

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Halloween—back in the day!

When I was a kid, Halloween was for children. We dressed in homemade costumes, rummaged from our parents' closets. Trick-or-treating was allowed, but only from neighbors we knew. I remember being limited to three streets in our huge subdivision.

The treats were as individual as each neighbor—this was long before the handy big bag of pre-packaged mini-treats. One house always gave out Tootsie Rolls and another had rolls of Life Savers (my Mom would always take the Butterscotch ones off my hands!) My favorites? The full size Butterfinger bars and the home made goodies.

If you were lucky enough to be invited to a Halloween party, you could count on delicious home made goodies and classic games like doughnuts on a string, raw egg toss and bobbing for apples. Now it didn't matter if you had full makeup on, you would stick your face all the way in the water to catch that apple and come up triumphant—apple clenched in your teeth and water streaming down your face.

Apples would appear again—on the goodie table, either covered in caramel or hard red candy that shattered like glass. Alongside would be homemade popcorn balls—the precursor to the ubiquitous marshmallow crispy treats. And, if you were really lucky, homemade doughnuts and cold apple cider—yum!

And my point—maybe it's just me—I don't remember what people wore—I don't even remember what I wore. But I do remember the food, as well as the care each neighbor took to do something special. Halloween isn't all about scary costumes and store-bought sugary treats—start your own traditions—with good food, fun and friends.

Halloween—una festa con buon ricordi!

La festa di Halloween e' sempre stata una festa per bambini in maschera, ed una scusa per zucherini. I nostri costumi erano messi insieme da cose trovate in giro per casa, rovistando l'armadio dei vestiti dei nostri genitori. Trick-or-treating, e' la tradizione dei bambini mascherati che vanno da casa a casa ottenendo caramelle e zucherini. Avevamo il permesso di rimanere nelle tre vie vicino a casa, e di visitare solo le case delle famiglie che conoscevamo.

Le offerte erano uniche come ogni famiglia. Una signora dava via delle buone caramelle gommosi, Tootsie Rolls, quelle che una volta in bocca, durano un'eternita'. Un'altra vicina dava via caramelle dure, Life Savers. I miei preferiti? Le caramelle Butterfinger ed i fondants fatti in casa.

Eri veramente fortunato se eri invitato ad una festa di Halloween, dove potevi contare su dei dolcetti deliziosi, e divertimento assicurato con giochi classici come le ciambelle dolci con lo spago, il lancio dell'uovo, o di cercare di afferrare con i denti le mele galleggianti nel catino d'acqua. Non contava che nell'atto di afferrare la mela, avevamo immerso la nostra faccia e adesso il trucco colava via, ma emergevamo trionfanti con la mela serrata in bocca!

Altre mele riapparivano sul vassoio dei dolcetti, caramellate o glassate, e si frantumavano come il vetro con il primo morso. E, se eravate veramente fortunati, ci sarebbero state ciambelle dolci e sidro freddo di mela—che buono!

Non mi ricordo le maschere e costumi di allora—io neppure mi ricordo il mio costume! Ma mi ricordo il buon mangiare, e la cura che ogni vicina ha preso per preparare qualche cosa di speciale per noi bambini. Halloween non è una festa con maschere spaventose e zucherini commerciali—iniziate la vostra tradizione—con buon mangiare, divertimento e cari amici.

Grazie to Ludovica Weaver who kept me from appearing to be a baby goat by completing this translation.



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What's Fresh Right Now?

Arugula
Basil—italian, microgreens
Beans—green, long
Bok Choy—baby
Cabbage—green head
Chestnuts
Collards
Cucumbers—slicers, kirby
Eggplant—purple italian, white/purple
asian, multi-colored small
Fuzzy Melon (loki)
Garlic—chives
Greens—collards, mustards
Herbs—basil, garlic chives
Honey
Melon—bitter, wax, fuzzy, winter
Microgreens—basil, arugula, radish
Mushrooms—shitake
Okra
Onions—green, dry yellow
Papaya—green
Pears—native
Peas—white acre, zipper cream, pink eye
Peppers—green/red sweet bell,
cayenne, banana
Persimmons—astrigent, non-astrigent
Potatoes—white, red, sweet
Pumpkins—calabasa, seminole
Radish—microgreens
Shoots—pea, corn, sunflower
Spinach—malabar (asian)
Squash—yellow/summer, green acorn,
butternut, zucchini, calabasa,
seminole, marrow
Sprouts—alfalfa, clover, quinoa, wheat,
adzuki, garbanzo, mung bean,
french lentil, green lentil, radish
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes—red beefsteak, grape

Get your entire dinner at the market!

*In addition to seasonal produce, local farmers
markets also sell tempeh, milk, yogurt, cheese,
chicken, beef, seafood, baked goods and more.*

Local and Fresh— Yellow Squash

Squash has almost become a year-round vegetable in this area—winter squash in the summer—summer squash in the winter. Maybe it is time to remove those seasonal designations!

