

Spice-Flecked Applesauce

A mix of apples generally provides best flavor, but if someone brings a bagful of apples to your door, use what you've got whether you know their variety or not. (I didn't.) I peeled half and left half unpeeled, but I think I'd peel them all next time. Ultimately, as with everything else, it's up to you. This recipe yields a pleasant, slightly chunky consistency. If you prefer a smoother texture, break out the food mill or simply cook a little longer.

5 pounds apples, either mixed variety or what you have on hand, peeled, if desired

1/4 cup orange juice

1/3 cup dark brown sugar

2 tablespoons butter

1-1/2 teaspoons cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Cut apples into large, irregular chunks around cores and stems. Discard cores and stems.

Place apple chunks in a large enameled cast iron pot with all remaining ingredients. Set over medium-low heat and cover. Cook about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low and continue cooking, covered, 40-60 minutes longer, stirring every 10 minutes, until apples soften considerably and begin to fall apart. I like to keep mine a bit chunky, but if you want yours completely broken down continue cooking and stirring until you reach the desired consistency.