Prep Time	30 Minutes	Washing, peeling, coring, and slicing apples
Active Cooking Time	20 Minutes	Pureeing and final simmer adjustment
Slow Cook Time (Low)	10 to 12 Hours	Essential for complete caramelization
Slow Cook Time (Uncovered)	1 to 2 Hours	Essential for moisture reduction
Total Time	~13 Hours	Mostly hands-off slow cooking
Skill Level	Beginner	Requires patience rather than advanced technique
Cooking Heat/Intensity	LOW Constant	High heat will scorch natural sugars
Yield	Approx. 4 Pints (64 oz)	Scales easily

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Step-by-Step Cooking Instructions

1.Prepare the Apples:Prep Time: 30 mins | Intensity: Low.

Peel, core, and chop 5 pounds of mixed apples into uniform 1-inch chunks. Place them directly into a 6-quart slow cooker. Uniform sizing ensures even softening throughout the cooking process.

2.Combine Sugars and Warm Spices:Prep Time: 5 mins | Intensity: Low.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, granulated sugar, ground cinnamon,

ground nutmeg, ground cloves, and salt. Pour the spice mixture over the apples and toss thoroughly to coat every piece evenly.

3.Slow Cook to Breakdown:Cook Time: 10 hours | Heat: LOW.

Cover the slow cooker with its lid and set to LOW. Cook for 10 hours without opening the lid. The apples will release their juices, soften completely, and turn a deep golden-brown color as their natural sugars slowly caramelize.

4.Puree for Silkiness:Prep Time: 10 mins | Intensity: Medium.

Uncover the slow cooker. Use an immersion blender directly in the pot to puree the softened fruit until completely smooth. Alternatively, transfer the mixture in batches to a standard blender, processing carefully while allowing steam to escape.

5.Thicken and Reduce:Cook Time: 1–2 hours | Heat: LOW (Uncovered).

Stir in the fresh lemon juice and vanilla extract. Set the slow cooker lid slightly askew (or place a wooden spoon across the top under the lid) to let steam escape. Cook on LOW for an additional 1 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally, until the mixture darkens to a deep mahogany and holds its shape on a spoon.

6.Cool, Fill, and Store:Prep Time: 15 mins | Intensity: Low.

Ladle the hot apple butter into clean glass jars, leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Allow the jars to cool completely at room temperature before sealing with airtight lids. Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month or freeze for up to 1 year.

How to Test for Readiness (The Plate Test)

To check if your apple butter has reduced sufficiently:

1. Scoop a small spoon of hot apple butter onto a chilled plate.
2. Let it rest for 1 minute.
3. Tilt the plate gently. If no rim of clear liquid/water separates around the edges of the mound, and the butter holds its shape without running, it is fully reduced and ready.

Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 1 Tablespoon (approx. 20g)

Servings Per Recipe: ~64 tablespoons

Nutrient	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories	35 kcal	—
Total Fat	0.1 g	0%
Saturated Fat	0.0 g	0%
Sodium	10 mg	0%
Total Carbohydrates	9.2 g	3%
Dietary Fiber	0.6 g	2%
Total Sugars	8.1 g	—
(Includes Added Sugars)	*(3.8 g)*	*8%*
Protein	0.1 g	0%
Calcium	4 mg	0%
Iron	0.1 mg	1%

Nutrient	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Potassium	22 mg	1%