

FOOD & WINE

The Ultimate Apple Guide to 85 Varieties, From Heirlooms to Hybrids

 foodandwine.com/types-of-apples-7976165



There are over 7,500 apple varieties around the world (and counting), each with its own unique history. There are heirloom apples that have withstood the test of time, and new types of apples coming into being every year.

Some varieties of apple have been specifically cultivated, selected, and grown to showcase unique characteristics: consider, for example, the aptly named 20 Ounce, an apple that was bred in the 1900s by the applesauce industry for its generous size and subtly sweet flavor. Other kinds of apple, like Cox's Orange Pippin, a beloved heirloom variety from England, emerged by pure random chance. Over many thousands of years of cross-breeding, apples have proliferated in an exquisite array of sizes, shapes, textures, flavors, and uses.

Due to the rise of large-scale commercialization, many heirloom apples have been pushed

out of mainstream consumption, replaced by more grocery store-friendly varieties that can be grown en masse, stored for long times, and shipped long distances. But you can still find heirloom apples if you know where to look — you can find them at farmers markets, on farms, in orchards, and even in backyards all over the United States when apples are in season from late summer to late fall.

The list of apple varieties that follows celebrates our favorite types of apples (heirlooms abound, as well as a few contemporary stars). It's extensive but still only scratches a tiny surface of what's out there.

So read up, then head out, and visit your local apple farmer to see what you can find.

Apples for different uses

Many of the apple varieties that follow are cultivated to have unique characteristics that make them ideal for eating out of hand, for baking, for saucing, or for making cider. While many apples were bred for specific applications, most apples can be used however you like.

[35 Autumnal Apple Recipes From Salads and Glazes to Pie](#)

Dessert apples

Eating apples straight out of your hand is one of life's simple joys. Prized for their sweet taste, bright acidity, and satisfying, crisp texture, dessert apples dominate at today's supermarkets. Heirloom varieties like Winter Banana are particularly beloved for their unexpected flavor reminiscent of both bananas and pineapple when fully ripe, while Pink Pearl apples boast a stunning rosy flesh that adds visual appeal to salads. Similarly, Hoople's Antique Gold and SnapDragon apples have juicy, sweet flesh that make them a dream for raw eating, so scoop them up if you see them at your local farmers market.

Saucing apples

Applesauces are commonly made with larger, softer apples. These apples tend to have less densely packed cells, which allows them to break down more easily when cooked. Saucing apples include common supermarket apples, like McIntosh and Golden Delicious, as well as heirloom apples like Pound Sweet, Jonagold, Rusty Coat, and 20 Ounce, an aptly named giant apple that was developed in the 19th century.

Baking apples

Apples that have a dense flesh and firm shape hold up well when cooked and are best for baking. Mutsu and Gala are go-to, widely available baking apples. Heirloom varieties that hold their shape include Cox's Orange Pippin, Northern Spy, and Jonathan.

[Our 13 Best Apple Pie Recipes](#)

Cider apples

Many cider makers like to use a blend of apple varieties with different characteristics. This commonly involves combining high-tannin, bitter apples, which lend a rich and robust structure to the body of the cider; high-acid apples, for a crisp taste and zesty quality; and dessert apples, for sweetness and to up the alcohol content during fermentation. While there are endless possibilities when it comes to making cider, several apple varieties known for their complex flavors are commonly used, including Grimes Golden, Summer Rambo, Ashmead's Kernel, Roxbury Russet, and Black Oxford.

Meet the New Wave of American Cider Makers

Where to find heirloom apples

Behind every apple on this list is a dedicated farmer, producer, or historian that cares about the lineage and the preservation of these historic gems. In creating this glossary of apple varieties, we had the privilege of working with and learning from farmers and preservationists from all over the U.S. (many of whom do mail-order), including:

