



Baked Apple

One of the simplest desserts which you can turn into a feast.

SERVES (YIELD): 4
 DIFFICULTY RATING: •
 PREPARATION TIME: 15 MINS
 COOKING TIME: 35 MINS

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

Apple corer, pastry brush, Oval baking dish 20cm.

PLANNING AHEAD:

You can pre-cook the apples three quarters of the way through and finish them in the oven to order.

INGREDIENTS

For the apples

Apples, large, Rene de Renate or similar russet apples
 60g/2½oz unsalted butter, melted
 4 tbsp caster sugar

For the Calvados sauce

3 or 4 Cox's Orange Pippin, Worcester, Russet or Braeburn
 50g/2oz caster sugar
 20g/¾oz unsalted butter
 40g/1½oz Braeburn apple, peeled, cut into 0.5cm/¼in dice
 80ml/3¼oz apple juice
 ½ tsp arrowroot, diluted in a little water
 1 tsp Calvados

For the garnish

15g/½oz bread, cubed
 15g/½oz icing sugar
 15g/½oz pistachio nuts
 10g/¼oz whole almonds
 5g flaked almonds
 1-2 tsp Calvados

METHOD

- 1 For the baked apples, preheat the oven to 170C/350F/Gas 4.
- 2 Cut the bases off any apples that do not sit flat, making sure not to remove too much of the base. Remove the cores from the apples, by making an incision with the point of a small knife just below the stalk, cutting through the core. Insert the corer at the base of the apple and slide up to the incision, twist the corer and you should be able to remove the core keeping the stalk at the top of the apple intact.
- 3 Brush a shallow ovenproof dish with some of the melted butter and sprinkle over some of the sugar. Brush each apple with the remaining melted butter, then roll them in the remaining caster sugar. Place the apples into the ovenproof dish and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. If possible cook the apples in without fan assisted heat as this is too intense and will burst the skin of the apple before it is cooked.
- 4 For the Calvados sauce, heat the sugar in a small saucepan over a medium heat until it reaches a dark golden caramel.
- 5 Stir in the butter and add the diced apples, cook for 30 seconds, without moving the pan (use a spoon to cover the apples in the caramel mixture).
- 6 Add the apple juice and bring to the boil.
- 7 Stir in the diluted arrowroot a little at a time, until it has thickened slightly, then remove from the heat and add the Calvados.
- 8 For the garnish, mix together the bread cubes and half of the icing sugar. Sprinkle the mixture onto a baking tray.
- 9 Mix the pistachios, whole and flaked almonds, Calvados and the remaining icing sugar together until well combined. Spread the mixture onto the same baking tray.
- 10 Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes, or until the nuts and bread cubes are golden-brown. Set aside to cool.

To serve

- 11 place one baked apple into the centre of each of four serving plates. Spoon the Calvados sauce into the centre and sprinkle over the toasted garnishes.

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CHEF'S NOTES: (*)

- *1 The Calvados is optional, but many farmers are now making some great Ciders and Apple Brandy's, so a trip to your local farmers market is well worth making.
- *2 You can use any mixture of nuts, seeds, dried fruits, spices: the choice is yours.
Nuts – Brazil, Pecan, Walnut, Hazelnut
Seeds – Sunflower, Pumpkin, Sesame,
Dried Fruits – Cranberry, Blueberry, Raisin, golden Sultanas,
Spice – Cinnamon, Star Anise, Nutmeg, All Spice, Mace
- *3 The power of a fan assisted oven will be too much for the skin of the apple and they will split during cooking. Set your oven to static and allow the heat to penetrate gently rather than being forced.
- *4 Taking the caramel to a dark golden brown is important; it will reduce the sweetness and give a better caramel flavour. If the caramel is too light or blond it will be far too sweet and ruin the dish.

Variations:

Get to know your apples, some of the best bakers are:

- Adams Pearmain
- Annie Elizabeth
- Cox's Orange Pippin
- D'arcy Spice
- Discovery
- Golden Nobel

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