



APPLE-ICIOUS!

Use these tried-and-true methods for apple goodness all year long

Josefina Ibarra

How many times have you heard the phrase “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”? I cannot back up this sentence with scientific research, but I can tell you apples fit a healthy diet!

Apples have about 3 grams of dietary fiber with the skin on. Apples are a good source of potassium, they are sodium-free, and they are deliciously juicy and sweet.

Apple for Every Occasion

Apples come in a wide variety. Some are best eaten raw or baked; others are great added to salads, canned, frozen, or used in cooked dishes such as a stir-fry or maybe enjoyed as applesauce for the whole family.

Apples are available in abundance in the fall, so it’s good they can be used so many ways. Fortunately, they

also keep well, are available in grocery stores year-round, and are easily preserved. So you really can have an apple a day.

Store them properly to ensure freshness. Maintaining crispness means keeping apples cold. Apples will soften 10 times faster at room temperature than at 35°F, so refrigerate as soon as possible.

Preservation

There are plenty of methods to preserve apples if not used right away. Apples can be dehydrated, canned, or frozen. Contact your local University of Wyoming Extension office for tested recipes or if you have preservation questions.

Dehydrating

Dehydration is about the least-expensive food preservation method and the oldest. Dried food can be enjoyed

throughout the year, the nutrition and flavors are concentrated, and it takes very little storage space since 50-75 percent of its weight and much of its volume is lost. You can use a dehydrator or oven or dehydrate the old-fashioned way like the pioneers did – in the sun. Today, though, using a dehydrator is preferred.

Set the dehydrator at 135 degrees. Slice apples approximately ¼-inch thick and dip them in a light cinnamon and sugar solution or put



them plain on the dehydrating mats. Because the apples are being dried, Fruit Fresh or a similar product is not necessary but can be used to keep apples from turning brown.

Square dehydrators with the fan in back circulate heat throughout the system and tend to work better than the round-types with the fan in the top, which require rotating the racks every so often. Slices approximately 1/4-inch thick take from seven-15 hours to dry to a pliable stage. Dehydrated apples can be mixed with nuts and other fruits to make a healthy trail mix for hunting, skiing, or next summer's hike. They can also be soaked in water to rehydrate and then used in a variety of recipes. Dried apples can be stored in a dark, cool, dry area for four to 12 months, depending on the temperature.

Freezing

If you prefer freezing apples as applesauce, wash them, peel (if desired), and slice. Add 1/3 cup water and 1 tablespoon produce protector, e.g., Fruit Fresh, to each quart of apples. Cook until tender. Smash the apples through a jelly cone to remove the peels from the pulp. If apples are peeled, you can use a food processor to puree the cooked apples. Add 1/4 cup sugar to each quart of puree and stir until dissolved. You can use red hot candies instead of sugar – the candies give the applesauce a cinnamon taste and a very pretty pink color. Just add candies to taste – it will take about 1/4 cup per quart. If still hot, cool the puree, and ladle applesauce into plastic freezer containers or freezer jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal, label, and freeze. Consume frozen items within a year.

Table 1. Recommended processing time for sliced apples in a boiling-water canner.

		Processing Time at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000
Hot	Pints or Quarts	20 min	25	30	35