- ♦ **Albemarle CiderWorks (Virginia)**: This farm grows a variety of apple trees that are becoming increasingly rare, expertly blending bitter and sweet apples to craft exquisite ciders. You can purchase these delicious ciders online.
- ♦ **Gold Ridge Organic Farms (California)**: Farmer Brooke Hazen has been a steward of heirloom and modern apples alike for decades.
- ♦ **Hurd Orchards (New York)**: Amy S. Machamer runs her family-owned farm that upholds the traditions of historic apples while embracing modern varieties. Preserves made with the farm's heirlooms can be enjoyed and purchased online.
- ♦ **Maine Heritage Orchard**: This 10-acre orchard preserves, identifies, and discovers old and new vintage varieties each year.
- ♦ **Mercier Farms (Georgia)**: A fourth-generation farm that sells and shares all kinds of apple varieties — both new and old.
- ♦ **Scott Farms (Vermont)**: In operation since 1971, each year this farm harvests over 130 heirloom varieties. To enjoy these antique varieties for yourself, produce boxes can be purchased online.
- ♦ **Seed Savers Exchange (Iowa)**: This team has played a pivotal role in safeguarding the genetic diversity of apples in America.
- ♦ **Seedling Farm (Michigan)**: Producer Peter Klein runs this farm, which produces for local markets and chefs.

The work of these farms and preservation centers is vital. They continue to rediscover apple varieties that were thought to be lost to time and to cross-breed and create new varieties. Alongside the other 5,000 apple producers in the U.S., their efforts ensure that the world of apples is ever-evolving.

Types of apples

20 Ounce (Hurd Orchards, New York)

Developed in the 1900s for the applesauce industry, to say this variety is huge would be an understatement. It can be 20 ounces or more, with fruits that are lumpy and bumpy and “filled with so much character,” according to grower Amy from Hurd Orchards. As far as flavoring goes, it’s extremely unique and has a very soft texture that lends itself to being cooked down or baked.

A

Albemarle Pippin (Albemarle Ciderworks, Virginia)

Originating in New York in the 1700s, this apple found fame in the heart of Virginia in 1777 in part because Colonel Thomas Walker brought a sapling back to Albemarle County during the battle of Brandywine. Albemarle Pippin apples have a very distinctive sweet taste, but with large farms dominating local production, it’s become quite rare. Nevertheless, the apple's rich history and flavor continue to make it a beloved antique.

Ashmead’s Kernel (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

This apple is "visually and taste-wise the most complex and wide ranging display of flavors and colors in a single apple," according to farmer Brooke. It has beautiful coloring with hints of orange, greens, red, pink, and purple tones. Flavor-wise, it’s a cornucopia of complex flavors that make it an absolute must-try.

B

Ben Davis (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This antique variety, discovered in the mid-1800s, is one of the first commercially grown and exported apples in the U.S. It’s easy to grow, visually quite striking, and mild in flavor.

Blue Pearmain (Scott Farms, Vermont)

Believed to have been a favorite of Henry David Thoreau, this apple’s exact origins are murky, but it was well-known throughout the U.S. by the early 1800s. It has a thick skin and creamy ivory flesh that is highly aromatic and perfect for cooking and raw eating.

Black Gilliflower (Scott Farms, Vermont)

This dark red apple with a unique shape is also known as Sheepnose because of its resemblance to that part of an actual sheep’s face. It was first grown in the late 1700s, and its green-white flesh and sweet bite are great for baking and drying.

Black Oxford (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Originating in the late 1700s, these apples are named after Oxford county, on the border of

Maine and New Hampshire, where it was first found. Its beautiful, dark, almost purple hue contrasts with its bright white flesh. It is one of the most popular apples in Maine because of its signature sweetness and exceptionally long shelf life. Black Oxford apples are also considered a grower's dream as the trees are disease-resistant.

Brock (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

A crossbreed of a McIntosh and Golden Delicious, this dessert apple was bred at the University of Maine in 1934. This large variety is considered a dessert apple; its cream-colored flesh has a juicy and mildly sweet bite.



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C

Cameo (Mercier Orchards, Georgia)

One of the sweeter heirloom varieties, this apple boasts slight notes of pear, is reminiscent of a Red Delicious (albeit less red), and is best eaten fresh. It was rediscovered as a chance seed in Washington state in the late 1900s, in a Red Delicious orchard.

Canadian Strawberry (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Rediscovered in the late 1900s, found in a cluster of 100-plus year old trees by Roy Slamm, this antique variety is a dessert and cider apple. It has lacey red and orange splotches all over, and a punchy bite.

