

baked apples

Serves: 4

Prep and Cook time: 30 min

Per serving: 220 calories, 5 g fat, 8 mg sodium

1/4 cup walnut or pecan pieces

About 6 TBS lightly packed light brown sugar

4 tsp butter, cut into 4 pieces

4 medium-size tart apples, such as Granny Smith or Braeburn

1/2 tsp apple pie spice or ground cinnamon

1. Spread the nuts out on a microwave-safe plate and microwave uncovered, on high power until fragrant and toasted, 1 to 3 minutes, stopping halfway to stir. Set aside.

2. While the nuts microwave, core the apples all the way through (do not peel them). Place the apples in a shallow microwave-safe dish, such as a glass pie plate. (If an apple doesn't sit upright in the dish, cut a little off the base to flatten it.)

3. Microwave the apples, uncovered, on high power for 6 minutes to partially cook them.

4. While the apples microwave, finely chop the nuts and set them aside. Place the brown sugar in a small dish, add the apple pie spice, and stir well; set aside.

5. Using oven mitts, carefully remove the plate of apples from the microwave oven. Spoon 1 TBS of the chopped nuts and 1 TBS of the brown sugar mixture into the cavity of each apple. Using your fingers or the spoon handle, pack the sugar mixture into the cavity. (Depending on the size of the cavity, you may want to use a little more sugar or a little less.) Place a piece of butter on top of the sugar in each apple. (It's okay if the butter just sits on top.)

6. Return the plate to the microwave oven and microwave, uncovered, on high power until the apples are tender when pierced with the tip of a sharp knife, 6 to 8 minutes.

7. Using oven mitts again, carefully remove the plate from the microwave. Use a large serving spoon to place each apple in a shallow bowl. Spoon the sugar syrup and any nuts that have accumulated in the baking dish evenly over the apples. Allow the apples to cool for 10 to 20 minutes before serving. Serve warm.

