



Farm to Table - Late Autumn Harvest

Stave off the impending cold with these fall favorites.

Here in Minnesota where long, harsh winters make heavy demands on even the hardiest person's health, I always think it's no accident that the late autumn harvest from garden and orchard is loaded with vitamin- and nutrient-rich foods. Root crops such as potatoes, parsnips, rutabagas and turnips provide a valuable combination of carbohydrates and vitamin C, while all the beautifully vivid orange vegetables – carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes, yams and pumpkins – pack a powerful dose of vitamins A, C, B12 and even K. From the orchard, nut trees yield their selenium- and vitamin E-rich harvest, some bearing protein, iron and other key minerals as well. The autumn farm harvest isn't just beautiful and delicious; it's a treasure trove of healthy nutrients and antioxidants as well.

While we don't face the same diet and healthcare difficulties our farming ancestors did, it's still a good feeling to face the winter months of snow and wind with a harvest of high-energy foods squirreled away. The recipes below pull double duty as everyday dishes that pack well if you carry your own lunch, but they're also special enough to serve on a holiday buffet or share at a potluck supper.

Don't hesitate to contact me at hobbyfarms@bowtieinc.com to tell me what you like (or don't) about the issue, or to simply say how life is good on your farm. We're all out here together!

Onion Tart with Havarti

8 side-dish servings or 16 appetizer servings

For a side dish to a green salad or a bowl of soup, cut this rich tart into wedges and serve with a plate and fork. For a finger-food appetizer, cut it into small squares and provide napkins.

CRUST

2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1 large egg, beaten
1-1/2 T. olive oil
6 T butter, melted and cooled
1/3 cup cold milk

TOPPING

6 cups thinly sliced yellow onions
3 T. olive oil
1 large egg, beaten
8 ounces Havarti cheese, cut into small chunks
1 cup grated Emmental or Gruyere cheese

To prepare crust: In large bowl, stir together flour and salt; make well in center. Add egg, oil, melted butter and milk to well. Working in the center of well, mix together liquid ingredients, gradually incorporating flour until dough forms. Turn dough out onto floured surface and knead until smooth, about 10 minutes. Form into ball, wrap in kitchen towel, and let stand at room temperature for two hours.

To prepare topping: In large, nonstick skillet, cook onions in oil over medium-low heat until tender but not brown, stirring frequently (This step may take up to 45 minutes. Cooking the onions slowly brings out their full sweetness.) Season with salt and pepper, and cool to room temperature. Mix in egg, then Havarti cheese.

To assemble: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. On floured surface, roll out dough to form a 13-inch round. Transfer to a baking sheet. Fold outer inch of dough over to form a rim. Spread topping evenly over crust. Bake tart 10 minutes, then sprinkle Emmental or Gruyere over. Bake until crust is golden, about 15 to 20 minutes longer. Let cool slightly before



cutting.

Sweet Potato Casserole Makes 8 to 10 servings

You can use canned sweet potato chunks, drained and mashed, for this recipe or you can use whole sweet potatoes or yams: Prick and bake them, then scoop out the flesh. Or, peel and cut them into chunks and cook as you would potatoes; drain and mash.

3 cups mashed, cooked sweet potato
3 T. butter, softened
1 egg
pinch salt
2/3 cup crushed pineapple, drained

Topping:
1 cup flour
1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. salt
5 T. butter, cut into small pieces

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Using an electric mixer, beat together sweet potato, butter, egg and salt. Fold in pineapple and spread into a buttered 8- by 8-inch glass dish.

For the topping, stir dry ingredients together until well-combined. Using a fork or pastry blender, cut in butter until topping is coarse and crumbly. Sprinkle over sweet potato mixture. Bake until topping browns, about 45 minutes. To serve, let cool slightly and cut into squares.

Harvest Pumpkin and Ham Stew Serves 8 to 12

You can use canned, plain pumpkin in this recipe, or you can use fresh pumpkin: Cut a whole pumpkin into quarters, scoop out the seed bed, and bake the quarters in the oven. When flesh is easily pierced with a fork, scoop flesh out of rinds and beat with a mixer until smooth. Or, cut pumpkin in half, scoop out the seed bed, then slice each half, paring the rind off each slice. Cut slices into large chunks and cook in water as you would potatoes. Drain and mash.

1 cup celery, chopped
1 cup onion, chopped
4 T. butter
2 cups cooked pumpkin
4 cups chicken broth
salt and pepper to taste
2 bay leaves
1-1/2 cups diced ham
1-1/2 cups corn, cut from cob (about 2 to 3 ears) or frozen
1/2 cup red or green bell pepper, diced

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan or Dutch oven, cook celery and onion in butter over medium heat until vegetables begin to soften. Add pumpkin, broth, salt and pepper, and bay leaves, stirring to combine well. Add ham, corn and pepper. Simmer over medium-low heat until vegetables are tender.

Maple-Cinnamon Glazed Nuts Makes 2 cups

2 cups mixed, raw or roasted, unsalted nuts of your choice, such as almonds, peanuts, hazelnuts, walnut or pecan halves and Brazil nuts
3 T. butter
2/3 cup brown sugar



2 tsp. maple extract
1/2 cup white sugar
2 tsp. cinnamon

Line a baking sheet with foil. Butter the foil; set aside. In a large, heavy-bottomed skillet, combine nuts, butter, brown sugar and maple extract. Cook over medium-high heat, shaking skillet occasionally to combine ingredients and coat nuts, until sugar begins to dissolve. Do not stir. Reduce heat to low and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour nuts onto prepared baking sheet and let cool completely. Combine white sugar and cinnamon in a sturdy plastic bag; shake to combine. Break nuts into small clusters. Working in four batches, shake nuts in bag to coat with cinnamon sugar. Store tightly covered.

*This article first appeared in the November/Decemebr 2005 issue of Hobby Farms magazine.