



Apple Butter Making by Grandma Moses

You can view it here: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/grandma-moses/apple-butter-making-1947>.

Day One

In my mind's eye, I see an old farmhouse in New England. The windows reflect the bowing limbs of a stately oak tree as the green leaves dance in the wind. The air is scented with home-baked bread. Muslin curtains frame the windows of this small farmhouse, and if we peek inside, we might catch a glimpse of this week's featured artist.

There she is. Can you see her? A small, silver-haired grandma in her house dress is mixing paint at a table. She squints her eyes and leans away from the canvas as she recalls her old Virginian home. A spark of remembrance lights her eyes. She returns the brush to the canvas and outlines the copper kettle, the centerpiece of the painting.

Ah, yes, as I peer in the window I can see she is telling the story of Apple Butter Making with her brush. Look. Do you see the young girls picking the apples while their mothers prepare apples for the kettle? And, look now . . . she has painted a man wielding a large wooden paddle inside the kettle. The perfume of cooking apples rises in the steam. I can almost hear the crackling fire under the bubbling pot filled with autumn's apple butter.

What happy memories she shares with us through her painting! It's her snapshot of a bygone day that we can only experience through her paint and brushes. Come now, let's leave her to finish her work, and I'll tell you a bit more about this remarkable woman.

Anna Mary Robertson Moses, better known as Grandma Moses, didn't start out as a famous painter. In fact, her paints were once wool, and her brush was a needle. Yes, her first love was embroidery. She created samplers which were the textile counterparts to her paintings. As she grew older, it became difficult for her to use a needle. It caused her much pain due to arthritis. But she didn't want to stop being creative. So, when her sister discovered her plight, she suggested Grandma Moses should pick up a brush and try her hand at painting. The rest is history! She started her painting career in her 70s, and she completed over 1600 works of art on canvas. This just goes to prove that it's never too late to try something new.

Grandma Moses was a very giving woman. She gave her paintings away as gifts to those she visited and as Christmas presents to the postman. She also sold them for a few dollars each in her local drug store, where they were proudly displayed in the shop's windows. This is where she was first discovered by an art collector. Then her work spread like wildfire throughout America and the world. Before too long, canvas was not the only home to her fireside memories, but curtains, clothing, and housewares were commissioned with her art.

Throughout her later years, her life was a buzz of activity. Her art was often on exhibit. She was featured in several magazines and interviewed on television. It was noted that Grandma Moses was prouder of her four children, eleven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren than any of her paintings. She never wavered in the fact that these paintings were based on a humble yet beautiful lifestyle, and she remained equally humble and beautiful.

Many artists are especially interested in creating pieces that have to do with certain themes, settings or genres. What themes was Grandma Moses especially interested in? Use these links to find three paintings by Grandma Moses, and see what you can discover about the kinds of scenes she liked to paint. Take a close look at the people in her paintings, too. When you're ready, try answering the questions below.

<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/grandma-moses#supersized-featured-251587>

https://web.archive.org/web/20150411163527/http://www.askart.com/AskART/photos/CNY20061130_3446/139.jpg

<http://gardenofpraise.com/images/moses1b.jpg>

What type of scenes did Grandma Moses usually have in her paintings?

How would you describe the people in her paintings? Do they look like people in photographs, or are they less life-like than photographs?

Describe some of the things the people in the paintings are doing.

Besides people, what are some other things Grandma Moses included in many of her paintings? If you became a professional painter, what kinds of themes would you focus on? Why?

Day Two

Bible

Grandma Moses' painting, *Apple Butter Making*, shows people gathered together in the annual festivities of making apple butter. Apple butter became a necessity in rural life because food was scarce during the winter, and it was discovered that other products made from apples, like applesauce, would not last through the winter. Apple butter, however, lasted longer and provided the vitamins and minerals needed to help keep folks healthy until food was again plentiful.

The process of making apple butter was an all-day event when the community would gather. Teams of people would be responsible for pressing the apples and stirring the pot while the apples boiled down. At the end of the day, when all the apple butter had been made, the community would celebrate with a party and dancing.

The first Thanksgiving was a celebration between the Pilgrims and the Indians, or Native Americans. Food was scarce for the Pilgrims who did not know how to farm. The Indians brought food, and they celebrated together for three days.

