

Foods for Fall Family Fun



It's harvest time which means Halloween and Thanksgiving. This is a season for wonderfully warm and yummy treats. I love fall food and I have some great autumn recipes in my recipe box. So in honor of my favorite time of year I'm sharing a few with you. These are "get the family together" recipes. Let the kid's help, make a mess, clean up together and then delight your taste buds.

Autumn is also a perfect time to read together. It creates a 'family feeling' that makes cool nights feel so wonderful. Besides the easy and tasty recipes I'm sharing you will find a list of wonderful fall books to read together.

Salt Water Taffy

Want something to do on Halloween night. Gather some of your neighbors into your kitchen and have a good old fashioned taffy pull. The fun is in the pulling and the reward is in the eating!

I remember doing this activity with my family. We had a terrifically sticky time. My mom was brave and I remember those taffy pulling times with fondness.

2 c granulated sugar
1 c light corn syrup
1 ½ tsp salt
2 T butter/margarine
¼ tsp oil of mint or other flavoring
7 drops food coloring

Combine sugar, syrup, salt and 1 c water in 2-qt saucepan. Cook slowly, stirring constantly till sugar dissolves. Cook to hard ball stage (265 degrees) without stirring. Remove from heat; stir in remaining ingredients.

Pour into buttered 15 1/2" X 10 1/2" pan. Cool till comfortable to handle. Butter hands; gather taffy into a smallish ball and pull. Keep pulling by stretching it out and bringing it back together. When candy is light in color and gets hard to pull, cut into fourths; pull each piece into a long strand about 1/2" thick.

With buttered scissors quickly snip into bite size pieces. Wrap each piece in waxed paper. Makes 1 ¼ lb. (If you have a group doing this project then you will already have your taffy in small enough quantities to pull into a long rope and snip.)

Cinnamon Apples

These were my favorite treat at the state fair, next to cotton candy. I can't make cotton candy but I love making these! I choose nice small apples so they don't go to waste and they are less cumbersome for little mouths to manage.

If cinnamon isn't your thing then try caramel apples. They are even easier to make and very tasty. Just buy a big bag of caramels at the grocery store, melt in a double boiler and dip your apples. Voila, a spectacular treat.



6 crisp, small apples
6 wooden skewers
1 1/3 c granulated sugar
2 c light corn syrup
1/4 tsp red food coloring
10 drops oil of cinnamon

Wash and dry the apples; remove stems. Insert skewers into blossom ends of each apple. Combine sugar, corn syrup, and food coloring in top of double broiler. Cook directly over low heat stirring till sugar dissolves, about 4 minutes. Cover and cook slowly 8 minutes. Uncover. Cook without stirring to hard crack stage (300 degrees). Stir in flavoring. Place top of double boiler over boiling water in lower part.

Turn each apple in syrup to coat. Twirl apple to spread coating evenly-let excess syrup drip back into pan. Set apples on a buttered cookie sheet. If syrup thickens, reheat over direct heat. Makes 6 apples.

Caramel Corn Recipe

This is by far the best recipe I have ever used and it is very old. I got it from a friend when I was newly married and she got it from her mom who was even older! It is delicious!

4-5 quarts popped
corn
3/4 c sugar
1/4 tsp
salt
1 tsp white vinegar
1/2 c white corn syrup



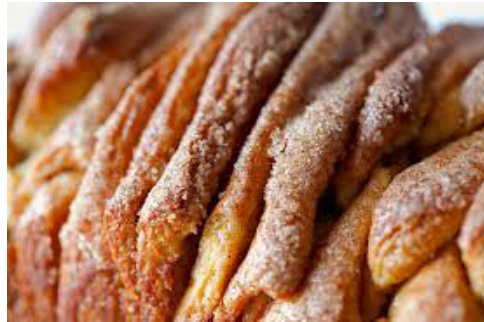
¾ c brown sugar
½ c water
¾ c butter

Cook all the ingredients except the butter to 260 degrees. Add the butter. Cook for 5 minutes. Pour over the corn and stir. If you want pop corn balls, my preferred way of eating candied pop corn, quickly butter your hands and begin forming medium sized balls until the corn cools so that it won't stay together any longer. I am pretty good and can get a lot of balls made before it cools too much.

