

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

The Appeal of Apples

Winter brings to mind the aroma and flavor of spiced cider, apple crisp fresh from the oven, taffy apples, and the crunch of biting into a crisp, juicy apple. Enjoy our Hurry-up Baked Apples as a quick, tasty dessert, a snack, or side dish.



How should I store apples to keep their quality as long as possible?

- Apples like cool temperatures and high humidity. Refrigerate or store in a cool location.
- Avoid storing apples with bananas or tomatoes. The ethylene gas these fruits naturally release causes apples to soften.
- To store apples in an unheated shed or basement, leave them in a cardboard box out of direct sunlight.
- Apples bruise easily so handle them gently to avoid fruit decay.



Tips for Healthier Holiday Meals

Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Select a variety of vegetables for a great way to add color to the meal. Dish up smaller portions of meat on your plate.

Cut back on sugar. Use non-nutritive sweeteners in place of sugar for pie fillings, puddings, and cranberry sauces. You can usually reduce the amount of sugar by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ in recipes that are high in sugar.

Lower the fat.

- Use egg whites or a nonfat egg substitute instead of whole eggs.
- Substitute a nutty cereal for half the amount of pecans in pecan pie.
- Substitute chopped vegetables for some of the bread in stuffing.
- Omit butter and margarine from stuffing recipes.

Be dessert smart. Cut pies in smaller pieces. Serve a large platter of fresh fruit along with traditional desserts. Try the Hurry-up Baked Apples for dessert. Bake fewer varieties of cookies and bars and make them smaller. Use fat free whipped topping.



Hurry-up Baked Apples

Serves: 4

Serving size: 1 apple half

Ingredients

- 2 medium-size tart apples (Braeburn, Cortland, Fuji, Granny Smith, Jonathan)
- 1 teaspoon white or brown sugar (packed)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons oatmeal
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit and nuts (dried cranberries, raisins, chopped walnuts, or pecans)
- 1 (6-ounce) container low-fat vanilla yogurt

Directions

1. Cut apples in half lengthwise. Use spoon to remove cores and hollow out a space about 1 inch.
2. Arrange apple halves, cut sides up, in microwavable dish. Cut thin slices off bottoms to keep apples from tipping.
3. Combine sugar, cinnamon, oatmeal, dried fruit, and nuts. Fill each apple half.
4. Cover dish with plastic wrap. Fold back one edge $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to vent steam.
5. Microwave 3 to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes until apples can be cut easily. Remove from microwave and let set a few minutes.
6. Spoon yogurt over the top.

Nutrient information per serving

120 calories, 2 g fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 30 mg sodium, 26 g carbohydrate, 3 g dietary fiber, 2 g protein.



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Checklist for Safe Recipes

Before trying new recipes for the holidays, evaluate them for food safety.

- Avoid recipes containing raw eggs because of the *Salmonella* risk. Older cookbooks may have recipes for ice cream, mayonnaise, eggnog, and desserts that use raw eggs.
- Be cautious with marinades. Marinate only in the refrigerator in glass or plastic containers.
- Use slow cookers safely. Defrost meat or poultry before putting it in the cooker. Keep the lid in place except when stirring the food or checking for doneness.
- Always cook meat thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to cook foods to a safe temperature. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/safefood/id376503723?mt=8>
- Post this toll-free number on your refrigerator for expert, research-based answers to your questions about holiday food preparation. ISU Extension and Outreach AnswerLine (800) 262-3804.
- Remember many major food companies have 800 numbers for answers to questions on about their own products. If you have a question about an item, check the package for a toll free number.



1-800-262-3804



ANSWERLINE

Information and resources for consumers
with home and family questions

Kitchen Calisthenics

Too busy to exercise? Too cold to go outside? You can multi-task while food is cooking by doing kitchen calisthenics!

Warm up by marching in place or walking briskly for one minute. Breathe deeply during exercising (IN through the nose and OUT through the mouth).

- **Quick arm exercise.** Start with a can of beans or fruit in your right hand. Bend at the elbow and lift the can to shoulder height 15 times. Switch hands and repeat. Do 3 sets of 15 for each arm.
- **Countertop pushups.** Stand about three feet from the counter. Place hands firmly on the counter top edge. Keep your back straight and slowly bend your elbows until your chest almost touches the counter. Slowly push back to an arms-straight position. Start with 5 and increase the number daily to 10.
- **Ankle twists.** Stand near a counter and place one hand on the counter for stability. Extend one leg forward with foot off the floor and rotate ankle to the left and right 3 to 5 times. Then point toes downward and hold for 30 seconds; extend toes up toward your nose and hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with the other ankle. For a greater challenge, hold your hand just above the counter and close your eyes.
- **Soft squats.** Face the kitchen counter, with both hands flat on the counter and feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly squat, bending your knees only to your comfort level. Slowly return to standing.



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...and justice for all

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