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KITCHEN

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BRAISED
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DIY RUSTIC KITCHEN

—
BY ALYSSA INGRAM

pulls, or simple round knobs. Installation is easy and requires just a screwdriver, making this an afternoon project with a big impact.

Add Open Shelving

Open shelving is a hallmark of rustic kitchen design. It not only creates a sense of openness but also provides an opportunity to display your favorite dishes, glassware, and decorative items. To achieve this look, start by removing the doors from one or more of your upper cabinets. If you're feeling more ambitious, consider removing the cabinets entirely and replacing them with sturdy, rustic wooden shelves.

Choose wood with a natural finish or a slightly weathered look to enhance the rustic feel. Reclaimed wood is an excellent option for this project, offering both sustainability and a unique, lived-in appearance. Mount the shelves using wrought iron brackets for added charm. Once installed, you can style your shelves with a mix of practical items and seasonal décor, such as ceramic pitchers, mason jars, and woven baskets.

Apply a Fresh Coat of Paint

A fresh coat of paint can work wonders in transforming the overall vibe of your kitchen. For a rustic fall look, opt for warm, earthy tones like soft taupe, sage green, or creamy off-white. These colors create a cozy backdrop that complements rustic elements like wood and metal.

If you want to add a pop of color, consider painting your lower cabinets or an accent wall in a deeper, autumnal hue like barn red or mustard yellow. Chalk paint

AS THE CRISP AUTUMN AIR ROLLS IN, IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO REFRESH YOUR KITCHEN WITH A COZY, RUSTIC VIBE. WITH A FEW DIY PROJECTS, YOU CAN TRANSFORM YOUR KITCHEN INTO A WARM AND INVITING SPACE THAT REFLECTS THE BEAUTY OF FALL. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE THIS LOOK.

Update Your Hardware

One of the simplest ways to give your

kitchen a rustic makeover is by updating the hardware on your cabinets and drawers. Swapping out modern, sleek handles and knobs for more rustic, vintage-inspired pieces can instantly change the room's look and feel. Consider using materials like aged bronze, wrought iron, or distressed wood for your hardware. These materials add warmth and character, perfect for creating a rustic aesthetic. Choose designs that evoke a farmhouse or cottage vibe—think cup pulls, bin



To complete the look, add a few finishing touches like a rustic farmhouse table, vintage-inspired light fixtures, or a cozy rug with autumn colors.

is another great option for achieving a rustic, matte finish. This type of paint is forgiving and easy to work with, even for novice DIYers.

Before you start painting, make sure to prep your surfaces by cleaning them thoroughly and lightly sanding any areas that need it. Use painter's tape to protect edges and ensure clean lines. Painting is a weekend project that will leave your kitchen feeling refreshed

and ready for fall gatherings.

To complete the look, add a few finishing touches like a rustic farmhouse table, vintage-inspired light fixtures, or a cozy rug with autumnal colors.

With just a little effort, your kitchen will become the heart of your home this season, a place where family and friends can gather, relax, and enjoy the cozy vibes of autumn..



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Cozy Autumn Living Room Makeover

BY ANNIE THOMAS

AS THE CRISP AIR OF AUTUMN SETS IN, IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO GIVE YOUR LIVING ROOM A COZY MAKEOVER. EMBRACE THE SEASON BY INFUSING YOUR SPACE WITH WARM COLORS, PLUSH THROWS, AND CHARMING SEASONAL DECOR. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU TRANSFORM YOUR LIVING ROOM INTO A WELCOMING FALL RETREAT.

Warm Up with Colors

Start by incorporating autumnal colors into your living room. Warm shades like rich oranges, deep reds, and golden yellows can instantly create a cozy atmosphere. Consider painting an accent wall in a warm hue or adding colorful throw pillows and blankets to your sofa. Look for rugs with fall patterns or colors to anchor the space and add a touch of warmth underfoot.

Layer with Plush Throws

Nothing says fall like snuggling under a soft, plush throw. Choose throws made of materials like wool, fleece, or chenille in autumnal colors or patterns. Drape them over the back of your sofa or chair for easy access and added visual appeal. Layering multiple throws can create a luxurious, inviting look.

Add Seasonal Decor

Pumpkins: Pumpkins are a quintessential fall decoration. Arrange a variety of pumpkins and gourds in different sizes and colors on your coffee table, mantel, or shelves. Opt for

real pumpkins for an authentic touch or go with faux ones that you can reuse year after year.

Dried Flowers: Incorporate dried flowers like mums, lavender, or wheat into your decor. Place them in rustic vases or old mason jars for a charming, seasonal touch. Dried flower arrangements can add texture and color to your space without the worry of wilting.

Candles: Candles add both warmth and ambiance to your living room. Choose candles in fall-inspired scents like cinnamon, apple, or pumpkin spice. Arrange them in decorative holders or trays on your coffee table or mantel. Opt for pillar candles, votives, or even a scented candle centerpiece to create a cozy glow.

