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Fall Cooking Tips and Tricks

A Q&A with the *Big Green Cookbook's* author Jackie Newgent.

[Big Green Cookbook](#) is a straightforward guide for anyone trying to cook greener without spending too much time on complicated recipes. The recipes sound delicious, and I love that they are broken-down seasonally. Even the introduction section is packed with valuable information: from a "green kitchen checklist" to "27 clever tips for low-carbon cooking." It's also great to see this book continue its sustainable message from start to finish -- the book is printed with soy-based inks on 100% post-consumer paper. I recently asked Jackie Newgent, a registered dietitian and the author of this book, some questions about fall cooking.



What are the gadgets that you dust off after summer and start using again in fall?

- Indoor electric grill ... for healthful grilling anytime.
- Slow cooker ... for veggie chilis and farmers' market-inspired stews.
- Mini-fryer ... to make crispy finger food for football watching parties.

What are the new gadgets or tools on the market this fall?

Just launched this September and sold exclusively at Sur La Table is the [Scanpan CTX](#). It's the world's first induction-capable, certified PFOA-free nonstick cookware -- which means it's safe for the planet and safe for you. It has a seven-layer construction with a brushed 18/10 stainless-steel finish and a ceramic-titanium surface that allows for excellent results when browning foods and won't be damaged by use of metal cooking utensils. It's suitable for all heat sources, including the oven. It's dishwasher-safe, too.

What are some of your favorite brown-bag lunch ideas?

- Thirty California pistachios make a satisfying, deliciously healthy snack for about 100 calories. They're ideal in brown-bag lunches or for an after-school nibble for kids. Pistachios will also help to keep kids (and adults) away from the vending machines since the protein and fiber content of pistachios offer a high level of satiety -- so they're likely to feel fuller, longer. They even come in fun flavors, like [Everybody's Nuts!](#) South of the Border pistachios. NOTE: See [Paramount Farms](#) for what this major producer of pistachios is doing with sustainability efforts.
- Think beyond the usual deli meat sandwiches. Beans make a hearty sandwich filling that provide protein, too. The beans can be pureed into a spread. Try a hummus sandwich on whole grain bread, in a pita or all wrapped up with very thinly sliced cucumber, tomato and onion.
- Instead of just tossing in some plain ol' veggie sticks, make brown-bag veggies more enticing. Include an organic salad dressing or an all-natural dip like hummus along with the veggies. Or get a little more creative: Pack a carrot and raisin salad as a sweet-n-savory side or make a fresh salsa to serve as a zesty sandwich topping.

What's your favorite underused fall fruit or vegetable?

My favorite underused fall veggies includes anything from the cabbage family. These vegetables are not only super-loaded with nutrition, but their flavors are unique. If prepared properly they can be downright addictive! One of my favorites that so often only shows up once a year on Thanksgiving tables is Brussels

sprouts. I adore them. Search for new recipes and find one that you love ... and prepare it weekly throughout the fall, not yearly! Try my Brussels and Balsamic recipe in [Big Green Cookbook](#) (p. 219).

What's a sustainable meal you love to order at restaurants in fall?

I seem to be busier in fall than at any other time of the year. So, I tend to get to-go orders from restaurants at least a couple times a week. One of my favorite items to order is a big veggie burrito that works as an entire meal. I go to a Mexican restaurant that pays great attention to sustainability and much is made in house like their salsas. I'm always sure to get the tofu "sour cream" and a whole wheat tortilla. Plus, I request no utensils, so there's nothing to waste.

What are your favorite green entertaining ideas for fall?

- Food for entertaining doesn't have to require "real" cooking. And food doesn't have to be served warm or hot. Make it easy on yourself. If the food is delicious, it won't matter that you didn't spend hours (or days!) preparing the party food.
- Have everyone do the cooking for your next gathering. Make it a festive farmers' market affair, where everyone brings a dish (and the recipe) they prepared using produce from their local farmers' market. Serve your seasonal, local produce in tasty new ways, like in a root veggie guacamole that uses potatoes and sweet potatoes instead of avocados. I call my version from [Big Green Cookbook](#), Rootamole (p 189).
- Take advantage of the crisp autumn weather and plan your entertainment around the great outdoors. Fall hiking and hayrides are activities in which food can be planned around. Apple picking and pumpkin carving can be part of your food-related entertainment. And, of course, there are always tasty treats that can be made with these foods, such as fair-trade chocolate covered apples or spicy roasted pumpkin seeds.

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