Yellow squash has been our go-to veggie for as long as I can remember—grated squash in salads, squash casserole, stuffed squash, steamed squash, stir-fries, and now, fritters.

Flavorful squash will be firm, with smooth skins. Store them in the refrigerator and use within a week of purchase.

Looking for a simple, but flavorful squash side dish? Slice squash into rounds, layer in steamer basket with either chopped green onions or fresh herbs. Steam to desired doneness and serve immediately. Cook extra so there will be leftovers for omelet fillings or cold salads.

Baked Squash Fritters with Gouda

INGREDIENTS

3 cups shredded squash, yellow or zucchini
1/4 cup shallot or scallion, finely chopped
4 ounces gouda, shredded
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup stone-ground cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/8 - 1/4 cup olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven and two cookie sheets to 375 degrees.

Mix ingredients (except the oil) in order given, stirring lightly after each addition.

Pour just enough oil to coat the hot cookie sheets. Use 1/4 cup of batter for each fritter and space them 2 inches apart.

Bake 5-6 minutes, turn and bake an additional 5-6 minutes. Serve hot.

Yellow Squash Creole Style

INGREDIENTS

2-3 large yellow squash, quartered lengthwise and chopped into 1 inch pieces.
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 large sweet onion, chopped
1 cup chopped celery
1 large green pepper, chopped
2 large tomatoes, quartered and sliced (preferably one yellow or orange and one red)
1/2 cup fresh basil, torn
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Steam squash for 2-3 minutes—it should still be firm when tested with a fork. Set aside.

Heat olive oil in a large pan with a lid. Add onion, stir to coat with oil and sauté over medium heat until completely translucent and soft. Stir in celery and green pepper and cook for 5-10 minutes until celery is tender. Add tomatoes and squash, stir well to combine, cover, turn heat to low and cook for another 5-10 minutes until completely heated through.

Turn off heat, stir in basil, salt and pepper, cover and let sit at least 15 minutes before serving. Serve over rice or as a side dish. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Three Sisters Succotash with Fresh Sage

INGREDIENTS

1 Tablespoon olive oil
1/2 sweet onion, chopped
2-3 large yellow squash, chopped
2 ears of fresh corn, kernels cut off the cob
1 1/2 cups shelling peas or beans, cooked OR a 15ounce can of cannellini, rinsed
6 leaves fresh sage OR 1/4 teaspoon dried sage
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat, add olive oil and onion. Stir continuously until the edges of the onion begin to brown. Add squash and stir gently. Sauté for 3-5 minutes, until the squash begins to soften. Turn heat to low, stir in corn. Sauté 3 more minutes and then add beans and sage.

If at this point the mixture appears dry—sometimes squash just aren't as juicy—add vegetable stock or water to the pan to achieve desired creaminess. (Water left from cooking the beans is perfect for this!)

Taste for seasoning, stir well and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve hot. Tastes great with cornbread! Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Leftover Recipes

Just 1 cup of squash?

Heat 1 cup Creole Squash, then use it as the filling for an omelet for two or the base of a fritatta. Tastes great with mild cheese—try Monterey Jack.

Two cups?

Creole Squash Marinated Salad

Mix two cups Creole Squash with 1 T each olive oil and red wine vinegar. Add 1 T each fresh basil and parsley, and 2 T chopped nuts. Taste for seasonings, stir well and serve.

Just one cup of Three Sisters Succotash will stuff two baked potatoes. Top hot filling with fresh chevre and sage.

Two cups?

Succotash Soup

Puree two cups succotash in a blender. Add 1 1/2 cups of veggie broth OR milk. Blend until smooth. Heat over medium heat. Add 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice or rice wine vinegar, stir well. Taste for seasoning. Serve hot with crunchy breadsticks.



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Tricks and Tips

If you don't have any leftover pumpkin, you can roast one in an hour, yielding enough for these cookies, a pie, and a side-dish or a pot of soup!

Just cut pumpkin in half, place cut side down on a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

Remove seeds and fibers, then scoop the pumpkin from the skin. Try native Seminole pumpkins!

Pumpkin Harvest Drops

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened | 2 cups brown sugar, not packed |
| 2 eggs | 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1/4 teaspoon each mace and ginger | 2 cups roasted pumpkin, mashed |
| 1/2 teaspoon vanilla | 2 cups whole wheat flour |
| 1 teaspoon baking soda | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 2 cups rolled oats (not instant oatmeal) | 1 cup dried cranberries |
| 1 cup pecans, finely chopped | 1/4 cup crystallized ginger, finely minced |

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line cookie sheets with parchment.

Cream butter and sugar, beat in eggs, then stir in spices, pumpkin and vanilla.

In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda and salt, then stir into butter mixture until completely combined. Mix oats into the batter completely. Lightly stir in remaining ingredients, just until distributed.

Scoop 1 rounded teaspoon of dough onto parchment, placing cookies only 1/2 - 1 inch apart—they don't spread, so more cookies will fit on each cookie sheet. Bake 13-15 minutes, until lightly browned. Cool before storing in airtight containers. Makes at least 8 dozen.