

Prep time: 15 minutes | Bake time: 40–45 minutes | Total time: ~1 hour

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Ingredients

For the cake:

- 3 medium apples (about 1 lb / 450 g) — e.g., 2 sweet (Honeycrisp, Gala) + 1 tart (Granny Smith)
- 1½ cups (190 g) all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder

- ½ tsp fine salt
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ground ginger (optional)
- ¾ cup (150 g) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- ½ cup (120 ml) neutral oil (canola, vegetable, or light olive oil)
- ½ cup (120 ml) whole milk or buttermilk
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

For the cinnamon-sugar topping:

- 2 tbsp granulated sugar

- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
 - 1 tbsp cold butter, cut into small pieces (optional, for a slightly crisp top)
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Equipment

- 9-inch (23 cm) round cake pan or 8×8-inch square pan
 - Parchment paper
 - Two mixing bowls (one large, one medium)
 - Whisk and spatula
 - Apple peeler/corer (or a sharp knife)
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Instructions

Step 1 — Prep (5 minutes | Low intensity)

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease your pan and line the bottom with parchment

paper. Peel, core, and dice the apples into ½-inch (1 cm) cubes—you should have about 2½ to 3 cups. Toss the diced apples with the lemon juice in a small bowl to prevent browning and add brightness.

Step 2 — Mix dry ingredients (2 minutes | Low intensity)

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger until evenly combined. Set aside.

Step 3 — Mix wet ingredients (3 minutes | Low-medium intensity)

In a large bowl, whisk the sugar and eggs vigorously for about 1 minute, until slightly pale and frothy. Whisk in the oil, milk, and vanilla until smooth and emulsified—the mixture should look glossy, not separated.

Step 4 — Combine (3 minutes | Low intensity)

Pour the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and fold gently with a spatula until just combined—a few streaks of flour are fine. Do not overmix; overworking the batter makes the cake dense. Fold in the diced apples until evenly distributed. The batter will be thick and chunky with apples—this is correct.

Step 5 — Bake (40-45 minutes | Passive, oven at 350°F / 175°C)

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. In a small bowl, mix the 2 tbsp sugar with ½ tsp cinnamon, then sprinkle evenly over the batter. Dot with the cold butter pieces if using. Bake on the center rack for 40-45 minutes, until deep golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean or with only moist crumbs. Check at 35 minutes—if the top is browning too fast, tent loosely with foil.

Step 6 — Cool and serve (15 minutes | Low intensity)

Let the cake cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then turn out onto a rack (or serve straight from the pan). Serve warm or at room temperature. Excellent with whipped cream, vanilla ice cream, or a drizzle of caramel.

Time & Intensity Summary

Stage	Time	Intensity
Prep & apple dicing	5 min	Low
Dry mix	2 min	Low
Wet mix	3 min	Low-Medium
Combine & fold	3 min	Low
Bake	40-45 min	Passive (350°F / 175°C)
Cool	15 min	Low
Total	~65-70 min	Easy

Nutrition (per serving, 1 of 9 slices)

Estimated using whole milk and no optional butter topping; values are approximate and will vary by brand and apple size.

- Calories: ~265 kcal
- Total fat: 13 g (1.5 g saturated)

- Carbohydrates: 34 g
- Sugars: 18 g
- Fiber: 1.5 g
- Protein: 3.5 g
- Sodium: ~180 mg
- Cholesterol: ~42 mg