

INGREDIENTS:

- 12 large apples, Granny Smith or other tart variety
- 12 apple sticks or large wooden skewers
- assorted toppings such as chopped nuts, sprinkles, chocolate, chopped candy, cookie crumbs, jimmies, etc.
- candy bags and ribbon

Homemade Caramel

- 1 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 pound dark brown sugar
- 1 cup salted butter
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash and dry apples.
2. Carefully poke stick straight into tops of apples. Chill.

Caramel:

1. In a large saucepan add milk, sugar, butter, and corn syrup. Cook over MEDIUM to MEDIUM-HIGH heat stirring constantly to avoid burning on the bottom of the pan.
2. Mixture will begin to boil and increase in volume, Avoid scraping sides of the pan as this can make the mixture "grain". Using a candy thermometer, cook mixture to 235°F or soft ball stage.
3. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.
4. Let caramel cool slightly - about 5 minutes – before dipping apples.

Caramel Apples:

1. Dip each apple into the hot caramel to coat. "Spin off" the excess. If rolling in nuts or candy, do that before the caramel sets and hardens.
2. If coating with chocolate, place caramel-coated apple onto a parchment lined cookie sheet and place in the fridge to cool. Once cool, drizzle or dip in chocolate and add other toppings as desired.
3. Work quickly as the caramel in the pot will begin to harden as it cools. Warm over medium heat if needed until the mixture is fluid again.
4. Once apples are finished and cooled completely, wrap as desired. Store refrigerated. Best if eaten with 3 days. Let sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes before slicing.

NOTES:

Wash apples before using and dry thoroughly.

If apples have been waxed, dip in very hot water for 15 seconds, then wipe clean.

When washing the apples, do not use any form of abrasive material as this can damage the skin of the apple.

Damage to the skin may cause air bubbles to form under the caramel.

Bubbles also occur as air escapes the apple from being dipped in the warm caramel.

To serve, use an apple wedger to core and cut into 8 slices. Or using a knife, cut a tic-tac-toe pattern around the core – giving 8 pieces around it.

QUICK CARAMEL/RAINY DAY CARAMEL:

- 1 package caramel baking bits or caramel chewy candy
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream or flavored coffee creamer

Melt  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the caramel bits over medium heat with the cream, stir frequently. Once melted, stir in remaining caramel bits.

Dip and decorate apples as desired.

