

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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This is time of year when fresh apple cider starts to show up, on the grocery shelves and in roadside fruit stands. Cider, often served at Halloween parties or other Fall gatherings, is the taste of Autumn in a glass. It's a real traditional American drink, popular since Colonial times.

Cider is unfiltered apple juice so it usually looks cloudier than apple juice. Freshly pressed cider is called sweet cider. During the times of the Colonies, when they couldn't preserve it, cider fermented rapidly. The yeast doing the fermentation changes apple sugars into alcohol. The result was hard cider. If it was distilled to concentrate the alcohol it became apple brandy, or as some people called it 'apple jack'. Hard cider would keep much longer than sweet cider, so people could enjoy it for months.

Apple cider usually ferments fairly easily. It has lots of sugar and not as much acid as some juices. Another reason is that often the apples that were used for cider were 'drops', apples that had fallen off the tree and were picked up from the ground. While they lay on the ground they could pick up lots of yeasts and bacteria too, not necessarily the good kinds.

Food poisoning is never fun. Many people think that if they get diarrhea or vomiting it came from the last thing they ate, or what they ate the day before. Really, some kinds of food poisoning can make a person sick in less than half an hour, and others might take 6 weeks before they have an effect! And not all food poisoning gives

us diarrhea. Some makes us feel like we have the flu. There's one kind that can cause a mother to have a miscarriage or make the baby be born with disabilities.

Today, with the refrigeration and pasteurization process we have available, we can have safe sweet cider for months. Pasteurization is a process that heats the juice just hot enough to kill any bacteria that might make us sick. That is usually hot enough to kill yeast and many of the bacteria that would spoil the juice too. Since 1999 FDA has required that fruit juices, apple, orange or any other sold in supermarkets be labeled if they are not pasteurized. The bottle, jug or other container must have a label that says "Warning: This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems."

However, this rule does not include roadside fruit stands, farmers markets or some juice bars if the juice is freshly squeezed and sold by the glass. Since there are so many people in those high-risk categories of children, elderly and people with weak immune systems, it is important to be careful about what you buy and where you buy it. Another group of people who are at higher risk of illness from unpasteurized juice are pregnant women. If you have persons in any of these groups in your household, think twice and ask questions before you buy.

Read the labels on all containers of juice, especially apple cider this time of year. If you can't find something on the label that says it has been pasteurized, either don't buy that brand, or ask the seller if or how they have processed their juice. If they don't know or can't tell you, the safe thing to do is not buy that juice. You could also buy it, take it home, and boil it for a minute to kill any bacteria. But it won't taste as good then.

Here's an apple cake you bake in a tube or Bundt pan. If you need a dessert or decoration for a Halloween party, bake it in the Bundt pan. Color a can of cake frosting orange and frost the cake thinly. Then roll some black gum drops until they're flat and cut out eyes, nose and mouth or teeth. Stick them on the cake like a Jack-o-Lantern!

### Fresh Apple Cake

3 cups all- purpose flour	1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoons salt	1 teaspoon cinnamon or apple pie spice
2 eggs	2 cups sugar (or 1 sugar + 1 C Splenda)
¾ cup oil	2 teaspoons vanilla
5 cups chopped fresh apples (unpeeled)	1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 10 inch Bundt or tube pan. Mix flour, baking soda, salt and spice in small bowl. Beat eggs and sugar together until creamy. Beat in oil and vanilla. Add dry ingredients and mix until smooth. Stir in apples and nut. Pour into pan and bake 1 hour or until brown and tests done in center. Serves 12 - 14.

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