

Apples are simple, healthful, yet full of variety

October 1 2014, by Melissa Wdowik

With autumn's arrival and National Apple Month right around the corner, this is a great time to brush up on our apple facts.

Archeologists have discovered signs that humans ate apples as far back as 6500 B.C., and this fruit has a long history throughout the world. At least 100 varieties of apples are grown commercially in the United States, with more than 2,500 varieties grown throughout 50 states for individual enjoyment. Apples can be found in many shades of red, yellow, and green, with a variety of textures and tastes. I have to admit I am surprised when people say they do not like apples. It may be because most people have only tasted one or two of the most popular varieties. If you do not like the sweetness of a Red Delicious or the tartness of a Granny Smith, you may like the more complex flavors of a Braeburn, Fuji, or Gala. Texture is also important, ranging from the tender Jonathan and McIntosh to the firmer Honeycrisp and Cameo varieties. Better yet, expand your repertoire to include heirloom varieties, especially Colorado-grown. The flavors and quality will surprise and please even the pickiest eaters, and the more we buy the heirloom varieties, the more available they will become.

The phrase "an [apple](#) a day keeps the doctor away" has a lot of truth to it. From a nutrition and health standpoint, what's not to love? Apples are high in water content and a good source of fiber, vitamin C, antioxidants, and polyphenols. In historic periods of typhoid epidemics, patients were encouraged to drink water mixed with apple cider. In Ayurveda medicine, apples are praised for warming the body as it

prepares to transition from summer to fall. They are also believed to cleanse the liver, regulate digestion, and clean the tongue. Western medicine concurs; studies indicate apples may be beneficial in the prevention and management of [high blood sugar](#), inflammation, asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and nerve and eye disorders.

Furthermore, healthy adults have been observed to eat fewer calories at a meal after they eat a medium-sized apple. While I am not recommending a diet of apples to the exclusion of other fruits and vegetables, it is worth considering a daily habit.

Apples are versatile. Raw slices go well with cheese, nuts, or turkey slices, while apples cooked with cinnamon and cloves provide a warm breakfast or dessert. This fruit can also be chopped into salads, stews, and quick breads, or used to create all-natural applesauce and apple butter. If you want to keep them sliced for snacking, prevent browning by sprinkling with lemon or pineapple juice. You can also enjoy them year-round; find extensive suggestions for preserving them at www.ext.colostate.edu/index.html What about [apple juice](#)? One hundred percent fruit juice is better than soda or [juice drinks](#), but still full of natural sugar and calories without the fiber. A whole fresh fruit is a much better pick.

Enjoy your apples, and see you at the orchard.

Provided by Colorado State University

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