

A healthier twist on an all-American dessert



Matthew Mead/AP

These Apple Phyllo Cigars take all the flavors of apple pie and wrap them in the healthier option of flaky phyllo dough.

By **ALISON LADMAN**
For The Associated Press

As all-American desserts go, it's hard to beat apple pie.

But celebrating summer with a cookout shouldn't have to involve making a big healthy-eating sacrifice. So we decided to create an apple dessert that lets us have our pie and our healthy habits, too.

With pie, the real dietary downfall is the crust, which typically is laden with butter or shortening. So we decided to remake the classic into a much

lighter hand-held flaky pastry.

For the crust, we went with phyllo dough, the papery-thin pastry used in baklava. Usually, it is brushed with melted butter to help it bake into thin layers. For ease and less fat, we went with a few quick mists of cooking spray instead.

We filled the phyllo sheets with sauteed apples, then rolled them into little cigars. You could just as easily fold them into triangles if that suits you better. To do this, just place the filling at one end,

then fold like a flag.

One thing about working with phyllo dough — if you let it dry out, it tears easily. So be sure to take out just the amount you need to work with at any given moment. To keep the rest moist, cover with plastic wrap, then a damp, but not wet, kitchen towel. Any phyllo you don't need should be tightly wrapped in plastic wrap, then placed in a zip-close bag and refrigerated.

Please see **CIGARS, D-2**

CIGARS

Continued from D-1

APPLE PHYLLO CIGARS

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Makes 8 cigars

¼ cup sugar

½ teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 Gala or Fuji apples, peeled, cored and diced

Small pinch salt

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon water

1 teaspoon cornstarch

4 sheets phyllo dough

Butter-flavored or plain cooking spray

In a small bowl, stir together sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg.

In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, toss the apples with 1 tablespoon of the sugar mixture and the salt. Saute until just tender, about 3 to 4 minutes.

In a small cup, mix together the lemon juice, water and cornstarch. Stir into the apples and cook for another 30 seconds, or until thickened. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

When ready to assemble the cigars, heat the oven to 400 F. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray.

Evenly stack the 4 sheets of phyllo dough. With a paring knife, slice the stack in half lengthwise. Remove one half sheet from the stack and cover the rest with plastic wrap, then a damp, but not wet, kitchen towel.

Place the piece of phyllo dough in front of you and spoon 1 tablespoon of the apple filling across one of the short ends. Spritz the dough lightly with cooking spray and sprinkle lightly with about ½ teaspoon of the reserved spiced sugar.

Starting with the apple end, roll up the pastry sheet to create a log with the apples in the middle. Place the cigar on the prepared baking sheet, with the loose end down. Repeat with the remaining apple filling, sugar mixture and pastry sheets.

Spray the tops of the cigars lightly with cooking spray and sprinkle with a bit more of the sugar. Bake for 15 minutes, or until golden and crisp. Serve warm or at room temperature.