blessed to have our very own local apples as they just come into season. Luther Burbank praised the apple, "It has often been said that if the Gravenstein could be had throughout the year, no other apple need be grown."

Wikipedia states:

The Gravenstein apple is considered by many to be one of the best all-around apples with a sweet, tart flavor and is especially good for baking and cooking. It is picked in July and August and is known as a good cooking apple, especially for apple sauce and apple cider. It does not keep well, so it is available only in season.

An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away?

Apples contain a host of nutrients and other healthy compounds that make them an incredibly healthy treat, such as:

- Powerful antioxidants, including quercetin, catechin, phloridzin and chlorogenic acid, protect against breast and colon cancers, prevent kidney stones, fight inflammation and help to lower bad cholesterol while raising the good kind.
- Pectin, a soluble dietary fiber that is good for cholesterol and blood sugar levels, as well as promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract.
- Lots of vitamin C and vitamin K.

Studies have also found that eating at least two apples a week reduces the risk of asthma and type 2 diabetes, and promotes lung health. Plus, eating them raw is a good workout for the mouth, providing a massage for the gums and a gentle cleaning for the teeth. And at only 80 calories for a medium-sized apple, why not enjoy? (www.sixwise.com)

Apple Care 101

- Refrigerate and humidify. No extra ripening time is needed.
- Early season varieties (before Oct. 1) should be kept refrigerated, as they will quickly lose their crunchiness if kept at room temperature.
- Late season varieties (after Oct. 1) *may* be kept in a fruit bowl for a couple of days if desired...they may gain a bit of sweetness and flavor, but will lose some of their crunch.

Easy Applesauce Recipe: Cook and Freeze

Making applesauce is easier than you think...and so yummy to eat warm from the stovetop! It's easy to experiment and try different ways of making it. Just select the apples you want, then peel, core and quarter them. Put them in a saucepan with just a bit of water or cider so that they don't scorch. Simmer until the apples are soft, about 20 to 30 minutes for 6 to 10 apples. You can process them in a blender or food processor, or just mash them with a fork or potato masher! Easy!

Now, the fun part...you can add to the sauce any way you like (if you want to!)...cinnamon perhaps...or honey, or maybe brown sugar or even a bit of ginger. If you make too much, you can freeze the extra. My favorite memories of Mom's sauce was eating it when it was only half-thawed...and enjoying crunching on the icy sauce chunks! Enjoy!

Crock-Pot Applesauce: Cook and Freeze

10 apples, peeled and sliced
_ c sugar or stevia or honey (optional)

1 T ground cinnamon

Combine ingredients in slow cooker
Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours

(Yummy over oatmeal or pancakes!)

Applesauce "Sorbet"

Something we love to do with applesauce is put some in the freezer in a freezer-safe container for a few hours. Take it out, spoon it up, and you have a fantastic apple sorbet, sugar-free and nutrient-rich. It's even better with little sweet rum drizzled on it!

Old-Fashioned Apple Bread

Yield: 1 loaf pan (9 1/2" x 5 1/2" x 2 1/2")
Bake (and freeze if there's any left)

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 cups peeled and diced apples, moistened with lemon juice
- 1/3 cup chopped nuts
- 1/2 cup chopped raisins or dates
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

Method:

1. Cream together butter and sugar.
2. Add beaten egg.
3. Stir in fruit and nuts.
4. Sift together dry ingredients and add alternately with milk.
5. Place in a loaf pan; let stand for 10 minutes.
6. Bake at 350 degrees F until cooked, about 1 hour.
7. Serve plain or buttered.