Calville Blanc D'hiver (Scott Farms, Vermont)

Originating in Normandy, France in the early 1600s, this apple was grown by Thomas Jefferson and boasts a yellow hue with bright red flushing. It's primarily used for baking (try it in a classic French tarte aux pommes), as it keeps its shape when cooked.

Cherryfield (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

First introduced in 1850, this hardy apple has a striking appearance, with pink-striped red skin. It has a mild-yet-tart flavor and a medium-to-large size that lends itself to cooking down into sauces.

Cinnamon Spice (Scott Farms, Vermont)

With a beautiful deep wine-red hue, this multi-use apple is exceptionally sweet. It was rediscovered growing in California in the 1980s during an era of heirloom apple shortages and was one of the first trees to be sold to consumers as an effort to preserve and spread antique varieties.

Cox's Orange Pippin (Scott Farms, Vermont)

This classic 19th-century English apple has a complex flavor profile that is almost reminiscent of tropical fruits. It was a chance seedling, and its striking orange-red coloring continues to be a favorite among apple lovers.

Crimson Crisp (Mercier Orchards, Georgia)

This red apple with almost purple hues was developed in New Jersey in 1971 and is the descendant of many apples (including Golden Delicious!). Its firm and sweet-tart flavor make it excellent for raw eating and the flavor complexity makes it good for cider-making.

D

Dolgo (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

With a roughly one-inch diameter, this bright red crabapple is a tiny heirloom that has origins in Kazakhstan centuries ago. The trees are excellent pollinators in the garden. The tart fruit delivers a super tart-sweet punch similar to cranberries, and it's best used in jams and chutneys and for fresh eating.

Duchess of Oldenburg (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

First founded in the Tula region of Russia in the 18th century, this apple has streaks of yellow and red and is the parent of many other cultivated apples, including Northern Spy. It's primarily used as a cooking apple and doesn't store especially well, so if you get your hands on one, use it quickly.

E

Esopus Spitzenburg (Scott Farms, Vermont)

Named after the settlement of Esopus in New York, where it was found in the late 1700s, this rich, sharp-tasting apple was rumored to be Thomas Jefferson's favorite apple because of its buttery, dense yellowed flesh. It's quite difficult to grow, however, as it is highly susceptible to virtually every common apple disease.

F

Fallwater (Albemarle Ciderworks, Virginia)

Also called Tulpehocken, Talpahawkins, Formwalder, Mountain Pippin, Green Mountain Pippin, Prim's Beauty of the West, Pine's Beauty of the West, Pound, Winter Blush, Kelly, Brubaker and Molly Whopper, this apple is of many names and its trademark large size and green-yellow skin doesn't have an exact origin date, but was first written about in the 1840s. It's pretty mild in flavor, and was historically loved as a dessert apple.

Father Abraham (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

This apple was historically grown by Thomas Jefferson, and is believed to have been brought to the Americas by early German settlers. It can be stored for several months, and is fabulous for cider.

Fuji (Mercier Orchards, Georgia)

With roots that date back to 1930s Japan, this apple is the offspring of the historically loved Red Delicious and has grown into quite a bit of fandom itself. It's a very attractive modern apple, and has a light white flesh and incredibly juicy bite that grocery store apples are known for today.



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G

Gala (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

In the apple world, Gala has that 'it-girl' power. It's got a beautiful, smooth skin and sweet bite that's tart, but not *too* tart. To many, it's the quintessential apple. Many chefs love this apple for savory cooking, because it holds its shape well, and its natural sweetness shines through.

Gideon (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This apple hails from Minnesota and was first introduced in 1888. It's great for fresh eating and in sauces and pies, and its pale yellow color with bright pink blushes make it visually stunning.

Golden Russet (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

Part of the golden family (which includes Golden Delicious, Golden Smoothie, Golden Supreme, and others), this heirloom apple has beautiful golden-red coloring, a rough-skinned texture, and resembles a russet potato (hence the name). It's also very small — about two inches tall. In the world of apples, its flavor and texture are unique: It's one of the sweeter apples yet is relatively dense, contrary to juicy. Many bakers prefer this apple because it holds its shape well and has that signature sweetness.

