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**** CORRECTION FROM HOMEGROWN FREDERICK ****

I am sorry to say that Homegrown Hay Days was cancelled for this year due to the pandemic. However many farms that participate in Homegrown Hay Days are still open including

- Black Ankle Vineyards
- Brookfield Pumpkins
- Catoctin Breeze Vineyards
- Catoctin Mountain Orchard
- Gaver Farm
- Linagnore Winecellars
- Mayne's Tree Farm
- Milkhouse Brewery
- Orchid Cellars
- Rocky Point Creamery
- Scenic View Orchards
- South Mountain Creamery
- Summers Farm
- Thanksgiving Farm
- Winterbrook Farm

While many of the farms have changed their offerings this year due to current guidelines. I encourage you to check their Facebook page or website for more details.

HOMEGROWN HAYDAYS FOR PUMPKIN PICKING PLEASURE

Fall is here and temperatures are dropping so get ready to visit some of the hardest working farms in Frederick County. **Homegrown Hay Days**, traditionally held during the third weekend of October, is happening in 2020. Participating farms are stepping it up so put on your mask and enjoy a Frederick County tradition.

On October 17th and 18th, from 10 AM to 4 PM, area farms will open up their doors. There's no registration or ticket required. Travel the countryside and stop at one or all 21 of them! For a complete list of farms and events visit <http://www.homegrownfrederick.com/homegrown-haydays>

The self-guided farm adventure showcases everything from alpaca's to pumpkin carving to wine tasting. Each farm hosts a variety of special activities and events, so there's plenty to do for every age. I'm looking forward to a hay ride to pick the perfect pumpkin. Not only is pumpkin an ideal fall decoration, but a noteworthy addition to a healthy diet.

Pumpkin is nutrient rich providing significant amounts of Vitamin A and several carotenoids, most familiar being beta-carotene. Dark, leafy green vegetables and red, yellow and orange vegetables contain beta-carotene; the darker the color the richer the source. Pumpkins are the **highest** vegetable source of beta-carotene. Vitamin A is crucial for vision, maintaining healthy cells, fighting infections, and promoting growth and development. Carotenoids play a role in prevention of certain kinds of cancer and other diseases.

Two other important carotenoids found in pumpkin are lutein and zeaxanthin; studies suggest that increased intake of lutein lowers risk for age-related macular degeneration, the number one cause of blindness for people over 55. People with the highest intakes of these two carotenoids also have a decreased risk of cataracts. Other advantages for adding pumpkin to your family meals are the fiber (7 grams) and potassium (500 mg) it provides in a one cup serving.

While pumpkin picking realize there are two types. The small ones, 8 to 10 inches in diameter, have a fine texture, sweet flesh, and are ideal for cooking, giving a better flavor than the large varieties. The jumbo or field type, which are 12 inches or larger and weigh 20 to 40 pounds, have a coarse-texture and dry flesh and are best left for decorating.

Pumpkins should be harvested when the rind is hard and the vine begins to deteriorate, but before a heavy frost. One pound of raw pumpkin yields three-fourths to one cup cooked, mashed pumpkin. To prepare pumpkin you can bake, boil, or steam it. To bake, wash and cut in half to remove the seeds and stringy portion. Place cut side down in a pan and bake at 350°F for approximately one hour or until tender. Scoop out the flesh and mash with a sieve, mill or blender. To boil or steam pumpkin, cut into small pieces, peel and cook, until soft. To microwave one whole pumpkin (2 pounds) or pieces of a larger pumpkin, pierce skin of pumpkin. Place on a paper towel. Cook 7 minutes; turn over once. Cut in half; remove peel and seedy center. Cut pumpkin into chunks cook pumpkin in a 1-quart covered glass casserole 6 or more minutes, or until tender. Stir halfway through cooking. The mashed pumpkin is now ready for making pies, cookies, bread, soup, custard or a variety of vegetable dishes. Don't forget to save the seeds and toast them for a snack.

