Favorite Dishes for Fall

**Poblano Chili Corn Chowder**

Makes four servings or three if you’re really, really hungry. This is perfect for those crisp autumn evenings when you don't want to spend hours at the stove but still want a savory hot soup. The sweetness of the corn cuts the spiciness of the chilies. It's a fast dinner, since this soup doesn't require hours of simmering to extract all the flavors.

You’ll need:  
4 poblano chilies  
1 onion  
2 cups of corn, frozen is fine  
1 tablespoon of butter  
4 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock if you want to go vegetarian as well as meatless  
1 cup of heavy cream  
Corn chips or if you want to get fancy make your own out of corn tortillas

Depending on your budget you could add 1 cup shredded cooked chicken or 1 cup frozen shrimp, crab or scallops. Lobster doesn’t work because the spiciness of the soup overwhelms the sweet lobster. Mussels don’t work for the opposite reason. Their flavor takes over.

Okay. You’re going to remove the skin of the poblano chilies by roasting them or charring them. Don’t freak. It’s easy to do. Put them on a cookie sheet and place under the broiler until one side is charred — the skin turns dark brown to black. Flip them over and char the other side. Remove and immediately put into a plastic zip lock bag. Set aside. If you loike pablano chilies, char 5 or 6 at a time. Chop and freeze for future use.

Chop the onion and put in a pot with the butter. Saute over low heat for five minutes.

After 15 minutes or so the chilies are cool enough to handle. Take the chilies out of the bag and scrap off the skin with a butter knife under running water. Martha Stewart, the diva of fussiness says not to put them under the water, but it takes a while to get the skin off if you don’t.

Slice the chilies in half-inch pieces. Pour a cold glass of water with ice. Taste the chili. Poblano heat isn’t reliable. Sometimes the chilies are almost as mild as bell peppers and sometimes as hot as jalapenos. The only way to tell is to taste. If the chili is very spicy, drink the cold water to take away the sting.

Add as much of the chopped chilies to the onions as you can, without making it too spicy for you to eat. Poblano has a fruity taste underneath the heat. Since you charred them they also add a smoky richness.

Wash your hands and don’t touch your eyes or nose.

Add the chopped chilies to the onions and sauté for another five minutes. Add the corn and the chicken broth. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the chicken or seafood during the last five minutes of cooking. Add the cream and just heat through. You don’t have to bring it to a boil. In fact you shouldn’t.

Serve with the corn chips. Poblano chili corn chowder will become one of your favorite fast dinner ideas.

**Fried Chicken Tenders For a Baseball World Series Supper**

Crunchy coated chicken -- fried to a golden brown -- and served with dipping sauces of bleu cheese, spicy chipotle mayonnaise, and sweet teriyaki is an easy dinner to munch away as you cheer on your favorite baseball team to victory. Add in honey mustard sauce for the kids. Add slices of crunchy bread and a bagged salad kit of kale, dried cranberries, and pumpkin seeds to round out the menu.

Cut boneless, skinless, chicken breasts into slices about 1 inch wide and ½ inch thick. Toss with seasoned flour. Add your choice of dried parsley, oregano, crushed red chili peppers, black pepper and salt to the flour. Dip the chicken slices into the flour and then into beaten raw eggs. Lastly dip the egg- coated slices into panko bread crumbs or sourdough bread crumbs. You can make the tenders up to this point the day before. Keep refrigerated until it's time to fry.

Heat oil in a frying pan until it reaches 360 degrees. Add the breaded chicken and fry until the coating is golden brown and the chicken is cooked through. Cut a tender open to check. The meat should be white with no pink showing through. Any juices should run clear and not be tinged with pink.

Use this same technique to make chicken wings rather than chicken tenders. The wings take a bit longer to cook since they have the bone, about 15 minutes or so. Time the first batch so you'll know for the remaining wings how long to fry them.

If you're making chicken tenders for a crowd you need a way to keep them hot and crunchy. Don't put them on paper towels. The towels will absorb the steam from the chicken tenders and become damp. That dampness then transfers back to the chicken and the tenders get soggy. Line cookie sheets with aluminum foil. Place in a warm oven. Don't place the tenders touching. Don't cover them with foil,that traps the steam and again makes the tenders soggy.

Offer bleu cheese salad dressing as one of the sauces. Combine one cup of mayonnaise with 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon roasted chipotle pepper. Purchased teriyaki sauce is quicker than making the sauce from scratch. Kids will love the honey mustard sauce. Simply mix honey with prepared mustard.

