

Cider-Braised Chicken with Apples & Spinach (with side suggestions)

Serves 2



Ingredients

- Boneless, skinless chicken thighs – 300 g (2–3 pieces)
- Canola oil – 1 Tbsp (15 ml)
- Red onion – 80 g (½ small), thinly sliced
- Garlic – 2 cloves, minced
- Apple juice – 120 ml (½ cup)
- Apple cider vinegar – 1 Tbsp (15 ml), plus more to taste
- Dijon mustard – 1 Tbsp (15 g)
- Homemade chicken broth – 120 ml (½ cup)
- Spinach – 100 g (about 3 cups, lightly packed)
- Crisp red apple (Fuji works well) – 1 medium (150 g), thinly sliced
- Kevala coconut aminos – 2 tsp (instead of added salt)
- Black pepper – to taste

Instructions

1. Pat chicken dry, season lightly with pepper. Heat oil in a Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium. Sear chicken 3–4 min per side until golden. Transfer to a plate.
2. In the same pot, sauté onion 3–4 min until translucent. Add garlic and stir 30 sec.
3. Add apple juice, vinegar, Dijon, coconut aminos, and pepper. Stir and scrape up browned bits. Reduce slightly (2–3 min).
4. Return chicken to pot. Add broth around the chicken (don't cover the tops). Cover loosely and simmer on low 15–20 min, until chicken is tender and cooked through.
5. Add spinach and apple slices. Simmer uncovered 3–4 min until spinach wilts and apples just soften. Adjust seasoning with more vinegar for brightness if desired.
6. Serve in shallow bowls with broth. Optional: garnish with extra parsley or basil.

Nutrition (per serving, with broth & apples)

- **Calories:** ~410 kcal
- **Protein:** 32 g
- **Fat:** 18 g
 - Sat. Fat = 3.5 g
- **Carbs:** 29 g
 - Sugars = 14 g (from apple + juice)
- **Fiber:** 4 g
- **Sodium:** ~420 mg (mainly from Dijon + coconut aminos)
- **Omega-3:** ~0.2 g

Notes & Flavor Tips

- Using **boneless thighs** means shorter cooking — it stays juicy without the bone.
- Spinach cooks quickly, so it won't get bitter (like kale sometimes can).
- Adding the apple at the end keeps it slightly crisp, contrasting with the savory broth.
- If you want a deeper herbal note (since sage isn't available), you could use **rosemary** or **thyme** (½ tsp dried or a small sprig fresh).



1. Roasted Carrots with Maple & Thyme

- Carrots – 300 g, cut into batons
- Olive oil – 1 tsp
- Maple syrup – 1 tsp
- Fresh thyme – a few sprigs (or substitute rosemary)
- Black pepper – to taste

Method

1. Toss carrots with oil, maple, thyme, and pepper.
2. Roast at 200°C for 20–25 min until caramelized and tender.
 ✨ *Natural sweetness echoes the apples in the chicken but adds earthiness.*



2. Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Glaze

- Brussels sprouts – 300 g, halved
- Olive oil – 1 Tbsp
- Black pepper – to taste
- Balsamic vinegar – 1 Tbsp (reduced slightly on the stove, optional)

Method

1. Toss sprouts with oil and pepper. Roast at 200°C for 18–20 min until crisp outside and tender inside.
2. Drizzle with balsamic reduction before serving.
 ✨ *Deep, slightly bitter-sweet flavor balances the fruity apple broth.*



Option 3: Roasted Kabocha with Sesame & Soy (Low-Sodium Style)

- Kabocha squash – 300 g, cut into wedges (skin on is fine)
- Olive oil – 1 tsp
- Kevala coconut aminos – 2 tsp
- Sesame oil – ½ tsp
- Toasted sesame seeds – 1 tsp

Method

1. Toss kabocha wedges with olive oil and coconut aminos.
2. Roast at 200°C for 20–25 min until soft inside and lightly browned.
3. Drizzle with sesame oil and sprinkle sesame seeds before serving.
 ✨ *Sweet, nutty, very autumnal — plays beautifully with the apple notes in the chicken.*



Option 4: Sweet Potato Nimono (煮物)

- Japanese sweet potato (さつまいも) – 250 g, sliced into thick rounds
- Water – 200 ml
- Kevala coconut aminos – 1 Tbsp
- Mirin – 1 tsp (or maple syrup if you want lighter sweetness)
- Rice vinegar – 1 tsp (to balance)

Method

1. In a saucepan, combine water, coconut aminos, mirin, and vinegar. Bring to a simmer.
2. Add sweet potato slices, cover loosely, and simmer 15–20 min until tender and glazed.
 ✨ *Traditional fall comfort food — gentle sweetness without salt heaviness.*