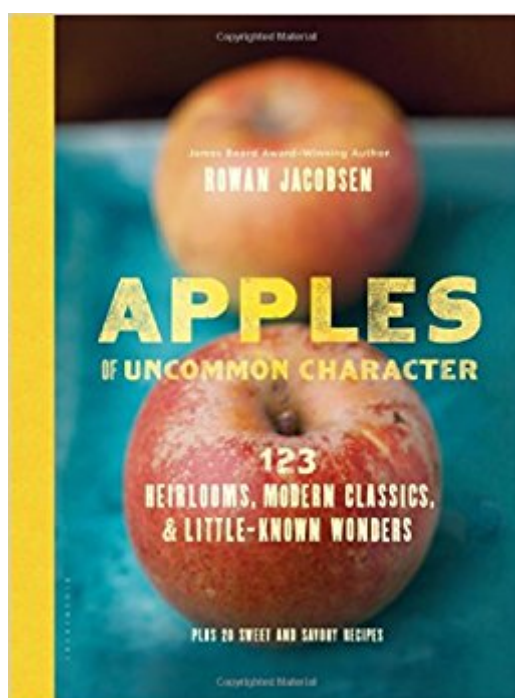


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# Apples Of Uncommon Character: Heirlooms, Modern Classics, And Little-Known Wonders



## Synopsis

In his classic *A Geography of Oysters*, Rowan Jacobsen forever changed the way America talks about its best bivalve. Now he does the same for our favorite fruit, showing us that there is indeed life beyond Red Delicious-and even Honeycrisp. While supermarkets limit their offerings to a few waxy options, apple trees with lives spanning human generations are producing characterful varieties-and now they are in the midst of a rediscovery. From heirlooms to new designer breeds, a delicious diversity of apples is out there for the eating. Apples have strong personalities, ranging from crabby to wholesome. The Black Oxford apple is actually purple, and looks like a plum. The Knobbed Russet looks like the love child of a toad and a potato. (But don't be fooled by its looks.) The D'Arcy Spice leaves a hint of allspice on the tongue. Cut Hidden Rose open and its inner secret is revealed. With more than 150 art-quality color photographs, *Apples of Uncommon Character* shows us the fruit in all its glory. Jacobsen collected specimens both common and rare from all over North America, selecting 120 to feature, including the best varieties for eating, baking, and hard-cider making. Each is accompanied by a photograph, history, lore, and a list of characteristics. The book also includes 20 recipes, savory and sweet, resources for buying and growing, and a guide to the best apple festivals. It's a must-have for every foodie.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A true delight... The descriptions are almost lyrical and a pleasure to read. Each apple comes with its own full-page photo, beautifully shot in natural light...I love the surprising readability of this book. It should be tucked into the backpacks of all apple festival goers. I really can't recommend this book

enough." --Powells.com "Like Facebook for fruit." --NPR "Opening the pages of Apples of Uncommon Character is like walking into a portrait gallery flooded with russet, bronzed masterpieces bathed in golden light -- forget about Magritte's Granny Smith-bedecked Son of Man, here are the Winesap, the Pound Sweet, the Maiden's Blush and Black Twig, rendered in a vivid prose rarely seen outside of the wine list... For anyone who's willing to get swept up in the grand romance of food, this handsome volume will make for seductive reading." --Morning Edition "Imagine my delight when the book Apples of Uncommon Character landed in my mailbox, a glorious compendium of 123 heirlooms, modern classics, and little-known wonders." Author and self-described apple geek Rowan Jacobsen does for apples what he did earlier for oysters: he captures in vivid language what makes the flavor of each type unique (with extraordinary photographs by Clare Barboza you want to bite into). --Melissa Block, All Things Considered "Stunning" --Seattle Times "The most gripping aspect of James Beard Award winner Rowan Jacobsen's Apples of Uncommon Character is the author's loving, quirky, and so-vivid-it's-like-you're-eating-one-right-now descriptions of 123 different apples." --Bon Appetit "Irresistible" --Wall Street Journal "Supremely well executed and written. If you are one of those foodies who actually likes to read, this one's for you." --Christopher Kimball, host of America's Test Kitchen "Best Cookbooks of 2014" --Washington Post, Boston Globe, Wall Street Journal, NPR [Jacobsen] covers 123 varieties (a small sample of the thousands grown worldwide) with a photo of each. He's an excellent guide, giving taste, texture, cooking and storage profiles. • Florence Fabricant, The New York Times "Apples of Uncommon Character pays tribute to some of North America's finest and most obscure specimens, reviving the lost art of apple appreciation in the process." • Salon

Rowan Jacobsen is the author of A Geography of Oysters, Fruitless Fall, The Living Shore, American Terroir, Shadows on the Gulf, and Apples of Uncommon Character. He has written for the New York Times, Harper's, Outside, Mother Jones, Orion, The Boston Globe, and others, and his work has been anthologized in The Best American Science and Nature Writing and Best Food Writing collections. He has won a couple of James Beard Awards, an IACP award, and some others. His 2010 book, American Terroir, was named one of the Top Ten Books of the Year by Library Journal. His Outside Magazine piece "Heart of Dark

Chocolate" received the Lowell Thomas Award from the Society of American Travel Writers for best adventure story of the year, and his Harper's piece "The Homeless Herd" was named best magazine piece of the year by the Overseas Press Club. He was a 2012 Alicia Patterson Foundation fellow, writing about endangered diversity on the borderlands between India, Myanmar, and China. He lives in Vermont.

