

How to Make Candy Apples with Honey (No Corn Syrup!)

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

*Candy apples have been a favorite of mine since childhood, but they make a nice novelty dessert for adult parties, too. In fact, my readers may recall the gourmet “baby billionaire” candy apples that were served to my amateur sleuth, Clare Cosi, at an exclusive club in my Coffeehouse Mystery [Billionaire Blend](#). For this recipe, I experimented with favorite ingredients, which is why there is no corn syrup. Instead, I used honey for better flavor. I’m also sharing a fun, spiked version that swaps cinnamon sticks for cinnamon schnapps. Whether you prefer your apples with or without spirits, may these treats bring you a taste of childhood joy! ~ **Cleo Coyle***

Makes about 8 small or 6 medium to large apples



You will need:

- * Wax paper or parchment paper
- * Non-stick cooking spray
- * Non-stick medium size saucepan
- * Wooden spoon or silicone spatula (one for high-heat cooking)
- * Wooden skewers or Popsicle/Craft Sticks or Chopsticks
- * (Optional) A candy thermometer; it's optional because I often make these without a thermometer; so if you don't have one, just follow my tips for knowing when the candy is done cooking.

Ingredients:

- 8 small or 6 medium (to large) unwaxed apples *(If your apples have wax on them, the candy will not stick! But you can de-wax apples easily. See how in the directions.)*
- 2/3 cup water
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 cinnamon sticks *(or a few more, but do not use ground, it will cloud the mixture)*
- 2-1/2 cups white, granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon + 4 or 5 extra drops red food coloring

Cleo's tips on choosing apples: In my photos you see small, organic Fuji apples. For more suggestions on what types of apples are best for candy apples, go to page 4.

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Step 1 - Prep the apples: Cover a baking sheet with wax or parchment paper and generously coat the paper with nonstick spray or you can brush it with oil. This is a must to prevent the apples from sticking to the paper. Remove stems from the apples and insert skewers, Popsicle sticks, or chopsticks as shown.

If your apples are natural or organic, you're set. But if they have WAX on them from the store, you **MUST REMOVE THE WAX** or the candy coating will not stick. To remove wax, dip apples very briefly in boiling water, dry well, and chill them in the refrigerator (to prevent mushiness) before continuing with this recipe.

Step 2 - Make the candy coating: Combine sugar, water, honey, cinnamon sticks, and food coloring in a nonstick saucepan. *(The red food coloring will darken as the candy cooks, so don't go too heavy on it. I suggest 1/4 teaspoon and 4 or 5 extra drops, not much more than that.)*

Stir the mixture over medium-high heat only until the sugar is completely melted. Once it's melted, you're safe to boil it. **DO NOT STIR AGAIN AT THIS POINT.** Turn the heat up and bring the mixture to a rolling boil. After about 10 minutes of a continual, rolling boil, the candy should be ready or very close.

Testing candy for doneness (no candy thermometer?):

To check without a thermometer, dip a spoon into the mixture and drop some of the liquid candy into a glass of ice cold water. Does it harden up quickly into a crunchy, brittle substance? If it does, you're ready to make candy apples. If not, keep cooking but check frequently to prevent burning.

Testing candy for doneness (with a candy thermometer):

If you're using a candy thermometer, look for a temperature from 280 to 300 degrees F. Don't go much beyond that or you'll risk burning the candy.

Step 3 - Coat the apples: BE CAREFUL with this step because the candy-coating is very hot and will burn if it splashes onto you. Turn the heat off under the pan and allow the boiling to stop. Tip the pan slightly and dip a skewered apple in the coating. Twirl the apple for an even coat. Lift and allow excess to drip back into the pan. Place newly dipped candy apple on greased wax or parchment paper.

COATING TIP: Do not double-dip or apply a super-thick coating. Take it from me, if the candy is too thick, your teeth will not be able to penetrate it. Simply dip once for a thin candy-coating. As it cools, it will harden prettily (similar to the hardness of peanut brittle).



Candy-Making Temperatures Grid: For a handy grid of temperatures attached to each stage of candy making, turn to page 4.



As the candy in the pot cools, it will thicken and become more difficult to work with, so be sure to dip all of your apples relatively quickly after the candy is finished cooking. If the liquid candy begins to thicken up, warm the mixture again until it loosens.

CLEAN-UP TIP: Do not pour leftover liquid candy into your sink. Instead, pour it into a disposable container (like an empty milk carton or soup can) and toss it into the garbage. As for cleaning any encrusted candy on your pan or utensils, simply fill your saucepan with water, place the utensils inside, and boil the water on the stove to melt the crusted candy off the utensils and the sides and bottom of your pot.



Cleo Coyle's Cinnamon Schnapps* Spiked Candy Apples

To make an even more grown-up version, you can spike the candy apples with cinnamon schnapps. Here's how I do it. Follow the recipe exactly as you would on the previous pages with these changes:

(1) Make the candy coating without cinnamon sticks.

