The Apple of My Eye: Comparing Applesauce

Unit: The Apple Genomics Project

Lesson: 4-H Lesson: Comparing Applesauce

Audience: This lesson is intended for use with upper elementary, middle, and high school science, agriculture, or family and consumer science classes. It could also be used with informal audiences from upper elementary school age and up, studying science, apples, or the sense of taste.

General Objective: To teach youth to recognize differences between apple varieties.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify differences and similarities between characteristics and uses of varieties of apples, including taste and appearance.
2. To construct a table of comparisons of characteristics and uses of common apple varieties.

Time Required: About an hour

Instructor Directions:

Prior to having students complete this activity, collect a number of different varieties of apples from a local grocery store, farmer’s market, or orchard. Other materials needed include a microwave or blender, plastic spoons and bowls, and ingredients for whichever recipe you choose to have students follow (see worksheet). Also, run enough copies of the “Comparing Applesauce” worksheet for the class.

Resources:

- For a list of national academic standards met by this activity, see the “Apple of My Eye” lesson on the apple genomics website where you downloaded this activity. The “Apple of My Eye” lesson also has additional activities and information about apples.
Comparing Applesauce

Not all apples are created equally. Each variety is unique. Some apples are great baked in pies, while others stay crispy and white in a salad. Still other apple varieties are best eaten fresh.

In this exercise, you will compare applesauce made with different apple varieties. Choose at least one apple variety known to be excellent in applesauce and at least one apple variety known to be poor in applesauce. Examples of good varieties for sauce are McIntosh and Cortland. Not-so-good applesauce varieties are Red Delicious and Empire. Your instructor may have designated a certain variety for you already, so check first before going on with this exercise.

Following your instructor’s directions, use one of the recipes below to make a batch of applesauce using each apple variety you identified. You don’t need to use all of the recipes; use whichever one your instructor designates. (*Each recipe makes about 750 milliliters, or 3 cups, of sauce.)

You’ll share your batch of applesauce with your classmates, and fill out the chart on the next page based on your observations of each batch of applesauce. Then, as a class, you’ll make some comparisons between each apple variety using the observations you made during the exercise.

**Basic Applesauce**

- 8 medium-sized apples
- 2 mL (1/2 tsp) cinnamon
- 125 mL (1/2 cup) water
- 5 mL (1 tsp) salt
- 15 mL (1 Tbsp) lemon juice
- 125 mL (1/2 cup) brown sugar

Core and dice apples. Place in saucepan, then add water and salt. Simmer until soft. Press through sieve or food mill to remove apple peels; add cinnamon, salt, and lemon juice. Add brown sugar to taste, and stir until dissolved. Serve hot or cold.

**Microwave Chunky Applesauce**

- 1 L (4 cups) peeled, sliced apples
- 125 mL (1/2 cup) sugar
- 50 mL (1/4 cup) apple juice
- 2 mL (1/2 tsp) cinnamon
- 10 mL (2 tsp) lemon juice

In a large glass bowl, combine all the ingredients. Cover and heat in a microwave on high for 7 to 9 minutes, or until apples are soft. Stir once during heating. After heating, mash apples until chunky. Serve hot or cold.
**Fresh Blender Applesauce**

4 large apples, peeled, cored, and quartered  
50 mL (1/4 cup) apple juice  
45 mL (3 Tbsp) honey  
2 mL (1/2 tsp) cinnamon  
5 mL (1 tsp) lemon juice

Place all ingredients in an electric blender; blend at medium speed for about a minute or until mixture is smooth. Taste for sweetness and add more honey, if desired. Serve immediately.

Once you have finished your batch of applesauce, share it with your classmates. Fill out the following table based on your observations of each batch of applesauce. Rate each sauce on its color/appearance, texture, and taste: 1 = Poor, 2 = Good, 3 = Excellent.

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<tr>
<th>Group #</th>
<th>Variety Name</th>
<th>Color/Appearance</th>
<th>Texture</th>
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Which was your favorite batch of applesauce?

Which was your least favorite batch of applesauce?

What were the differences you observed between your favorite and least favorite applesauce?