

Empty Nester Recipes

And this week...

I can tell that Fall has officially arrived. The Japanese maples and chestnut trees on the Cape have begun their transformation to vermilion-hued glory and the marsh grasses to dusty lilac. The blue jays and squirrels have taken over the garden and reign uncontested. Despite it being quite lovely outside, it is freezing cold in the house, so much so that I found my non-cuddly cat sleeping under the covers snuggled up against me this morning. Front porch time has naturally evolved to my bringing a mug of warm green tea with me, rather than this summer's go-to of heavily iced Topo Chico with lime balm and lime simple syrup. And all of the dishes that I am thinking about these days seem to involve soups, stews and brothy things, none of which are really indicated for one person.

I have always been a huge fan of long and slow braised cuts of meat that fall apart into tender pieces after many hours in the oven and make the house smell delicious while they cook. These days I eat less meat and am wondering what I will replace those cold weather stews with, and if I will have the same emotional connection to these dishes since they will be new inventions, rather than items that I used to make for my son or that my mother used to make for me.

Though I love fast cooking when eating alone, there is something to be said for the meditative exercise of spending time making something from scratch, of following a myriad of steps, of waiting patiently for something to be cooked to perfection while the smell wafting through the house intensifies, along with one's anticipation of tasting the dish...

This is harder to do with vegetables, especially if one is also taking into account nutritional value, which diminishes in veggies with long cooking times (except in the case of tomatoes where cooking increases the amount of lycopene in the fruit.) I do plan on making a vat of basil-laden tomato sauce today, which should tick some of the boxes from above, and also make me feel virtuous when I line my pint glass jars up in neat rows in the freezer.

As for those of you who are sniffily thinking “well, why not just make a stew and freeze portions of that for future use, dummy, and cut down on all of this prose” -- it is not that I have not considered that, but freezer space is at a premium in this house and reserved only for individual portions of meat broken down from family packs, the bottle of company vodka, ginger, herb cubes, and items that can multitask.

I have no answers yet as to what I will cook to feed my autumnal cravings described above though my weekly delivery of discombobulated ingredients will arrive within the hour. Stay tuned as I figure this out...

For those of you who follow my recipes, I post on the day that I make a dish. Though the option does exist of having each recipe appear in your inboxes in a timely manner, this somehow feels very intrusive so please check in to the website often to stay up to date. For the rest of you, here is the regularly scheduled recap of last week's recipes. It is shorter than usual since I was in New York at the beginning of the week.

[Crispy Rice Paper Omelet](#)

[Merguez Spiced Lamb with Eggplant "Noodles"](#)

[Greens, Herbs and Black Bean Stew](#)

[Dahi Murg \(Yogurt Chicken Curry\)](#)