

Firiki Piliou

Malus domestica Borkh

Firiki Apple



These apples come from trees of the *Malus domestica* Borkh species that grow within the borders of Portaria, Makrinitsa, Zagora, Agria, Artemida, Mouresi, Milies, and Afetes. It is a famous small- to medium-sized apple with an elongated shape.

Due to its small size, Firiki is not easily damaged by the sun. It can be recognized by its yellowish-green color, with some reddish patches which are visible on the apple's sun-exposed side. These fragrant apples originated from the Black Sea area and were brought to the region in the 19th century.

They are gently harvested by hand to ensure they do not get bruised or lose their stalks. These firm-fleshed, intensely fragrant, crisp apples can be stored for a long time with no need for refrigeration, as they will keep their organoleptic properties.

1. Apples May Lower High Cholesterol and Blood Pressure

Savor a juicy apple and you may help keep your ticker healthy in the process. “Studies have linked apple consumption with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, which may be related to the cholesterol-lowering benefits of the soluble fiber found in apples,” says Anzlovar.

Soluble fiber dissolves in water to form a gellike material, according to the Mayo Clinic. According to the University of Illinois, soluble fiber helps prevent cholesterol buildup in the lining of blood vessel walls, therefore lowering the incidence of atherosclerosis (restricted blood flow in the arteries due to plaque buildup) and heart disease. It can also help lower blood pressure levels. A study found that a higher intake of soluble fiber was associated with a decreased cardiovascular disease risk.

Research shows that eating apples (or pears) regularly was associated with a 52 percent lower stroke risk. Furthermore, a study published in February 2020 in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that eating two apples a day helped study participants lower both their LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

2. Eating Foods With Fiber, Including Apples, Can Aid Digestion

You've likely heard that fiber is good for digestion — and what you've heard is true! According to Harvard Health Publishing, both types of fiber (soluble and insoluble, which means it can't be absorbed in water) are important for digestion. And you're in luck — apples have both types, according to the University of Illinois.

Soluble fiber helps slow down digestion, allowing you to feel full, and also slows the digestion of glucose, which helps control your blood sugar. Meanwhile, insoluble fiber can help move food through your system and aid with constipation and regularity, per Harvard.

Just be sure to eat the apple skin, which contains much of the apple's insoluble fiber, according to the University of Illinois.

3. Apples Can Support a Healthy Immune System

Who doesn't want a stronger immune system going into autumn? Apples might be an important tool in your immune-supporting tool kit.

According to research in animals, a diet filled with soluble fiber helped convert immune cells that were pro-inflammatory into anti-inflammatory and immune-supporting ones. Another animal study, published in May 2018 in the journal *Immunity*, found that a diet high in dietary fiber protected mice against the flu. Whether those effects would be seen in humans is unclear until there are more studies.

Still, there's reason to believe that apples may bolster immunity, in part because they contain immune-boosting vitamin C. A review published in November 2017 in the

journal *Nutrients* found that vitamin C plays many roles in helping the immune system function, such as by strengthening the epithelial (a type of tissue) barrier against pathogens and guarding against environmental oxidative stress, such as pollution to radiation, according to research.



4. Apples Are a Diabetes-Friendly Fruit

If you have type 2 diabetes, consider adding apples to your diet. Sure, they're a fruit, but it's a common misconception that people with diabetes can't eat fruit.

In this case, apples' soluble fiber can help slow the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream and may improve blood sugar levels, the Mayo Clinic notes. Plus, per Mayo, a healthy diet that includes insoluble fiber can lower your odds of developing type 2 diabetes in the first place.

Furthermore, a study of people with type 2 diabetes published in August 2016 in *Experimental and Therapeutic*

Medicine found that regularly consuming soluble fiber helped reduce insulin resistance and improved blood sugar and triglyceride levels.

5. The Antioxidants in Apples May Play a Role in Cancer Prevention

While there's no one surefire way to prevent cancer, apples could help play a role. "Apples may reduce the risk of certain cancers, which researchers speculate is related to the antioxidants found in apples," says Anzlovar. Research suggests that apples have a very high level of antioxidants, and in laboratory studies, these antioxidants have been shown to limit cancer cell growth.

A review published in October 2016 in Public Health Nutrition found that eating apples regularly is associated with a reduced risk of certain cancers, including colorectal, oral cavity, esophageal, and breast cancers.

The fiber in apples may provide cancer-preventing perks. A study published in March 2016 in the journal Pediatrics found that women who ate more high-fiber foods during adolescence and young adulthood (especially lots of fruits and vegetables) had a lower breast cancer risk later in life.

And another study, published in January 2019 in the journal The Lancet, found that a diet high in dietary fiber could protect against colorectal cancer and breast cancer, as well as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

6. Eating Apples Can Support Healthy Weight Loss

A diet rich in fruit (and vegetables) can help you maintain a healthy weight — or shed pounds — according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Because apples are filled with dietary fiber, they are high on this list. “Fiber slows digestion and the rise of blood sugar, keeping you satiated and less likely to overeat,” says Levinson.

According to that study in *The Lancet*, people who ate the most fiber had a significantly lower body weight. Research shows that overweight women who ate three apples a day lost 1.22 kg (2.7 pounds) after 12 weeks.

At only 95 calories for a medium-sized apple, this fruit is one you’ll want to keep on hand when sweet cravings strike.

7. Apples May Help Prevent Alzheimer’s Disease

Time to start eating more apples and other flavonoid-rich foods like berries and tea. Research published in August 2020 in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that adults age 50 and older who included only a small amount of flavonoid-rich foods like berries, apples, and tea in their diet were a whopping 2 to 4 times more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia over 20 years compared with people who ate more flavonoid-rich foods.

On top of that, a review published in January 2020 in the journal *Biomolecules* found that quercetin, a flavonoid found in apples, protects neurons from oxidative damage and contains other anti-Alzheimer's disease properties, too. But, the researchers say, more research needs to be done outside of a laboratory setting.

