

Food Facts Fancies

Did Cool Glaciers Make For Tasty Apples?

(NASPA)—The next time you enjoy the flavor of a Michigan apple you may want to thank the Ice Age. Many think the geology resulting from the Ice Age helped make Michigan one of the world's best locations for apple growing.

When the glaciers retreated they left behind Lake Michigan. One of the Great Lakes, it moderates temperature extremes and fosters balmy breezes across the apple orchards located downwind.

The glaciers also built a rim of hills along the lake's eastern shore, ideal for apple trees needing protection against frosts. Early settlers discovered that the climate is ideal both for varieties that thrive in the north and for others suited for farther south.

The primary northern-type apples are McIntosh, Jonathan and Northern Spy. All are said to deliver a robust and tangy tartness that befits the rugged north.

Red Delicious and Golden Delicious remain the two kingpins in Michigan orchards, ranking first and second respectively in production.

Jonathan and Northern Spy are especially fine for processing because they hold their shape in baking. Another processing favorite is Ida Red. Michigan is a leading producer of processing apples. Chances are those firm, tasty slices in your frozen apple pie probably came from Michigan.

You can also try them in this "a-peeling" approach to muffins.

Brown Sugar Muffins (Low Fat, Cholesterol Free, Low Sodium)

- 1¹/₄ cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- 1¹/₂ teaspoon baking soda**
- 1¹/₄ teaspoon salt (optional)**
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice**
- 2 egg whites**
- 2²/₃ cup firmly packed brown sugar**



Michigan farm families have been growing apples commercially for well over a century.

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 3³/₄ cup unsweetened Michigan applesauce**
- 1¹/₂ cups diced, peeled Michigan apples**
- 1¹/₄ cups uncooked, old fashioned rolled oats**
- 1 tablespoon turbinado sugar**

1. Stir together flour, baking powder, soda, salt and spice. Set aside.

2. In large mixing bowl, combine remaining ingredients except the turbinado sugar. Let stand about 5 minutes or until oats soften slightly. Add flour mixture, stirring only until combined. Portion evenly into twelve 2¹/₂-inch muffin-pan cups coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle batter with turbinado sugar.

3. Bake at 400°F about 20 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.

Yield: 12 muffins

Variation: substitute 1 can (20 oz.) sliced Michigan apples, drained, diced for fresh Apples.

Suggested Michigan Apple varieties to use: Empire, Gala, Golden Delicious, Ida Red, Jonagold, Jonathan, McIntosh or Rome.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.MichiganApples.com.