



APPLE Q & A

What are apples?

An apple is a round tree fruit that has crisp white flesh. The skin colour of an apple can vary from yellow to green to red. An apple is a pome fruit, as is a pear. A pome fruit has multiple seeds protected by a core. There are over 100 varieties of apples grown in North America. The varieties grown for BC's commercial production are Red and Golden Delicious, Royal Gala, McIntosh and Spartan. Newer varieties now being widely planted include Jonagold, Braeburn and Fuji.

Where are apples produced in BC?

About 98% of BC apples are produced in the Okanagan-Similkameen Valleys. The hot, dry weather is ideal for growing Red and Golden Delicious apples. High sunlight and temperature levels are ideal for apple colouring and yield. The low rainfall level reduces the impact of disease. Most orchards are on slopes near lakes. This moderates the temperature and reduces the risk of winter injury and spring frost. Apples are also grown on Vancouver Island, in the Fraser Valley and in Kootenay areas.

How many apples do we produce?

BC produces about 30% of apples grown in Canada. The total quantity ranges from 136,000 tonnes to 195,000 tonnes, amounting to more than 1 billion apples. British Columbians consume 25% of the apples grown in BC: about 75 to 100 apples per person per year.

2/ Apple Facts

How are apples produced?

Apples are grown in orchards. Apple growing has become a specialized science known as pomology. An apple tree is composed of two parts: the cultivar (fruit-bearing part of the tree) and the rootstock. Both cultivar and rootstock are selected for specific site conditions. The cultivar is grafted onto the rootstock. Grafting involves placing a short shoot of a dormant cultivar into the rootstock. The tongue and groove union is then wrapped with tape and left to grow. Caring for an orchard requires planting trees, pruning, fertilizing, controlling weed growth, insects, and other pests, watering, and replanting trees to ensure the orchard is always healthy.

Apple trees must be cross-pollinated. When the trees start to bloom, orchardists place beehives in fields to ensure pollination. It is important not to spray an orchard at this time, as honeybees are very sensitive to insecticides. As small apples start to grow, some are removed to control the size and number of apples produced. The trees will also do this naturally during the June drop.

Apples are harvested from August to October. Some indicators that apples are ready for harvest include brown seed coats, crisp and juicy flesh texture and the skin colour turning from green to yellow or red. Apples that are to be eaten fresh are hand picked into picking bags hung from the pickers shoulder. These bags are carefully emptied into wooden bins that hold 350 to 400kg.

3/ Apple Facts

What happens after the apples leave the farm?

Two-thirds of the apple crop is sold fresh. Apples are either sold directly right after harvest or taken to the packinghouse where they are sorted, graded and packed into 18kg boxes and sometimes into smaller bags. Packinghouses use modern equipment and computers, but still rely heavily on hand labour. Apples are shipped to North American markets by truck, and to other markets by boat. At the retail outlet, apples are either sold already bagged, individually, or in bulk by weight.

What are apples used for?

About two-thirds of the apples grown are eaten as fresh fruit. Processed apples are used for fresh and frozen apple juice, sauce, cider and vinegar. Apples can be dried, made into apple leather or used as pie filling.

Juice is the most popular form of processed apples. KLO's 100% pure apple juice is made by washing the apples and grinding them to pulp. The juice is then squeezed, filtered and pasteurized, meaning it's heated to kill any harmful bacteria.