



Delicious Fall Apples: Varieties and Selection

The taste of a Fall crisp apple is refreshing along with visiting farmers markets, drinking warm apple cider after a hayride, dunking for apples, making caramel apples, and enjoying your favorite apple recipe. These are things I along with many other people associate autumn months and look forward to doing each year. Apples provide a large variety of flavors and textures that are great for cooking, baking or just eating raw. Apples are a convenient snack for busy families that are easy to pack and store. If you are looking for more nutritious food options, apples are packed with phytonutrients and antioxidants. The adage, “An apple a day, keeps the doctor away” might have more merit than we realize. Apples provide many health benefits: Apples are a good source of soluble and insoluble fiber, vitamin C, and pectin found in apples may help to lower LDL cholesterol. The phytonutrient called quercetin that is found in apples, may help in the prevention of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease. They are an excellent source of flavonoids and antioxidants and may help protect bone health and help prevent diseases such as asthma, heart disease and certain kinds of cancer.

There are over 7,500 apple varieties grown across the entire world, it’s difficult to remember which apples are in-season, which make the best pies, applesauce and which are best eaten raw. Here are a few popular varieties of apples and dates they are in season along with their flavor, texture, and best way to use. This way you can enjoy the peck freshness and flavor in your favorite apple dishes!

- **Granny Smith** apples are known as a green apple or sour apple. They are popular for their tart and tangy flavor and firm texture. The Granny Smith apple is one of the most recognizable and beloved apples in the orchard and are one of the healthiest choices you can make. With a distinct tart flavor, they are among the lower-sugar fruits you can eat, and they're loaded with fiber and phytonutrients that benefit your health. They are in season: early October to mid-November.
- **Red Delicious** apples Red Delicious apples are one of the most well-known commercially grown apples in the United States. They have a bright red skin that is slightly bitter. The fine-grained flesh is creamy white, crisp, juicy and has a mildly sweet taste with flavors of melon. They are best used in fresh preparations, as their flesh does not hold up well when cooked. Add to green, fruit and chopped salads or as an edible garnish on sandwiches, quesadillas, and burgers. They are in season: mid-September to mid-November
- **Fuji** apples are yellow-green with red highlights to full red in color but sometimes they maybe pink speckled flush over a yellow-green background. They have a sweet-tart flavor with a crisp and crunchy-firm texture that is juicy, with dull white flesh which snaps cleanly. Fuji apples are among the most popular apples for eating fresh, but they are also great for baking, as they hold their shape when they cook. They are in season: early October to mid-November.
- **Honeycrisp** apples are a medium-to-large sized apple, with a light green/yellow background largely covered with red-orange flush with strong hint of pink. The skin may be flecked with occasional russet dots. The flesh is white, with a sweet and tart flavor. They are in season

late mid-August to late September. One of the sweetest apples around. It is firm enough that it won't cook down much and complements just about any other apple variety to make a stellar pie.

- **Gala** apples are sweet with a mild flavor with a crisp flesh and yellow-orange skin with red striping. They are in season mid-August to late October. They are among the best apples for applesauce, salads, eating out-of-hand, and pressing into cider.
- **Golden Delicious** apples are a large apple with yellowish-green skin with a mild, sweet flavor that are juicy. prone to bruising and shriveling, so it needs careful handling and storage. It is a favorite for salads, sauces, and apple butter. You can put less sugar in pies and sauces made from Golden Delicious apples, because of the natural sweetness these apples provide. Are in season mid-September to mid-October and the fruit will keep for up to 3–6 months if refrigerated.
- **McIntosh** apples McIntosh apples have a bright red with spots of green skin with a sweet-tart flavor and are available in late fall and early winter. They are good apples for baking, juicing, and eating because they are so juicy, the apple is tart enough to hold its shape in a sweet dessert.
- **Empire** apples are sweet in flavor and in season late August to mid-October. Empires are a cross between McIntosh and Red Delicious apples. Firm-textured and sweet-tart, the Empire is a fine all-purpose apple good for juice, sauce, pies, baking, salads, eating fresh, and drying.

To recap when baking, you need to pick an apple with the appropriate texture. Spending time on perfecting a fall apple dish only to take a bite of mushy apple is, to say the least, quite a disappointment! To avoid this, make sure that you pick an apple that is crisp enough to withstand the oven, and that has a good balance of sweet and tart taste. Remember, you can also mix multiple types of apples to create a variety of flavors — it never hurts to experiment a little! Here are a few examples of what to look for when selecting the perfect apple.

- **Sauces:** If you're making applesauce, chutney, or apple butter, look for those that offer a more tender flesh and sweetness. Juicy apples are also ideal, which offer more liquid, making for extra flavorful results.
- **Baking:** When it comes to choosing the best baking apple, texture and flavor are key. Whether you're whipping up an apple crisp or pie, you want a variety that offers a firmness that will hold up in the oven, as well as a balanced sweet-tart flavor that will pop among other ingredients.
- **Eaten Raw:** When eating apples straight from your hand, it really comes down to preference! If you enjoy a tart flavor, reach for a variety such as granny smith. If you prefer sweeter notes, choose honey crisp or pink lady. If you're packing lunch or looking for a travel-friendly option, choose those with a firmer skin.

Enjoy the Fall weather and delicious apples either raw or cooked! For questions about apples or nutrition email: Martha Maddox, CEA IV, Family and Consumer Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County at mmaddox@ufl.edu, and put in MEMO: apple article. ENJOY!