There are different celebrations noted in the Bible:

1. The Feast of Trumpets was a celebration of thanksgiving when the harvest was over. A trumpet would be sounded.
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a remembrance of God's provision of manna when the Israelites were wandering in the desert.
3. Purim was a celebration of deliverance of the Jews from being destroyed. This story is located in the book of Esther.
4. Passover was a celebration to remember when the Spirit of God passed over the Israelites and spared them even though all the firstborn in Egypt died. This story is found in Exodus.

What other celebrations can you find in the Bible? What do they stand for?

What do we celebrate today because of events that took place in the Bible that aren't noted as festivals or celebrations in God's Word?

Day Three

History/Geography: Follow the Apple Trail!

When we think of the early settlers in America, typically the first things we see with our mind's eye are tall men in buckskin breeches carrying flintlock muskets, ladies in calico dresses with crisp white aprons, and children running beside the wagon with a dog barking merrily behind them! We see families traveling through the untamed wilderness in groups made up of all ages and different backgrounds: strong-jawed Scotsmen, dark-eyed Frenchmen, fair-haired Englishmen, serious yet merry Germans, singing Welshmen, and Irishmen with lilting voices all mixing and mingling together. In many ways, America is a patchwork quilt still in the making!

But do you ever think of apples when you think of American history? Apples played a great role in the unfolding drama, and the artwork of Grandma Moses opens a portal into time . . .

Apples grew all over Europe. From the sunbathed coasts of Greece to the forests of France, apples filled clay pots for centuries! Even the Israelites during Bible times would have eaten and enjoyed a good apple. The fruit also graced the writings of ancient Romans as they controlled most of the known world at the time. The whitewashed walls of villas dotting the rugged hills surrounding Rome bore motifs of all kinds of fruit, including apples. Brave Roman soldiers carried dried apples in their knapsacks as they marched all over Europe and the Middle East. You would be safe in saying apples conquered the world!

Perhaps our strongest link to the apple's history stems from Great Britain. Grown and tended for hundreds of years by patient yeomen, many kinds of apples flourished during the Middle Ages all the way through the Renaissance as men and women learned more about science and how to be better farmers and gardeners. As England became more powerful, they sent settlers to colonize the New World and, of course, apples went with them. Baked apple pies sweetened the air of the colonies very early on!

Apple orchards blossomed all over the thirteen colonies and survived battles and hard times during the Revolution. They provided food and drink to soldiers and to those who stayed on their farms, keeping the home fires burning.

When Grandma Moses was a girl, apples still played a huge part in everyday life. Making apple butter during harvest time added a special touch to the celebration of a good harvest. It also gave the people something sweet to enjoy during the cold winter days ahead. Seeds of family love and fun times brought everyone together, old and young alike!

So, the next time you peel an apple, remember that you are cutting a slice of history. You can add another square in the quilt of time in a single juicy bite.

What activity can you and your family share this week?

Day Four

English

Do a little research and write at least two paragraphs about Grandma Moses' life.

SAMPLE

Day Five

Math

1. Let's start by counting:
 - a. How many trees can you find in the painting?
 - b. How many people do you see in the picture?
 - c. How many buckets/barrels/bowls of apples can you find?

2. It is said that it takes 5 pounds of apples to make 1 pound of apple butter.
 - a. How many pounds of apples will it take to make 2 pounds of apple butter?
 - b. How many pounds of apples will it take to make 5 pounds of apple butter?
 - c. How many pounds of apples will it take to make just one-half pound of apple butter?

3. Let's say there are, on average, 20 apples in 5 pounds.
 - a. How many apples are needed to make one pound of apple butter?
 - b. How many apples are needed to make 3 pounds of apple butter?
 - c. How many are needed to make 10 pounds of apple butter?

4. If 20 families from the community participate in making apple butter:
 - a. How many pounds of apple butter will need to be made so that each family can take home 5 pounds?
 - b. How many pounds of apples will be needed?
 - c. How many apples will be needed?

Day Six

Science

Look again at the pictures listed below. Did you notice that each one represents a different season? Write a short paragraph explaining what controls the seasons. Be sure to include a sentence or two about why seasons in one part of the world are opposite to the seasons in another part.