Peach melba sundaes are just what's needed to cool down after a hot and heavy seventh inning. Let fans build their own with pound cake slices, vanilla ice cream, defrosted frozen peaches and raspberries.

**Homemade BBQ Links**

Smoky miniature hot dogs bathed in a tangy but sweet barbecue sauce vanish in no time when served to family and friends. Perfect as an appetizer at an early autumn barbecue. Serve the homemade BBQ links hot as an entrée with baked beans, coleslaw and mini buns (just cut regular hot dog buns in cross wide slices), or room temperature as an appetizer. BBQ links travel well for a pot luck or picnics -- think tailgate party --especially if heated in a crock pot and toted to the party in that crock pot.

What You’ll Need  
Ground meat such as pork, chicken or beef  
Liquid smoke  
Seasonings  
Food processor  
Sausage stuffer  
Link casings  
Plastic food wrap  
Vegetables  
Tomato sauce, juice or ketchup  
Sweetener

Line Up the Links  
Add the liquid smoke, sweetener and other spices and seasonings to the ground meat. Try cumin, mace, dry mustard, garlic and onion powder, black pepper, salt, ground celery seed or coriander. Add in paprika for a nice red color. Toss in the sweetener such as white or brown sugar.

Stir well to combine all the ingredients. Make in smaller batches if necessary, rather than in one large batch.

Emulsify the meat in a food processor until it becomes a paste. If you’ve ever looked at the inside of a BBQ link you’d see it’s homogenous. Add ice water if the mixture becomes too thick. You’re looking for the consistency of baby food meat. Scrape down the sides of the processor often. You can’t pick out any ingredients. Again work in batches, if necessary, to thoroughly blend the meats with the seasonings.

Attach the link casings to the sausage stuffer. Add the meat mixture and fill the casings. Twist the casings every 3 inches so tie off the links. You could also use plastic food wrap instead of the sausage stuffer and casing. Place a 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch cylinder of emulsified meat at one end of a sheet of plastic about an inch from the edge. Roll the cylinder in the plastic to wrap it tightly. Tie the ends with of thread or string at each end.

Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Immerse the links into the water. Simmer 20 minutes. Insert a meat thermometer into one of the links. It should read 160 degrees Fahrenheit for pork and beef, 165 F for poultry. Fish the links out of the water. Cut the casings between each link. If you used the plastic wrap method, open the long sausage and cut into 3-inch long links.

OR BUY LITTLE LINKS AND SKIP ALL THE ABOVE STEPS

Time for a Barbecue Bath  
Chop the onions, shallots or leeks finely. Chop the green, red or orange sweet peppers as well. If you like your barbecue on the spicy side, add in a chopped jalapeno pepper or red pepper flakes. Sauté until the vegetables are soft but not brown, about 5 minutes on medium heat.

Combine your choice of tomato sauce, tomato juice, or ketchup with a good splash of liquid smoke. Add in a sweetener such as honey, brown sugar or maple syrup. Bring to a simmer. Reduce by half if you used tomato juice.

**Tailgate Heaven with Kansas City Ribs**

Football, whether high school, college or pro, is a big part of the fall festivities. Make these ribs ahead and tote to your favorite tailgating spot. Should you choose pork ribs, baby back ribs, beef ribs or short ribs? Should you use a dry rub or no rub? Bake them in the oven, grill or slow smoke them? Sauce or sans sauce? The questions are seemingly endless. No matter what ribs you choose and how you cook them, the ribs should be tender and juicy.

This menu includes baby back ribs marinated in a sweet and sour vinegar mop, smoked over a slow fire until the meat falls off the bone. If you don't want to grill in the late fall season, bake in a slow oven for 3 hours. Finish off the ribs with fire engine red sauce. And what goes better with ribs than coleslaw and 3-bean salad -- not much. Both are travel well and taste good at room temperature.

Combine 2 cups of apple cider vinegar with 2 cups of apple juice. Add three crushed cloves of garlic, one chopped onion, and up to four chopped jalapenos, the more you add the spicier the mop. Set aside one cup of the mop in a zip lock bag. Put the rest of the mop in a large zip lock bag with the ribs. Marinate overnight.

Fire engine red sauce sounds complicated but it's actually quite easy to prepare. Pour one large can of tomato juice into a sauce pan, add the juice of a lemon, 2 tablespoons butter, one chopped onion, one chopped red sweet pepper, three chopped jalapenos and 1/4 cup brown sugar. Let simmer until the sauce is reduced by half. That should take about an hour.

