

By Gaia Manco

As the weather continues to get chilly you've probably started to feel the need to comfort yourself with food. What better than a heart-warming apple cake? Apples are excellent for your health, being rich in fiber, vitamin C and antioxidants. Plus let's face it, they're delicious with butter and sugar. I love to taste and bake cakes from around the world and note recipes down in my blog in my spare time.

So here I've made a short selection of recipes –all tested – of an all-time classic: the apple cake. Add ice cream or whipped cream on the side, brew yourself a cup of tea and you'll have your cozy afternoon treat to help you face the coming winter.

### British apple cake

This is how they make apple cake in Dorset, on the southern coast of England, in the UK. It goes down well with a traditional British milk tea.

#### Ingredients:

- ▶ 230 g softened butter
- ▶ 500 g apples
- ▶ Zest of one lemon (grated)
- ▶ 230 g sugar
- ▶ 230 g white flour
- ▶ 8 g baking powder
- ▶ 1 tablespoon of cane sugar

Pre-heat the oven at 180°C. Grease the baking mold with butter and cover with a thin layer of flour to make it non-sticky. In a mixing bowl, stir together butter, sugar and grated lemon zest until they reach a mousse-like texture. Add one egg and mix it well. Add a few tablespoons of flour and keep mixing, then add the second egg, and repeat the operation until you finish both eggs and flour.

Peel and cut the apples into cubes. Add the baking powder and the apple cubes to the cake dough. Pour the dough in the baking mold and sprinkle the top with cane sugar.

Bake at 180°C for 40 minutes. Let it cool down and serve with whipped or double cream.

### Apple crumble

A crumble is actually a cake turned up-side down, where the fruit filling is at the bottom and the dough is sprinkled on top in the form of big sugary crumbles. This cake is delicious when eaten warm with vanilla ice cream. According to the season, you can vary the fruit inside and add walnuts or almonds to your crumbles.

#### Ingredients

- ▶ 120 g butter + one tablespoon for cooking the apples
- ▶ 120g flour
- ▶ 140g sugar + two table-

**Left: Apple crumble tastes even better when served warm with vanilla ice cream on the side.**

**Right: You can create a decoration for your cake by arranging the apple slices on the top of your cake before putting it into the oven.**

Photos: IC



- spoons for cooking the apples
  - ▶ 4 apples
  - ▶ 70 g dried apricots or other dried fruits
  - ▶ Ground cinnamon
- Preheat the oven at 190°C. In a big mixing bowl mix together the sugar, butter and flour, first with a wooden spoon and then with your hands. The result is not going to be a dough but a "mountain" of crumbles. Put the crumbles in the fridge to set and cool off.
- Peel the apples and cut them into cubes and cut the apricots into pieces. In a frying pan, cook the apples with a spoon of butter and two tablespoons of sugar on a gentle fire for 5 minutes or until the sugar is melted. Turn off the heat and add the apricots to the cooked apples. Scatter your mixed fruit in your (buttered) baking mold and cover with the crumbles that you have just taken out of the fridge. Bake at 190°C for 20 minutes. Serve warm with a cup of red or black tea.



### Easy apple pie for beginners

This cake is perfect when you need a dessert for your dinner party but you lack the time – or the skills – to make it.

- ▶ 1 round puff pastry ( approx 250 g, available in big super-markets)
- ▶ 400 g apples
- ▶ 8 tablespoons of apricot jam (or peach, or the flavor you prefer)

Preheat the oven at 180°C. Place the pastry into your baking mold. Spread 6 tablespoons of jam all over it.

Peel the apples, cut them in quarters and then slice the quarters thinly. Put the apples on the jam so as to cover the entire top part of the pastry and fold the borders of the pastry over the apples. Heat the remaining jam on low heat and pour it on top of the apples and the borders to give it a shiny glaze.

Bake at 180°C for 25 minutes. Voila!

### Country style apple cake

Apple and cinnamon are a recurrent match often found in pâtisseries. No wonder: They are delicious together!

#### Ingredients

- ▶ 700 g apples
- ▶ 2 eggs
- ▶ 200g sugar
- ▶ 200 g flour
- ▶ 100 g melted butter
- ▶ 200 ml milk
- ▶ 8 g baking powder
- ▶ 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- ▶ Salt
- ▶ Vanilla
- ▶ Icing sugar

Pre-heat the oven at 180°C. Peel the apples and cut them into small thin pieces.

In a mixing bowl stir eggs and sugar and then pour in the melted butter. Add cinnamon, milk, vanilla powder, a pinch of salt, baking powder and flour (last) to the mixture. When the dough is well mixed and uniform add the apple pieces. Grease with butter and cover with flour a round baking mold and stir the mixture in. Cook at 180°C for 55 minutes. Let it cool off and then sprinkle with icing sugar mixed with cinnamon.

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▶ Four ideas on how to transform an ordinary fruit into sweet desserts

One apple cake a day