Canning

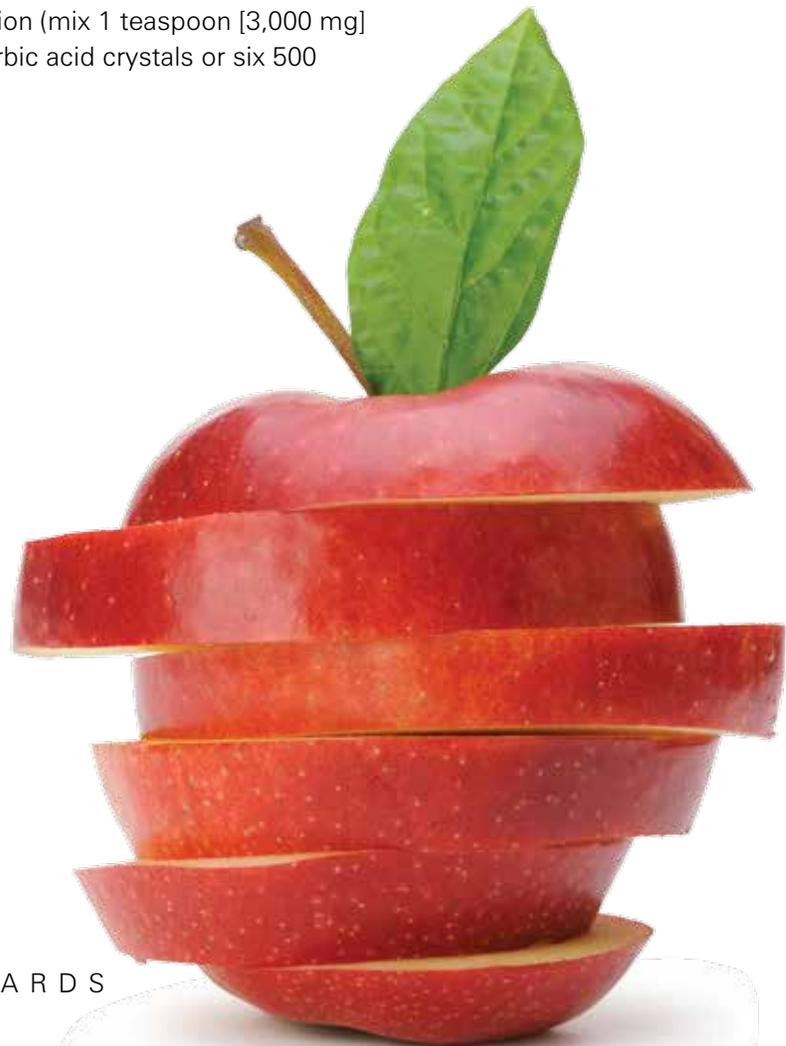
For canning, always select firm apples with even color, free from bruises, and with a smooth finish. Use the less-than-perfect apples for eating right away, cutting for salads, or making applesauce or apple butter.

Canned Apples - Sliced

An average of 19 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts. Select apples that are juicy, crispy, and preferably both sweet and tart.

Wash, peel, and core apples. To prevent discoloration, slice apples into water containing ascorbic acid solution (mix 1 teaspoon [3,000 mg] ascorbic acid crystals or six 500

milligram vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon water). Raw packs (canning apples without precooking them) result in a poor quality product. Place drained slices in large saucepan and add 1 pint water or very light, light, or medium syrup per 5 pounds of sliced apples. Boil five minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Fill jars with hot slices and hot syrup or water, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process. Consume apples within a year.





SYRUPS FOR CANNING FRUIT

Adding syrup to canned fruit helps retain flavor, color, and shape. It does not prevent spoilage. The guidelines for preparing and using syrups in Table 2 offer a new “very light” syrup, which approximates the natural sugar content of many fruits and adds

the fewest calories. If this is your first time canning a particular fruit variety or using a particular syrup, you might want to try a small batch first to see if your family is going to like it before carrying out a major canning activity.

Table 2. Preparing and using syrups

		Measures of Water and Sugar				
Syrup Type	Approx. % Sugar	For 9-Pt Canner Load (1)		For 7-Qt Canner Load		Fruits commonly packed in syrup (2)
		Cups Water	Cups Sugar	Cups Water	Cups Sugar	
Very Light	10	6-½	¾	10-½	1-¼	
Light	20	5-¾	1-½	9	2-¼	Very sweet fruit
Medium	30	5-¼	2-¼	8-¼	3-¾	Sweet apples, sweet cherries, berries, grapes
Heavy	40	5	3-¼	7-¾	5-¼	Tart apples, apricots, sour cherries, gooseberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums
Very Heavy	50	4-¼	4-¼	6-½	6-¾	Very sour fruit

1. This amount is also adequate for a 4-quart load.

2. The type of processing (raw pack, hot pack, etc.) you’ll want to do before canning varies by fruit type. Check out the resources listed for further information.

Josefina Ibarra is a University of Wyoming Extension nutrition and food safety educator serving western Wyoming, based in the Rock Springs extension office. She notes some information for this article came from extension educators **Denise Smith** and **Phyllis Lewis** and from the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning.