

# Apples really can help keep the doctor away

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Apples don't get the same buzz as popular "superfruits" such as goji berries, acai berries or pomegranates. But don't overlook them. They are chock-full of powerful disease-fighting nutrients and health benefits, in addition to being affordable and portable. •

- Apples keep you hydrated: 84 percent of an apple's content is water. This means apples not only satisfy your hunger but can satisfy your thirst as well. •
- They are low in calories (a medium-size apple has only 80), fat-free, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and full of fiber.
- They contain immune-boosting Vitamin C, which is important for the growth and repair of all body tissues. Vitamin C also helps to heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy.
- They help you meet your daily fruit intake. The USDA recommends about two cups of fruit per day for most adults. A medium apple counts as a cup of fruit, so if you snack on one fresh apple while on the go, you are halfway to meeting your daily fruit intake.

Ready to start looking for apple recipes? Be careful. Many apple recipes contain loads of butter and refined sugar (think traditional apple pie) and advise you to remove the skin, stripping away important dietary fiber and nutrients. With apple season in full swing, find out how to maximize your "apple a day."

## **Keep the skin on**

Most of the fiber in apples comes from the skin and the pulp. When you remove the skin, you remove about half the fiber. A medium apple with skin contains 3.3 grams of fiber, whereas a medium without skin has only 1.7 grams. Applesauce and apple juice contain even less. Dietary fiber is important for weight management, because it keeps you fuller longer. Dietary fiber from fruit, as part of an overall healthful diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and might lower the risk of heart disease, obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Plus, fiber aids in proper bowel function and helps to reduce constipation.

An apple's skin is also incredibly nutrient-rich. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, apples are loaded with the powerful antioxidant quercetin, which is found predominantly in the skin. Quercetin is a phytochemical with anti-inflammatory and heart-protecting qualities, and may reduce the growth and spread of cancer cells.

## **Eat the right apples**

Choose apples with the stem intact. Also try smelling them — you should be able to actually smell the freshness.

Apples can stay fresh in your refrigerator for up to three weeks. Keep them in a plastic bag and away from other foods with strong odors.

## **Make them part of your routine**

Consumed whole, apples make for a mess-free and convenient snack. For a more filling option, you can slice them up and dip them into yogurt or your favorite nut butter. Diced apples also make a great topping. Try them with your morning oatmeal or lunchtime salad.

Visit [a nearby orchard or your farmers market for fresh off-the-tree apples](#). Use them in any of these healthful recipes, found in The Post's Recipe Finder at [washingtonpost.com/recipes](https://www.washingtonpost.com/recipes/):

- [Apple recipes for a seasonal feast](#)
- [Autumn Fruit and Vegetable Bisque](#)
- [Beet and Apple Slaw](#)
- [Carrot Apple Soup](#)
- [Curried Sweet Potatoes With Apples](#)
- [Gingered Applesauce](#)
- [Honey-Braised Chicken Thighs With Apple](#)
- [Moroccan Chickpeas With Apples](#)
- [Squash and Apple Puree](#)
- [Waldorf Salad](#)
- [Warm Ginger, Apple and Cabbage Slaw](#)

- [Wild Rice, Sweet Potato and Apple Chowder](#)

## **Apple pie makeover**

Apples are probably most known for their role in popular American desserts such as apple pies, cobblers, crisps, cakes and tarts. Apple pie is a classic fall comfort food, but a typical slice of it can set you back anywhere from 300 to 600 calories (and this doesn't include the vanilla ice cream you might scoop on top of your slice).

This apple pie makeover is a healthful and portion-controlled dessert that is great for adults or children. Importantly, this recipe leaves the apple skin on to increase the overall nutrients and fiber, making the recipe more healthful and satisfying.

Most apple pie fillings drown the apples with refined sugar. And most crusts are loaded with butter and refined flour. This [Apple Pie Bites](#) recipe gains subtle sweetness naturally from apples, applesauce and brown rice syrup, a liquid sweetener that is both gluten-free and vegan. It is made by cooking sprouted brown rice in water that is then evaporated, producing a syrup that retains antioxidants. In this recipe, it helps to act as a binding agent for the crust as well as a sweetener.

The crust contains no butter and is made from brown rice flour and almond flour, which means it's gluten-free and vegan-friendly. It's also incredibly simple; this recipe would be great for a novice chef.

One bite might not get you nearly as many nutrients as a whole fresh apple, but it will satisfy your apple pie craving (and your sweet tooth). At 50 calories a pop, you can afford to go back for seconds — or even thirds.

### [Recipe: Apple Pie Bites](#)

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