If there are old maids in the corn they are hot and the candy is hot. Little children probably won't want to make the balls but older kids will hop up and down on one foot yelling "hot, hot", while they make a ball or two. Very fun!!

Cinnamon Roll Pull-Aparts

I got this recipe from my younger sister. It is fabulous and easy to make. I love pulling off the pieces of roll that are just right for popping in your mouth. When we made this treat we would just put it in the middle of the table and everyone would pull it apart and eat.



1 pkg yeast (1T)

½ c warm water
¾ c warm milk
3 T butter melted
2 T sugar
1 ½ tsp salt
2 ½ to 3 c flour

Soften the yeast in the warm water. Add the milk, butter and sugar which have been warmed together. Add the salt. Mix in the flour and knead 5- minutes. Let dough rise until it is double in bulk. Knead down again.

Break off small pieces and roll into strips. Dip the rolls into melted butter and then into the sugar mixture. Begin laying the strips one at a time into a circular pattern on your pan. Let the dough rise again and then bake at 350* for 10-15 minutes. Enjoy!

Sugar Mixture

¾ c white sugar
2 T cinnamon
¼ c brown sugar

Now that you have some great fall treats gather your family together and read some interesting fall books and enjoy a cozy evening as a family.

Autumn Books for Kids

- **Too Many Pumpkins** by Linda White – As a child, Rebecca Estelle’s family spent a month eating pumpkins when they couldn’t afford anything else. Afterwards, Rebecca Estelle swore she would never eat, or even look at, another pumpkin again. “Until...” fate stepped in and sent a plague of pumpkins into her garden. Readers will love how Rebecca Estelle tries to get rid of the problem.
- **Patty’s Pumpkin Patch** by Teri Sloat – Patty’s pumpkin patch is wonderfully illustrated and maps out the entire life cycle of a pumpkin plant from seeds and planting to the actual growth and harvest.
- **Waltz of the Scarecrows** by Constance W. McGeorge – Marvelous story. Beautifully illustrated. Children love this story. The search for the scarecrows hidden in the pages creates a level of glee that keeps the child and adult involved.
- **The Seasons of Arnold’s Apple Tree** by Gail Gibbons – This book covers the basics of what a tree goes through every season. Arnold and his dog take you through each season and explain what type of activities they do with the tree.
- **Picking Apples and Pumpkins** by Amy Hutchings – An engaging, informative and beautifully photographed book for kids and parents.
- **Hurry, Hurry Mary Dear** by N. M. Bodecker – The illustrations are delightful, with much detail. There is almost a second story line in the antics of the small black cat found on most of the pages — very nice when reading to kids; it allows them to make up a story of their own to go along with the main story.
- **Leaf Man** by Lois Ehlert Like Leaf Man – I was blown away, but not by the wind, by this beautiful book. It’s a pleasure to read, children love to find the animals quickly getting the hang of seeing them in the leaf shapes.
- **Giving Thanks** by Jonathan London – The father in this story teaches his son to give thanks for all of the things in nature that they encounter during a walk in the woods – for the sun and moon, frogs and crickets, a fox, and more. A lovely book to read before taking a fall hike.
- **Leaf Jumpers** by Carole Gerber and Leslie Evans – A fantastic introduction to identifying leaves!
- **Wild Child** by Lynn Plourde – Lynn Plourde’s text snaps and crackles like the leaves of fall as Mother Earth gently gets her daughter ready for bed.

- Henry and Mudge Under the Yellow Moon by Cynthia Rylant- An early reader – In the autumn Henry and his big dog Mudge watch the leaves turn, meet with some Halloween spooks, and share Thanksgiving dinner.
- By the Light of the Harvest Moon by Harriet Ziefert. As the harvest moon shines down, the wind picks up, sending orange, yellow, and crimson leaves dancing, until they settle in a pumpkin patch. One-by-one, leaf people emerge to celebrate the autumnal equinox.
- Strega Nona's Harvest by Tomie dePaola – An all-new Strega Nona picture book.
- Pumpkin Moonshine by Tasha Tudor – I just love her illustrations!