

Have You Ever Tried an Opal Apple?

ERIN JACKSON

I always have my eyes peeled for new items at Trader Joe's, but I didn't have to look hard to see the **Opal apples**. The display of bright yellow fruit, just inside the front door, was unmissable.

According to the official [opal apple webpage](http://www.opalapples.com/) (<http://www.opalapples.com/>), the apples are a cross between Golden Delicious and Topaz. They were discovered in 1999, tested in 63 orchards throughout Europe and the Mediterranean for 12 years, and introduced to the US market in 2010. Today, Opal apples are grown exclusively at [Broetje Orchards](http://www.firstfruits.com/) (<http://www.firstfruits.com/>) in Prescott, WA. Peak season is December to March for conventional Opals, and November to January for the organic variety.

Two things are immediately striking about the apples: their heft and their color. Both apples I purchased (\$1.29 each) weighed nearly 14 ounces. That's a lot of apple, even if you're sharing.

Aside from the natural russeting around the stem and some tiny brown flecks, the skin is smooth, thick, and bright yellow, like a lemon. The white flesh underneath is crisp and juicy, with a resounding crunch, similar to a Honeycrisp. Flavor-wise, it's quite sweet and slightly floral. I picked up notes of pear, coconut, and banana candy (Runts, in particular).

Opal apples aren't supposed to brown after cutting, and since extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, I had to test it out. Here's the same apple, 6 hours and 26 minutes after the initial photo was taken. There's a bit of browning, but not much—especially since I left it (unwrapped) on my kitchen counter.

If you want to try this relatively new type of apple for yourself, don't delay. According to one Trader Joe's location near me (which started carrying the apples a week or so ago), Opals will be available as long as the supplier can keep apples coming, but demand is strong and shoppers are snapping them up quickly.

Have you tried an Opal apple? Let us know your thoughts in the comments.

About the author: Erin Jackson is a food writer and photographer who is obsessed with discovering the best eats in San Diego. You can find all of her discoveries on her [San Diego food blog EJeats.com](http://www.ejeats.com/) (<http://www.ejeats.com/>). On Twitter, she's [@ErinJax](https://twitter.com/#!/erinjax) (<https://twitter.com/#!/erinjax>)