

Eat Apples!

You may need to look beyond the supermarket shelves to find them, but there's an exciting variety of apples from UK orchards - sharp apples, sweet apples, crunchy apples, softer-fleshed apples, red apples, yellow apples, green apples and everything in between. Many are perfect for enjoying on their own as a delicious, healthy, energy-boosting snack. And when used as an ingredient they can be transformed into some of THE great desserts (see recommended recipes), combining magically with flavours such as caramel, cinnamon or blackberries.

HISTORY - Although the origins of the apple are not clear, it is almost certainly one of the first fruits to have been cultivated. Apples were a favourite of the ancient Greeks and considered a luxury fruit by the Romans.

The apples familiar to us are a cultivated product, far removed from the small, sour crab apples that were the wild ancestors. Today apples are grown across the globe outside of tropical regions. China is by far the largest apple producing country, responsible for over 40% of the world's output.

BIOLOGY - The apple (*Malus pumila*) is a member of the Rosaceae family, which includes roses, strawberries, raspberries, apricots, plums and pears. There are thought to be over 7,000 varieties of apple.

BUYING - Apples should be firm with taut unbroken skins. Many varieties have naturally freckled or dull matt surfaces - don't shy away from those without the high-sheen finish supermarkets have led us to expect. The odd blemish on apples grown with low/no pesticides is nothing to be afraid of. The fragrance of an apple is a good indicator of freshness and quality.

All 'eating' apples can be used in cooking but the opposite is not the case. *Bramley* is the definitive English cooking apple and it bakes to a wonderful fluffy texture. For cooked dishes requiring a firmer texture (such as apple tarts), *Cox* or *Granny Smith* are a reliable choice.

COOKING - Scan the code below to view the recipe for '*Baked apples with calvados glaze*' on the seasonal recipes blog.



or visit: qmul sustainability.wordpress.com/recipes