



September 2001 – A Time for Apples?

Did you know that there are 7000-8000 different varieties of apples of which only a few are being cultivated? The original wild apple ancestor was a small sour fruit, much like the crab apple. The apple is one of the first fruits to be cultivated and it is quite probable that apples cultivated back in the Roman times are identical to ones being cultivated today; Api and the Court pendu.

A couple of years ago I was invited to this farm on the northern part of Gabriola, it was an old homestead with the original log cabin still there and still lived in. This farm is now an organic apple orchard, boasting 45 varieties of apples. On this cold rainy October afternoon my friend and I picked windfalls from the ground. We then put these windfalls, with a little preparation, through a juicer. This juice we split with the owner of the farm, but after, we got to share in some heart-warming apple brandy and some homemade apple cider. What a memorable day.

For storage the apple should be of a late variety and they should have no blemishes. Blemishes will cause the apples to release an enzyme that will speed up deterioration. They should be stored in a cool dry spot and they should not be touching each other. Another great way to preserve apples is to dry them. Peeled and cored the apples should be sliced and threaded on a cord and strung in a warm airy drying room.

Apple butter is another old-fashioned way of preserving apples, which has become a little unnecessary now that we have refrigeration, but it still produces a great product to use. This is applesauce reduced down to a concentrate by boiling with a little cider. Something to keep in mind that the pectin one buys in the store can be duplicated by boiling up some apples.

Apple jelly

1Kg Apples

-Chop apples, include peel and seeds

6c Water

-Bring to a boil and simmer covered for about 40mins.

-Strain mix through cheesecloth, allowing the mix to drip slowly. Do not squeeze or press the pulp. This will keep a clear jelly. Throw away the pulp.

-Measure apple liquid into a large wide pan.

AT THIS POINT YOU CAN INCORPORATE THIS RECIPE INTO YOUR FAVOURITE JAM RECIPE

-Allow 3/4c Sugar to 1c Liquid.

-The liquid should not be more than 5cm deep in pan, dissolve sugar while stirring.

-Boil uncovered with out stirring about 20mins, until jelly sets on a cold saucer.

This recipe can be used to make mint jelly, Jalapeno jelly, red pepper jelly...the skies the limit.

Apple upside down cake

Take your favourite pineapple upside down cake and instead of the pineapple rings, try 1/2 inch thick sliced apples that are slightly overlapping.

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