

By NLDestiny
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Local Waterfront Cooking Class Cooks Up Innovative Autumn Recipes

Sources:

1. Kevin McCarthy, Culinary Instructor, Paul Smith's College [518-327-6230](tel:518-327-6230)
2. Tom Pollack, Culinary Instructor, Executive Chef Paul Smith's College, TPollock@paulsmiths.edu
3. Student Chef, Stephanie Dalaba, stephanie.dalaba@me.com
4. Preston Hulse, Student Chef
5. Alison Abdo, Student Chef
6. Gavin Bicknell, Student Chef
7. Adam Newstead, Student Chef

Sidebar:

Serving Lunch 11:30 - 1:30 p.m., Dinner 5-8 p.m., September 15 through December 9, 2011.

Reservations are requested but not necessary
phone [518-327-6355](tel:518-327-6355)

- **Bacon Quinoa Stuffed Squash Recipe:**

4 (1 pound golden nugget squashes)

Cooking spray

¼ pound bacon

½ C finely chopped carrot

½ C finely chopped onion

2 garlic cloves, minced

½ C vegetable stock

2 C cooked quinoa

2 T chopped fresh parsley

½ t chopped fresh thyme

¼ t black pepper

¾ C (3 ounces) shredded 2% reduced-fat Monterey Jack cheese, divided

1. Cut the top quarter off each squash; reserve tops. Discard seeds. Arrange squashes, cut sides down, in 2 (11x7-inch) baking dishes. Fill each dish with 1-inch of water; microwave 1 dish at HIGH 15 minutes. Remove dish; repeat with remaining dish. Cool.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add bacon; sauté 5 minutes or until crisp. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon. Add carrot, onion, and garlic to drippings in pan; sauté 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in ½ cup vegetable broth; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; cover and cook 8 minutes or until carrot is tender.
4. Combine bacon, carrot mixture, quinoa, parsley, thyme, salt, and pepper; stir in ½ cup cheese. Stuff about 1 cup quinoa mixture in each squash, and top each serving with 1 tablespoon cheese. Arrange stuffed squashes in a broiler-safe baking dish, and place tops in dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Remove from oven.
5. Preheat broiler to high.
6. Broil squashes 4 minutes or until cheese is golden.

Serves 4 (serving size 1 stuffed squash)

• **Butternut Apple Cider Soup with Sage:**

2 quarts of medium diced butternut squash (or pumpkin will suffice)

1 cup roughly chopped white onion (vidalia preferred)

1 quart vegetable stock (water can be substituted)

1 quart apple cider

1 Table Spoon finely minced ginger

2 cloves finely minced garlic

1 tsp sage

1 tbs Cider Vinegar (may be substituted with white wine vinegar or another neutral flavored vinegar)

2 Tbs Butter (oil may be substituted)

Salt and Pepper to taste

In a medium sauce pot, sweat on low heat the onion and the squash or pumpkin in the melted butter. When the onion is translucent, add the garlic and ginger. Stir, still on low heat for 30 seconds. Add the thyme, then the cider and vegetable stock. It is important in the first steps that no browning occurs on the vegetables as it will result in the final product having an undesirable color and bitterness. Slowly simmer until the squash or pumpkin is soft enough to be easily mashed with a fork. Be mindful of the amount of liquid in your pot, the vegetables should barely float at all times, add water if needed. When the squash or pumpkin is totally soft, blend or process in a food processor. Judge the thickness of the resulting puree, if it is extremely thick, add water or stock until you have acquired your desired thickness. At this point in time add the cider vinegar, blend thoroughly and taste. Soup may be garnished with finely diced apple or toasted pumpkin seeds. Yields approximately half a gallon.

PAUL SMITHS—A gorgeous waterfront culinary training center doubling as an elegant café, is one of the best kept secrets in Franklin County. Students cook and develop recipes as innovative as the restaurant.

Bacon and Quinoa Stuffed Squash, Butternut Apple Cider Soup with Sage, Rabbit with Sweet Potato and Pumpkin Stuffing are the most recent recipes delighting the St. Regis Café student chefs at Paul Smith's College.

The student and faculty operated St. Regis Café located in the Joan Weill Student Center on campus is open to the public. The fall harvests are upon us and student chefs are delighting in autumn recipe innovation, according to Tom Pollack, executive chef, culinary instructor, Paul Smith's College.

“They blend tradition with a twist,” Pollack, said.

Pollack explained, “The farms are driving what we are doing.” We get sweet dumpling pumpkins, heirloom variety white, yellow, red, purple and orange carrots, acorn, butternut, and buttercup squashes from Tucker Farms, which is just down the road.

Pollack said the quality of local ingredients is much better. The students use fresh picked, top quality vegetables and fruits from either our culinary garden or local farms, which are still full of flavor and nutrients, because “we are getting it out of the dirt, not off of a truck, is what makes the St. Regis Café` recipes stand out.”

“Freshness, it makes all the difference in quality and flavor,” Pollack said. The student chefs combine old recipes with innovative ideas, Pollack said.

“Like our Butternut Apple Cider Soup with Sage and Bacon, it’s a flavorful soup that’s new to the North Country,” Pollack said. It stands out both in your mind and your mouth. It has a consistency smoother than traditional butternut squash soup, with a less nutty, sweeter flavor, he said.

Another innovative autumn recipe, Bacon Quinoa Stuffed Squash by student Chef Stephanie Dalaba adds more flavors by adding vegetable stock instead of water, and bacon to give it a smokier flavor, Pollack said.

Stephanie Dalaba, student chef added, I enjoyed making that recipe. Being a chef is pleasurable and allows for ingenuity to create innovative and scrumptious recipes, she said.

The chefs at the St. Regis try new-fangled flavors, up-to-the-minute ideas, steering their imagination into uncharted realms. Customers can observe and savor this on their plates. Like the quinoa recipe, Adam Newstead, student chef said.

The St. Regis culinary instructors teach flavor, freshness and variety as fundamentals to its students. Paul Smith's College Culinary Instructor, Kevin McCarthy believes freshness and flavor come from local products, from local farms.

"Freshness doesn't come from a truck that's delivering carrots harvested two weeks ago, been on the road for a week and been sprayed with something to keep them from spoiling until they get here," McCarthy, said. That's what we teach and believe he added.

"It's all about the experience, having fun with the food and the dining environment. The St. Regis's deck outside offers our customers' a stunning view of Lower St. Regis Lake and from the tables inside as well. Where else can you go and get that?" McCarthy said.

He added that a primitive outdoor cooking class using no utensils is part of the culinary curriculum at Paul Smith's College.

Student chef Alison Abdo, cooked up an innovative autumn meal. Rabbit was tied to a stick, stuffed with sweet potato and pumpkin, and then leisurely roasted over an open fire pit in the ground.

Mean while, student chef Preston Hulse, with the help of fellow student chefs had dug a hole in the ground, filled it with burning embers, buried a cabbage wrapped trout, then covered it with the dirt. He let it cook for an hour. Corn patties and gourds were also fire roasted.

“Freshness and new ideas is what sets our recipes apart from everyone else’s. We like to create and autumn is an especially fun time to create new recipes,” Gavin Bicknell, student chef said.