Light the grill. When the coals are covered with gray ash, spread the coals apart to lower the heat. Wrap wood chips in aluminum foil. Poke about four or five holes in the foil to let the smoke escape. Add the packet next to but not touching the charcoal. You want it to smoke not burn.

Grill for two hours, basting, or mopping, the ribs every 20 minutes with the reserved mop. If the weather is too cold for grilling, bake in a 300 degree oven for 3 hours. Mopping every 20 minutes after the first hour.

Serve the fire engine red sauce on the side for those that don't like sauce on their ribs.

Coleslaw takes no time to prepare. Add 1/2 cup of mayonnaise to 1/2 cup of apple cider vinegar, 1 tablespoon of celery seeds and 2 tablespoons of brown sugar, honey or white sugar. Add the dressing to one package of shredded cabbage and toss.

Three bean salad is available in the canned vegetable section or make your own. Drain and rinse a can each of green beans, garbanzo beans, and kidney beans. Dress with ½ cup of apple cider vinegar mixed with 1 tablespoon of brown sugar and ½ teaspoon each garlic and onion powder.

**Classic Roasted Game Hens**

Game hens are nothing more than baby chickens, but they do make an elegant presentation for a late fall dinner. The game hens are marinated in a lime juice and chipotle bath overnight, then roasted. The meat is succulent and tender with a south of the border twist. Accompany the birds with baby roasted red potatoes basted with olive oil and rosemary. String beans are an easy and tasty side when you add almonds and garlic. A black bean soup is a nice starter in cooler weather rather than a salad, and carries through the southwest flavor. Finish with chocolate ice cream sprinkled with cinnamon and a very light dusting of cayenne pepper. Count on one game hen per serving for normal appetites and 1 ½ hens for hungry guys.

Split the hens in half. They'll roast more evenly. Plan on one hen per person. Combine 1 1/2 cups lime juice, four crushed garlic cloves, one bunch chopped scallions, and 1 tbsp. chipotle powder for four birds. Add more or less chipotle powder depending on how spicy you like your food. Reserve 1/2 cup of the mixture and store separately. Put the remaining marinade and the split hens in a zipper-locked bag and marinate at least overnight.

Scrub the potatoes and dry. If the potatoes are no bigger than a golf ball, leave them whole. If they're bigger cut in half or quarters. Combine ¼ cup chopped fresh rosemary with ½ cup olive oil. Reserve a couple teaspoons of the oil and rub the potatoes with the rest of the mixture.

Poultry needs to reach an internal temperature of at least 165 F. The game hens should roast at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes. The juices should run clear. The potatoes can roast at the same time the game hens are cooking but put them in the oven 10 minutes before the birds.

Cook fresh or frozen green beans until tender. Add a few teaspoons of the reserved rosemary oil to a saute pan and 2 or 3 chopped garlic cloves along with ¼ cup of almond slices. Cook over medium heat until the garlic is fragrant and the almonds are turning a nice golden brown. Add the beans and heat through.

Use your favorite recipe for a black bean soup. Or simply combine 1 chopped red pepper, 1 small chopped onion, 1 small chopped jalapeno to 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sauté until the veggies are soft, about 5 minutes. Add 1 can of drained and rinsed black beans and 1 teaspoon cumin. Mash about half of the beans. Add 4 cups chicken broth and bring to a simmer. The mashed beans will thicken the broth. Simmer about 15 minutes. Garnish with a dollop of sour cream, chopped scallions and a wedge of fresh lime.

**Fall Vegetables and Pasta Dish**

Fall is back to school time with the holidays right around the corner. Sometimes you need a supper that takes only minutes to make. Pasta fills the bill. It's a common misconception that pasta isn't healthy. All those carbs! And when was the last time you saw a skinny Italian chef on TV? Well, not only can pasta be healthy, but delicious and filling as well. How about Fall Pasta Primavera? Succulent fresh fall veggies bathed in a lemon sage sauce. Don't be scared off by the olive oil. Olive is good for you and this recipe only uses a teaspoon per serving.

