

Basic Applesauce and Brownie Recipe

by Lee Jackson

Applesauce is one of the most versatile of all apple dishes. It can be used in hundreds of ways. The basic applesauce can be made from almost any variety of apple and sweetened to individual tastes or left unsweetened.

Here is an easy basic recipe that makes approximately 4 cups of full flavored **applesauce**, particularly if using fresh-off-the-tree apples.

6 to 8 apples, peeled, cored, and cut up
1/2 cup water

Add water to apples in saucepan. Cover and cook over low heat until apples are soft. Stir occasionally. Watch carefully as apples can scorch easily. Add a little more water if needed. Some apples are juicier than others therefore the amount of liquid may vary.

Many varieties of apples are naturally sweet and require no added sugar. For this healthier unsweetened applesauce, just cool, and eat. For sweetening tart apples, stir in up to 1/2 cup sugar, and continue cooking until thickened. Add cinnamon for flavoring, if desired. Then, depending on whether the taste preference is for chunky or smooth applesauce, break up with a fork, use a potato masher, or put through a food mill, blender, or food processor.

Applesauce is good on pancakes, waffles and French toast or mixed into oatmeal or other hot cereal for breakfast. Try it on toast, English muffins or bagels. Spoon warm over gingerbread or other types of cakes. Freeze it and then whip in blender for a refreshing slushy. Add it to meatloaf or baked squash. It can be used in place of the liquid in flavored gelatin and lemon pudding mixes. If making large quantities of applesauce, package in plastic containers or jars and freeze.

An important advantage of applesauce is that it can be used to replace much of the fat in many types of dishes. Equal amounts of applesauce can be substituted for the fat in some baked foods such as quick breads and desserts. For example, instead of using 1/2 cup butter in a recipe, use 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce, and omit the fat. For those recipes requiring a moderate amount of fat for taste and texture, the amount can often be reduced from 1/3 to 1/2. For instance, in an oatmeal cookie recipe, 1 cup of butter can be reduced to 2/3 cup butter or margarine and 1/3 cup applesauce. Substituting applesauce for fat is not recommended for products such as pie crusts and yeast breads.

In this recipe for **Brownies**, the original recipe called for 1/2 cup of butter. The following revision cuts the amount of fat in half without sacrificing taste or texture. The nuts called for in the recipe can also be reduced or eliminated for a lower fat content. This recipe is based on information from the North Central Regional Extension Publication 473.

1 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
3/4 cup flour
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Grease a 9" x 9" pan or spray with nonstick spray. Cream sugar and butter. Mix in applesauce, egg, and vanilla. Stir in flour, cocoa, baking powder, salt, and walnuts. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake at 350° F. for 20 to 25 minutes. Cut while warm into 2 inch squares. Makes about 16 brownies.

With the help of applesauce, the total fat in foods can be eliminated or reduced. Apples are packed with fiber, have a low sodium content, can help lower cholesterol and high blood pressure and contain no fat. A major study released from the National Academy of Sciences urges consumers to include more fruit in their diets. Using applesauce in foods is a good way to incorporate more fruit into our meals while at the same time lowering the total fat intake.

Lee Jackson is the author of two apple cookbooks, **From the Apple Orchard — Recipes for Apple Lovers** and **Apples, Apples Everywhere — Favorite Recipes From America's Orchards**. See more information about these books at www.imagesunlimitedpub.com or order from the publisher, Images Unlimited Publishing, P.O. Box 305, Maryville, MO 64468. For inquiries e-mail: Lee@imagesunlimitedpub.com

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