



WARM AUTUMNAL COLORS AND COZY GATHERINGS

After the long, lazy days of summer, fall sneaks up on us. The leaves on the trees turn yellow, ocher, and red. We pull out our blankets and sweaters, and can't wait to light the first log fire of the season. Our homes are decorated with all sorts of squash, and comforting dishes make a comeback. Everything seems to slow down and become cozy.

FLOWERS

Dahlias, Japanese anemones, fall-blooming camellias and hydrangeas, proteas.

TABLE DECOR

Apples; dried flowers and leaves; vintage quilts; thicker, heavier materials such as glass, ceramics, and metals; dried corncobs; squash-shaped bread rolls; assorted squash. Fall brings with it the last harvests before the winter vegetables appear. Use warm colors, or else soft, neutral tones. At farmers' markets, you will find stunning squash varieties in soft tones to decorate your table, such as Baby Boo, Hungarian Blue, and white pattypan.

PLACE CARD AND GIFT IDEAS

A dried apple slice, cinnamon stick, and small crystal attached to each drinking glass using a ribbon; bandanas that you've hand-embroidered; toffee apples; bottles of farmhouse cider.

PARTY IDEAS

Make a large pot of hot mulled apple cider or a signature cocktail using cinnamon and figs. Prepare a big cheese board along with other little culinary treats—perfect for an *apéritif dinatoire* (an informal cocktail dinner). Remember to have plenty of blankets on hand.

Pumpkins, apples, and leaves are typically used for autumnal decor, but you can arrange them any number of ways. For instance, you can turn apples into candle holders (see the DIY version in my first book, *Miss Maggie's Kitchen: Relaxed French Entertaining*), or write guests' names on leaves and use them as place cards.

AUTUMN UNDER THE APPLE TREES

- Use apples as candle holders, empty glass bottles (beer, wine) as vases or candlesticks, baby pumpkins in lieu of place cards, and wooden crates as coffee tables. Let your creativity guide you.
- Fall is the perfect season for bringing branches of colorful leaves into your home. I'm a fan of floral arrangements that don't look too fussy or labored. I have a few vases, but I especially like repurposing other containers, such as old earthenware jars, jugs, antique silver champagne buckets, and so on, as I find them more original. You can also experiment with hanging a maple branch over your table, with or without string lights.

A WESTERN AUTUMN

- Combine autumnal colors such as brown and ocher with blue, pink, and yellow, to recall the golden light at the end of summer. Use tablecloths made

of heavy fabrics, bandanas as napkins, and dried flowers. Imagine a meal with family and friends after a long day of horseback riding in the great outdoors.

A NORDIC AUTUMN

- Use ceramics, an abundance of one particular seasonal product (pears, for instance), metal, and linen or thick cotton—all in neutral colors. Opt for various shades of white and gray, and a return to essential, bold pieces.

A FEW TIPS IF YOU CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING:

- Accept help, whether it be with the shopping or the preparation of certain dishes.
- Plan your menu in advance, so you can decide what to prepare ahead of time and determine what needs to be made on the day.
- Get started on the table setting one or two days ahead. This will give you time to make adjustments or any final purchases. For the tablecloth, consider repurposing a vintage quilt or plaid blanket.
- Serve the meal buffet-style—it's much simpler than table service, and guests can help themselves according to their personal tastes.
- Offer each guest a little gift, a note to express your gratitude for their friendship, a souvenir photo, etc.



MY ART OF ENTERTAINING

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