

Happy Thursday ... and welcome to this week's note of non-virus-related positivity. We're now more than halfway through August and as Sara mentioned last week, fall is just around the corner.

I may have been a winter baby, but fall is my favorite season. Spiced lattes, crisp fall air, colorful leaves and lots of pumpkins ... fall is full of fun. Though the season will look different this year, my husband and I are looking forward to creating memories and traditions with our daughter as she experiences her first fall and Halloween.

Apple picking has become an annual tradition for us and we hope to continue it this year in a safe and healthy way. I happen to be allergic to this fall fruit, but that's never stopped me from enjoying a good homemade apple pie!

Some of our destinations have apple stories worthy of sharing with you, plus we checked in with some former clients and other industry pals to curate a list aimed at entertaining and inspiring you. We hope this gets you into the spirit of fall and causes you to start thinking about all the ways you can still enjoy the upcoming season – whether it's in an orchard or in the comfort of your own home.

For those with kiddos at home, there's something special for you at the end of this note. If you enjoy it, let us know and we'll be happy to include something similar in some of our upcoming weekly messages.

-Mallory



The Apple of My Pie

These Destinations Highlight That Humble Fruit of Fall

August 20, 2020 – People will be enjoying autumn in varying capacities this year, but one thing is certain: apples will always be a fan favorite for fall (behind pumpkins, of course!). Whether you prefer to pick them in an orchard, bake them in a pie or drink them in a bottle of hard cider, you can't have fall without the trusty apple. This versatile fruit can be enjoyed in so many ways! Some of our favorite destinations came together to share the ways they capture the apple's perfectly simple autumnal essence.

25-Pound Apple Pie

[Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee](#)

If the individual slices weren't tipping the scales at three pounds, Dollywood's larger-than-life apple pie would be sure to leave you wanting more. Cooked in a cast iron skillet to ensure a perfectly flaked crust and made with more than 40 apples, this 25-pound pie is nothing short of perfection. Butter, sugar, cinnamon and apples mesh to create a melt-in-your-mouth taste of fall. The good news is that this sweet treat is available at the park year-round. Even better, for those of you who have stepped up your online shopping game during quarantine or can't make it to the park personally, the pie can be shipped to you from [Spotlight Bakery](#) so you can enjoy pounds upon pounds of pie in the (hopefully) judgment-free zone of your own home.



Challenge accepted! Satisfy those quarantine food cravings with Dollywood's 25-pound apple pie.

Apple Crisp with Homemade Granola Topping

[The Otesaga Resort Hotel](#) in Cooperstown, New York

Cooperstown is known for its apples – there are more varieties grown here than anywhere else in the United States – so it makes perfect sense that the culinary team at The Otesaga has a tasty apple recipe up their sleeves. Their Apple Crisp with Homemade Granola Topping is a seasonal favorite. This part of New York is home to dozens of apple orchards, and nothing says fall like taking your family out for a pick-your-own experience and coming home with bags of fragrant apples ready for snacking or baking. If you can't get to the Otesaga to taste their delicious Apple Crisp but still find yourself craving a yummy apple dessert, they were kind enough to provide us with recipes for both their crisp filling and that homemade granola, which you can find [HERE](#). Executive Pastry Chef Peter Calhoun suggests using Granny Smith apples, since they keep their shape well and are nice and tart. Adding lemon juice water to keep them from turning brown isn't necessary, he says, as most of the time you add brown sugar and/or cinnamon and turn them brown anyway. This granola recipe makes a generous helping. If you have extra, it makes a great snack for a road trip or hike!

MBPR Note: If you make these recipes, let us know! We'd love to hear what you think and see photos of the finished product.

Apple Fried Pie

[Cobalt in Orange Beach, Alabama](#)

If you know the MBPR team, you know that we have a strict “any fried food is good food” belief ... and it just so happens that Cobalt in Orange Beach, Alabama, shares that philosophy. Their Apple Fried Pie is made using homemade biscuit dough (yes!!!!) that has been stuffed with apples and cinnamon. The dessert is then deep-fried (YUM!) and served with vanilla ice cream and a delightfully sticky caramel drizzle (WHAT? Can it get any better?). Don’t forget, apples are fruit ... so this fried dessert could probably be considered a healthy part of a balanced diet. Maybe?



We’re drooling over this Apple Fried Pie from Cobalt.

Apple Orchards

[Hendersonville, North Carolina](#)

Henderson County, North Carolina, is the largest apple-producing county in North Carolina and in the top 20 counties nationwide. It’s a client destination represented by our friend Craig Distl, who confirms that the people of Hendersonville live, eat and breathe apples. They’ve just launched an orchard [trail guide](#) that highlights 21 different orchards and markets where people can stop and stock up on the fall fruit during harvest season. Most of the orchards go above and beyond, with corn mazes, wagon rides, apple cannons, pumpkin patches, and fresh apple foods and ciders in addition to their pick-your-own apples. From September 4-7, these orchards will bring in craft vendors, food trucks and other fun activities for [Orchard Trail Days](#). You’ll be surrounded by apple products just ripe for the choosing ... everything from cider and pies to jellies and butters. Of course, all activities have been customized for a post-COVID world, with proper health and social-distancing measures in place.

Apple Butter

[Wilmington, Delaware](#)

There’s no better way to enjoy breakfast in the fall than with a nice piece of toast capped by a generous dollop of apple butter. [Highland Orchards Farm Market](#) in Wilmington, Delaware, makes a delicious [apple butter](#) using their own apples, cinnamon and their homemade apple cider. It doesn’t contain any added sugar or preservatives and, as a bonus, you’re supporting a small, family-owned business! Though apple butter is the star of the season, the family also grows fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers ... all of which are available at their market.



Apple Butter from Highland Orchards.

[Winchester Ciderworks](#) and the [Homestead Farm at Fruit Hill Orchard](#)

Winchester, Virginia

Though the beautiful town of Winchester, in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, is no longer a client, we couldn't present an apple roundup without including them. Their tourism director, Justin Kerns, told us about Winchester Ciderworks and Homestead Farm at Fruit Hill Orchard, which are owned by sisters Diane Kearns and Katherine Solenberger. Winchester Ciderworks makes traditional English cider using its own estate-grown apples, and at the adjacent farm you can find a market and bakery as well as homemade soaps and candles. The sisters established these businesses on land that has been in their family since the 1800s. Whether you prefer your apples in brew form or as fresh fruit, these ladies offer some of the tastiest products along the East Coast.

MBPR BONUS FUN:

Do you have young kids at home and you're always looking for ways to entertain them? Try these fun activities with apples!

- Cut an apple in half. Pour kid-safe paint onto some paper plates and let your kids use the apple halves as stamps to create a beautiful masterpiece. Completely fridge-worthy!
- If you want a fun science lesson, fill a cup with water and put some apple seeds in it. Then, add Alka-Seltzer tablets and watch the apple seeds jump! If you don't have Alka-Seltzer, mix baking soda in with the water, then add lemon juice. Ta-da!

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