

An Unusual Culinary Column: Enjoying Fall

By Karen Kain

Fall formally began September 22 at 10:21 am and lasts until December 21 at 5:44 am, per the Old Farmer's Almanac.

For me, fall doesn't really kick in until November arrives. I love this time of year when the temperature starts to chill and the leaves on the trees change their colors to rich browns, magnificent oranges and fabulous yellows.

Each fall New England receives about 3 billion dollars in tourist revenue. Travelers come from all over to witness the change, but I personally think that Eastern Oregon has some of the prettiest colors I have ever seen. November is a season of crisp mornings, gratitude, football, pumpkins, and celebration. I appreciate this time of year and find myself cooking stews on the stove and baked goods in the oven that fill my home with delicious aromas.

I love all things made with pumpkin, so I am sharing with you a few fall recipes. To no surprise, each of these recipes call for Pumpkin Spice. Don't worry, if you don't have any on hand, you can make your own pumpkin spice in minutes. You just combine: 3 tablespoons of ground cinnamon, 2 teaspoons ground ginger, 2 teaspoons ground nutmeg, 1 1/2 teaspoons ground allspice and 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves. Mix together and you have pumpkin spice.

I started off by baking Vegan Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies. They

were really easy to make, not too sweet and the chocolate with pumpkin spice totally work. I love cookies with nuts but if you are not a fan, just leave out the pecans. The Pumpkin Swirl Muffins are delicious, a little richer due to the cream cheese in the middle, which also makes them very moist. The Crunchy Pumpkin Cake recipe I found on the internet, I had to make it because it was just so darn easy. This is a great dish to make ahead of time; the perfect party share. If you love sweets you will love this one.

It is great to be back in Halfway after visiting my niece and her family in Vernonia. I look forward to talking to you about your favorite holiday recipes. Wishing you all a great month.

Vegan Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 Cups flour *
- 1/2 Teaspoon salt
- 2 Teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 Teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 Cup pumpkin puree
- 1/4 Cup coconut oil
- 3/4 Cup sugar
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla
- 2 Tablespoons water
- 1 Teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 Cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 Cup pecans, chopped

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375° F. In a large mixing bowl, sift together the flour, salt, pumpkin pie spice and baking powder.

In a separate bowl, combine the pumpkin puree, coconut oil, sugar, vanilla, water and vinegar. I used a Kitchen Aid to mix the dry ingredients in a little at a time. Add the chocolate chips and nuts then mix to fully incorporate. Spoon onto a greased baking sheet, then bake for 18-20 minutes, until the edges start to brown.

* For gluten free cookies use garbanzo flour.

Pumpkin Swirl Cupcakes

Ingredients:

- 1 3/4 Cups all purpose flour
 - 1 Tablespoon pumpkin spice
 - 1 Teaspoon baking soda
 - 1/2 Teaspoon salt
 - 1-15 Ounce can pumpkin puree
 - 1 Cup granulated sugar
 - 1/2 Cup packed brown sugar
 - 2 Large eggs
 - 1/2 Cup vegetable oil
 - 2 Teaspoons vanilla extract
- For the swirl:**
- 8 Ounces cream cheese, room temperature
 - 1/4 Cup sugar
 - 1 Large egg yolk
 - 2 Teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375° F. This recipe should make about 18 cupcakes, so you will want to put cupcake liners into your muffin pan, set aside. Sift together the



flour, pumpkin spice, baking soda and salt. In a separate bowl mix the pumpkin puree, both sugars, stir to fully combine, then add the eggs, oil and vanilla extract then mix again. In small amounts add the flour to the pumpkin mixture, once fully incorporated, fill the cupcake liners 3/4 full.

For the swirl – Using a mixer, mix together the cream cheese, sugar, egg yolk and vanilla. Place one teaspoon size spoonful onto the top of each cupcake. Using a toothpick swirl the cream cheese by dipping into the pumpkin mixture then gently swirling the cream cheese into the batter. Bake for 18-22 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the center.

Crunchy Pumpkin Cake

Ingredients:

- 1-15 Ounce can pumpkin puree
- 1-12 Ounce can evaporated milk
- 4 Large eggs
- 1/2 Cup sugar
- 1/2 Cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 Teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 Tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- 1 Box yellow cake mix
- 1 Cup chopped pecans
- 3/4 Cup unsalted butter, melted

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a 9x13 inch pan or small ramekin dishes for individual servings. In a large bowl mix together the first 8 ingredients, using a whisk to fully combine. Pour into the baking dishes then sprinkle evenly with the dry cake flour, pressing down into the pumpkin mixture. Sprinkle with pecans then pour the melted butter over top. Bake for 40 minutes, cover with foil then bake for 10-15 minutes longer. Cool completely then chill for at least 2 hours before serving. Top with whipped cream and some additional nuts if desired.

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