

Crisp Apple Salad with Creamy Dressing: A Perfect Side Dish

refreshing crispness and the fantastic balance of flavors



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30 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 4 large Honeycrisp apples, cubed
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 ½ tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 ribs celery, thinly sliced
- 1 cup seedless red grapes, halved
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- ½ cup dried cranberries

Swaps and Notes:

Apples: Honeycrisp apples are ideal for their crisp texture and balanced sweetness, but other firm, sweet-tart apples like Fuji, Gala, or Granny Smith (for a more tart profile) would also work. Make sure to cube them evenly.

Lemon Juice: Don't skip the lemon juice on the apples! It's essential to prevent browning and adds a bright, fresh tang.

Mayonnaise: Use your favorite brand of mayonnaise. For a slightly lighter dressing, you could use a light mayonnaise, or even try a blend of mayonnaise and plain Greek yogurt for added tang and protein.

Brown Sugar: This adds a lovely molasses note to the dressing. Granulated sugar can be used as a substitute, but brown sugar provides a richer flavor.

Celery: Provides a crisp texture and subtle savory note. If you're not a fan, you can reduce the amount or omit it, but it does add a nice

counterpoint.

Grapes: Seedless red grapes are convenient and visually appealing. Green grapes would also work well.

Pecans: Toasted pecans will bring out even more of their nutty flavor. You can lightly toast them in a dry skillet over medium heat for a few minutes until fragrant. Walnuts or slivered almonds would also be delicious substitutes.

Dried Cranberries: Add a wonderful chewiness and tartness. Dried cherries or golden raisins could be swapped in for a different twist.

Directions:

Prepare the Apples: Wash and core your 4 large Honeycrisp apples. Cut them into uniform, bite-sized cubes. Immediately place the cubed apples in a medium bowl and toss them with the juice of 1 lemon. Stir well to ensure all apple pieces are coated; this crucial step prevents them from browning.

Make the Dressing: In a separate large bowl, add the 1/3 cup mayonnaise and 1 ½ tablespoons brown sugar. Whisk these two ingredients together until the dressing is completely smooth and the brown sugar is dissolved.

Combine Ingredients: To the bowl with the smooth dressing, add the lemon-tossed apples, 2 ribs of thinly sliced celery, 1 cup of halved seedless red grapes, ½ cup chopped pecans, and ½ cup dried cranberries.

Using a spatula or large spoon, gently stir all the ingredients until everything is evenly coated with the creamy dressing. Make sure the dressing is distributed throughout the salad.

Chill: Cover the bowl containing the assembled salad with plastic wrap or a lid. Transfer it to the refrigerator and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. This allows the flavors to meld together beautifully and the salad to become perfectly chilled.

Tips for Success:

Lemon Juice is Non-Negotiable: Coating the apples with lemon juice immediately after cubing them is essential to prevent oxidation and keep them looking fresh and appealing.

Chill Time is Important: While you can serve it right away, allowing the salad to chill for at least 30 minutes (or longer!) really helps the flavors marry and deepen.

Even Cubes: Uniformly sized apple cubes make for a better texture and easier eating experience.

Toast Pecans (Optional but Recommended): A quick toast of your pecans will unlock more of their natural oils and enhance their nutty flavor, adding another layer of deliciousness to the salad.

Adjust Sweetness: Taste the dressing before combining. If you prefer it sweeter, add a tiny bit more brown sugar; if you like it tangier, a splash more lemon juice.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Storage and Leftover Tips:

More Recipes You Will Love:

For another apple-centric treat perfect for fall, try [These Caramel Apple Pie Cookies Are My Favorite Fall Treat In Bite-Sized Form](#).

If you love the combination of apples and caramel in a fun, shareable format, don't miss [These Caramel Apple Nachos Are My Favorite Quick Fall Dessert Trick](#).

For a healthy and satisfying snack or breakfast component, check out [These No-Bake Monster Cookie Energy Balls Are My Favorite Snack To Keep On Hand](#).

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11. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: This Apple Salad is incredibly versatile. It makes a fantastic side dish for grilled chicken, pork, or even a holiday ham. It's also hearty enough to be a light lunch on its own, perhaps alongside a cup of soup. It's a wonderful addition to potlucks, picnics, and backyard BBQs because it holds up well. For other delicious salads, check out my [A Light Tangy Chicken Salad I Actually Crave And There's No Mayo In Sight](#).
12. Storage and Leftover Tips: Store any leftover Apple Salad in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2-3 days. The apples will remain crisp for a day or two, but the texture might soften slightly over time. The lemon juice helps prevent browning, but it's best consumed within 48 hours for optimal freshness. If you're making it for a party, you can chop all the ingredients and make the dressing separately, then combine just before serving.
13. More Recipes You Will Love: If you enjoyed the fresh and fruity elements of this salad, you might also be interested in these other delightful recipes:
14. For another apple-centric treat perfect for fall, try [These Caramel Apple Pie Cookies Are My Favorite Fall Treat In Bite-Sized Form](#).
15. If you love the combination of apples and caramel in a fun, shareable format, don't miss [These Caramel Apple Nachos Are My Favorite Quick Fall Dessert Trick](#).
16. For a healthy and satisfying snack or breakfast component, check out [These No-Bake Monster Cookie Energy Balls Are My Favorite Snack To Keep On Hand](#).
17. And for a comforting classic, you can't go wrong with [The Best Peanut Butter Brownies I've Ever Made And I've Made A Lot](#).
18. Final Thoughts: This Apple Salad is a testament to how simple, fresh ingredients can come together to create a truly memorable dish. It's light yet satisfying, sweet yet tangy, and always a crowd-pleaser. Give it a try - it might just become your new favorite way to enjoy apples!
19. What are your go-to fruit-based salads? Share your ideas in the comments below, and don't forget to follow [Chefmaniac.com](#) for more delicious recipes!

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/crisp-apple-salad-with-creamy-dressing-a-perfect-side-dish/>