<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/grandma-moses#supersized-featured-251587>

https://web.archive.org/web/20150411163527/http://www.askart.com/AskART/photos/CNY20061130_3446/139.jpg

<http://gardenofpraise.com/images/moses1b.jpg>

SAMPLE

Day Seven

Physical Education/Health

Apples are rich in Vitamins A and C as well as dietary fiber. List at least three reasons for each that explain why they are important for good health.

Vitamin A

Vitamin C

Dietary Fiber

SAMPLE

Day Eight

Home Economics—Apple ABC's

There is an almost endless list of the varieties of apples available today. Try to find a variety of apple for every letter of the alphabet. You can check out your favorite seed catalog or explore <https://web.archive.org/web/20160702202220/http://www.orangeippin.com/apples> for ideas! Which ones will taste the best in apple butter?

Why do you think that is?

For example: Albany Beauty
Baldwin apple Chieftain apple

SAMPLE

Day Nine



Attach a picture of *Apple Butter Making* above or try your hand at drawing it. Answer the following questions:

1. What was Grandma Moses' real name?
2. In what year did she paint *Apple Butter Making*?
3. Name the states Grandma Moses lived in during her lifetime.
4. How many works of art did Grandma Moses paint during her lifetime (approximately)?
5. Name two of Grandma Moses' other paintings.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line. The word "SAMPLE" is written diagonally across the page in a large, light gray font.

Day Ten Activity (Grades K–2)

Grandma Moses at My Kitchen Table

Kitchens are exciting places full of wonderful smells, bright sunshine, and laughter! Even when your mom asks you to help her set the table, you are making memories that will last a lifetime. Today, you can create a memory of your kitchen just like Grandma Moses did!

Grandma Moses introduced a new kind of art: **primitive** art. She used bright, bold colors and painted simple themes of people going about their normal routine. In *Apple Butter Making*, she opens a window for us to look through and see what she would have seen in the fall when she lived on her farm. What kinds of things do you see everyday in your kitchen?

1. Find a large piece of heavy drawing paper, a paint brush, and a small bowl of water. Collect five colors of paint or markers: bright blue, yellow, dark green, red, and purple.
2. Sit down at your kitchen table. Cover your workspace with old newspapers so you don't get paint or markers on the table.
3. Think of what goes on in your kitchen: washing dishes, cooking, baking, or sitting down to eat with your family. You can now create a painting of your favorite activity in your own kitchen! Don't be afraid of using all your bold colors. If you are not sure what to do, ask you parents or older siblings to help!
4. When you are finished, clean up your work area and set your painting somewhere safe to dry.
5. Show your work of art to your family the next time you share a meal together!

Day Ten Activity (Grades 3–6)

How to Make Homemade Apple Butter

In the old days, folks gathered wood and took it in their wagons to the apple orchard. Then the menfolk stoked the fire until it crackled under a copper kettle. Meanwhile, we womenfolk cored and cut apples while our sunbonnets shaded us. We tossed the apples into that sparkling, copper kettle, with some fresh cider. As the hours ticked by, each person would take a turn stirring the apples with a large wooden paddle. Let me tell you *youngins*—your arms would get powerful tired stirring all those apples! But just the smell of that fire and the sweet butter that was cooking made it all worthwhile. A bit of sugar and some spices were added in the mix to make the perfume all the more tempting as each pass of the paddle wafted a bit more of that delightful fragrance into the autumn air.

Eventually, one of the older women would declare it to be canning time. Back then, we preserved our apple butter in beautiful blue mason jars. After they cooled, I particularly liked lining up those shiny blue jars on our cellar shelves. Just seeing our stock of good eating all neat and pretty made me feel secure in knowing that we didn't have to worry about having something good to eat that winter!

Now that we have modern conveniences, I won't give you all the fine details of tracking down a copper kettle to make your own apple butter. However, I will share a recipe you can easily make in your own kitchen so you, too, can feel that old-fashioned sense of satisfaction.

