



Often underestimated, the humble apple is full of surprises (as well as health benefits). Believed to have originated in Asia up to 10 million years ago, and brought to Europe via the Silk Trade Route, apples are the second most consumed fruit, after bananas.

A single medium-sized apple contains up to 4g of fibre, which helps lower cholesterol and stabilise blood sugar swings. Plus there's vitamins A and C to help boost the immune system, and the antioxidant flavonoid quercetin, mostly found in red apples, which has anti-inflammatory properties.

So many benefits in one apple? We're not done yet – some people think regular consumption of apples can help 'scrub away' bacteria from teeth, and stimulate saliva production. They may also be good for those dieting or trying to control their eating – apples can help you feel fuller for longer.

When looking for the perfect apple, keep in mind there are two types – dessert apples meant for eating (such as gala or pink lady) and cooking apples, a bit more tart and sour (think bramley and grenadier). Keep the skin on – it has three to four times more concentrated nutrients than the pulp – and always wash thoroughly before eating.



HOW TO USE THEM

Apples can be cooked and steamed to create a sauce, baked whole with a filling of dried fruit and cinnamon, grated or dried as an addition to your muesli. Fresh apples can be paired with cheese or peanut butter for a protein-filled snack.



WORKS WELL WITH

Apart from a classic apple-cinnamon combo, pair them with raisins, dates, or caramel to complement their sweetness. For an immune-boosting spice kick, add cardamom or ginger.

WHAT'S COOKING?

This issue, we're trying out this refreshing and nutritious lunch idea from *Great British Apples* (greatbritishapples.co.uk).



Gala apple, cranberry and quinoa buddha bowl

Serves 2

- 1 tsp cumin seeds, toasted
- Olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, cut into 1cm thick rounds
- Salt and pepper
- 25g dried cranberries
- 30g walnuts, roughly chopped
- 1 small red onion, sliced
- 4 slices halloumi cheese
- 1 pouch microwavable quinoa
- Small bunch flat-leaf parsley, picked and roughly chopped
- 1 Gala apple, grated
- 2 lemon wedges, to serve
- 2 spoonfuls yoghurt, to serve

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Bash the toasted cumin seeds in a pestle and mortar to release aroma. Mix with 1 tbsp olive oil and 1 minced garlic clove. Toss in the carrot and season to taste. Roast for 15-20 mins until golden.
- 2 Place the cranberries in a small bowl and cover them with boiling water. Put them to one side to soak while you prepare the other ingredients.
- 3 In a dry frying pan over a medium heat, toast the walnuts until golden, remove and put to one side. Add a little olive oil and the onion and remaining garlic, then sauté for a couple of minutes, until soft. Remove and place to one side.
- 4 Turn up the heat and fry the halloumi until golden on both sides. Cook the quinoa as per packet instructions. Drain the cranberries.
- 5 Mix the quinoa with the parsley, walnuts, cranberries, apple, sautéed onion and garlic, then season to taste. Separate the quinoa mixture into two bowls and top with roasted carrots and halloumi. Add a lemon wedge and yoghurt dolloped on top to serve.

THREE GREAT **HEALTHY** BUYS

On-the-go goodness

These quick bites are nothing but dried apples and figs – they're naturally sweet and packed with antioxidants and vitamins. *Nothing But Apple & Fig Snack* (£1.25 for 12g, hollandandbarrett.com)



A solution to everything

Stimulates metabolism, kills harmful bacteria, fights diabetes, lowers blood sugar – apple cider vinegar is perfect as part of a healthy lifestyle. *Bragg Organic Apple Cider Vinegar with 'the mother'* (£6.99 for 473ml, hollandandbarrett.com)



That's a wrap

A new natural alternative to plastic or paper wraps to store your fruits and veggies, or pack your lunch. Organic and reusable – simply wash with warm water and soap. *Bee's Sandwich Wrap* (from £8.50, beeswrap.com)



In season...
APPLES → A super source of hidden vitamins and antioxidants, one apple a day definitely helps keep the doctor away

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