

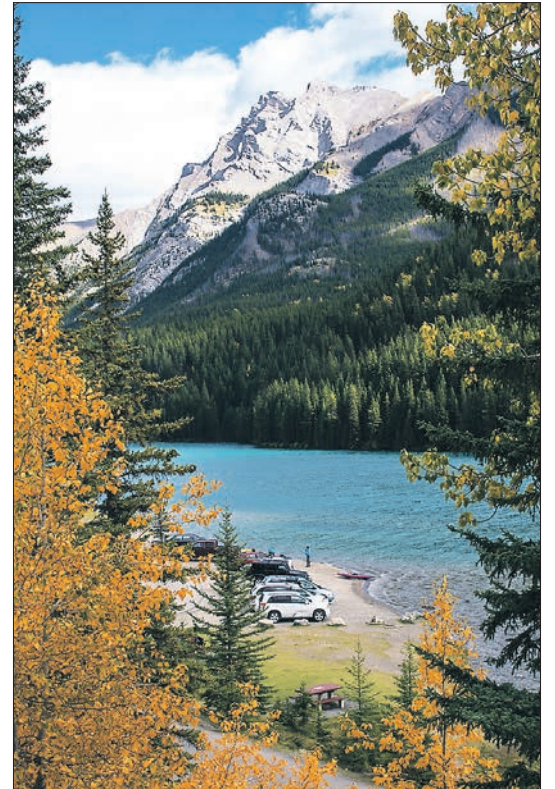
FARMLIVING

SPADE TO SPOON

Three growers have joined forces to provide a host of nursery supplies, plants, produce and preserves from their greenhouses and market gardens near Irma, Alta. | **Page 19**



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LEFT: Watch out for heavy traffic in Elk Island national park near Edmonton. | ROBIN AND ARLENE KARPAN PHOTOS

ABOVE: Two Jack Lake in Banff National Park shows its fall colours.

WESTERN PARKS, ATTRACTIONS

Enjoy colourful autumn with trips close to home

TALES FROM THE ROAD



ARLENE & ROBIN KARPAN

Fall is our favourite time to wander around the west. Forests are draped in gold, summertime crowds have cleared out of the parks and accommodation and campsites are more readily available, sometimes at off-season rates.

If you haven't yet taken advantage of free admission to national parks during 2017, fall is the perfect

time, especially if you're eyeing heavily-visited Rocky Mountain parks such as Banff or Jasper.

Any time we have visited in late September, we've found it busy but not overcrowded. Once you get away from the main townsites, the traffic and tourists disperse considerably.

Yoho, Kootenay and Waterton Lakes National Parks get fewer visitors in the fall.

One national park that is often overlooked, but shouldn't be is Elk Island just east of Edmonton. Though less than an hour from the city, weekdays in the fall are quiet.

The combination of forest, meadows, lakes and wetlands makes for attractive fall colours, though the real draw is wildlife.

You might see elk, moose, a variety of birds and other critters. Finding bison, often a lot of them, is practically a certainty. Big males like to simply wander down the road, making this the only place in Canada where you might get caught in a bison traffic jam.

Keep in mind that the 2017 free admission also applies to national historic sites such as Batoche, Fort Walsh or Lower Fort Garry.

For more information, visit the Parks Canada website at www.pc.gc.ca.

While fall can get cool in the mountains, it usually brings ideal weather to visit southern prairie parks such as Alberta's Dinosaur Provincial Park or Writing On Stone Provincial Park, which can be uncomfortably hot in summer.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >>



The red leaves of mountain maple trees, centre, contrasts with the gold and green of the mixed wood forest in Cypress Hills.

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FLAVOURFUL TOPPINGS

Savoury jams and jellies make tasty condiments

TEAM RESOURCES



SARAH GALVIN, BSHEC

Jams and jellies for toast are nice but I also like to put away a few jams to use with my savoury and snacking foods.

