homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FRIDAY, October 10, 1941

SUBJECT: "APPLES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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According to a well-known poem, October is the month when "trees in apple orchards with fruit are bending down." Anyway, it is the season of the year when grocery stores are showing their choicest selection of fresh apples--bright red apples, yellow apples, striped apples. In fact, no matter what your taste in apples, you're pretty sure to find what you want in the stores now.

According to men who keep tab on apples all over the country, this is a year when there are going to be plenty of apples. To put it in the market-reporter's words--"the crop is above average and considerably larger than it was last year."

So today, to be in tune with the times, here is apple news from the kitchen front. I'd like to remind you of the 3 cardinal rules of apple cookery--and pass on to you some apple pointers from the home economists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

First, if you have to have a real good reason for eating apples, you may want to know about their food value. That is if you have to have any more of a good reason for eating them than the fact that they taste good. Here's what the home economists say:

If you have to have dietetic justification for eating apples, look to their food value. Apples contain small amounts of several of the vitamins and minerals. These amounts vary with the kind of apple, and the length of time the apples have been stored. But apples can make a real contribution to the diet when they are used generously.

To get the most food value from an apple, eat it raw with the peel on.

That way you get its vitamin C value intact. That goes for apples eaten out of hand or served raw in salads and fruit cups.

If you're like me, though, you'll gladly give up a little of this vitamin C in the interests of a good cooked apple dish--a hot apple pie right out of the oven, or an apple cobbler maybe.

So here are three of the rules the home economists suggest following for cooked apple dishes.

Rule number 1 is: Buy the apple that suits your needs. Learn about the possibilities of the different varieties on your market. Some apples never should be cooked. And of those that are good for cooking, you'll find some are best for baking, some for pies and general use, and so on down the line. If you aren't quite sure about the apples you are buying, take home a sample before you invest in a large quantity.

Rule number 2 is: Use little or no water when you cook apples. For apples are over four-fifths water, and a lot of this cooks out.

Finally, rule number 3: Avoid <u>over</u>cooking by watching closely the progress of the apples on top the stove or in the oven.

And here's how those 3 rules work. Suppose you are going to make that favorite side dish--applesauce.

Well, first you want a variety of <u>tart</u> apples that cook soft quickly so are good for applesauce. Then, when you cook the apples, add only enough water to keep the apples from scorching. Cook the apples in a covered pan until they are just soft. Press them through a colander, sweeten to taste, add a few grains of salt. If you like, add a little spice.

But maybe you're interested in some other ways to cook apples. Here are some of the ways Department-of-Agriculture home economists suggest. They say that sweetpotatoes or cabbage make good companions for apples in a casserole

dish. And instead of plain fried apples, you might like to fry carrots along with them--or onions.

For a cabbage and apple casserole--slice the apples and shred the cabbage. Then put alternate layers of the sliced apples and the shredded cabbage in a greased baking dish. Season each layer with salt, and a little fat. And on each layer of apples, sprinkle a little sugar. Over the top layer, put some buttered bread crumbs. Cover the casserole and bake the apples and cabbage for about three quarters of an hour--or until both the cabbage and the apples are tender. At the end, remove the cover to brown the crumbs.

You may use sweetpotatoes with apples in a casserole dish in much the same way. But because sweetpotatoes are more firm than apples, it's best to cook them tender first. Boil them in water, then cool them, skin them, and slice them, and combine with the apples.

Fried apples make a good accompaniment for the main meat dish--especially pork chops, or ham, or sausage, or roast pork. The trick of getting fried apples that have that shiny transparent look is to cook them slowly in fat that doesn't burn too easily. Sprinkle about one-fourth cup of sugar to every 2 quarts of diced apples. Put a lid on the skillet and leave it on until the apples cook tender. Then take off the lid, turn the apples over gently, and let them brown.

If you are frying carrots with the apples, cut the carrots length-wise into thin slices. Then put the carrots and the sliced apples together in a heavy frying pan. Cover the skillet tightly and cook until both carrots and apples are brown. Turn them and brown them on the other side. Just before the carrots and the apples finish cooking, sprinkle them with a little salt and sugar.

As for apples in desserts--that's a whole story in itself. You are welcome to a leaflet on Using Apples published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture that tells about making apple pie, apple turnovers, apple dumplings, and apple tarts. But let me remind you again that there are plenty of apples this year. So it's a good time to serve your old favorites often, and to try new apple recipes that strike your fancy.

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