Golden Supreme (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

Believed to be the offspring of Golden Reinette and Grimes Golden, this mellow, sweet apple has a pale-yellow skin with slight red blushing to it. This apple was historically dried for long-term use in the winter, making it a valuable asset in the 1900s.

Granny Smith (Mercier Orchards, Georgia)

Widely known and loved, this apple was randomly found by Maria Ann “Granny” Smith in Australia in 1839. The heritage fruit spread to become one of the world's most popular varieties. It is often described as having a lemon-like acidity.

Gravenstein (Golden Ridge Farms, California)

The origins of the Gravenstein apple are a bit mysterious, but it was first described in Europe 1979. Even though it's relatively well-known, it was never able to achieve its true stardom because its tree is disease-prone. If you can get your hands on one, it makes great apple juice and pies, and is terrific for fresh eating.

Gray Pearman (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This apple was rediscovered (and named) about a decade ago. It has a distinct tart taste with slight pear notes and boasts a beautifully plump muffin shape.

Grimes Golden (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

Believed to be the parent of the widely known (and loved) Golden Delicious, this apple from the 1800s is self-fertilizing (which is quite rare to find in apples). It can russet (when the skin cracks) and its flesh is incredibly sweet.

H

Harrison (Albemarle Ciderworks, Virginia)

In 1817, this apple was believed to be the most celebrated for cider making before being lost to time. But at the end of the 20th century, it was miraculously rediscovered, and within this vintage lies the golden age of American cider. According to Albemarle Ciderworks, though, it is still one of the best for cider because it's high in tannins.

Hawkeye Delicious (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

Originally a chance seedling on a farm in Iowa around 1870, this apple is the original Red Delicious, and is the beginning of the 'Delicious' line of apples. It's incredibly sweet, tender, and juicy — one of the tastiest fresh apples out there.

Hooples Antique Gold (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

Originally discovered on a limb off a Golden Delicious tree on a farm in Ohio in 1960, this apple has a strong sweet flavor with mild floral notes. It is medium-to-large in size, and has russetting all over, as other varieties in its family do.

Hudson's Golden Gem (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

This potato-looking apple is in the same family as Hooples Antique Gold. It was first discovered in Oregon 1931 among a group of mysterious fruiting trees and belongs to the Golden Russet family. For taste, its signature golden hue belies an apple that is much sweeter than its modern counterparts.

J

Jefferis (Maine Heritage Orchards, Maine)

Discovered by Isaac Jefferies, this apple won a prize for best seedling in 1848 from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. It's a fruit that ripens incredibly fast but only produces one to two apples at a time, making it not especially commercially viable. That aside, it's sweet, juicy, and has a mellow flavor that's well suited for fresh eating and cider making.

Jonagold (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

A cross between a Golden Delicious and a Jonathon apple that dates to the 1940s, this is one of those varieties that ranges in flavor depending on where it's planted. When grown on the coast, as this one was, in the words of farmer Brooke, it's "aromatically a dream." It's large and packs a ton of sweet flavor that is perfectly balanced by tartness.

Jonathon (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

This is an older heirloom variety that was first cultivated in the early 1800s and is quite popular throughout the East coast. Many people grew up with them and love them. As far as flavor, it's quite tart, and chefs and bakers all over love baking with this firm and crisp apple.

Josiah Foye (Maine Heritage Orchards, Maine)

This small to medium fruit has beautiful reddish-purple striping. It's being preserved by Maine Heritage Orchard (where we received this apple from).

K

King of Tompkins County (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This heirloom apple was first publicly grown in 1805 by Jacob Wycoff in Tompkins County, New York. Wycoff initially named it King, but over time it became known as King of Tompkins County.

King David (Maine Heritage Orchards, Maine)

First rediscovered in an Arkansas Orchard in the late 1800s, this apple is an old heirloom variety that is generally used for fresh eating and cider. It comes in small-to-medium sizes and has a pale-yellow flesh and a sweet-tart flavor with subtle hints of wine.

Kennebec Russet (Maine Heritage Orchards, Maine)

This apple doesn't have an especially long shelf life (roughly two to three weeks), and its small-to-medium size and heavy russeting makes it a popular choice for cooking and cider making. Its original tree was identified in 2012, but is believed to have been around much, much longer than that. It's under the care of [Fedco Seeds](#).

