

A Flavor for Every Taste!

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The weather is cooling, children are back in school and the nights are growing longer. Soon the leaves will begin to change as we ease our way into fall. We will miss the Minnesota summer, but there are certainly positives as well. It means that apple season is here again!

Many Minnesotans savor the taste and the memories that come along with apple season. The good news is, we needn't wait any longer for those tasty, early season varieties! Minnesota apple orchards are now open across the state and

offering varieties like Paula Red, Zestar!, Whitney

Crab and more. As the season progresses we will find fall favorites like Honeycrisp, Cortland and Sweet Sixteen filling the shelves at grocery stores and farmers markets. Some varieties will even continue through November! Because apple availability depends heavily on region and weather, it is important to call your producer to ensure your favorite variety is ready and waiting for you!

Health Benefits

In addition to great taste, apples offer a variety of health benefits. They are an excellent source of pectin, a soluble fiber that lowers blood pressure and maintains the health of the digestive system. They are also full of boron, a nutrient that supports strong bones and a healthy brain. Vitamins C, E, and A are also found abundantly within the fruit, boosting immunity and reducing the risk for heart disease, diabetes and asthma. An apple a day may very well keep the doctor away!

Did you know that apples are the most popular tree fruit and one of the most widely cultivated in the country? It should come as no surprise then that Minnesota has no shortage of apples, and this year they are looking better than ever!

According to Ralph Yates, Secretary of the Minnesota Apple Growers Association, harvest dates are back to "normal" this year. That means retail stands are going to have a good supply of high quality apples throughout the season. "Some classics are already showing up. For the best taste, always eat what is

available seasonally. Start with an apple like Wealthy now, and hold out for later season apples like Honeycrisp,” says Yates.

The University of Minnesota has a variety of apples bred specifically for the Minnesota climate. They have the world-class taste you know and love, but only when grown right here in the state. Don’t be fooled by apples coming from out of state! The University has developed 17 varieties, let’s take a look at some of the favorites!

SnowSweet – Ripens mid-October

“Savor The Sweet”! The tagline for this tasty apple is on par. SnowSweet® is popular for its sweet taste and tart balance. This apple is great for snacking or in salads!

Zestar! – Ripens late August to early September

“Crunch Into Zestar!” This early season apple has a crisp, juicy texture with a hint of brown sugar! It has excellent flavor and storage life, making this a great apple for snacking.

SweeTango – Ripens late August

SweeTango® apples offer a superior eating experience. They are satisfyingly crunchy and have a juicy blast of sweet/tart flavor!

Honeycrisp – Ripens late September

“Explosively Crisp!” There is a good chance you have tried a Honeycrisp apple – it is one of the University of Minnesota’s *most* successful apples and is even popular in Europe! They are grown widely around the world and valued for their well-balanced sweet/tart taste, and crisp, juicy texture. In fact, the Honeycrisp was named the Minnesota State Fruit in 2006! It’s popular, great tasting, and helped to revive the declining apple growing industry by bringing revenue to family-run orchards. They taste great for snacking, salads and desserts. What’s not to like?!

Like we said before, these apple varieties taste best when grown right here in Minnesota. That’s because they have been bred specifically for our climate! Although they can be grown successfully world-wide, it is best to hold out for these varieties fresh from your local producer.

Many apple orchards offer additional activities for visitors to enjoy, making a trip to the orchard a fun activity for the whole family to enjoy. These activities may include hay rides, kids play areas, photo cut-outs, petting zoos, fresh apple cider, and more! Some orchards even have bakeries and stores onsite with fresh apple treats, pies, jams, and even gifts. Most often, apples will be pre-picked for you upon arrival, but some may offer pick-your-own. Be certain you check with your producer!

If you decide to pick your own apples, remember that color doesn’t determine how ripe an apple is. Pick firm, crisp apples by lifting up and twisting the fruit. Keeping



Photo Courtesy of [Carlson’s Orchard, Bakery & Restaurant](#)
Winsted, MN

the stem attached to any picked fruit will help keep it fresh and increase storage life.

Minnesota Grown apples, depending on variety, will store for over six months! Keep apples in a cool, dark place with high humidity. The Minnesota State Fruit, the Honeycrisp, is particularly good for longer-term storage. Cortland is also known for being slow to brown, making them ideal apples for school lunches and salads! The University of Minnesota Extension is a good resource for storage tips, canning, freezing and drying.

**The Minnesota Grown Directory boasts 100+ apple orchards across the state. Get Out and Go Local this fall!
Find your producer of fresh, local apples at www.MinnesotaGrown.com!**

Sources: University of Minnesota