

# Harnessing the Power of Seasonal Picks: A Guide to Bettering Your Seasonal Awareness in the Kitchen

By Mikayla Stock

As winter's bitterness settles in around Ithaca, many Cornellians and residents alike are longing for the days when we are once again able to revel in the joy of warm weather and witness skies of any color but gray. Getting distracted by the many dislikes of the cold can be tempting during the transition from autumn to winter, so much so that the change of seasons may seem like a cause accounting for minimal celebration when one considers the many months of chilliness ahead. However, the transition doesn't need to be the cause of our impending doom, but instead it can pose as the outlet through which we experience the earth's edible offerings in a new (and rather delicious) light. When we embrace the seasonal produce, flavors, and smells that make up the latter months of the year, we can expand our culinary repertoire, gain further insight and appreciation towards plant-powered recipes, and show support to the farmers that make all the tasty magic possible from the source.

## CARAMEL APPLE MULE

Adapted from @bevsbybeverly on  
TikTok

### RECIPE

Yield: 1 cocktail  
Time: 5 minutes

#### Ingredients:

1/2 oz lemon juice  
3 oz apple cider  
2 oz vodka  
1/2 oz caramel sauce, plus extra for garnish  
Ginger Beer  
Ice  
Sliced apples, for garnish

Add all ingredients, except ginger beer, ice, and garnishes, to a mule. Stir to combine. Add ice and top with ginger beer. Garnish with sliced apples and caramel sauce. Sip and enjoy.



Squash, pumpkins, apples, and cranberries are just a handful of the produce that make up the flavors signifying this transition. A trip to a local farm stand can reveal the many possibilities for utilizing the season's harvest to your advantage. Squash can be roasted, blended, baked, or sauteed to add an excellent nutty addition to meals. Pumpkins can act as the key to embracing traditional flavors when used in pies, cookies, breads, or soups, and apples can be poached, baked, blended, or perched next to your favorite cheeses on your holiday charcuterie board. Lastly, tart cranberries make a wonderful addition as a winter staple for sauces, cocktails, cookies, or granola.

Seasonal plant-based delights such as these and many others will encourage you to step back and recognize the magic of the earth's natural supply as they play a vital role in our favorite autumn and winter recipes. After all, without many of these signature fresh, nutty, bright, and tart flavors in our winter dishes, the change of seasons wouldn't be nearly as special.



PHOTO: Abby Reing

## ROASTED HONEY NUT SQUASH Served with Sage Compound Butter

### RECIPE

Yield: 8 halves  
Time: 1 hour

#### Compound butter

1 stick salted butter, softened  
4 sage leaves, finely chopped  
2 heaping tsp shallot, finely chopped  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground

#### Squash

4 honey nut squash, washed and cut in half horizontally with seeds scooped out

1. In a small bowl mix the butter, sage, and shallot until the mixture is well combined
2. Add salt and ground pepper, stir to combine
3. Place butter mixture onto a sheet of plastic wrap and roll into a log formation, twist and roll in ends of log and set aside in fridge to harden
4. Preheat oven to 450° F (230° C)
5. Place squash halves onto a baking sheet with scooped side facing upwards
6. Brush squash halves with olive oil
7. Bake for 25 mins until tops begin to caramelize
8. Remove squash from oven and transfer to a plate with tongs
9. Remove compound butter log from fridge and cut into 1 inch coins
10. Place the compound butter coins inside of the squash where the seeds were removed
11. Serve hot and enjoy



PHOTO: Abby Reing

*Seasonal staples grant you a creative  
outlet to show your appreciation for  
the transition to winter and try your  
hand at some new recipes.*

Also, the transition presents the perfect opportunity to research what is growing in your area to support farmers and the local economy as the snow settles in. Whether you're enjoying the comfort of an apartment, dorm room, or house at this chilly time of the semester, I encourage you to take advantage of the bountiful seasonal goodies that not only pose as a delicious occasion for recipe exploration, but also whose flavors, textures, and smells exemplify the nostalgia and delight of winter for all who choose to enjoy them.



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