

## Fall Staples Made Healthy

By Martha Smith

Oh, the flavors of fall: pumpkin, apple, cinnamon; how appetizing! Although it is easy to be tempted by these flavors in fall-themed baked goods, unfortunately, when purchased at the market, these ingredients are typically combined with sugar and additives which negate their health benefits. The good news is that there are healthy ways to bake with these fall staples!

An apple a day truly can “keep the doctor away”! Apples are a great source of vitamins C and B, as well as fiber. Studies have shown that they can reduce risk of stroke and boost the immune system [\(1\)](#). Pumpkin, too, has its benefits. It is very high in potassium, which has been shown to reduce risk of stroke and lower blood pressure [\(2\)](#). Here are two healthy, easy recipes to get the most out of the nutritional benefits from apples and pumpkin!

### Baked Apples

These baked apples are so simple, and loaded with flavor! They are great warm right out of the oven or chilled from the refrigerator. They can be added to food like oatmeal or eaten alone.

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F.
2. Peel apples (*see picture*)
3. Slice apples lengthwise (*see picture*)
4. Add the cinnamon and sweetener to a bowl, and mix together.
5. Coat the apples in the mixture spread them on to a pan with tin foil.
6. Place in the oven for about 30-40 minutes, occasionally checking. The cook time will vary depending on the thickness of your apple slices.

#### Ingredients:

1. 3 apples of your choice - *gala apples were used in these photos*
2. 1 tablespoon cinnamon - *this can be adjusted to your preference*
3. 2 packets of stevia or 2 teaspoons of sugar

## Pumpkin Pie Bars

These bars are a great alternative to pumpkin pie! Their consistency is thick, almost like a fudge, and are great warm or chilled.

Ingredients *(makes 1 9x9 pan)*

1. 1.5 cups of pumpkin puree (do not use pumpkin pie mix- this is already sweetened with sugar and other additives)
2.  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of coconut flour
3. 2 teaspoons cinnamon
4. 1 teaspoon baking soda
5. 1 teaspoon salt
6. 1 egg
7.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk- I used almond milk, but regular milk will also work *(we recommend nonfat or 1% for a healthier option)*
8.  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of maple syrup *(we used one with low sugar, the brand was wholesome sweeteners)*
9.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chocolate chips *(can be substituted with carob chips or cacao nibs if you don't like dairy or chocolate)*
10. Optional: 2 tablespoons of pumpkin creamer- this just adds some additional flavor

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
2. To a bowl, add the pumpkin puree, milk, and egg, and stir. Optional: stir in the pumpkin creamer
3. Add the salt, baking powder, cinnamon and coconut flour and stir.
4. Lastly, stir in the maple syrup and chocolate chips.
5. Spread on to a 9 x 9 greased pan and put in the oven for about 30 minutes, occasionally checking.

## Sources

1. Knekt, P.; Isotupa, S.; Rissanen, H.; Heliovaara, M.; Jarvinen, R.; Hakkinen, S.; Aromaa, A.; Reunanen, A. Quercetin intake and the incidence of cerebrovascular disease. Eur. J. Clin. Nutr. 2000, 54, 415–417.
2. Vinceti, M.; Filippini, T.; Crippa, A.; de Sesmaisons, A.; Wise, L.A.; Orsini, N. Meta-Analysis of Potassium Intake and the Risk of Stroke. J. Am. Heart Assoc. 2016.