

Menu Planning for November

If you're planning your menu for November, there are a few holidays to consider and autumn fruits and vegetables that can be added to well-honed comfort menus.

Plan for November:

Full Moon – November 25th, called 'Beaver Moon' or Frosty Moon

National Apple Month, Good Nutrition Month, National Diabetes Month

- November 1st – All Saint's Day
- November 1st – Daylight Savings Ends
- November 2nd – Cookie Monster's birthday
- November 3rd – National Sandwich Day
- November 3rd – Election Day
- November 11th – Veteran's Day
- November 15th – Sadie Hawkins Day
- November 18th – Great American Smoke-out
- November 26th – THANKSGIVING Day

Plan ahead for December:

Full Moon – December 25th, Moon before Yule, Long

Night or Cold Moon

National 'Hi Neighbor' Month

- December 4th – National Cookie Day
- December 7th – Pearl Harbor Day
- December 6th – Hanukkah begins
- December 14th – Hanukkah ends
- December 22nd – Winter Solstice
- December 25th – Christmas
- December 26th – Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, National Whiners Day
- December 27th – National Fruitcake Day
- December 31st – New Year's Eve

Winter squash, Root Vegetables and all the Brassicas start their fall harvest...:

These are the menus of cooler weather. Our natural instincts for hibernating and the need to add to our literal and figurative layers create cravings for vitamin and mineral rich foods: the beta carotenes of winter squashes and yams; the starches of fall harvest potatoes; the rich flavors of all the *brassicas* (broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbages); the earthy flavors of root vegetables – beets, turnips, parsnips, celery root, leeks and onions. Long slow cooking methods enhance the flavors of late fall and winter vegetables. By slowly cooking these roots, tubers and hard squashes, kitchens convert the starches to sugar and have an opportunity to create delicious and inexpensive menu items.

The pilgrims would never have had green beans or fresh peas on their menu – perhaps think about using high protein and richly flavored dried beans and lentils for soups and stews. Cranberry beans and other shelling beans are also delicious vegetables with a rich and buttery flavor. If you want to have green on the plate, Bloomsdale spinach and the hardy greens are all available for the winter, they thrive in cooler weather! These are the months for all of the delicious and colorful kales and chards – spinach loves the cooler weather too. The bitter flavors of the endive family are a wonderful compliment to the richness of seasonal menus. Also consider accenting traditional recipes with dried chilies and toasted nuts for extra and unusual flavor.

The classic fruit for late fall is the cranberry and these are being harvested throughout October and November and available fresh. Cranberries are wonderfully enhanced by the zest and juice of the first of the winter citrus, but don't limit these tart and nutritious beauties to just a sauce – think about cobblers and pies with a bit of tart flavor and some fresh crème anglaise or vanilla ice cream to balance that fresh flavor. Create a *winter* cranberry cocktail; the Cape Codder is delicious in the summer, what is its winter counterpart? Desserts can be made even more delicious with the last of the heirloom apples or recently harvested pears and their relative – the quince. The brightly colored arils of pomegranates and both Fuyu and Hachiya persimmons are other fruits that can be used to enhance the menu. One last fruit option - the many varieties of figs that are finishing - use them until the first frost hits because after that, unless you have a desert supplier, they aren't available until the spring harvest.

The following items *should* be available for the month of November. Remember that availability projections are based on annual history and sometimes the weather patterns and other acts of the universe can change access to quality produce. The items noted in **BOLD** should be the best values for the month of November.

Apples

Artichokes

Asparagus – Peru

Asparagus, White - Peru

Beans – Cranberry

Beans – Dragon

Beans - Romano

Beets

Endives

Boiler Onions

Broccoli

Broccoli Rabe

Broccolini

Brussels Sprouts

Brussels Sprouts Stalk

Cabbage

Cactus Leaves

Cactus Pears

Cantaloupe

Cardoni

Cardoon

Carrots

Cauliflower

Celery

Celery Root

Chards

Chayote Squash

Cherimoya

Chestnuts

Chicories

Chili Peppers

Citrus - Mandarins

Collards

Crab Apples

Cranberries

Cucumbers

Dates

Feijoa

Fennel

Figs - ending soon

Garlic

Ginger

Gooseberry - Caped (CA)

Grapefruit

Horseradish

Jicama

Kale

Kiwifruit, (new CA)

Kohl Rabi

Leeks

Lemons

Limes

Mushroom – Black Trumpet

Mushroom – Chanterelle (OR)

Mushroom – Hedgehog

Mushroom – Hon Shimiji

Mushroom – Lobster

Mushroom - Matsutake

Mushroom – Mytake

Mushroom – Truffle (domestic)

Onions

Onions – Sweet

Oranges - Navel

Parsley Root

Parsnips

Pearl Onions

Pears - Asian

Pears - Winter

Persimmons

Pineapple

Pomegranates

Potatoes – Fingerling

Potatoes – Purple

Potatoes – Red

Potatoes - Russet

Potatoes - White

Potatoes – Yukon

Pummelo

Pumpkins

Quince

Radicchio

Radishes

Rutabaga

Shallots

Spinach

Squash (Hard)

Sunchokes

Sweet Potatoes

Tamarillos

Tangerines

Tomatillos

Turnips