Having read numerous apple books the particularly good thing about this one is the author really tries to tease out descriptions of flavor and texture from the apples. He catches many subtle dimensions of flavor that were "on the tip of my tongue" but I couldn't quite put into words. Apples are many worlds of flavor and texture, the spectrum is quite stunning and this book begins to make a step in getting a deeper understanding. Another distinguishing feature is the writer can actually write and "old saw" apple stories I have read dozens of times before become fresh again. It would be a great book for any foodie-type that likes apples. The book is not perfect however. While it has some very good descriptions about what part of the country the various apples do well in, it is not a book for the grower in that disease propensity etc is not discussed. While it tries to be an American Apple Book, it is more focused on New England than other parts of the country. Its probably for the better though as the descriptions show the varying degrees of familiarity the author has with the different apples - the ones he knows best just sing from the page while some I get the feeling are only vague acquaintances. I also really don't know why mediocre apples are intentionally covered, there are fantastic apples that were left out (including two of my favorites, Hoople's Antique Gold and Freyburg) so we could learn how bad 20-Ounce Pippin is.

This book should be required reading for everyone with an interest in putting historically healthy, storeable food in their bodies. The pictures, descriptions, and history are so enjoyable. Growing up in New England I frequented orchards in the Fall with my mom and dined on Jonathan's, Baldwin's, and Blue Pearmain's. There were literally hundreds of varieties at my fingertips. As an adult, I've noticed a definite change in the grocery store apples. I'm limited to just a handful of varieties and I've developed an allergic reaction to either the pesticides or the protective wax put on the apples. I can't eat them, but thank the heavens for the old orchards and hobbyists that are preserving the old varieties and ways of growing tasty apples. This book inspired me to plant some old varieties in my own yard. Looking forward to harvesting and eating Blue Pearmain's, Gray Pearmain's, Cox's Orange Pippin, D'Arcy Spice, Baldwin, and Asmead's Kernel. As the author states, we're in a new golden age of apples with a renewed interest in old heirloom apples and the explosion of the hard

cider industry. Buy this book, you won't regret it!

I would give this book ten stars if I could it is that good! I heard the author on the radio and had to get the book. This book is so well written you will read it more than once. I didn't think a book about apples would make me laugh! The one downside is that I now have ordered about 100 apples to plant in the spring! This book made me want to have the apples described in the book. I live in growing zone 3 so there isn't a chance to grow most of them. I am making an attempt because of this book. If you buy this book beware of the temptation to grow apples. I gave into it and will have about a hundred holes to dig this coming spring!

This is vintage Rowan Jacobsen, but it's important to know that this is literally a listing of apples old and new, by category, with some very nice recipes thrown in. I found it imminently adable and fascinating stuff, but I'm a food professional - Your results may vary. That said, I've used this book in the farmer's market several times since my first read - We live in western Washington State, where there are a bunch of heirloom varieties showing up - it came in very handy for that. It's a revenge addition to my working library I'm very happy to own. If that sounds good to you, I highly recommend it. If you've not read Jacobsen's *American Terrior*, do - It's stunningly good, as is, frankly, all his work.

This book has very good photographs and descriptions of many apple cultivars. I didn't care for the author's comments about the Granny Smith apple. He calls it the "Blunder from Down Under". Other than that, this is an excellent book for apple enthusiasts. It includes apples you find in the grocery store (Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Gala, Fuji, etc.), as well as a great number of apples you find in orchards across the country. It has a great description of Black Twig, a particular apple that has attracted my interest. This book even includes a description of Redfield, a little known red-fleshed apple. If you liked Tom Burford's *"Apples of North America: Exceptional Varieties for Gardeners, Growers, and Cooks"*, I suggest getting this one, too. I have given my father several apple books through the years, and he seems to like this one a lot.

In Wisconsin, a surprising number of heritage apples show up. This book led me to discover a local heirloom apple grower. I had grown tired of the apples in our supermarkets. What a surprise to learn that there are still apples out there that taste like apples did when I was in knee pants and they are available. The book is a good guide to finding varieties, but also a help in identifying unknown

apples.

The most delightful and thorough walk through apple history, lore and pragmatics for home (and other) growers. I have purchased 3 - 2 for gifts and one for my own complete perusal. Highly recommended. Also contains variety-specific recommendations for different uses (baking, sauce, juice/cider, fresh eating) - which change over storage life. Very comprehensive volume, this. HIGHLY recommended for anyone who grows, or eats, apples. You will not look at the humble fruit in the same way again.

Wow, interesting reading, we all can appreciate Johnny Appleseed stories. Can't wait to visit some places I read about here. Thanks to the author and all those dedicated people, farmers that have planted apple trees for our future!

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