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September means cool nights and warm days. The stars seem twice as bright in the clear, midnight air. The morning sky is a brilliant blue and the sun has a golden hue. I welcome that extra cup of coffee in the morning for the warmth it brings but don shorts and a t-shirt



for my afternoon walk. I think of these days as Indian summer but am not sure if it is politically correct to say it out loud. Perhaps I should just rename it Apple Picking Time.

September is when we pick apples in New Hampshire. Sure you can get apples year round from Chile and China. But those apples travel long and far. They just can't compare to locally grown. In the fall when New England orchards are brimming with fruit, it's time to think local not global.

An orchard is a wonderful place to spend an early fall afternoon. Family farms dot the New England landscape and many open their orchards to the public in September and October. Some farms have taken the route of autumnal extravaganza. Before you pick your apples you can get lost in a corn maze, ride a pony or carve a pumpkin. With lots to see and do, you can easily fill an afternoon.

Bring a kid, maybe two or three, along with you. (If they're not your own, don't forget to check with their mothers first!) Several years ago, I took two of my nieces and a few of their friends to pick apples. It was a glorious day, warm and sunny. The girls dashed through the corn maze in record time, visited the horses and inspected the pumpkins and gourds. They were in constant motion, five delightful dervishes whirling in different directions.

Eventually we headed into the orchard. The little girls dashed up and down the rows of trees, playing tag and climbing up into the lower branches. They practiced juggling and had a wonderful time hurling rotten apples to see who could throw the farthest. Luckily no one got the idea to throw apples at each other. Keeping track of the girls was a lot like herding cats.

Finally we started to pick and before long our bags were heavy with Cortlands and Macs. We finished just in time. Loaded down with girls and apples, I pulled away from the farm just as the sun dipped behind the trees and the temperature dropped.

Back at the house, the giggles and fun continued in the kitchen. We melted caramels and the girls dunked crispy apples in the warm, sweet goo. For the final step and la pièce de résistance, the girls rolled their sticky apples in sprinkles and little candies. An apple a day may keep the doctor away but not when they are coated with sugary treats!



Enjoy apple season. Take a long walk through an old orchard, admire the view and pick a bushel or a peck. Or find a comfy armchair and curl up with a good book and a mug of cider. Fill your kitchen with the fragrant perfume of apples bubbling into a sauce with cinnamon and nutmeg or a savory feast of pork with apples and onions.

Have a lovely September and bon appétit!

*Susan*

## Roasted Pork Loin with Apples & Onions

*A wonderful, old fashioned dinner, pork loin roasted with apples and onion will hit the spot on a chilly night.*

*Enjoy!*

Serves 8

3-4 Cortland or Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into thick wedges  
 2 onions, cut in half length-wise and then in thin wedges  
 1 carrot, finely chopped  
 1 stalk celery, finely chopped  
 Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 1 teaspoon dried thyme, divided  
 3-4 cloves garlic, minced and divided  
 Olive oil  
 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
 1/2 teaspoon paprika  
 1 teaspoon dried sage  
 1 pork loin, about 3 pounds, trimmed and tied

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Put the apples, onions, carrot and celery in roasting pan, season with salt and pepper, sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon thyme, half the garlic and toss with a little olive oil to coat. Push the onion and apples to the sides of the pan.

Combine the mustard, paprika, sage, remaining thyme and garlic in small bowl. Generously sprinkle the pork with salt and pepper and then slaver it with the mustard mixture. Add the pork to the pan and roast at 450 degrees for 15 minutes.

Give the apples and onion a stir and reduce the heat to 350 degrees. Continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the meat registers 145 degrees\*, about 30-45 minutes.

Transfer the pork to a cutting board and let it rest, loosely covered with foil, for 15-20 minutes.

Turn the oven off, transfer the apples and onions to an ovenproof serving dish and return to the oven to stay warm.

Remove the strings from the pork, slice about 1/2-inch thick and serve with the apples and onions.

*\* There is some debate as to the proper temperature to cook pork. Historically, it has been cooked to 160 degrees. However, pork is fully cooked at 145 degrees (Pork and Pork Products CURFFL Section 113996(a (3))). At that temperature, the meat will be nice and moist and slightly pink.*



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