Serves Four

1 cup cooked acorn or hubbard squash. Look in the produce section for ready-to-cook, peeled and diced squash.   
1 cup lima beans

1 cup thinly sliced Brussel sprouts, again some produce sections have these sliced and ready

Greens of your choice. 2 cups. Kale, spinach, Chinese cabbage or bok choy. Two cups sounds like a lot but it cooks down.   
Olive oil 1 teaspoon   
One large red onion thinly sliced   
3 garlic cloves minced   
Lemon   
Sage leaves, 3 or 4 fresh or ½ teaspoons dried and crumbled.   
Freshly cooked pasta at least 4 cups, 6 is a more generous serving

Blanch the lima beans for five minutes in boiling water. That simply means dump the beans in the boiling water and then fish them out again after five minutes. emove and drain well, blotting to remove any water. The water dilutes the final dish.

Heat the olive oil in a nonstick pan. Add the onions and garlic and cook over medium high heat. Until the garlic browns just the tiniest bit,

Add the greens, lima beans, squash and Brussel sprouts. Cook over medium heat until the greens are wilted, probably no more than three minutes, the Brussel sprouts will still be crunchy. Spritz with the juice of half a lemon and a splash of white wine. If you don't want to use white wine, add two tablespoons of the pasta cooking water. Sprinkle the finely chopped sage leaves over the veggies.

Immediately add the pasta and heat through. If you want a heartier dish, add shredded chicken, crumbled bacon, diced ham or cooked shrimp.

**How to Make Warm Spicy Asian Chicken Salad**

You might not think of salad as a fall supper but this salad is filling and warm. The sweet spicy dressing compliments the chicken. Use shredded chicken from the grocer or buy a roasted chicken. Of course you can always use left over chicken or even canned chicken in a pinch. You will need about ½ cup or 4 ounces of shredded chicken for each serving. Try those plastic boxes of organic baby greens rather than bagged salad. It's more expensive than a head of lettuce but cheaper than bagged. And for some reason the boxed salad greens stay fresher longer than the bagged lettuce, even after you open the box. Okay so here we go on our Asian journey.

Combine one part rice vinegar with one part oil and one part freshly squeezed orange juice and the grated rind of that orange. Add no more than 1/2 teaspoon of toasted sesame oil to a half cup of the dressing or the sesame oil flavor will overpower the dish.

Throw in some grated ginger and garlic. Add a chopped jalapeno pepper and sweeten to taste. You could use brown sugar or honey. If you don't have jalapenos, use cayenne pepper, red pepper flakes, hot sauce or chili oil. Go easy on the spicy seasonings. You could always add more if you want to bump up the heat but it's difficult to remove the little pieces of jalapeno if the dressing is too hot. Mix well. A few dashes of soy sauce finishes off the dressing.

Toss together one cup of the lettuce with another cup of your choice of chopped vegetables for each serving. Scallions, shredded carrots, water chestnuts, frozen peas and cucumbers are all good choices. Don't worry about cooking the peas. They'll defrost by the time you're ready to serve the salad.

Heat the dressing until very hot but not boiling. Heat the chicken in the microwave. Heat one cup of rice per serving in the microwave.

Add about 1/4 cup of the dressing for each serving of salad and toss well. Place a scoop of rice on the plate. Top with the salad and then the cooked hot chicken. Garnish with slivered almonds, crunchy rice noodles and a few slices of fresh oranges. Drizzle a few more tablespoons of dressing over the dish.

**Leftover Slow Cooker Chili**

Is there anything better than tucking into a bowl of chili on a chilly fall evening? Now you can make chili with your leftovers. You don't want to throw away that lonely baked chicken leg, last few slices of roast pork, or roast beef. What to do? Save the leftovers in the freezer until you have about a pound of meat - that's about 2 cups, then make leftover chili. This dinner is perfect for fall nights when not everyone can eat at the same time. The slow cooker keeps the chili hot.

Makes four servings

2 cups chicken, hamburger, pork and/or beef. Chop the meat into 1/2 inch cubes. You could even throw in a smoked sausage if you like. Any combo or ratio will do, just keep in mind that lamb has a distinct flavor and can overpower the dish.

2 cups raw vegetables such as onions, sweet peppers, or corn. Chopped into ½ inch cubes.

2 cups canned fire roasted tomatoes with juice. You could also use fresh cherry tomatoes sliced in half.

Add the canned tomatoes to the slow cooker and smash against the bottom of the cooker to break them up. A potato masher works well. Add ½ teaspoon of red pepper flakes. More if you like your chili spicy. Add the vegetables, leftover meat, and 1 can of rinsed, drained beans.

Splash in about a cup of beer. Water or chicken bouillon works as well. You could also use tomato juice. Don't waste wine on this dish. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

Serve over cooked rice, pasta or crushed corn chips.