Knobbed Russet (Scott Farms, Vermont)

First recognized in England in 1819, this apple is large, light green, and as its name implies, knobbly and highly russeted. As with other russets, this antique variety resembles a potato, but a bite reveals crisp, juicy, flesh erupting with sweet-tart flavor.



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L

Lady (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

Also known as Pomme d'Api and the Christmas Apple, this antique variety has contested origins (some sources say it was discovered in the Forest of Api in France, others that it dates back to Ancient Rome). It was widely grown in the orchards of King Louis XIII, and early American colonists thought of this apple as a symbol of wealth. Its satin finish accompanies a tender bite with bursts of sweet-tart flavor.

M

McIntosh (Mercier Orchards, Georgia)

This antique apple is an all-star classic that was rediscovered by John McIntosh in 1811. Since then, it's been widely adored for its very juicy flesh and sweet tang that lends itself well to fresh eating and baking.

Missouri Pippin' (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

This cool-weather heirloom has a stellar shelf life for fresh eating even during the coldest months. It was first planted in 1829 on the farm of Brinkley Hornsby in Kingsville, Missouri.

Mother (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This ovoid apple is also known as American Mother, Queen Anne, Mother of America, Gardner's Apple, and Bolton Mother. Developed by Steven Partridge Gardner in 1844, this heirloom variety is primarily used in desserts and prized for its spicy sweetness, which lends itself well to cobblers, pies, tarts, and more.

Mutsu (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

This apple was crossbred from Golden Delicious in 1949 and has a greenish-yellow flesh and large shape. As far as flavor and texture go, it's sweet, slightly tart, firm, and juicy — a classic baking apple with one of the highest levels of sugar.

N

Northern Spy (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

This round-shaped, all-purpose apple was planted by seed by Herman Chapin in East Bloomfield, New York, around 1800. Though the original tree was killed before it was able to fruit, 40 years later Roswell Humphrey collected a seed and brought it to commercial

success. Also known simply as "spy," it is excellent for apple pie.

Northwestern Greening (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This apple was first grown from seed in Wisconsin in 1849 and was introduced commercially in 1872. It's best used for cooking and is known as one of the hardiest American apples. It's pretty round and pretty tart.

NYS No. 30 (Hurd Orchards, New York)

This fall organic apple was bred by Dr. Robert Lamb and the special disease resistant program between Cornell, Purdue, and Rutgers Universities. It's very sweet when cooked and has a delicious zesty taste when eaten fresh.

O

Opalescent (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

With origins that date back to the early 1800s, this antique apple ripens in the fall and is visually striking, with deep red ribbing all around. It's great for out-of-hand eating and baking.

Ohio Pippin (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Believed to have been rediscovered in Dayton, Ohio, in the late 1800s, this apple has a smooth, almost glossy finish and an irregular shape. Its season begins in September and goes until the winter. It's a firm yet tender apple with a mildly sweet flavor.

P

Parmenter Hille (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This late-fall apple is light green with blushes of pink. It's a classically sweet apple, just as great eaten raw as it is baked.

Paula Red (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

This is a particularly juicy apple, with sweet-tart notes and an ivory flesh. It's typically available throughout the end of summer into the fall and was discovered in an orchard in Michigan in the 20th century. It's a great apple to eat fresh, especially on cheese boards, because its high acidity helps it oxidize more slowly than other varieties.

Pink Pearl (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

This pink-fleshed apple was developed in the 1940s in California by the late Albert Etter. There's so much nuance and enticing aroma to this sweet-tart apple, in addition to its striking look, which is absolutely stunning in salads and pastries.

Pomme Gris (Albemarle Ciderworks, Virginia)

Also known as the French Russet, Gray apple, Grise, and Leather Coat, among other names, this small-to-medium sized apple was first cultivated throughout 17th-century Europe. It's greenish-yellow but typically completely covered in russet (common discolored and rough patches on apples and pears). Thomas Jefferson was known to grow Pomme Gris as a dessert apple, thanks to its rich sweet-nutty flavor.

Pomme d'Or (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This rare antique variety is known for its often peculiar shape (it sometimes even grows in a rectangle) and its yellow-green hue. Believed to have come from Canada, as the fruit ripens, its golden coloring deepens. Although it can be eaten fresh, it's quite tart.

