

Baked apple

The ultimate can't-go-wrong pudding

Prep time – just 5 mins

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5.
- 2 Use a Bramley, Cox or Braeburn. Core apple with knife or corer, removing all the sharp bits and gouging out a generous cavity in the middle.
- 3 Use a knife to score the skin around its equator (to prevent explosions).
- 4 Wedge a sugar cube (brown or white) in the base of the cavity, fill with sultanas, then jam in another sugar cube.
- 5 Place in a small baking dish with a tablespoon of water in the base, cover with foil and bake for 20 mins.

Adapt it

If you are using a cooking apple, drizzle with runny honey before baking.
For a real treat, dot with butter and sprinkle with cinnamon.
Try baked pears – Conference are ideal. Cut in half, core generously to provide a decent cavity and lay flat before filling.

Try these fillings

- Chopped dried apricots and chopped or flaked almonds
- Chopped dates and walnuts
- Chopped sultanas and hazelnuts



Extra online
 For more crumble tips, visit saga.co.uk/oct-mag

The basic crumble mix

Serves 2

70g (3oz) plain flour
 35g (1½oz) salted butter, diced
 20g (1oz) caster sugar
 Rub the butter into the flour using your fingertips, working lightly until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Salted or slightly salted butter is best for a crumble topping; if you have only unsalted butter, add a pinch of salt. Then stir in the caster sugar and add the flavour boosters of your choice, see right.

Adapt it

Instead of plain white flour, use wholemeal or spelt (or a mix).
Instead of caster sugar, use soft light brown sugar.
For a lighter, healthier mix, substitute oats (rolled or jumbo) or granola or ground almonds (home-ground with skins on, ideally) for half the flour.
Add a tablespoon of chopped almonds, hazelnuts or pecans.

Flavour boosters

Powdered cinnamon, nutmeg or ginger, lemon zest or crushed cardamom seeds



Posh crumble

Melt 1 tbsp muscovado sugar in 1 tbsp butter and sauté apple slices until golden before topping with crumble

How to cook

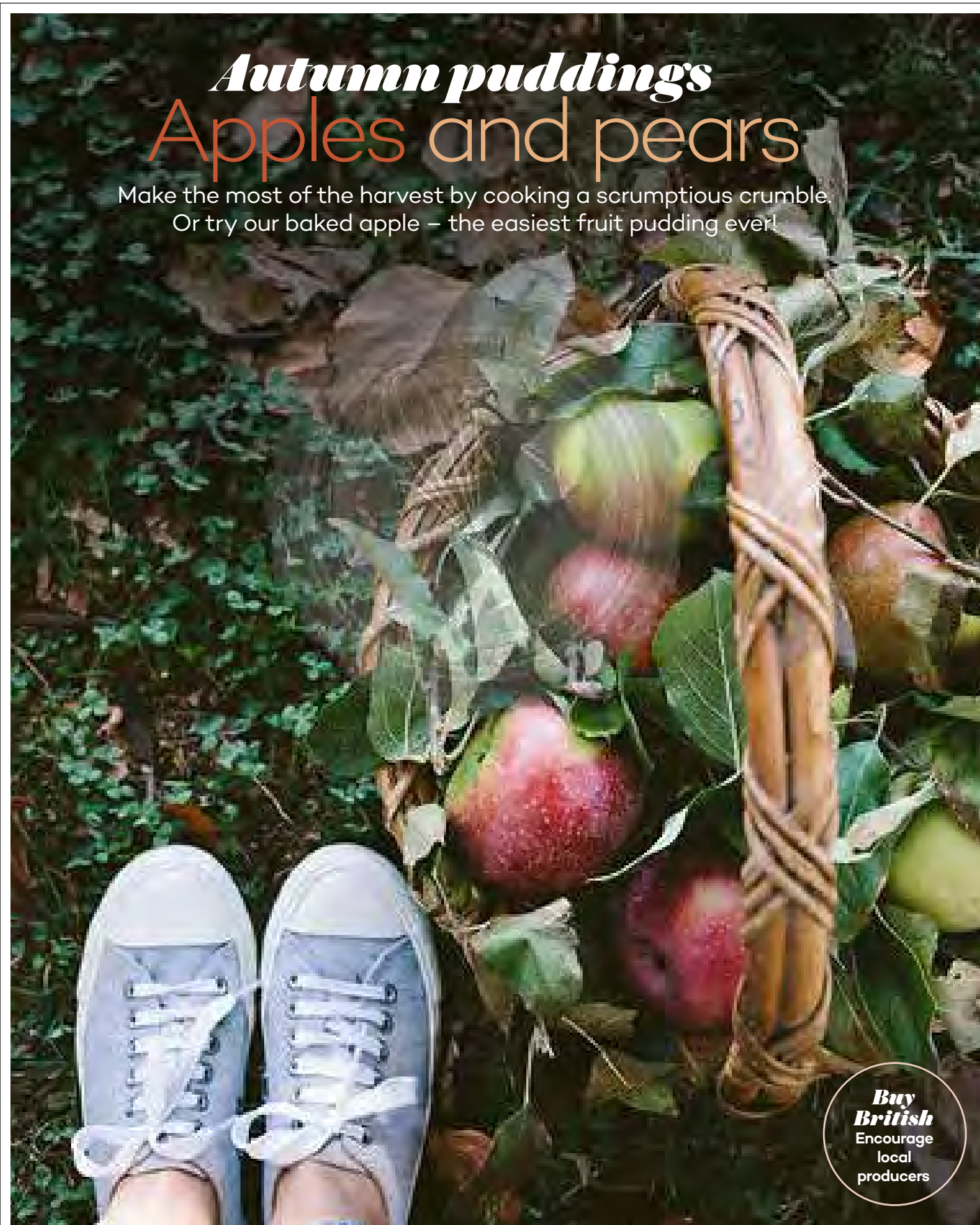
- 1 Preheat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5.
- 2 Mix crumble, see left.
- 3 Butter an ovenproof pie dish or ramekins.
- 4 Prepare the fruit, about 450g (1lb) to serve 2. Stone, peel and core as necessary. Sweeten and flavour, tasting as you go. Place fruit in dish.
- 5 Top with crumble and bake for 25-30 mins until golden (ramekins may take less time).
- 6 Serve with cream, ice cream or custard.

Try these fillings

- Apple/pear and blackberry
- Apple/pear and Victoria plum
- Apple/pear and blueberry
- Pear and stem ginger

Of course, you can use all manner of other fruits, fresh or canned. Apricots, rhubarb, nectarines, gooseberries and red berries all work well.

Simply taste to ensure a nice balance between the sharpness of the fruit and the required sweetness of the crumble.



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