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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Apple Ideas." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes Revised."

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No season in the year is pleasanter to me than the time when apples are ripe again. The first song of the birds in spring, the first violet in the garden, or the first anything else that the poets sing about --- none of these brings me quite the pleasure that comes with the first apple of the year.

Apples have long been popular fruits with the human race. Since that far-back day when Eve ---

But I'm not going to tell that first apple story all over again. I'm just referring to it to illustrate what favorites apples have been since ancient times. Even that wise old man Solomon said his say in favor of apples. Do you remember that he once exclaimed, "Comfort me with apples"? A nice idea, I've always thought, to turn to apples for comfort, especially if the apples are nice and plump and juicy as I'm sure those that Solomon ate were.

According to the history books, apples have been cultivated in Great Britain since the times the Romans were there. The names of many of the older varieties indicate a French or Dutch origin. Even back in the old days farmers were cultivating apples of many different kinds just as they are today. An old list published way back in 1688 by a man by the name of Ray gives 78 varieties that were being raised then. Today I'm told that there are over 2000 kinds.

As for geography, apples grow pretty generally all over the temperate zones of this world. You'll find apple trees way up in Norway and way down at the Cape of Good Hope. You'll find them in most parts of Europe, in Asia and Australia. Yes, the people up in northern India and China like apples just as much as the French and the English and the Spanish and the Americans do.

But in spite of the apple's fame and popularity and long use, most of us haven't realized its possibilities in our menus. It is in general such an inexpensive and easy-to-keep fruit, it combines with so many other foods and can be cooked in so many different ways, that it deserves to be used much more frequently than it is. To most of us, you know, apples stand for just about three things --- the traditional pie and sauce and cider.

But that is just the beginning of the apple story. Apples make many good first course dishes and ever so many delicious salads. As for desserts --- there are many different apple puddings, made with rice or tapioca or gelatin or eggs. Then, apples can be used in cake or shortcake, or as a basis for fruit beverages or frozen desserts.

And among the preserves there's apple jelly, apple butter, apple conserve, apple chutney and so on. While you're making apple jelly, better flavor some with mint, all ready to go with roast lamb and lamb chops you'll be serving next year.

Now as to using raw apples. The fairly firm texture of the raw apple combines best with celery, nuts, pineapple and other foods of similar quality. That's why apples are so good in salad and in fruit cocktails and appetizers.

Cooked apple, on the other hand, blends well with the softer materials, such as other cooked fruits or rice or tapioca or doughs of various kinds. Though the flavor varies in different apples, it is in general mild and usually tart.

For this reason, apples make excellent extenders of other fruits that are more expensive and less plentiful. They may be combined with plums, peaches or blackberries to make all sorts of good things like jams, marmalades, jellies and butters. Because apples are rich in pectin, a good jelly can be made by combining apple juice with the juice of some fruit lacking in pectin. If you happen to have some apples that are lacking in flavor, another fruit juice may be used with them to supply the flavor.

If you agree with Eve and Solomon and all the other people who have a fondness for apples, you'll be pleased to know that there are 20 apple recipes in the new green cookbook, beside two recipes for using apple juice or cider. And there are five different dishes described for using apples with the main course of the meal. Try a nice dish of apples and bacon some night, or apples and carrots, or apples and onions.

You may also be interested to hear that our menu today contains a novel apple dish --- scalloped apples and sweet potatoes. Don't you think that's an excellent dish to go along with ham and tender corn on the cob?

Dear me, I've almost told the whole menu already. Now I'll go back to the beginning so you can write it down as we talk about it.

The menu begins with a salad --- a simple, bright, crisp salad for an appetizer on a summer day. Sliced tomatoes on lettuce --- very cold and very crisp, served with French dressing. Next, Fried ham; then, Scalloped apples and sweet potatoes; Corn on the cob; and, for dessert, Coffee gelatin and whipped cream.

Before I forget, let me tell you that directions for making the coffee gelatin dessert are on page 93 of the radio recipe book. You can prepare that dessert either the night before or in the cool of the morning. Slip it into the refrigerator and it will be all firm, cold and nicely molded when it's time to serve it for dinner.

For the apple and sweet potato scallop, there are five ingredients:

3 medium-sized sweet potatoes
4 medium-sized apples pared and cored
1/2 cup of sugar
1/2 teaspoon of salt, and
3 tablespoons of butter

I'll list those once again. (Repeat)

Cook the sweet potatoes in boiling water until they are tender. Cool and skin them. Cut the sweet potatoes and apples into slices, place in alternate layers in a greased baking dish, and sprinkle each layer with sugar and salt. Dot with butter, add a little water, and bake for 30 to 45 minutes, or until the apples are soft and the top layer is brown. Serve in the baking dish.

There. I know I had forgotten something. I haven't yet mentioned crabapples --- those nice, tart, colorful little fall apples that are so rich in flavor and pectin and so ideal for jelly-making. Use them for just plain jelly or for spiced or mint jelly. The Recipe Lady says she often makes her mint jelly from the second extraction juice from crabapples. The first extraction, you see, makes a rich red jelly, but the second extraction is paler and therefore will take the green color better.

Tomorrow:

"Read the Dentifrice Label."

