



Best Baked Apples

SERVES 6

If you don't have an ovenproof skillet, transfer the browned apples to a 13- by 9-inch baking dish and bake as directed. The recipe calls for 7 apples; 6 are left whole and 1 is diced and added to the filling. Serve the apples with vanilla ice cream, if desired.

INGREDIENTS

- 7 large (about 6 ounces each) Granny Smith apples**
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened**
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar**
- ⅓ cup dried cranberries, coarsely chopped**
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted**
- 3 tablespoons old-fashioned rolled oats**
- 1 teaspoon finely grated zest from 1 orange**
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- pinch table salt**
- ⅓ cup maple syrup**
- ⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons apple cider**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Peel, core, and cut 1 apple into ¼-inch dice. Combine 5 tablespoons of butter, brown sugar, cranberries, pecans, oats, orange zest, cinnamon, diced apple, and salt in large bowl; set aside.

2. Shave thin slice off bottom (blossom end) of remaining 6 apples to allow them to sit flat. Cut top ½ inch off stem end of apples and reserve. Peel apples and use melon baller or small measuring spoon to remove 1½-inch diameter core, being careful not to cut through bottom of apple.



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3. Melt remaining tablespoon butter in 12-inch nonstick oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Once foaming subsides, add apples, stem-side down, and cook until cut surface is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Flip apples, reduce heat to low, and spoon filling inside, mounding excess filling over cavities; top with reserved apple caps. Add maple syrup and ⅓ cup cider to skillet. Transfer skillet to oven, and bake until skewer inserted into apples meets little resistance, 35 to 40 minutes, basting every 10 minutes with maple syrup mixture in skillet.

4. Transfer apples to serving platter. Stir up to 2 tablespoons remaining cider into sauce in skillet to adjust consistency. Pour sauce over apples and serve.

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