

Greenwich Sentinel

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Column

Apples, Apples, Apples!

By Julia Chiappetta



The apple is a pomaceous fruit whose tree belongs to the Rosaceae family and has the scientific name *Malus domestica*. Apples made their way to America by way of European colonizers and have many benefits, including vitamin C, vitamin K, vitamin B6, and riboflavin and minerals like potassium, copper, manganese, and magnesium. They also present a good source of dietary fiber and are packed with phytonutrients and flavonoids like quercetin, epicatechin, and phloridzin.

Fall is the time to pick apples from beautiful apple trees. That said, I was invited back to The Drenckhahn Family Farm on Valley Road in Cos Cob, this past Saturday to pick apples. I was so excited to have this invitation and see the farm in full Fall Harvest mode after seeing it in July when it was bursting with the colors of summer vegetables and flowers. I saw many pumpkins and watermelon on their roots, the largest butternut squash I have ever seen, gorgeous eggplants, hot

peppers, tomatoes (yes, they still had tons of tomatoes) and sweet corn coming up on tall stalks reaching for the sun.

Their apple trees line the driveway as you enter the property and as entered in I could see to my right, apples, apples, apples. I marveled at this sight and just then two things came to my mind...the first was a childhood memory of the apple tree in our backyard behind a white picket fence, where we would pick and eat apples while my grandmother hung clothes on the line she erected that ran behind the apple tree and ran the full expanse of our backyard to dry the laundry (we didn't have a dryer) and which hovered over sections of the remains of her bountiful, organic garden.

The other thought I had was of that really funny scene in *The Wizard of Oz*, where the apple trees begin to talk to and reprimand Dorothy and her clan, asking them how they would feel if someone was picking on them...and with much speed and fear they hit the yellow brick road to safety! Ha-ha. The trees at the Drenckhahn Farm are similar to those in the movie, therefore I had a chuckle when David Drenckhahn said, "go ahead and pick whatever you like". With a bit of effort and reaching, I was able to pick about 50 apples. The apples that grow wild on these trees are not what you see in grocery stores. Some are smaller and imperfect, while some are perfectly round and rosy in color (not at all shiny or waxed, like in the markets) and they tasted so,

so good! I was excited to take my haul to my Mom, Olympia's home for cleaning and viewing because my Mom gets as excited about fruit and vegetables on view, as I do and did I say, she bakes the best apple pie I have ever tasted. As we looked upon those lovely apples, we soon realized the huge task of peeling before us, so I went on line and purchased a very efficient apple peeler that came in the mail 2 days later. The apple peeler did its job with ease and soon the apples were peeled, sliced and in their crust ready to be baked. The anticipation of those luscious, hot pies and the smells emerging from her oven are memories that will comfort me forever. I am sharing my Mom's recipe which is easily converted to gluten-free. See below:

Olimpia's Apple Pie

Crust:

2 cups of flour (For Gluten-free option: Purchase Gluten-Free Pie Crust Mix & Follow Instructions); ¼ Stick of Chilled Crisco Baking Sticks; 4-8 tablespoons of water
Cut Crisco into flour with pastry blender or fork until coarse crumbles form; stir in water slowly with a fork –just until dough hold together; divide dough in half- place in plastic wrap- chill for 30 minutes.

Filling:

Use approximately 8 large granny smith apples, peeled and sliced. Mix 1 cup of sugar with a pinch of cinnamon-use more sugar if needed depending on tartness; Grease a 10-inch pie plate; Roll out half of the pie crust and line the pie plate; Add the apple slices; Roll out the other half of the pie

crust and cover the apples; Pinch the dough together around the pie; Using a fork make a few holes in the top crust; Bake at 425-degrees for approximately 45 minutes – depending on your oven. Serve hot as you wish!

October is upon us and I encourage all of us to reach into our community and beyond by donating our time and talents to those that are hurting like the elderly who are alone in facilities, women and children at risk. Perhaps do something radical: hug a stranger who looks sad, pay a bill for someone with cancer who is too sick to work, call someone to pray with them by phone. I thank God daily for healing me from breast cancer and for NOT giving me the things I thought I should have, but instead transporting me to another exit on the highway of life, where He knew I needed to go, to find His perfect plan for my life.

As always, please try to drink something green like a fresh juice or wheat grass, take a walk, watch a sunset and love your body!

Julia Chiappetta is the author of "Breast Cancer: The Notebook" (Gemini Media, 2006) and is also the owner of Julia Chiappetta Consulting. She lives in Cos Cob. More information and past columns can be found at JuliaChiappetta.com.

