



DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART
FLESHMAN

The cutest thing I've seen in a long while

It may have been my last rose of summer, seeing that I don't have rose-bushes in my yard. But, it did speak to me as being a rather special moment to share with you.

I saw the cutest thing one day in September.

Well, you know how quickly days go by anymore, but it does seem like it was in August when it should have been September. Since it seemed like spring never came and smoke obscured our summer, then maybe it was in our favorite month of early autumn that it happened — the cutest of all things I've seen happen in a long time.

I've made a big thing of not having anything for which to be responsible at this stage of my life regardless of how involved I've been earlier, so I have to back up a bit in my determination concerning taking care of any animal, bird or fish.

I've even gone as far as stating — no dog, cat, fish, caged bird, turtle, gerbil, rabbit, or snake as a pet in or out of my house requiring daily care. No feeding or watering, no forced daily walks, no changing of waters or cage floors.

In other words, even though I like or respect such critters and had enjoyed them in the past, I now needed to be free to come and go and do as I pleased.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Prune butter, other sweet fall treats

This is the time of year that the Italian plums and late apples begin to fall. On the breeze is the heady fragrance of fermenting fruit, and yellow jackets are lazy about cleaning up the mess as they are sluggish in the cool autumn air.

Italian plums can be dried (thereby becoming prunes) or canned to preserve their sweet goodness. Dried prunes are excellent stewed with or without citrus peel and a few cloves and cinnamon sticks and optional sugar. Canned plums can be eaten as they are or used in baking cakes.

The late apples are full of flavor and tart sweetness and most of them make an excellent sauce or pie. They can be preserved as canned sauce or dried to be used in pies later on (for which you reconstitute the apples in water by simmering for a few moments — it's a quick process).

One thing which is well-known for preserving apples and plums is making butter. Many people make apple butter, but few make prune butter. It is essentially the same process.

Prune Butter

Wash as many plums as you wish to use to make your prune butter. Remove the pits as you put the plums through a food grinder to coarsely grind the fruit. Place all in a large stock pot. They should now be a reddish violet color. Add at least ½ cup sugar for every 4 cups of fruit. Bring to a simmer. Cook for 5 to 8 hours until the butter is thick and the color of stewed prunes and a rich, prune fragrance. Frequent tasting is always enlightening.

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Lower-Calorie Version Of A Fall Favorite



Rose Baca/Dallas Morning News-TNS

A healthier do-it-yourself version of a pumpkin spice latte.

PERFECT PUMPKIN

By **Charles Scudder**
The Dallas Morning News

What costs five bucks, tastes like fall and has a whopping 380 calories per cup?

It's officially pumpkin spice latte season, but too many of those Starbucks PSLs can hit not just the pocketbook, but your calorie count, too.

Maggy Doherty, clinical dietitian at Parkland Health and Hospital System, showed us an alternative, healthier pumpkin spice latte that's quick and easy to make at home.

"The ingredients it takes to make this one is so much less expensive, it has way less calories and way less sugar," Doherty said.

For example, a grande pumpkin spice latte at Starbucks, costing \$5, has 380 calories, 14 grams of fat and 52 grams of carbohydrates with 50 grams of sugar.

Our DIY PSL of the same size: Only 178 calories, 3 grams of fat and 15 grams of carbohydrates with 13 grams of sugar.

And don't worry about that "health food" taste: This homemade latte is flavorful and fragrant. It has a natural pumpkin taste without the thick, sugary flavors of the mass-marketed variety.

Doherty said pumpkin spice everything has health benefits beyond trendy treats. Pumpkin is a natural source of vitamin A, vitamin C and potassium. When making your pumpkin dishes, Doherty said to buy pure pumpkin puree, not canned pumpkin pie filling with

added ingredients.

"The pumpkin pie filling has lots of additives like sugar and salt," Doherty said. "The only ingredient that should be there is just pumpkin."

HEALTHY DIY PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE

- 2 ounces espresso (or 4-6 ounces strong coffee)
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin puree (NOT pumpkin pie filling)
- ¼ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon real maple syrup
- 1 cup non- or low-fat milk (or almond milk)

Blend coffee, pumpkin, spice, vanilla extract and maple syrup until smooth.

Froth the milk. If you don't have a milk frother, warm it in the microwave and blend until frothed.

Pour pumpkin coffee mixture into a serving mug. Top with milk, reserving foam with a spoon. Add the foam on top and dust with a sprinkle of pumpkin pie spice.

— SOURCE: Adapted from *livestrong.com*

PUMPKIN SPICE SMOOTHIE

- 1 frozen banana
- 2-3 ice cubes

- ¼ cup canned pumpkin
- ¼ cup vanilla Greek yogurt
- 1 cup low- or non-fat milk (or almond milk)
- 1 scoop vanilla whey protein powder

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

— SOURCE: Maggy Doherty

TURKEY AND PUMPKIN SKILLET LASAGNA

- 1 large can (29 ounces) pure pumpkin puree
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup ricotta
- 1/3 cup sliced fresh sage
- 10 no-boil lasagna noodles
- 6 herbed turkey meatballs, chopped
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella

In a bowl, mix pumpkin, egg, ricotta and sage.

Spread 1 cup in a large, ovenproof skillet. Layer the noodles, meatballs and pumpkin mixture. Repeat twice.

Add 1 cup water, cover and simmer over medium for 10 minutes.

Add cheese. Bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit, uncovered, until noodles are cooked, about 15 minutes.

— SOURCE: Adapted from *rachelraymag.com*.