Here's what you need:

- 12 organic large apples (Gala, Granny Smith, or Fuji)
- 2 cups organic apple cider (or pineapple juice)
- 1 ½ cups organic brown sugar
- 2 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cloves
- ½ teaspoon ginger

Step 1: Get those apples out and give them a good scrubbing in some fresh water.

Step 2: It's time to slice and dice! Carefully core and slice the apples into small chunks. If you're too little, use this time to draw a picture while a parent chops them for you.

Step 3: Toss all your cut apples into a large stockpot. Save the cores for composting in your garden. The little garden critters will love you for it.

Step 4: Measure a cup of apple cider or pineapple juice and splash it all over your beautifully cut apples. Then pour out a second cup and do it again.

Step 5: Put your pot of apple goodness on the stove and bring her to a boil. Once she's a *boilin*, ' turn her down to a simmer for about 30 minutes. Just make sure to stir it around a bit with your wooden spoon to keep it from scorching.



Cooking the apples down

Step 6: Once she's simmered down, remove the stockpot from the heat and put your cooked apples into a blender. Pulse the blender a few times so the apples are pureed slightly but still chunky.

Step 7: Put your pureed apple butter beginnings into an oven safe dish. Add your sugar and spices. Don't forget to stir it up!



Right after the apples were pulsed in the blender and the spices were added.

Step 8: Pop your apple butter into a 300°F oven, and let her cook down for about an hour or two. Be sure to peek in and stir it occasionally.



Hot out of the oven, the apple butter is ready to be canned.

Step 9: While your apple butter is in the oven, wash the stockpot. Then, set the stockpot on the stove top and place some half-pint jars inside. Fill the pot with water until it is an inch above the jar rims. Bring the water to a boil and let it boil for about 10 minutes. This is how you sterilize canning jars!

Step 10: Place the jar lids in a small pot with water and bring it to a slow simmer. This will sterilize your jar lids!

Step 11: When your apple butter is the consistency you desire, remove one of the jars from the hot water and fill it with your cooked apple butter. Leave $\frac{1}{4}$ inch headspace in the jar. This means there should only be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch gap between the apple butter and the lid.



The apple butter jar is ready for the lid to top it off.

Step 12: Use a damp washcloth to wipe off the jar rim. If any apple butter is left on the jar rim, your lid will refuse to seal.

Step 12: Place the lid on top of the jar and screw on the ring.

Step 13: Place the sealed jars back into the stockpot filled with hot water. Make sure the water is at least an inch above the jars. Bring the water to a rolling boil, and let it boil for about 10 minutes. (If you live at a higher altitude, you will need to adjust your canning time.) Then turn off the heat and remove the jars to a towel-covered counter. Once all of your jars are out of the hot water, cover them with another towel to tuck them in for the night. In the morning, check to make sure the lid is sunken in and that there is no “popping” sound when you press on it. If you hear a pop when you touch the lid’s center, the lid did not seal. Just place this jar in the refrigerator to use during the week.



Jars resting after the water bath.

Step 14: Decorate your canning jars with a pretty piece of fabric tied with a satin ribbon over the lid and a customized tag including the date canned.

There you have it! You’ve now canned yourself a nice batch of homemade apple butter to enjoy and share with your neighbors!

Day Ten Activity (Grades 7–12)

Paint a Memory

Grandma Moses painted pictures of many childhood memories. She loved those carefree days—helping her mother, playing with her brothers, enjoying the outdoors, roaming through the woods, and gathering flowers.

Take a moment and recall a favorite outdoor memory from when you were younger. In 5–10 sentences, write about it, describing as many details as you can remember, whether it was hiking in the woods, roasting marshmallows over a campfire, or flying a kite on a windy day.

Using your description as a guide, draw the scene with a pencil (so you can erase, if necessary). Include all the details you wrote about. If you were flying a kite, were there a lot of clouds or birds in the sky? Did you see many flowers on your hike? Once you have drawn your picture, use your paints to fill it in with color. Don't forget to use a lot of color. Try to remember how vibrant your kite may have been, or how blue the sky was during your hike, or how dazzling the flowers looked.

Your memory will come alive on your “canvas” for others to see and appreciate, just as millions of people got the chance to appreciate Grandma Moses’ many paintings. Her many memories of beautiful family times came alive through her pencil and her paintbrush. Now, it’s your turn!