

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER



*"We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same."
- Carlos Castaneda*

5 Things to Do This Fall With Your Whole Family

countryliving.com

As much as we all love summertime, it's safe to say you've been counting down the weeks, days, and hours until the first day of fall. Before long, you'll be Googling "fall activities near me" and looking for the best fall things to do now in your area. To help you get started, we've rounded up a fall bucket list of items that you'll want to prioritize this time of year.

- **Decorate Your Porch with Fall Flair:** Let your neighbors know how excited you are for the season with a front porch curb appeal using all the festive fall decor—pumpkins, mums, a pretty fall wreath, and vintage finds. It will make the perfect backdrop for your family's Instagram photos.
- **Host a Potluck:** Invite friends to bring their favorite fall dishes for a casual get-together to celebrate any ol' occasion—or for no reason at all!
- **Take Family Movie Night Outside:** Put those extra blankets stuffed in your linen closet to good use. Hang a large white bed sheet from your fence to re-create a big screen. Make a palette on the ground with all the extra fluff, and settle in under the stars as you and your family watch these classic kids' movies.
- **Plan a Backyard Dinner:** Dine al fresco with your family when the crisp, fall air ushers in. Cover each chair with a plaid blanket to wrap up in after the sun sets, then set the mood with cozy candles and a hearty feast. Good for you if you have a red-barn backdrop!
- **Bake an Autumnal Treat:** Use fresh finds from your local farmer's market to make apple-flavored cakes, pecan pies, and more. Talk about an impressive centerpiece for Thanksgiving!

Israeli Couscous Salad

wellplated.com

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole wheat Israeli couscous also called pearl couscous
- 1 lemon zested
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice from about 1 large lemon
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups arugula
- 1 medium English seedless cucumber sliced and quartered
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes or grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup crumbled reduced fat feta cheese
- 1/4 cup lightly packed fresh mint leaves chopped

Directions:

- Bring 1 1/4 cups water to a boil in a medium (2-quart) saucepan. Add the couscous, return to a boil, then cover and reduce the heat to a simmer. Let cook until the liquid is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Fluff with a fork and set aside.
- In the bottom of a large bowl, whisk together the lemon zest, lemon juice, olive oil, mustard, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Taste and add additional seasoning as desired. While the couscous is still warm, add it to the bowl and toss to coat. Place in the refrigerator for 5-10 minutes to allow the couscous to cool.
- When ready to serve, add the remaining ingredients: arugula, cucumber, tomatoes, feta, and mint. Toss to combine. Serve cold or at room temperature.

How to Price Your Home in a Hot Seller's Market

homes.com

When selling your home, it's no secret that setting a fair listing price is essential for quickly attracting a buyer. But in today's strong seller's market, which has seen home values hit record highs in many areas and bidding wars often drive the sales price above the listing price, sellers may wonder just how ambitiously they should price their homes. While your realtor will be able to offer the most up-to-date guidance for your current market, here are a couple pricing strategies to keep in mind:

- Safeguard against low appraisals. In areas where home prices are rising quickly, it's not uncommon for properties to receive appraisals that are lower than the price agreed upon by the buyer and seller. In fact, the National Association of Realtors reported that in the first quarter of 2021, low appraisals were the leading cause of terminated contracts. Since mortgage companies generally will not lend more than a home's appraised value, the problem in this situation is that either the buyer needs to offer more cash, the seller needs to agree to a lower price, or the two must meet in the middle in order to save the sale. Fortunately, there are some steps that sellers can take to protect themselves against low appraisals. For example, you can choose to only accept offers that guarantee the sales price regardless of the appraisal, or only accept buyers who are prepared to put at least 20% down.
- Consider recent comps. Identifying the sales prices of similar homes in your area that have recently sold will help you and your agent choose the optimal listing price for your home. For the most relevant data, focus on properties located within a mile that have closed in the past 90 days and have similar defining characteristics—such as the same number of bedrooms and bathrooms, and square footage within 20% of your home.



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