Incorporate Textural Elements

To enhance the cozy feel of your living room, add various textures. Layering different materials can make the space feel more inviting. Consider adding a chunky knit pouf or a woven basket to your decor. Use texture-rich fabrics like velvet cushions or a shaggy rug to create a tactile experience.



Embrace Nature

Bring a touch of the outdoors inside by incorporating natural elements. Arrange a bowl of pinecones or acorns on your coffee table or shelves. Use a large branch of bare tree limbs or a bundle of birch logs as a decorative element. These natural touches can enhance the autumnal theme and add an organic feel to your living room.

Set the Scene with Lighting

Lighting plays a crucial role in creating a cozy atmosphere. In addition to candles, use soft, warm light from lamps or string lights. Choose lampshades in autumn colors or textures that complement your fall decor. If you have a fireplace, make it a focal point by decorating the mantel with seasonal items and lighting.

Create a Cozy Reading Nook

If space allows, set up a cozy reading nook in your living room. Add a comfortable armchair or a small loveseat, and layer it with plush pillows and a soft throw. Place a side table nearby with a lamp, a stack of your favorite books, and a cup of hot cider or tea for a perfect autumn retreat.

Transforming your living room for fall is all about creating a warm and inviting space that reflects the cozy essence of the season. Embrace the autumn season and enjoy a beautifully decorated living room that welcomes you and your guests with open arms.



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APPLE CIDER BRAISED PORK CHOPS

BY NELLIE PALMER

INGREDIENTS

- 4 bone-in pork chops (about 1 inch thick)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large apple, diced
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary (or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard (optional)
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

DIRECTIONS

1. *Season the Pork Chops:* Pat the pork chops dry with paper towels. Season both sides with salt and pepper.
2. *Sear the Pork Chops:* In a large skillet, heat the olive oil

over medium-high heat. Add the pork chops and sear for 3-4 minutes on each side until golden brown. Remove the pork chops from the skillet and set them aside.

3. *Sauté the Apples and Onions:* In the same skillet, add the sliced apples and onions. Cook for 3-4 minutes until they begin to soften. Add the minced garlic and cook for another minute.

4. *Deglaze with Apple Cider:* Pour in the apple cider and chicken broth, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Stir in the rosemary, walnuts and Dijon mustard, if using.

5. *Braise the Pork Chops:* Return the pork chops to the skillet, nestling them among the apples and onions. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 20-25 minutes, or until the pork chops are cooked through and tender.

6. *Serve:* Remove the rosemary sprigs and serve the pork chops with the apples, onions, and a spoonful of the braising liquid.

6 SIGNS YOU MAY NEED A NEW HVAC SYSTEM

There's no place like home, especially when that home is a comfortable and safe haven. One of the ways residents find comfort in their homes is by maintaining the right indoor temperatures, which fluctuate along with the seasons. While there is much to be said about opening windows and doors to let Mother Nature do her thing, indoor comfort is often maintained with an HVAC system.

HVAC stands for heating, ventilation and air conditioning. It can include heat pumps, furnaces and air conditioning units. It is an automated system that works by adjusting a thermostat to regulate air temperature, and sometimes humidity, in the home. According to Enviguard, a commercial contracting provider, HVAC systems also may be used to improve indoor air quality through filtration and oxygen replacement.

As with any mechanical device, an HVAC system has a life span that must be considered. Should any of the following conditions be present, it is likely time to consult with an HVAC technician to see if repairs or replacement of the entire system is warranted.

1. AGE

If the HVAC system is more than 10 years old, it could be time to begin budgeting for a new unit. Many modern, efficient systems may last 12 to 14 years with routine maintenance. But it's good to keep an HVAC system's age in mind so you can readily recognize when it might start to fail.

2. LONGER OR CONSTANT RUNNING TIMES

An efficient, properly working system will quickly heat or cool the home and then turn off. A system that is turning on repeatedly or having to run for a while before the set temperature is reached could be nearing the end of its utility.

3. STRANGE NOISES

Groaning, banging or loud humming noises should be addressed. While these noises may indicate that certain components need maintenance or replacement, they also could be symptoms of age and a system nearing failure.

4. FREQUENT REPAIR VISITS

Knowing the HVAC company's repair person by name is a sign that the system has required too much work in recent months. Repeated issues and repairs are probably signs that it's time to consider a system replacement.

5. HIGHER BILLS

Sticker shock when receiving electricity or gas bills likely mean the HVAC system isn't working efficiently and might need to be replaced.

6. POOR INDOOR AIR QUALITY

If the home is dusty or humid or even if allergies seem to have cropped up out of nowhere, this could indicate a poorly functioning HVAC system.

HVAC systems are vital to keeping indoor environments comfortable and safe. Such systems may exhibit certain signs that indicate they need to be replaced.