The canning process is the same as for your other jams and jellies. Select ripe produce and cut out any bad spots. Cook in a non-reactive pot such as stainless steel or enamelled cast iron. If you are using pectin, be sure to check the expiry date.

Wash jars in hot soapy water and rinse. Always use new lids for the best results. The screw rings can be reused.

Have your jam hot and the lids in a pot of hot but not boiling water to soften the rubber seal.

Fill jars and leave one-quarter inch (6 mm) headspace for jams and jellies.

Using a non-metallic utensil, slide it down the insides of the jars to release any air bubbles. Re-adjust the headspace, if necessary.

Wipe the rim of the jar with a damp cloth to remove any stickiness. Apply the lid and screw ring.

Tighten the ring with your fingers only. Do not over tighten. Air is expelled from the jars while they are in the boiling water bath so you don't want them to be sealed tightly or they will burst.

Process jars in a boiling water bath that covers them by at least one inch (2.5 cm).

When the jars are removed from the water bath and cool, a vacuum is produced that will preserve the food.

For best quality, eat within a year.

The processing times on these recipes are for altitudes up to 1,000 ft. (300 m).

Add five minutes for each additional 2,000 feet (600 m) of altitude.

Do not disturb the jars for 24 hours. Check the seal, wipe clean and label with the date. Store in a cool, dark place.



Habanero peach jam goes well with soft cheeses. Also try it on your chicken wings for a sweet and spicy flavour. | SARAH GALVIN PHOTO

TOMATO JAM

This is nice with hamburgers and hotdogs. The bonus is that you don't have to peel the tomatoes.

5 lb. tomatoes, finely chopped	2.2 kg
3 1/2 c. sugar	875 mL
1/2 c. lime juice	125 mL
2 tsp. freshly grated ginger	10 mL
1 tsp. cinnamon	5 mL
1/2 tsp. ground cloves	2 mL
1 tbsp. salt	15 mL
1 tbsp. red chili flakes	15 mL

Combine ingredients in a large, non-reactive pot. Bring to a boil and then reduce temperature to a simmer. Stirring regularly, simmer the jam until it reduces and becomes sticky. This will take between one and 1 1/2 hours, depending on how high you keep your heat.

When the jam has cooked down sufficiently, remove from heat and fill jars, according to the directions in this column. Process in a boiling water bath for 20 minutes.

Remove jars from water bath and allow them to cool.

GARLIC ROSEMARY JELLY

This jelly pairs well with lamb. I find the flavour of fresh, locally harvested garlic stronger. Substitute the rosemary with sage and it will be tasty with pork or chicken.

1 3/4 c. dry white wine	425 mL
1/4 c. white wine vinegar	60 mL
1/3 c. finely chopped garlic	75 mL
1/4 c. finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves	60 mL
3 1/2 c. sugar	875 mL
3 fl. oz. pouch liquid pectin	85 mL

In a medium-sized pot, stir wine, vinegar, garlic, rosemary and sugar and bring mixture to a rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly.

Stir in pectin quickly and bring mixture back to a full rolling boil.

Boil jelly, stirring constantly for one minute and remove pot from heat. Skim off any foam and ladle jelly immediately into jars. Process

according to the directions in this column for 10 minutes. Makes about four one cup (250 mL) jars.

Source: Adapted from *Gourmet*.

BLUEBERRY ONION JAM

This savoury jam goes well with wild game such as venison or moose. It would also be nice with duck. I would not recommend canning this recipe due to the oil in it. This is best made as needed and can be stored in the refrigerator up to two weeks.

2 tbsp. olive oil	30 mL
8 c. chopped red onion	2 L
2 tbsp. minced fresh tarragon or 2 tsp. dried tarragon	30 mL
1/2 tbsp. minced fresh thyme or 1/2 tsp. dried	10 mL
1 tsp. salt	22 mL
1/2 tsp. white pepper	2 mL
1 1/2 c. fresh or frozen wild blueberries	375 mL
1/4 c. honey	60 mL
1/4 c. balsamic vinegar	60 mL
1 tbsp. lemon juice	15 mL

In a Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat. Add onions, tarragon, thyme, salt and pepper.

