



Nutrition News

Apples: A Bushel and a Peck of Flavor

The humble apple has been enjoyed throughout history, dating back thousands of years. A member of the rose family, the apple was considered a symbol of beauty in Greek mythology. The fruit made its way to North America in the 1600s. In the early 19th century, pioneer missionary John Chapman earned his famous nickname “Johnny Appleseed” by starting apple tree nurseries from Pennsylvania to Illinois.

More than 8,000 varieties of apples are grown worldwide, with about 2,500 cultivated in the United States, 100 of those grown on a commercial scale, and about two dozen grown in orchards in the Hudson Valley. Almost all apple trees today don't actually come from seeds, but rather from a process called grafting, since most seeds will not produce the same apples from which they came.

When it comes to nutrition, there is some truth in the saying “an apple a day keeps the doctor away” - especially if it's unpeeled. With the majority of its nutrients found in the skin, an apple is a good source of dietary fiber and vitamin C.

Typically in peak season from late August through October, apples are available year-round across the country. When purchasing apples, look for a smooth skin free of bruises, with a bright color and shine. Prolong shelf life by storing fresh apples in a plastic bag in the refrigerator or in a cool, dark place. Apples left on a countertop or table will ripen faster and should be consumed within a few days.

Because apples produce the natural gas ethylene, they can cause other fruits to ripen faster. Place a ripe apple with unripe fruits or vegetables in a brown paper bag and seal it. After a day or two, open the bag to see if the fruit or vegetables have ripened.

Every variety of apple has a distinct taste, color and texture. While some are considered “all-purpose” apples, good for snacking or cooking, others may be better suited for different culinary applications.

The apples we've listed below are often available at orchards and farmers markets throughout Dutchess County, as well as at local supermarkets.

Braeburn

Originally from New Zealand, the Braeburn is undeniably crisp with a balance of sweet and tart flavor. Its skin is pale green with red and orange streaks. Braeburns can be eaten fresh, baked whole or used in tarts or applesauce.

Granny Smith

This Australian-born variety gets its name from Maria Ann “Granny” Smith, who discovered it in 1868. The Granny Smith has a thick and shiny green exterior, with a puckering sour taste. Its firm, crisp and juicy texture is ideal for baking into pies and sauces. This is the apple The Beatles used in their “Apple Corps” logo.

Gala

This New Zealand variety has quickly become the second most popular apple in the United States. Gala has a waxy reddish-yellow skin and golden flesh, with a snappy, tart flavor. Gala is an all-purpose apple, making it a good choice for eating and cooking.

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Apples (continued)

Pink Lady

Also known as Cripps Pink, the Pink Lady is from Australia. Its pink exterior is speckled with white freckles and has a sweet-tart and almost tropical flavor. Resistant to browning when cut, Pink Lady apples are great for salads or cooking.

Honeycrisp

Originally from Minnesota, this variety is pink-red in color with juicy flesh. With a mild, sweet flavor and an undeniable crunch, Honeycrisp apples are best when eaten fresh or dried and often are used in baking.

McIntosh

Although it originated in Canada, the McIntosh has become the quintessential New England apple. Its texture is crisp and juicy at its peak, but it quickly softens. With skin that is bright red mixed with varying amounts of green depending on ripeness, McIntosh apples can be eaten fresh from the tree or used to make cider and sauces.

Fuji

This barrel-shaped apple originated in Japan but is now enjoyed worldwide, especially for snacking. It has a yellowish-red skin striped with pink accents, a crisp and juicy texture, and a sweet, fruity flavor.

Mutsu (or Crispin)

Also an apple that originated in Japan, the Mutsu is larger than most apples. Its flesh varies in color from white to greenish yellow. It is suitable for eating on its own, juicing, drying, or cooking, as it maintains its shape well when cooked. It can be kept for up to three months before going bad.

Jonathan

Hailing from the Woodstock area, the Jonathan apple has a ruby-red exterior with gold spots, a spicy scent and a sweet-tart taste. Jonathan apples hold up well in baking, making them perfect for pies. "Jonagold" and "Jonamac" apples are Jonathans cross-bred with Golden Delicious and McIntosh apples, respectively.

Golden Delicious

The Golden Delicious apple has soft, yellow skin speckled with brown spots. It has a mostly sweet, almost melon-like flavor and crisp texture. The Golden Delicious is an all-purpose apple, ideal for snacking or cooking.

Empire

Named for its home state of New York, the Empire is a cross between the McIntosh and the Red Delicious. Its shiny, red skin and sweet taste make it one of the top picks in the U.S. Best eaten fresh, Empire apples' crunchy texture fades fast with prolonged storage.

Esopus Spitzenburg

This one was discovered by a Dutch settler in the late 18th century. Thomas Jefferson is said to have planted dozens of these trees at his home orchard at Monticello, in Virginia. It ripens late in the season, and its flavor improves with a few weeks of storage.

Northern Spy

Originating in western New York near Rochester, Northern Spy is commonly used for desserts and pies, as well as juice and cider. It is an excellent apple for storage, tending to last long due to late maturation. The apple called Red Spy is closely related, but redder.

Rome

If you like pork chops with fried apples, the Rome apple is your best bet. They retain their shape and flavor beautifully when cooked. Widely grown in New York State.

Red Delicious

Originally known as the Hawk Eye, the Red Delicious hails from Iowa and is known for its deep red color and tall stature. It has a mild sweetness with a crisp, juicy texture and tough skin. The Red Delicious is best eaten on its own or chopped in salads.

Happy eating!



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