If you have too much pumpkin to use right away, try freezing it. Just cool the mashed pumpkin by placing the pan containing the pumpkin in cold water and stir occasionally. Package leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

If you can't make it to the Festival, you might try one of the multitude of **PUMPKIN SPICE** products in the supermarket. Each year food manufacturers create more selections and the choices are getting ridiculous. During a quick visit down the aisles, I saw traditional products like pumpkin rolls, bread, pie and soup. New products cover the gamut – Kcups, coffee creamer, beer, vodka, cereal, donuts, cupcakes, biscotti, granola, Pop Tarts®, pudding and pie filling, syrup, Toll House® morsels, Little Debbie® cakes, marshmallows, Oreo® cookies, chicken sausage, tortilla chips, dog treats, etc. There is even a harvest pumpkin spice Hershey® Kiss!

The majority of these products are highly processed, high in sugar, and contain little to no actual pumpkin, so read the list of ingredients. I did find a yummy Chobani® greek yogurt called

Pumpkin Spice that was delicious and provided 40% daily value for Vitamin A. My advice is to make your own pumpkin treats using the recipes below.

PUMPKIN MUFFINS

3/4 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cups white whole wheat flour
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1 egg
1/2 cup cooked mashed pumpkin
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup milk

Stir together dry ingredients. Beat egg slightly. Combine, egg, milk, pumpkin and oil. Add wet ingredients all at once to dry mixture. Stir until combined, batter should be lumpy. Fold in raisins and fill greased muffin cups until 2/3 full. Bake 20-25 minutes at 400°F. Makes 12 muffins.

CREAM OF PUMPKIN SOUP

2 tablespoons margarine
1 large onion, finely minced or pureed
1 1/2 teaspoons flour
1 1/2 cup chicken broth
1 can (16 ounce) pumpkin
3 cups milk
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon ginger
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

Combine margarine and onion in a 3-quart casserole. *Microwave on high 3 to 4 minutes. Add flour, stir until blended. Add chicken broth, whisking to blend. Stirring midway through cooking, microwave on high 7 to 8 minutes, or until bubbly.

Blend in pumpkin, milk, salt, pepper, ginger and cinnamon. Stir until smooth. Microwave on 70% (medium-high) power, 10 to 12 minutes or until hot. Makes 2 quarts or 8 (1-cup) servings.

PUMPKIN PUDDING

Graham crackers
1 package instant pudding, vanilla OR pumpkin flavored
1 1/2 cup milk, very cold
2 cups canned or cooked mashed pumpkin

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Crumble graham crackers. Beat pudding mix into 1 1/2 cups of cold milk with wire whisk for two minutes. Beat in pumpkin and spices. Layer pudding with graham crackers into individual serving dishes. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Optional preparation method: Pour pudding into graham cracker crust and refrigerate until ready to serve.

PUMPKIN CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

This is a family favorite rich in Vitamin A and flavor

1/2 salt
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp ginger
2 cups flour
2 cups sugar
1 cup oil
4 eggs
1 small can pumpkin (1 1/2 cups)

Cake:

Preheat oven to 350°F. In one large bowl, stir together dry ingredients and set aside. Beat sugar and oil together in a large mixing bowl. Add eggs, pumpkin, and mix until well blended. Add dry ingredients gradually to liquid mixture and mix until combined. Spray a jellyroll pan with non-stick coating and pour in cake batter. Bake at 350°F for 20 to 25 minutes. Cool well and then spread on frosting.

FROSTING

3 ounces cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup butter, softened
3 cups powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla

Frosting:

Beat softened butter and cream cheese until well blended. Add powdered sugar and vanilla. Beat until creamy.

NO CRUST PUMPKIN PIE

1 (12 oz.) can evaporated skim milk
1 (16 oz.) can pumpkin OR 2 cups fresh pumpkin puree
2 eggs
3/4 cup sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/2 cup whole wheat flour

3/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoons melted margarine
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ginger
1/4 teaspoon cloves

Spray a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate with non-stick spray. Blend all ingredients in blender until smooth. Pour into pie plate. Bake 50 to 55 minutes in a 350°F oven

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