

- Prep Time: 25 minutes
- Cook Time: 10 hours (Slow Cooker Low) or 4 hours (Stovetop Low)
- Total Time: 10 hours 25 minutes
- Yield: Approx. 4 pints (64 oz / 128 tablespoons)
- Skill Level: Easy
- Cooking Intensity: Low & Slow (Gentle simmer / low heat infusion)

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Equipment Needed

- 6-quart Slow Cooker (or heavy-bottomed Dutch Oven)
- Immersion blender (or high-speed blender)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Vegetable peeler and paring knife
- Canning jars with lids (if preserving)

Ingredients

Main Base

- 5 lbs (2.3 kg) Apples: A mix of sweet and tart varieties (e.g., 2.5 lbs Honeycrisp, 2.5 lbs Granny Smith), cored, peeled, and sliced.
- 1 cup (200g) Granulated Sugar: Helps draw out juices and sweetens the base.
- 1 cup (200g) Dark Brown Sugar: Packed; adds rich molasses undertones.

- ½ cup (120ml) Unfiltered Apple Cider: Adds natural acidity and apple concentration.

Spice Blend

- 1 tbsp Ground Cinnamon: The dominant warm spice.
- 1 tsp Ground Nutmeg: Earthy and fragrant.
- ½ tsp Ground Cloves: Provides a deep, spicy kick.
- ½ tsp Ground Allspice: Adds complexity.
- ¼ tsp Kosher Salt: Balances the sweetness and enhances flavor depth.

The Bourbon Finish

- ½ cup (120ml) Quality Kentucky Bourbon: (e.g., Maker's Mark, Woodford Reserve, or Knob Creek).
- 1 tbsp Pure Vanilla Extract: Added alongside the bourbon for a silky finish.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prep the Apples

Peel, core, and slice all 5 pounds of apples into roughly ½-inch wedges. Uniform size ensures even cooking, though precise cuts are not critical since everything will be blended later.

Step 2: Combine and Coat

Place the sliced apples into a 6-quart slow cooker. In a medium bowl, whisk together the granulated sugar, dark brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, and salt. Pour the spice and sugar mixture over the apples, followed by the apple cider. Toss thoroughly so every slice is coated.

Step 3: The Long Slow Cook (Intensity: Low)

- **Slow Cooker Method (Recommended):** Cover and set to LOW for 8 to 10 hours. The apples will break down completely, releasing their liquid and darkening significantly.
- **Stovetop Alternative:** Cover a large Dutch oven and simmer on LOW for 3 to 4 hours, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching at the bottom.

Step 4: Blend to Velvet Smoothness

Once the apples are completely soft and dark brown, use an immersion blender directly in the pot to purée the mixture until totally smooth. Alternatively, transfer the apples in batches to a blender, process until silky, and return to the pot.

Step 5: Reduce and Caramelize (Intensity: Low-Medium)

Uncover the slow cooker (or Dutch oven). Set the heat to LOW and prop the lid open slightly with a wooden spoon to allow steam to escape. Cook uncovered for another 1 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens to a deep mahogany paste that holds its

shape on a spoon.

Step 6: The Bourbon Finish

Stir in the ½ cup of bourbon and 1 tablespoon of vanilla extract during the final 20 minutes of cooking. Keeping the heat low allows the harsh alcohol bite to cook off while leaving behind rich oak, vanilla, and caramel notes.

Step 7: Cool and Store

Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature. Transfer into clean glass jars.

Storage & Shelf Life

- Refrigerated: Store in airtight glass jars in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.
- Frozen: Leave 1/2 inch of headspace in freezer-safe jars or containers and freeze for up to 1 year. Thaw overnight in the fridge before serving.
- Canned (Water Bath): Process in hot water bath jars for 10 minutes for shelf-stability up to 1 year in a cool, dark pantry.

Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 1 Tablespoon (approx. 20g)

Servings Per Recipe: ~128

Nutrient	Amount per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories	35 kcal	—
Total Fat	0g	0%
Saturated Fat	0g	0%
Sodium	5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrates	9g	3%
Dietary Fiber	0.5g	2%
Sugars	8g	—
Protein	0g	0%
Potassium	25mg	1%