

Seasonal Eating
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Apple Crisp Warms Up the Fall
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Fall has finally arrived with its cooler temperatures and crisp, dry air. For me, that means its apple season. While we can get apples year round now at the stores, fall is when they are at their peak here in Tennessee. Crisp, juicy, sometimes sweet, sometimes tart, apples make great warming dishes for the cooler days.

While I love to pair apples with pork for delicious main courses, and baked or sautéed apples for a side dish, apples are probably best known for desserts. My Mom's favorite pie is Dutch Apple with its crispy crumble topping and highly seasoned apples full of cinnamon and cloves. Fresh apple cake is another standard apple dessert with moistness from the apples making this a favorite. Then there are apple dumplings, wrapped up in their pastry coats and oozing with cinnamon flavored sauciness.



But one of the easiest apple desserts is the humble apple crisp. Homey and comforting, this dish is perfect for a potluck, a family dinner or Halloween spread. It is good hot from the oven or at room temperature and it makes a big pan for sharing. The best part is that you don't have to make pie dough and roll it out, but still have the same flavors.

For this crisp, I flavored the apples with ginger, cinnamon and a little clove. There are many types of apples you can use. You want to choose a variety that still retains its texture when baked and gives you some tartness to stand up to the sweetness of the topping. Using a combination of two or three varieties will give you a depth of flavor as well. I used granny smith and honeycrisp. The honeycrisp is a little sweeter but both retain their shape well and the tartness of the granny smith pairs well with the brown sugar and the topping. Golden delicious, Jonathan or Jonagold apples will work well also with the granny smith.

The topping for this crisp is buttery, sweet and nutty. It doesn't have any oats but does have pecans for added crunch. You could also use walnuts if you have them on hand. Just be sure to toast your nuts before adding them to the topping – it will bring out the flavor and add crunchiness as well. When I get a bag of nuts, I generally toast all of them at once and then freeze so they are ready to go. This crisp will fill your home with the aroma of fall as it bakes up and make you ready to dig in as soon as its out of the oven.

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Apple Crisp

- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 large granny smith apples, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 large honeycrisp apples, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

Topping:

- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup chopped toasted pecans
- 1 cup butter, melted

In a large bowl, stir together the brown sugar, flour, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Add the apples, vanilla, lemon juice and butter and gently toss together. Pour into a greased 9"x13" baking dish. For the topping: Rinse out the bowl and combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, salt, pecans and butter. Sprinkle over the apples in the baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes, until bubbly and golden.