

HARVEST THYME

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"I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, then be crowded on a velvet cushion." HD Thoreau

Harvest Thyme is time for work, but also time for fun! Half Moon Bay is famous for its pumpkin festival, but a warning--the traffic there is horrendous on weekends. A better alternative is to visit a more local pumpkin farm in Livermore or Clayton, or even Windmill Farms in San Ramon. Not a farm, but this is a popular produce stand which has lots of pumpkins in the fall. However, my favorite autumn trek especially if you have children or grandchildren, is to visit **Bishops' Pumpkin Farm** in Wheatland which is north of Sacramento on Highway 65. They have great pumpkins, especially the super huge ones. This is a real farm with lots of activities for the kids (slide in a hay mow, animals, etc.) and the best real train ride through large fields. The bakery is super--try the walnut pie, made from walnuts from the local orchards. Another super pumpkin patch with a great variety of pumpkins and the largest corn maze in the world (it's in the Guinness book of records) is Cool Patch Pumpkins in Dixon, off Highway 80. For directions, see websites for both--they contain photos and lots of information.

Apple orchards (and more pumpkin patches) can be found in the **Apple Hill** area in the foothills near Placerville. Of course, like every place, these are more crowded on weekends, so if you can, visit during the week. Whenever you go, don't miss Rainbow Orchards as they have the very best freshly made hot apple cider donuts! Look up Apple Hill on-line and get a trail map and information of the many farms in this area just off Highway 50.

If you don't have the time to make one of these trips, you can still have "good thymes" at home. Have a harvest celebration--decorate with lots of pumpkins, wheat, corn shucks, fall fruits. Make a fresh flower arrangement in a pumpkin-use fresh herbs, mums, dahlias. And of course, serve some wonderful autumn dishes!

HARVEST BREAD PUDDING

Place 8-10 slices cinnamon raisin bread on a baking sheet in 350 oven for 5 minutes. Remove from oven, cool and break into 1 inch cubes. (Makes about 4 Cups) In large bowl, beat 3 eggs, 1 can pumpkin, 2 Cups milk, 3/4 Cup sugar, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon cloves, 1/4 teaspoon salt; mix well. stir in bread cubes. Let sit 5 minutes. Pour into buttered 1 & 1/2 quart size dish (9 x 13 pan works too) and bake at 350 for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Serve warm or cold with whipped cream.

CURRY PUMPKIN SOUP

Melt 1/4 Cup butter in skillet and add 1 large onion, thinly sliced. Sprinkle with about 1 teaspoon sugar and saute till limp. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon curry powder (or more) and saute another 5 minutes. In blender, mix curried onions, 2 cans pumpkin and 2 Cups milk or cream. Transfer to a large saucepan and heat slowly with chicken stock. Serve garnished with fresh chives.

GRANDMA B's APPLE PIE

Place a 9 in pastry in pie pan. Make topping: Mix 1/2 C & 2 Tbl flour, 1/2 C brown sugar, 1/3 C white sugar, 2 tsp cinnamon. Cut in 1/2 C butter till crumbly. Make Filling: Slice 7 large apples (3 & 1/2 lb) (I use Golden Delicious). Toss with 1 T lemon juice, then toss with mix of 3 Tbl flour, 1/2 C sugar, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1/4 tsp nutmeg. Layer apples in pan, mounding higher in center. Pat on the topping to form top crust. Place on baking sheet and bake 15 minutes at 400. Reduce heat to 350, baking another 45 minutes. Remove foil last 20 minutes. Enjoy!

