Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 25–30 minutes | Total Time: 40 minutes
Yield: 2 servings | Intensity Level: Easy

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## Introduction

Baked Apple Cinnamon Cottage Cheese is a warm, comforting dessert-meets-breakfast that

proves cottage cheese deserves far more credit than it gets. Sweet-tart apples are sautéed in butter with fragrant cinnamon and a touch of maple syrup, then spooned over creamy, protein-packed cottage cheese and baked until gently warmed and golden at the edges. The result is a dish that's simultaneously cozy and nourishing — like apple pie filling with a fraction of the sugar and a serious protein boost. It's ideal for a slow weekend breakfast, a post-workout refuel, or a light dessert that won't leave you feeling heavy. Cottage cheese brings roughly 25 grams of protein per cup, while the apple adds fiber and natural sweetness, and cinnamon delivers that unmistakable warm-spice aroma that makes the whole kitchen smell like autumn. With just 10 minutes of hands-on work, this is a recipe that fits beautifully into a healthy routine without feeling like a compromise.

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# Ingredients

## For the Baked Apples

- 2 medium firm apples (Honeycrisp, Fuji, or Granny Smith), peeled, cored, and diced into ½-inch cubes (about 2 cups)
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter (or coconut oil)
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- Pinch of ground ginger (optional)
- Pinch of fine sea salt

- 1 tbsp pure maple syrup (or honey), plus more to taste
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)

## For the Cottage Cheese Base

- 2 cups (450 g) full-fat or 2% cottage cheese
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp almond flour or oat flour (optional, for a slightly firmer set)
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of salt

## For the Topping

- 2 tbsp rolled oats or crushed graham crackers (optional, for crunch)

- 1 tbsp brown sugar or coconut sugar (optional)
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp melted butter
- Chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)

## For Serving

- A drizzle of maple syrup or honey
- Fresh apple slices or berries
- A sprinkle of cinnamon

## Equipment

- Medium skillet
- 2 small oven-safe ramekins or a small baking dish (about 4–5 inches)
- Mixing bowls

- Whisk
- Baking sheet
- Chef’s knife and cutting board

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## Time & Intensity Breakdown

| Stage | Time | Intensity | What’s Happening |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prep apples | 5 min | Low | Peel, core, and dice apples |
| Sauté apples | 6–7 min | Moderate | Soften apples in butter and cinnamon |
| Mix cottage cheese base | 3 min | Low | Whisk egg, vanilla, cinnamon into cottage cheese |
| Assemble ramekins | 3 min | Low | Layer apples and cottage cheese |
| Make topping | 2 min | Low | Combine oats, sugar, cinnamon, butter |
| Bake | 20–25 min | Low (passive) | Cottage cheese sets; topping turns golden |
| Rest & serve | 3 min | Low (passive) | Dish firms up; flavors settle |

Total active time: ~18 minutes | Total passive time: ~22 minutes

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## Instructions

### Step 1: Prep the Apples (5 minutes | Low Intensity)

Peel, core, and dice the apples into even ½-inch cubes. Keeping the pieces uniform ensures

they soften at the same rate. If you're using organic apples, you can leave the skins on for extra fiber and color — just scrub them well. Set the diced apples aside.

## Step 2: Sauté the Apples (6–7 minutes | Moderate Intensity)

Melt the butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the diced apples, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger (if using), and salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5–6 minutes, until the apples are slightly softened and beginning to caramelize at the edges. Stir in the maple syrup and lemon juice and cook 1 minute more, until glossy. Remove from heat and stir in the chopped nuts, if using. Let the apples cool slightly — about 5 minutes — so they don't cook the egg in the cottage cheese mixture.

## Step 3: Mix the Cottage Cheese Base (3 minutes | Low Intensity)

While the apples cool, preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). In a mixing bowl, whisk the egg, vanilla extract, ¼ teaspoon cinnamon, and pinch of salt until smooth. Add the cottage cheese and almond flour (if using) and stir gently until just combined. Don't overmix — you want some curds intact for texture. If you prefer a smoother, more pudding-like consistency, blend the cottage cheese briefly before mixing.

## Step 4: Assemble the Ramekins (3 minutes | Low Intensity)

Lightly grease two small oven-safe ramekins or a small baking dish. Spoon about two-thirds of the sautéed apples into the bottoms of the ramekins, dividing evenly. Pour the cottage cheese mixture over the apples, smoothing the tops with a spatula. Spoon the remaining apples over the top.

## Step 5: Make the Topping (2 minutes | Low Intensity)

In a small bowl, stir together the rolled oats (or crushed graham crackers), brown sugar, cinnamon, and melted butter until crumbly. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the ramekins, followed by the chopped nuts if using. Place the ramekins on a baking sheet to catch any

drips.

### Step 6: Bake (20–25 minutes | Low Intensity, Passive)

Bake on the middle rack for 20–25 minutes, until the cottage cheese is set and slightly puffed around the edges, and the topping is golden brown. The center should still have a very slight jiggle — it will firm up as it rests. If the topping is browning too quickly, tent loosely with foil for the final 5 minutes.

### Step 7: Rest and Serve (3 minutes | Low Intensity, Passive)

Remove from the oven and let rest for 3–5 minutes — the dish firms up considerably as it cools. Drizzle with a little maple syrup or honey, add fresh apple slices or berries, and finish with a sprinkle of cinnamon. Serve warm.

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## Flavor Variations

- Apple-Cranberry: Add 2 tablespoons dried cranberries to the sautéed apples.
- Pear-Cardamom: Swap the apples for pears and the nutmeg for a pinch of cardamom.
- Nutty Crunch: Use almond flour in the base and top with toasted pecans and a drizzle of almond butter.
- Savory Twist: Skip the maple syrup and topping; add a pinch of black pepper and serve alongside a green salad.

- Berry Version: Replace half the apples with fresh blueberries folded in before baking.

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## Serving Suggestions

Serve warm as a breakfast with a cup of coffee, or as a light dessert with a dollop of Greek yogurt or a drizzle of caramel. It’s also lovely topped with granola for extra crunch. For a brunch spread, bake it in one larger dish and serve family-style.

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## Storage & Reheating

- Refrigerator: Store cooled portions in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
- Freezer: Not recommended — the cottage cheese separates and the apples become mushy.
- Reheating: Warm in a 350°F (175°C) oven for 8–10 minutes, or microwave covered for 60–90 seconds. The microwave is faster but softens the topping.
- Make ahead: Assemble the ramekins up to 24 hours in advance, cover, and refrigerate; add 5 minutes to the bake time.

## Nutrition Information (Per Serving, Based on 2 Servings)

*Values are estimates and will vary by cottage cheese fat content, apple size, and optional add-ins.*

| Nutrient | Amount per Serving |
|---|---|
| Calories | ~365 kcal |
| Total Fat | ~15 g |
| — Saturated Fat | ~6 g |
| Cholesterol | ~115 mg |
| Sodium | ~520 mg |
| Total Carbohydrates | ~35 g |
| — Fiber | ~4 g |
| — Sugars | ~26 g |
| Protein | ~25 g |