



TASTING A NEW SEASON

FUN WITH FALL FOODS

by Isabelle Crouch, RDN, Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor

And just like that, it's time for sweater weather! Though I do love the sunshine of summer, I am also quite partial to the more mellow tones of autumn.

Summer is the time for bright fruit, crisp salads and refreshing smoothies to help cool you down on a hot day. But as the weather cools and the colors of nature warm up, our foods also start to transform. Warm soups, aromatic beverages and pumpkin spice come out to play!

EATING SEASONALLY IS AN AGE-OLD PRACTICE

We've all heard that "eating seasonally" is beneficial for many things—from our health to our wallets and even the environment. Before we were told to do this in more recent times, people naturally did it for thousands of years. Many of our traditional holiday meals are full of seasonal foods and spices for this very reason. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that your pumpkin spice latte is a product of thousands of years of human evolution and ingenuity that stems from our natural wisdom of being in tune with the earth and its seasons.

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Fall brings produce that is harder and more nutrient-dense to help prepare for the cold of winter. Root vegetables and winter squash are wonderful seasonal additions to a nutritious diet that have warming fall flavors and a hearty, starchy texture. The next time you are looking for in-season items to stock up on for fall, keep an eye out for these autumnal options:



Fruits: apples, cranberries, pears and figs



Veggies: carrots, parsnips, cauliflower, mushrooms, shallots and Brussels sprouts



Starches: butternut squash, pumpkin, sweet potatoes and eggplant



Spices: nutmeg, clove, ginger, allspice, turmeric, cinnamon, sage, pumpkin spice and cardamom

RECIPES

Once you have some seasonal goodies stocked up, you are ready to prepare a fall feast! Try out some of the recipes in this article to celebrate the bounty that nature has provided us and get into the spirit of the season!



BREAKFAST: Carrot Cake Oatmeal Bake

Adapted from *The Roasted Root*

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- Dash cinnamon
- Dash ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded carrot
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup, to taste
- 1 tablespoon craisins or raisins
- 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoon apple sauce (*optional*)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup boiling hot water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup full-fat canned coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon orange zest (*optional*)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Add all ingredients for the baked oatmeal to a ramekin or oven-safe bowl and stir well.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 12 minutes.
4. Remove ramekin from the oven, allow it to cool enough to touch (*about 5 to 10 minutes*) and serve with additional coconut milk or almond milk.

Nutritional Notes:

- This is a great way to get some vegetables in at breakfast!
- You can get gluten-free oats to make this recipe dairy-free, gluten-free, and vegan!



SOUP: Roasted Eggplant Soup

Adapted from *Breaking the Vicious Cycle* by Elaine Gottschall, BA, MSc

Ingredients:

- 2 medium eggplants
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, roughly chopped
- 1 medium carrot, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 2 cups yogurt (*plain*)
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 3 tablespoons butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fresh basil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Slice eggplants lengthwise and rub with olive oil, put in oven until golden brown.
3. In a large pot, combine onion, carrot, celery, garlic and stock. Bring to a boil.
4. Reduce temperature and simmer until vegetables are tender.
5. Peel eggplant and cut into cubes.
6. Strain vegetables and return stock to pot.
7. Combine strained vegetables with cubed eggplant and purée in blender or processor.
8. Add yogurt and butter to puréed vegetables and blend.
9. Add vegetable and yogurt mixture to stock.
10. Heat gently to simmer.
11. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve hot, garnished with basil.

Nutritional Notes:

- This recipe has lots of vegetables, which makes it full of fiber, nutrients and flavor!



SIDE: Baked Acorn Squash

Adapted from *Breaking the Vicious Cycle*
by Elaine Gottschall, BA, MSc

Ingredients:

- 1 acorn squash = 2 servings
- A little butter
- A little honey
- Grated orange rind ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon for each squash half)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Cut acorn squash in half, scoop out seed cavity of each half.
3. Place cut side down on a cookie sheet and bake until a dull knife goes through the squash easily.
4. Turn face up and dot with butter, honey and grated orange rind.
5. Return to oven to bake another 15-30 minutes at 350 degrees F.

Nutritional Notes:

- You could fill these “boats” with a mixture of cooked poultry or meat and vegetables moistened with broth.



SIDE: Butternut Squash Slices

Adapted from *Breaking the Vicious Cycle*
by Elaine Gottschall, BA, MSc

Ingredients:

- 1 butternut squash
- Small amount of butter
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Slice the neck of a butternut squash (*not necessary to peel*). If crispness is desired, slice very thinly ($\frac{1}{4}$ " thick).
3. Place on cookie sheet, dot with butter, and bake until one side is brown.
4. Turn and brown other side

Nutritional Notes:

- If sliced thin, these can be used as a healthy substitute for french fries.



DRINK: Pumpkin Spice Latte

Adapted from *The Food Network*

Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk or milk alternative
- 2 tablespoons pure pumpkin purée
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice, plus some for garnish
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup hot espresso or strong brewed coffee
- Stevia or other sugar-free sweetener to taste

Directions:

1. Combine the milk, pumpkin purée, sugar-free sweetener, pumpkin pie spice and vanilla extract in a microwave safe bowl.
2. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and vent with a small hole.
3. Microwave until milk is hot (1-2 minutes).
4. Whisk vigorously until the milk is foamy (30-60 seconds).
5. Pour the espresso or coffee into a large mug and add the foamed milk. Top with a sprinkle of pumpkin pie spice.

Nutritional Notes:

- Use extracts and spices for low-sugar flavor.
- Use cow's milk or soy milk for a dose of protein!

Some tips to maximize your nutrition this season:

- Keep the skin on your produce for its beneficial nutrients and filling fiber.
- Utilize flavor extracts and spices to increase the sweetness and flavor profile without additional calories, salt or sugar.
- Roast your veggies for a low-fat preparation method that is still full of flavor.
- Play-up the natural sweetness of fall foods, like apples and sweet potatoes, for a snack to satisfy your sweet tooth but keep your blood sugar in check! Bake your treat seasoned with your favorite fall spices. Add some nuts or nut butter for some healthy fats and extra flavor. These foods are high in fiber and full of vitamins and minerals as well!!

LET'S CELEBRATE FALL THIS YEAR AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE AUTUMNAL FLAVORS!

About the Author:

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Obesity Action Coalition

ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



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