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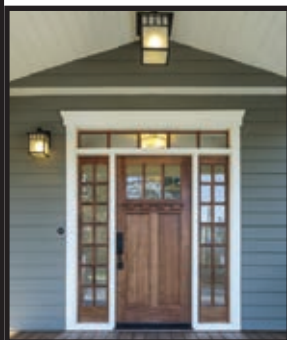
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MAPLE Pecan Pie Oatmeal Bars

BY NELLIE PALMER

INGREDIENTS:

For the Crust:

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

For the Filling:

- 3/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup
- 3 tablespoons heavy cream
- 2 cups chopped pecans
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the Oven: Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a 9x13-inch baking dish with parchment paper, leaving some overhang for easy removal later.

2. Make the Crust: In a large bowl, cream together the softened butter, flour, brown sugar, and salt until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Press the mixture evenly into the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly.

3. Prepare the Filling: While the crust

is cooling, melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the brown sugar and maple syrup, bringing the mixture to a gentle boil. Let it boil for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in the heavy cream, chopped pecans, and vanilla extract.

4. Assemble and Bake: Pour the pecan filling evenly over the pre-baked crust, spreading it out with a spatula if needed. Return the dish to the oven and bake for an additional 20-25 minutes, or until the filling is set and slightly bubbly around the edges.

5. Cool and Serve: Allow the bars to cool completely in the baking dish. Once cooled, lift them out using the parchment paper overhang and cut them into squares or bars.

These Maple Pecan Pie Bars are a rich, buttery treat that's easier to make than a full pie but just as satisfying.



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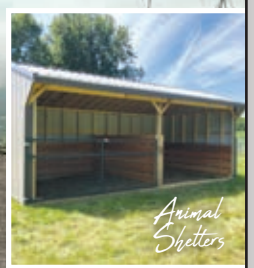
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DECLUTTER AND CLEAN

Before you start stocking up, take some time to declutter and clean your pantry.

Remove all items and check expiration dates, discarding anything that's expired or no longer usable. Wipe down shelves, clean containers, and vacuum or sweep the floor. A clean slate will make organizing and restocking much easier.

CATEGORIZE AND ORGANIZE

Once your pantry is clean, organize it into categories to streamline your cooking and baking process. Common categories for fall include:

- **Baking Essentials:** Stock up on flour; sugar; baking powder; baking soda, and spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Fall is a great time for baking pies, cakes, and cookies, so having these staples on hand is essential.
- **Canned and Jarred Goods:** Keep a supply of canned pumpkin, applesauce, and hearty soups. These ingredients are great for

making quick fall dishes and adding flavor to your recipes.

- **Grains and Pasta:** Store a variety of grains and pasta, including rice, quinoa, and various types of pasta. These staples form the base of many fall meals and are versatile for different recipes.
- **Oils and Vinegars:** Ensure you have olive oil, vegetable

REGULARLY REVIEW AND ADJUST YOUR PANTRY ORGANIZATION TO ENSURE EVERYTHING REMAINS IN ORDER

oil, and a selection of vinegars such as apple cider vinegar and balsamic. These are essential for cooking and adding depth of flavor to fall dishes.

- **Spices and Herbs:** Refill your spice rack with fall favorites like sage, rosemary, and thyme. These herbs are perfect for seasoning roasts, stews, and casseroles. Also, stock up on dried herbs and spices you'll use frequently.

Stock Up on Seasonal Ingredients

Fall brings a bounty of seasonal ingredients that can enhance your cooking. Here's how to incorporate them into your pantry:

- **Pumpkin and Squash:** Besides canned pumpkin, consider storing butternut squash and other varieties that can be used in soups, stews, and side dishes. You can freeze cooked pumpkin or squash for later use.

- **Apples and Pears:** Keep dried apples or pears for snacking and baking. They can be used in recipes for muffins, bread, and salads. Canned apple pie filling is another great addition for quick desserts.
- **Sweet Potatoes:**

Stock up on canned sweet potatoes or puree for use in pies, casseroles, and soups. Fresh sweet potatoes can be stored in a cool, dark place for several weeks.

- **Nuts and Seeds:** Fall recipes often call for nuts and seeds like pecans, walnuts, and sunflower seeds. These are great for adding texture to baked goods and salads.

LABEL AND STORE PROPERLY

Proper storage is crucial for keeping your pantry items fresh. Use clear, airtight containers for dry goods like flour, sugar, and grains. Label each container with the contents and expiration date to make it easier to find what you need. For items that are already in their original packaging, such as canned goods, consider organizing them on shelves by category and date of expiration.

PLAN YOUR MEALS

With your pantry organized and stocked, planning your fall meals becomes a breeze. Create a meal plan that incorporates your pantry staples and seasonal ingredients. This will help you use up items before they expire and ensure you have everything you need for delicious fall dishes.

As you use up ingredients and bring new items into your pantry, keep an eye on your stock levels. This will help you stay prepared for any fall recipe that comes your way.



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