

APPLESAUCE (ONE STEP AT A TIME)

APPLESAUCE: Makes 1 ½ cups

4 medium cooking apples

¼ to 1/3 cup water

1 stick cinnamon 2 inches

2 to 4 tablespoons sugar

STEP 1: Start by choosing tart, juicy apples such as Jonathan, McIntosh, or Winesap. Working on a cutting board, cut each apple in half and then into quarters with a paring knife. If you have extremely large apples, cut them into sixths or eighths so the pieces will cook more evenly.

STEP 2: Working with one piece of apple at a time, hold the apple wedge with point upright and remove core by making a semicircular slice with paring knife.

STEP 3: Continuing to work with one wedge of apple at a time, cut the peel from each piece, removing as little of the fruit as possible.

STEP 4: Place apple wedges in medium saucepan. For thick applesauce add ¼ cup water. For thinner sauce, add 1/3 cup water. Add cinnamon stick.

STEP 5: Heat to boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 8 to 10 minutes. Uncover: check texture of apples with a fork. They should fall apart easily. Remove cinnamon.

Applesauce is cooked covered to prevent apple juices from boiling away.

STEP 6: Transfer saucepan to trivet or hot pad on a table or counter and mash apples with potato masher. Continue mashing until there are no large chunks and apples have a smooth texture.

STEP 7: Stir in 2 tablespoons sugar or 1/8 cup. Taste applesauce for sweetness. If you prefer a sweeter applesauce, add additional sugar, a tablespoon at a time, tasting sauce after each addition.

STEP 8: The consistency of the finished sauce should be fairly smooth. If you enjoy applesauce warm spoon it directly into serving dishes and serve at once. For chilled applesauce, spoon sauce into refrigerator container; cover and chill several hours.

TIP: To save time when making a large batch of applesauce, do not peel apples in step 3. Cook them as in step 4 and 5, but instead of mashing the apples in step 6, press them through a food mill. Discard the peel. Then continue with steps 7 and 8.

If you use red apples, cooking the quarters unpeeled will give the applesauce a festive rosy color.