Pound Sweet (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

This fall heirloom (also known as Pumpkin Sweet) originated in Middlefield, Connecticut in 1834. It was historically used as livestock feed and for large-scale apple butter production, yet remains prized for all sorts of cool-weather baking. Use this apple to make an apple sauce. It may take a little longer and a bit more water to cook down, but it has such a lovely sweetness that you won't need to add any sugar.

R

Red Cortland (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

This shiny red- and green-striped apple has a subtle tartness to balance its sweetness. This heirloom variety is a descendant of the McIntosh from the late 19th century and was named after its first seedling spot in Cortland County, New York.

Rhode Island Greening (Hurd Orchards, New York)

This heirloom variety has smooth waxy green-yellowish skin with a red-orange blush. It was first discovered in Newport, Rhode Island, around 1650. It's a good all-purpose apple and is considered a quintessential fruit for apple pie in the region.

Ribston Pippin (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Hailing from the United Kingdom in the 18th century, this apple (also known as the Glory of York) is one of the most popular varieties from England. (It received the Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1962.) With a delightful sweet-sharp flavor, this apple is versatile, making it great for cooking and eating fresh.

Roxbury Russet (Scott Farms, Vermont)

First discovered in 1635 in Massachusetts, this apple is widely recognized as one of the oldest varieties in North America that was able to adapt to the climate from Europe. It has some tartness to it, as other apples in the Russet family, but at its core is sweet. In its heyday, this apple was widely popular because it kept quite well before modern storage was widely available.

Royal Sweet (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

You'll most likely only find this variety in Maine, where it was first discovered around 1890. The fruit is small- to medium-sized and covered in red and rose stripes. This low-acid apple is quite sweet and though not widely commercially viable, it is used for making cider and apple molasses, or given to livestock.

RubyFrost (Hurd Orchards, New York)

This brightly hued apple is the cousin of SnapDragon and was also developed by Cornell University roughly a decade ago. It has a plump, large size and a rich sweet-tart flavor that shines in seasonal baked goods.

Rushock Pearmain (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

Also known as Charles Pearmain, this apple was first written about in *Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* by Charles Downing in 1872. It's been referred to as an excellent dessert apple and can aesthetically take on a few different appearances, sometimes developing brown spots due to sun exposure.

Rusty Coat (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

Several apple varieties that develop russetting all over their flesh are called Rusty Coat. According to Jamie, the widespread use of synonyms has led to a murky history, though Rusty Coats are likely to be related to the Golden Russet. And though they're perfectly fine for fresh eating and baking, many like to use Rusty Coats for a sweet cider.



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Illustration by James
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S

Scott Winter (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

Also called Wilcox's Winter, this remarkable variety actually emerged as a chance seed on Scott Farm in Vermont in 1864 (hello, crossover!) by horticulturalists Dr. Thomas Hoskins who was known for testing apple varieties' hardiness. This apple ripens throughout October and November and has a long shelf-life.

Sea Breeze (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

Light green like a golden delicious but with a bit more golden hue to it and a rose blush on the sun side, this apple originates from Gold Ridge Organic Farms by Farmer Brooke himself, and is a descendant from their Hoople's Antique Gold. Brooke sums it up as, "firm, sweet, and beautiful to look at."

Senshu (Seedling Farms, Michigan)

Also known as Sensyu or Senchu, this round apple has qualities reminiscent of a Fuji, with aromatic sweet notes and crisp, juicy flesh. It was developed in Japan in 1966 and makes for a great dessert.

Smokehouse (Seedling Farms, Michigan)

With a yellow-green color, this apple has a bitter-spicy sweetness that gives it a faintly fermented taste. It makes a fabulous juice or cider.

SnapDragon (Hurd Orchards, New York)

Bred by Dr. Susan Brown, this contemporary apple is a cross between a few varieties and its name is a descriptor for what it is: snappy and filled with juice. It's a fabulous snacking apple, but also cooks beautifully.

