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Autumn Treasures

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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The colors of the Season – Crimson and burgundy reds, bittersweet oranges, sun yellows, hunter green, and beige – These brilliant hues of Autumn can be mixed, matched, or just enjoyed – your choice!

Outdoor decorations:

Haystacks, scarecrows, pumpkins, in all shapes and sizes, bushel baskets of gourds, apples, Indian apples, and squashes.

Corn stalks, and Indian corn are decorative touches that add so much to areas around your home.

Use these Harvest items on porches, decks, or on steps and near front door-ways. Wheat, mums, and willows add a Fall dimension to flower arrangements and centerpieces. Use the colorful leaves available under your centerpieces, on windowsills, mantels, shelves, etc. wherever you need a "touch of color" and the warm hues of a very exciting season of the year.

Party Themes:

After the Pumpkin Patch Supper –

After a hard day of searching for and choosing the gourd that truly symbolizes Fall, your family and friends will need some nourishment!

Apples Galore Fun-Time Fest –

Apple picking is fun – don't forget the camer – as everyone reaches for that one treasure on the very tippy-top of the tree. But picking apples, sampling, and breathing in the aroma of the orchard excites appetites, creates instant giggles and fun, and old-fashioned enjoyment!

Let everyone make their own taffy apples, of course, with adult supervision with the hot taffy, and add sprinkls, nuts, etc.

Raking Leaves Party Time –

Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn – stories from the past – get family, friends, and relatives to pitch in with rakes, brooms, and baskets to rake and clean up your landscape, but "jumping in" is just part of the fun. Also, if your area permits, burning leaves is truly the aroma of Autumn – great to sit around, munch on apples, and dream about the Holiday Season just ahead. Throw in a great meal and you

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have – instant party time fun!

Harvest Time Bon–Fire Get–together –

Freshly baked apples pies, grilled hot dogs, chips, and apple cider –
it just doesn't get any better than this!

However you decide to celebrate – enjoy Autumn and Nature – it only comes once a year – but the memories will last a lifetime.

Table Decor –

Make a centerpiece of one large pumpkin, surrounded by smaller ones, baby squash, gourds, acorns, and leaves. Let your imagination go wild!

Use fall leaves that have been dried between sheets of waxed paper on windowsills, shelves, and mantels.

Use large leaves or baby pumpkins as place cards and tie napkins with "autumn colored" yarns, or raffia. Add an acorn or pinecone and you have a very impressive napkin ring.

Colorful felt placemats with cut–out hot–glued on of apples, leaves, etc. are fun and inexpensive.

Meal–time menus:

Cornish game hens, with wild rice stuffing, baked sweet potatoes, cornmeal fried tomato slices, tossed green salad, and chocolate mousse

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Beef stroganoff on poppyseed noodles, green beans, garlic biscuits, and taffy apples

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Italian sausage and pepper grilled sandwiches, English pea salad, ice cream sundaes

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Barbecued Pork sandwiches, potato wedges, pineapple chunks, leaf cut–out sugar cookies

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Harvest pork roast, pan–fried squash and tomatoes, baked potato, and hot apple pie

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Beverage: Try cider, apple lemonade, tea, or apple juice

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Use a large pumpkin to serve stew, soup, or chili.

Use smaller pumpkins as individual servings of these "cooler" weather treats.

Italian Sausage and Pepper Sandwiches:

4–6" long Italian sausages

4–6" Hoagie or submarine rolls

2 tsp. olive oil

2 red/green sweet peppers, cut in strips

1 hot pepper, diced

2 onions, sliced into rings

1/2 cup spaghetti sauce

2 cups Shredded mozzarella cheese

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Place sausages on grill or broiler. Grill until thoroughly cooked, about 10 mins.

Cut rolls in half, scoop out tops and reserve "insides" for bread crumbs.

Place rolls on grill and brown until golden.

Place oil in pan, add onions, and sweet peppers.

Heat until soft.

Warm spaghetti sauce in pan.

Chop hot pepper and place in small bowl and drizzle olive oil over.

On each roll, place sausage, peppers, and onions, and top with sauce. Sprinkle cheese, place under broiler for a minute or two until cheese is melted.

Great tasting, and you may just have to double this recipe.

Taffy Apples –

6 apples, washed

wooden sticks

1 (16 ozs.) bag caramels

2 tbs. water

Insert stick into each apple. Microwave caramels and water in glass bowl on high for 3 mins. stirring

after each minute until sauce is velvety smooth. Dip apples into hot caramel and turn until completely coated.

Scrape excess from bottom and dip into nuts if desired.

Cool on waxed paper and enjoy!

Potato Wedges –

2 tbs. vegetable oil

1/4 cup Italian-seasoned bread crumbs

2 tbs. grated Parmesan cheese

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/2 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. garlic salt

5 potatoes, unpeeled

Spread oil in bottom of baking pan. Combine all the ingredients, except potatoes in bowl. Cut each potato into wedges and thoroughly dip into mixture. Place in single layer in pan and bake, uncovered (350) for 45 mins.

Autumn Cider –

1 gallon apple cider

1 can (12 ozs.) lemonade concentrate, thawed

1 lemon, thinly sliced

Several cinnamon sticks

In large bowl, combine cider and lemonade until combined. Pour into hollowed-out pumpkins. Place lemon slices on top and float a few cinnamon sticks as well.

Ladle out into glasses with a little crushed ice.

However, you decide to enjoy Autumn, do just that –

ENJOY!

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(Excerpts from Arleen's Book –
Autumn Splendors)

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Autumn Wreaths Mark The Season

By Dawn Keadic

Wreaths are sometimes thought of as a Christmas-only decoration. This is a short-sighted view, as a beautiful wreath can be used to decorate a home for any season. Wreaths made to celebrate the autumn months can be very attractive home decorations.

Autumn wreaths often attempt to take the most beautiful elements of the fall season and to combine them in one artistic statement. They will often feature the striking colors of fall foliage and often reflect an "outdoors" or "country" look.

Autumn wreaths can be based on any number of foundations. Some have found the rustic and neutral look of a grapevine wreath makes a perfect foundation for an autumn wreath. Others may prefer to work from a woodier twig base. It is even possible to start with a basic wreath form (often made of foam and available at craft and hobby stores). Whatever option is used can work wonderfully as a springboard for beautiful fall decorating.

Autumn wreaths can be made from the season's fallen leaves. Such projects, although beautiful, are short-lived as the leaves dry and crack. As such, many wreath makers rely upon silk and other artificial leaves to decorate their wreaths. Accents are often provided by simple homemade bows. Small seasonal decorations (for instance a miniature scarecrow) are sometimes attached to the finished product with a glue gun as a way of commemorating the autumn months.

There are no rules or limits one must obey when creating an autumn wreath. The idea is to capture the essence of autumn in the wreath, and that can be accomplished in any number of ways. An autumn wreath is an exercise in creativity and many beautiful decorations have been produced around the theme.

Wreaths are not exclusively for the Christmas holidays. A decorative wreath can brighten any home, and wreaths celebrating autumn provide a unique opportunity to bring the essence of the outdoors into one's home.

Dawn Keadic enjoys decorating with wreaths, both indoors and outdoors. For more information on Christmas, fall and autumn wreaths, including wreaths you can make at home, visit



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