Reduce heat to medium-low and cook 30 to 35 minutes or until onions are soft and their liquid is evaporated, stirring occasionally.

Add blueberries, honey, vinegar and lemon juice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until mixture is thickened, stirring occasionally.

Remove from heat. Store in jars in the refrigerator.

Source: Adapted from the *Taste of Home* website.

HABANERO PEACH JAM

Habanero peppers are relatively hot, ranging between 150,000 to 300,000 Scoville heat units. Compare that to a jalapeno at 2,500 to 8,000 SHU. With the sweetness of the peaches, the cooking and the added sugar, don't be afraid to use at least two in this recipe.

6 c. peaches, peeled, pitted and chopped	1.5 L
6 c. granulated sugar	1.5 L
2 - 3 habanero peppers	
1/2 tsp. lemon zest	2 mL
2 tbsp. lemon juice	30 mL
2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar	30 mL

Mix chopped peaches and two cups (500 mL) of the sugar in a non-reactive bowl or pot. Cover and let stand about 30 minutes to macerate. Mash the peaches slightly, leaving some large chunks. Use an immersion blender if you want the jam smoother.

Add peppers, zest and remaining sugar to the peaches. Add lemon juice and cider vinegar. Stir, bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook, stirring often until thickened.

Since there is no pectin used this will take a little longer, perhaps 30 to 40 minutes.

When done, ladle into jars and process in a water bath canner for 10 minutes. Makes about four one cup (250 mL) jars.

Source: Adapted from *Deep South Dish*.

Sarah Galvin is a home economist, teacher and farmers' market vendor at Swift Current, Sask., and a member of Team Resources. She writes a blog at allourfingersinthepie.blogspot.ca. Contact: team@producer.com.

AUTUMN TRIPS

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Campground space opens up as well. You almost always have to book ahead in summer for camping in Dinosaur Provincial Park, but when we visited last September, there was plenty of space available. In addition to the famous fossils and spectacular badlands, a fall time bonus was the gloriously golden cottonwood trees lining the Red Deer River.

Colour is the prime fall specialty. Shades of yellow dominate the aspen parklands, mountains and northern forests. But the farther east we go, the more interesting things become.

Eastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba have more tree species such as Mountain Maple, adding a reddish tinge to the forests.

Don't overlook the southern prairie when seeking fall colours. Wooded coulees in places such as Grasslands National Park or Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park contrast against native grasses for a kaleidoscope of hues.

In a class by itself is the Cypress Hills, where the fall colour season usually comes later and the mix of forest and grasslands makes for striking scenes.

Fall brings wildlife highlights such as the elk rut, marked by ear-piercing bugling and males competing for dominance and generally showing off. While the rut is wide-ranging, national parks tend to be the best places to see the show because the wildlife isn't concerned with hunters.

Jasper is the top spot, though Banff, Elk Island, Prince Albert and Riding Mountain National Parks all have plenty of elk shenanigans.

Fall migration of waterfowl through the Prairies ranks among nature's great spectacles. Numbers of geese and cranes can be in the hundreds of thousands.

Hotspots include Manitoba's Oak Hammock Marsh, the Quill Lakes and Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan or Beaverhill Lake in Alberta.

Our go-to spot is often Luck Lake Heritage Marsh just north of Lake Diefenbaker because the dyke road crossing the shallow lake provides easy access. A bonus is that elegant tundra swans usually stop there as well.

Coming here at dawn to watch the lift-off of tens of thousands of snow geese is nothing short of breathtaking.

Arlene and Robin Karpan are well-travelled writers based in Saskatoon. Contact: travel@producer.com.



The campground in Alberta's Dinosaur Provincial Park is nestled in the trees. | ROBIN & ARLENE KARPAN PHOTO