

How to Match the Apple to the Recipe

Apple varieties are as individual as people, with their own quirky flavors, textures, and strengths. Some perform best in desserts, others in salads. You can't tell by simply looking at them. I've taken some of the guesswork out of this process by organizing dozens of popular varieties into four simple categories, which correspond to their best uses in the kitchen: firm-tart, firm-sweet, tender-tart, and tender-sweet.

FIRM-TART

These apples, which hold their shape when cooked, are best in rich baked desserts like pies or pastries—anything that benefits from a bit of acidity.

Calville Blanc d'Hiver
Esopus Spitzenberg
GoldRush*
Granny Smith
Northern Spy

Rhode Island Greening
Rome
Roxbury Russet
Sierra Beauty
Stayman Winesap*

FIRM-SWEET

These apples work best in sweet and savory baked dishes that need a firm fruit with more sweetness.

Baldwin
Black Oxford

Honeycrisp
Jazz

Blue Pearmain
Braeburn
Cameo
Ginger Gold*
Golden Delicious*

Jonagold
Mutsu
Pink Lady
Sweetango

TENDER-TART

These apples break down easily during cooking, which makes them best for soups and sauces.

Cortland*
Empire*
Jonathan
Macoun
McIntosh

TENDER-SWEET

I use some of these in salads, dessert sauces, and the occasional quick-cooked dish, but mostly enjoy them right out of my hand.

Ambrosia
Cox's Orange Pippin
Fuji*
Gala*

** apple variety that doesn't brown quickly when sliced; a good choice for salads*