

Eating Local and Seasonal: Transitioning from Summer to Fall

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The arrival of the fall season brings back a longing for warm comfort foods, while saying a bittersweet goodbye to the abundance of fresh produce from the summer months. Many of the local summer produce finish their season in October making this the perfect time to get the last of our summer flavours. Try out the ideas in this issue for a seamless transition from summer to fall in your kitchen.

Soups are one of the top fall season go-to dishes. Not only do they warm the soul, but they are also perfect for using up the last of the summer harvest. A basic vegetable or minestrone soup is excellent for combining vegetables like green and yellow beans, tomatoes, peas, corn, zucchini and other summer squash. Simply sauté the diced vegetables along with onions, carrots, and celery in some olive oil. Add vegetable or chicken stock and dried herbs (thyme and oregano works well) and simmer for about 10 to 20 minutes.



For another variation, vegetables like cauliflower, corn and tomatoes make excellent creamy soups. Similar to the recipe above, start by sautéing chopped onions in olive oil and butter. Add your vegetable of choice, stock and herbs (thyme and basil work well for corn and tomato soups). Simmer for 10-20 minutes before cooling and puree with a hand blender or food processor.

Tip: Save vegetable scraps like corn husk, onion skins, and carrots and celery ends to make your own vegetable stock!

Curries are another great dish for transitioning to fall. They are rich and flavourful, yet versatile enough to incorporate a variety of summer produce. Cauliflower, eggplants, peppers, summer squash and tomatoes all pair well with curries. To make a curry dish, follow the basic vegetable soup instructions mentioned previously with the addition of a tablespoon or two of curry powder. Use less vegetable or chicken stock so that the curry is more like a sauce rather than a soup. Add coconut milk or Greek yogurt at the end of the cooking process to make the curry more creamy.

Salads are more often thought to be a summer dish, but add in some warm roasted vegetables and the salad is instantly transformed into a fall dish. Cauliflower, eggplants, peppers, zucchini and rapini are all great options for this. Drizzle olive oil over the vegetable, and roast at 400°F for about 30 minutes. Then add them to any salad of your choice.

Sources: 1. Left photo by Navada Ra from Pexels. 2. Right photo by Foodie Factor from Pexels. 3. Foodland Ontario. Availability Guide from <https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide>



Ratatouille

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

3 tbsp	Olive oil, divided
3	Garlic cloves, minced
1/2	Small onion, chopped
1/2 cup	Shredded carrot or diced red bell pepper
14 oz	Crushed tomatoes
1 tsp	Dried basil
1/4 tsp	Dried thyme leaves
2 tsp	Dried parsley
1	Small eggplant
1	Large zucchini
3	Roma tomatoes
1/2 tsp	Salt
1/8 tsp	Black pepper

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cook garlic, onion and bell peppers in 2 tbsp olive oil over medium heat, for 4-5 minutes or until tender.
3. Add crushed tomatoes and seasonings and simmer 15 minutes or until thickened. Taste and season with salt and pepper.
4. Meanwhile, cut vegetables into thin slices, about 1/8" thick.
5. Pour sauce into a baking dish. Arrange sliced vegetables standing on their sides over the sauce. Brush with remaining olive oil.
6. Cover and bake 30 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
7. Sprinkle with fresh basil and serve.

Sources:

1. Recipe by Holly retrieved from <https://www.spendwithpennies.com/ratatouille-2/>
2. Ratatouille (Original photo) by Stijn Nieuwendijk from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/stijnnieuwendijk/28350802465> (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)