(2) After the candy is finished cooking and you are ready to coat the apples, turn off the heat and WAIT for the boiling to stop. Measure out 2 tablespoons of cinnamon schnapps** and CAREFULLY pour the schnapps into the liquid candy. The hot candy will sizzle and JUMP a bit as you add the alcohol so watch for that and do not get burned! The reason you are adding it at this late stage is to preserve the alcohol and flavor of the liqueur. Lightly stir the mixture with a wooden skewer and immediately begin dipping your apples. If the liquid candy cools and begins to thicken on you, turn on the heat and warm it until it loosens again. Follow the rest of the recipe as written.

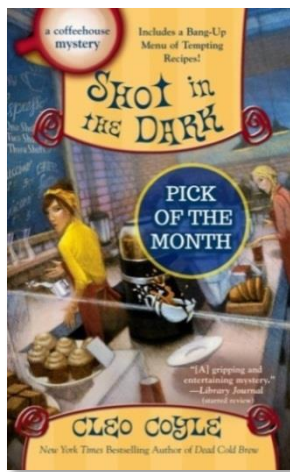
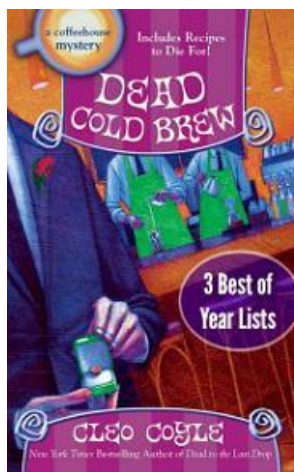


***Cinnamon schnapps** is a fun liqueur to play with, especially in the fall and winter. Add a generous splash of it to a glass of cold apple cider, for instance, and you've got a drinkable "Apple Pie"--delicious! For more drink ideas using cinnamon schnapps, [click here](#) or [here](#). (We use Goldschlager.)

Eat with joy! ~ Cleo

The [Coffeeshouse Mysteries](#) are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes.

To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeeshouseMystery.com And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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CLEO'S TIPS FOR CHOOSING APPLES: The key to making great candy apples is using fresh apples from a variety that has good firmness to it. Nobody likes a mushy candy apply! For that reason, you'll want avoid Rome Beauty and Red Delicious, which are not firm varieties. How tart should the apple be? While some folks revel in the contrast of a sweet candy coating with a tart apple interior, others prefer a sweeter variety of apple. Either way is fine, as long as they are fresh and firm. Some suggestions:

Braeburn: sweetly tart and firm with skin that's golden-green to red

Fuji: sweet and firm, yellow-green skin
(I used Fuji apples in my photos)

Golden Delicious: sweet and firm with a golden skin

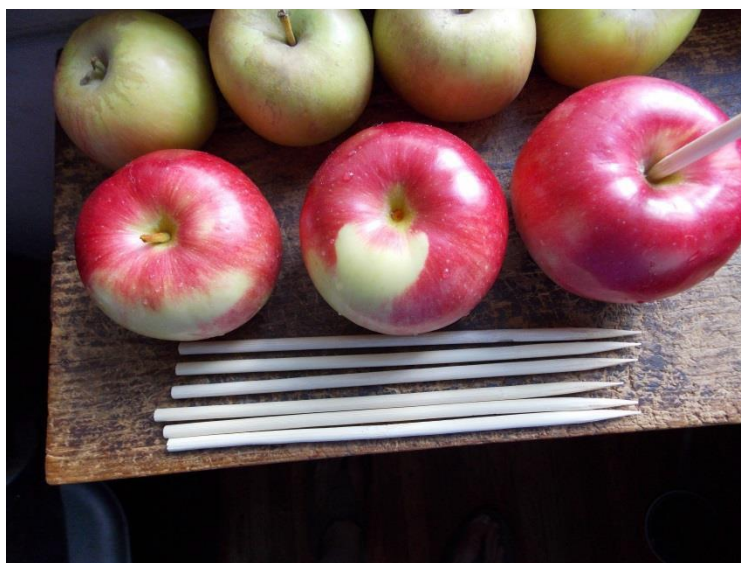
Grenny Smith: tart and very firm with a green skin

Jonathan: sweetly tart with a firm yellow-red skin

Jonagold: tangy sweet with a firm skin

Lady: sweetly tart and firm with a skin of red to yellow

McIntosh: sweetly tart and firm with a reddish-green skin



Finally, avoid buying apples displayed with a shiny coating of wax on them. This will make it difficult for the candy to stick. Look for apples that are organic or have come right from the farmer, without wax coating. If all you can find are wax-coated apples, dip them very briefly in boiling water to melt the wax, dry them well, and chill them in the refrigerator (to prevent mushiness) before continuing with this recipe.

Candy Temperatures Grid

Candy Stage	Temperature	Description
Thread Stage	begins at 230° F.	Makes a long thread when dropped in cold water.
Soft Ball	234° F.	Forms a soft ball that doesn't hold its shape. Cream candies, fudge, fondants are done at the this stage.
Firm Ball	246° F.	This ball will flatten when pressed. Divinity and Caramels.
Hard Ball	250° F.	This ball will hold its shape when pressed. Taffy.
Soft Crack	270° F.	The candy separates into bendable threads. Toffee and Butterscotch.
Hard Crack	300° F.	Becomes brittle. Peanut Brittle. Candy Apples.
Caramelize	310° F.	Sugar turns dark.



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