Snow (Hurd Orchards, New York)

Believed to come from Quebec, this apple was first classified in the early 1700s. Snow apples have a delicate, refined, subtle sweetness, and they're absolutely stunning, with cherry-red cheeks. This apple's name comes from its icy white flesh that resembles snow, and its preference for cold climates. It's mostly an eating apple, though like many other apples, can still be cooked with. Its texture is much softer than other varieties, and is the parent of the MacIntosh apple.

Somerset of Maine (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Named after and discovered in Somerset county in Maine sometime in the early 1800s, this apple is on the larger side, and can be red or green, with light stripes. It's a late summer ripener and makes an excellent apple pie.

The Spitzenburg (Gold Ridge Organic Farms, California)

In the same genetic family as Esopus Spitzenburg, with its deep roots in America and origins that trace back all the way back to Germany, this apple boasts a history as rich as its red hues and deep flavor. This apple matures later in the season, allowing its dense flesh to develop a deep, complex flavor.

St. Lawrence (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

With fuzzy origins in the 1800s (when it's believed to have come from Montreal, Canada), this apple's doughnut shape contains a lemony-sweet taste that's fabulous for fresh eating. When baked, its acidity mellows, leaving a sweet, mild flavor.

Stark (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This midwestern variety is not to be confused with Starkey, a dessert apple from New England. The flesh of Stark apples is white and firm, with hints of green. One of its trademarks is its long shelf life and all-purpose nature — it can hold all winter for eating, baking, and making cider throughout the season.

Stayman (Mercier Orchards, Georgia)

For many chefs, the Stayman is the apple of choice because of its trifecta of juiciness, tartness, and crispiness. This American classic has a deep red hue with green streaks and was named after Dr. Joseph Stayman, who discovered it in Kansas in the late 1860s.

Summer Rambo (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

Medium-to-large in size and with a pale yellow-green and red striped skin, this apple was first recorded in 1535 in France and began to be cultivated in the U.S. in the late 1700s as a dessert apple. It typically begins to ripen in early August and has a sweet-tart flavor.

T

Tetofsky (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

This Russian-descended gem is known for its smooth pale yellow-green skin and sweet and tart bite. If you get a hold of one of these apples, it's best to eat it fresh or fire up the oven for baking because it doesn't have a particularly long shelf life.

Tolman Sweet (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

As far as historic apples go, the Tolman Sweet is one of the oldest out there with a history that dates to before the 1700s. It's called "sweet" because it essentially has no other notes to it than sweetness. It's an all-purpose apple that's firm enough to hold its shape for desserts, but if cooked long enough, makes a great applesauce, too.

W

Wagener (Seed Savers Exchange, Iowa)

Originally from Penn Yan, New York, first discovered in 1971, this apple is believed to be the offspring of Northern Spy. It's delightful for fresh eating and has earned a reputation as one of the finest dessert apples out there. Jamie Hanson from Seed Savers believes this apple to be so good that, "after one experiences the luxury of the Wagener, they will feel somewhat dissatisfied with most other kinds, however good they may be."

Winn Russet (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Also going by Winn, Win Russet, and Winn's Russet, this cool-weather apple is known for its distinct large circular shape, red-orangish hue, the speckled raised white little dots on its skin, and its deep soft interior (reminiscent of pear) that makes it well suited to cider-making. Its origins in the U.S. date back to the mid-1800s, but it is believed to have originated in Sweden.

Winter Banana (Maine Heritage Orchard, Maine)

Aptly named, this apple has a smooth, waxy, and pale yellow skin and a somewhat banana-esque taste. It also happens to be one of the few self-pollinating apple species (it doesn't need cross-pollination to fruit). It bruises rather easily, so isn't the best candidate for baking. Enjoy this one raw.

Wolf River (Seedling Farm, Michigan)

Cultivated along the shores of Wisconsin in the 1870s, this apple is exceptionally large, disease-resistant, and does well in the cold. Its large size and not overly sweet taste lends this apple to, as Klein says, make “the best apple sauce I’ve ever had.”

Y

Yates (Albemarle Ciderworks, Virginia)

As a heavy annual producer, Yates is a sturdy tree that was founded in the mid-1850s in Georgia. It grows all along the East Coast and can withstand temperatures down to -25°F. With a white flesh and juicy-sweet flavor with a tinge of spice, Yates apples are commonly used in ciders and baking.