



Apples

A great way to use up leftover apples is to peel, core and chop them before simmering them with a splash of water in a covered pan until they turn to mush. Put the mixture through a blender to create a puree, which can then be frozen and used in baking recipes to sweeten and add moisture.

Caramelised Apple Pancake

This is a big, sweet pancake cooked in a frying pan, rich with brown sugar, spice and sultanas. Serve it with a dollop of creamy ricotta and some tart raspberries to cut through the comforting sweetness. It makes a wonderful brunch.

2 eating apples (Braeburn work well)
3 tbsp sultanas
½ tsp ground cinnamon
4 tbsp light muscovado sugar
125ml milk
Pinch of salt
3 large eggs
60g plain or spelt flour
30g butter
Raspberries and ricotta cheese, to serve

Peel and core the apples, then cut into thin slices. Heat half the butter in a large, non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat, then add the apples, sultanas, cinnamon and 2 tbsp sugar. Cook for a few minutes, stirring frequently, until the apples are soft, sticky and caramelized.

Meanwhile, put the flour in a mixing bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the eggs and salt, then use an electric whisk to beat into the flour, pouring the milk in at the same time, until you have a lump-free batter.

Add a little more butter to the pan, and spread the apple mixture evenly over the bottom using a wooden spoon. Pour in the pancake batter and turn the heat down slightly. Cook for a few minutes, drawing the cooked edges of the pancake into the centre with the spoon and allowing the liquid egg to run into the gap (as you would with an omelette). When the pancake is almost set all the way through, use a spatula to lift it off the bottom of the pan, and slide it gently out of the pan and onto a plate. Add a little more butter to the pan and sprinkle over 1 tbsp of the sugar. Put the pan upside-down over the pancake on the plate, and invert so that the pancake is now in the pan the other way up. Cook for a few minutes (be careful not to burn the sugar – you'll smell it if the heat is too high). Put the plate over the pan and invert so that the pancake is on the plate, then add the remaining butter and tbsp of sugar, sprinkling it evenly over the pan. Slide the pancake off the plate and into the pan, and cook for another couple of minutes. The outside should be lovely and golden.

Cut into wedges and serve with a dollop of ricotta and some fresh raspberries.

Apple Granola

I like to use it as the base for a batch of homemade granola. If you've never tried making granola, give it a go – it's easier than you think and so much nicer than shop-bought. Plus, you can customise it by adding all your favourite fruits and nuts!

1 kg muesli base mix
320g apple puree
100g runny honey or maple syrup
2 tsp vanilla extract
1.5 tsp ground cinnamon
¾ tsp salt
150g mixed nuts and/or seeds
125g dried fruit
80g raisins or sultanas

Pre-heat the oven to 160C. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the apple puree, honey, vanilla, cinnamon and salt. Add the muesli base and mix well with a wooden spoon until everything is sticky and moist. Divide the mixture between two large baking trays, spreading it out as evenly as possible (but don't press it down).

Bake for 10 minutes, then remove from the oven and stir well. Bake again for another 10 minutes, stir, then return to the oven for another 10 minutes. Remove, stir, then add the nuts before returning to the oven for a final 10 minutes (so you've baked it for 40 minutes in total). Leave to cool before mixing in the fruit, then store in an airtight container.