



Apples

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Are they a fruit or a vegetable?

Apples are a fruit. They are part of the Rose family, along with pears and cherries.

How do they grow?

Apples grow on trees. Trees grow for at least five years before they start to produce fruit.

Where do they grow?

Apples are grown everywhere throughout the US. Washington State is the top producer in the country.

When are they in season?

Apples are harvested from late September to early November, but can be stored until April.

What should you look for?

Look for apples that are firm and not bruised.

How do you store them?

When freshly picked, apples can be stored for several months. If one apple has been bruised, keep it away from the rest to stop the others going bad. They are best kept in the fridge.

How can you eat them?

Apples are often eaten raw, just as they are, or chopped up and added to sweet or savory salads. They're also delicious cooked in desserts such as apple pies and crumbles, or made into homemade apple sauce to serve with roast pork.

Why are they good for you?

Apples are full of goodness. The skin contains lots of vitamins and minerals and almost one-third of the fiber of the entire apple. Fiber is very important in our diets because it keeps our digestive system healthy and helps keep us feeling full, so we don't eat too much.



Did you know?

- ★ Some apple trees will grow to more than 40 feet high and live more than 100 years.
- ★ Red Delicious are the most widely grown variety of apple in the US.
- ★ The US's longest living apple tree was reportedly planted in 1647 by Peter Stuyvesant in his Manhattan orchard and was still bearing fruit when a derailed train struck it in 1866.
- ★ Seeing an apple falling off a tree inspired Sir Isaac Newton to develop his theory of gravity.

Always check the label on your fruit or veg and remember, the closer it was grown to home, the fresher and tastier it will be!



Apple and watercress salad

Serves 6

for the salad

- ★ 2 bunches of watercress or fresh spinach
- ★ 2 nice red and green eating apples
- ★ optional: 1oz pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- ★ 2oz mild blue cheese, feta or goats' cheese

for the dressing

- ★ 1 spring onion
- ★ 0.5oz mild blue cheese, feta or goats' cheese
- ★ 2 tablespoons natural yogurt
- ★ 1 lemon
- ★ 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ★ sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

To make the dressing, trim and slice the spring onion as finely as you can and put it into a bowl or clean jam jar. Crumble in the cheese and spoon in the yogurt. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze in most of the juice, holding your hand underneath to catch any seeds, then add the oil and give it a good whisk or pop the lid on and shake. Have a taste and season with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper, if needed.

Pick out any wilted watercress or spinach leaves, then wash and dry the rest in a salad spinner or colander. Put the watercress or spinach onto a nice platter or into a serving bowl. Wash the apples and remove their stems. Either coarsely grate them, or cut them in half then carefully slice into matchsticks and scatter over the watercress or spinach. Squeeze over the last bit of lemon juice to stop the apple from going brown.

Sprinkle over the pumpkin or sunflower seeds if using, crumble over the rest of the cheese and drizzle over the dressing. Gently toss together so everything is nicely coated, and serve.



Equipment

- ★ knife
- ★ cutting board
- ★ bowl or jam jar
- ★ box grater
- ★ measuring spoons
- ★ balloon whisk or fork
- ★ salad spinner or colander
- ★ serving platter or bowl

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

This lesson is about getting students to taste and enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables while learning about where they come from and why they are good for you. We want students to understand how important and fun it is to eat well.

Use this recipe to get your class to see, touch, smell and taste some delicious crunchy apples. Even if they can't help with some of the preparation, get them washing the watercress, picking through the leaves and making and tasting the dressing. Get as many students involved as possible and make it fun!

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Notes for teachers

Key facts

- ★ Apples are a fruit, because they are an edible part of the plant that contains the seeds. They are part of the rose family, along with pears and cherries.
- ★ Apple trees usually bear fruit after 5 to 10 years and are beautiful not only for their fruit, but also for their blossom.
- ★ Cultivated apples are believed to have come from south-west Asia and the region around the Mediterranean at least 5,000 years ago. They're now grown all over the world, including Europe, North America and South Africa.
- ★ The pilgrims planted the first apple trees in the US in the Massachusetts Bay Colony – they're now grown across the US.
- ★ There are more than 7,000 varieties of apples grown worldwide and 2,500 varieties are grown in the US!
- ★ Apples are full of goodness. The skin contains lots of vitamins, minerals and fiber. Fiber is very important in our diets because it keeps our digestive system healthy and helps keep us feeling full, so we don't eat too much.

Additional activities

Apple sampling

You will need:

- ★ knife
- ★ cutting board
- ★ apples of at least 3 different varieties, for example: Golden Delicious, Fuji, Red Delicious and Empire
- ★ plates and napkins

Cut most of the fruit into wedges and place onto clearly labeled plates. Put an uncut fruit next to each plate so students can see how they look whole. Get students to take a sample of each, then ask them to compare the taste and texture of each sample together. Ask students which they prefer and why. Discuss with students which apples are better for cooking and baking.

Note: there are lots of different varieties of apples. Buy whatever fruit is available near you and, if possible, use the farmers' market so students can see what's grown locally.

Why do apples turn brown?

You will need:

- ★ 1 large bowl
- ★ apples, cut into wedges
- ★ plastic wrap
- ★ lemon juice
- ★ plates and napkins

Fill a large bowl with cold water, then take four apple wedges and divide them between four student helpers. Get one helper to place their wedge in the water, another to tightly wrap their apple in plastic wrap, another to squeeze lemon juice over their apple and the final helper to leave their wedge aside on a plate. After about 30 minutes, examine the apples and discuss which wedges have changed the most and why they think this is. Get students to taste the apples and discuss if the flavor has also changed and why.

Explain that apples contain an enzyme that reacts with the oxygen in the air when cut open – this turns the apple brown. Using lemon changes the acidity of the apple so it doesn't turn brown as quickly, while covering it or placing it in water reduces the amount of oxygen that comes into contact with the apple.