

My Favorite Time



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Fall is my favorite season of the year. Hands down. Nothing can beat it. Nothing even comes close. I am loving this year's fall – immensely.

What do I love about fall?

First off, I love the temperature. I don't like 80-85 degrees of hot, sunny and humid. I like 65-70 degrees with clear and crisp skies. I tell people it's because of my heritage. I have an Irish heritage. I'll never forget driving around a curve in Ireland and seeing the beach as we came around. It was June. The kids were playing on the beach but they had long pants on with rolled up cuffs. They had long sleeves on their shirts. This protection kept them from getting sunburned. It was plenty warm, but they chose to keep their clothes on. I get fried in the sun. I don't even get much of a tan, so it's just not worth the risk. I am waiting for white and pasty to become fashionable again; just like it was in 1900. I hope this trend catches up to us soon.

I'm a fan of green and lush but I am a bigger fan of leaves changing color; even if it means they must fall from the trees.

I go out for drives just to look at the bright vistas. The upper, central part of the US is a perfect place to see autumn colors. You don't have to go to New England. We have it all right here.

I love the smell of the woods when the leaves are falling. I go on trails just to kick my way through the leaves. I don't have to rake them. I can just enjoy the crunchy feeling under my feet. This is the perfect time for me to go in the woods too. For the most part, the biting bugs are gone. I am allergic to bug bites so summer bugs are more than just a nuisance to me. They are dangerous. If I get bitten, I get all inflamed and puffy. Sometimes I even run a low temperature. I'm overly itchy and miserable.

Invariably, on the way back from one of my adventures in the woods, I'll stop off to buy pumpkins. I buy the big ones for Halloween but I also buy a few smaller ones and some gourds. I made a simple table display this year. Instead of a picture of today's recipe I am showing a picture of the table display I made. It's easy. Just get one, small pumpkin and put it in a large bowl. Surround it with gourds and baby pumpkins. Then go out in your yard to find an assortment of skinny, crooked sticks. One option is to look for a bush that needs a little trimming. Another option with kids or grandkids is to have them hunt for little sticks. Gather them up, take them in the house, trim them with scissors if necessary and stick them amongst your display. The sticks fill it out and give it an artsy, modern look. I'm happy with my display and it only took me five minutes.

My favorite pumpkins now are the "pimply" ones. Don't you love those too? I hear they are just about impossible to carve for Halloween but I love all the colors they come in (even white!) and all the texture they have. I have those and mums on my porch

at the moment. I just set up a display. Simple, no-fuss decorating for fall.

I love the food of fall. I many things with pumpkins. I go from pumpkin smoothies to pumpkin pie. I actually make my pies differently now. They have either an almond flour crust or no crust at all. I am going to experiment soon with a recipe I'm working on that has pumpkin pie on the bottom and a crunchy nut topping – sort of like a combo between pecan pie and pumpkin pie, with no sugar of course. That's the trick.

Halloween is still my favorite holiday. We used to hold some massively fun Halloween parties. In the past, our parties would start around 8PM. I served 13 courses while people drank, danced and ate appetizers. Around 11PM or midnight I served the entrée, side dishes and desserts. All the while people danced to music provided by a DJ. It was always our biggest party of the year. People went all out with their costumes. It was a real fete. I'm thinking of bringing that party back. It was quite the production, but it was worth it.

Well, Halloween brings us to the end of October. It's not the end of fall yet, but I can visualize it already...did I tell you how much I love fuzzy sweaters and leggings? Did I tell you how much I love curling up on the porch with a big blanket to read? Did I tell you how much I enjoy candlelight and fireplaces?

I love everything about fall.

Cheers,