

Noteworthy Apple Crisp

From Ravinia Festival Cookbook

4 cups peeled, cored apples
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
¼ water
¾ cup flour
1 cup sugar
6 tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange apples in buttered 10-X 2-inch baking pan, or a more decorative ceramic dish. Sprinkle with cinnamon, salt and water. Combine sugar, flour, butter with pastry cutter. Sprinkle course mixture over apples. Bake in preheated oven 40 minutes.

Baked Apples

Serves 4

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried tart cherries

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cherry flavored brandy or Apple Jack

4 apples (Gala or Granny Smith), peeled, cored and halved

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar, packed

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup pure maple sugar

1 stick unsalted butter

Vanilla ice cream

Preheat oven to 350. Combine cherries and brandy in a bowl. Let stand until cherries plump, about 20 minutes to 2 hours. Hollow center of each apple half with melon baller. Arrange cut sides up in a glass baking dish. Fill apple centers with cherry mixture. In a heavy saucepan, combine brown sugar, maple syrup and butter and bring to simmer, stirring until melted. Drizzle sauce over and around apples. Bake about 55 minutes, basting frequently. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Butternut Squash and Apple Soup

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 4 ¼ pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 4 ¼ cups vegetable broth or chicken broth
- 1 Gala or Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, diced
- ½ cup apple juice
- Light sour cream
- Chopped fresh chives

Melt butter in large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion and nutmeg, sauté until onion begins to brown, about 5 minutes. Add squash, broth, apple and apple juice. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered until squash and apple are tender, about 30 minutes. Working in batches (or with stick blender right in the pot) puree the soup. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Bring soup to simmer and thin with more broth if necessary. Garnish with sour cream and chives.

Autumn Apple Cheesecake

1 cup graham cracker crumbs
½ cup finely chopped pecans
3 tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup butter, melted
2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
½ cup sugar
2 eggs
½ teaspoon vanilla
4 cups apple slices, peeled and thinly sliced (Granny Smith are the best)
1/3 cup sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

For the crust:

Stir together graham cracker crumbs, finely chopped pecans, 3 tablespoons sugar, ½ teaspoon cinnamon and melted butter; press onto bottom of 9-inch springform pan. Bake 10 minutes.

For the filling:

In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and ½ cup sugar at medium speed with electric blender until well blended. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Blend in vanilla, pour over crust.

For the topping:

Toss apples with combined 1/3 cup sugar and ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Arrange apples in overlapping concentric circles over crust. Sprinkle with chopped pecans.

Bake 1 hour 10 minutes. Loosen cake from rim of pan – cool before removing rim. Then chill. Makes 10 to 12 servings.