

A wooden walkway with a railing leads through a forest. The trees are covered in vibrant yellow autumn foliage, creating a warm and cozy atmosphere. The walkway is made of wooden planks and is partially covered with fallen leaves.

6 WAYS
TO SETTLE
INTO
Autumn Slowness

WORDS BY PAIGE LEIGH REIST



The mulchy scent of decaying leaves, the spiced steam from a cup of hot chai, wafts of warm candle wax and campfire smoke. The rush of colors, old gold and amber, charcoal and brickdust, rust and deep plum. The cool October wind moving through your hair, and the harvest moon glinting like a copper coin in the sky. Autumn is a feast for the senses.

I wait all year for fall to roll around again, and it never lasts quite as long as I would like. There are too many things about this time of year to sink your teeth into, too many things to experience. It's a gorgeous, moody season, a perfect bridge between the liveliness of summer and the serenity of winter, a cozy place I could happily live forever. But, of course, autumn's just passing through, so here are a few ways to embrace the season while it lasts.

Update Your Wardrobe

Cool-weather clothing is my favorite, all that potential for layering, for texture, for interest. I love the coarse wool of an old fishermen's cable-knit sweater, the luxurious softness of a cashmere wrap, vintage leather as soft as butter. Tartan tweed and rich velvet, walking boots and fingerless gloves, a felted beret or a wide-brimmed rancher. Hidden layers of lace and silk against the skin, rumpled socks, red lipstick. I'm a firm believer that your clothing should tell the story of who you are, and autumn is such a good opportunity to play around with expressing yourself.

Get Outside

Nature is flush with beauty in the autumn months. It's a great time to explore the natural world around you, whether it's hiking, canoeing, running, or even just taking a picnic out into the backyard. I love camping in the fall, looking up to see the Milky Way spilled across the sky, waking up in the brisk air. Bonfires are an autumn classic, too — bring a thermos full of coffee and Irish cream, invite all of your friends, and spend the night swapping ghost stories and roasting marshmallows. »



Forage

Pull on your boots, sharpen your pocketknife, hook a wicker basket over your arm, and head to the forest for a bit of mushroom hunting — taking great care, of course, to consult a field guide or an experienced forager. Some poisonous mushrooms look almost identical to edible ones, so meticulous inspection is absolutely necessary. If you're careful and responsible, the payoff is incredible. There's nothing quite like the rich, earthy taste of chanterelles or slices of hen-of-the-woods fried in a little butter. If you're feeling a tad less ambitious, a trip to the apple orchard or pumpkin patch makes for a lovely afternoon, and you'll walk away with an equally delicious armful of autumnal treats.

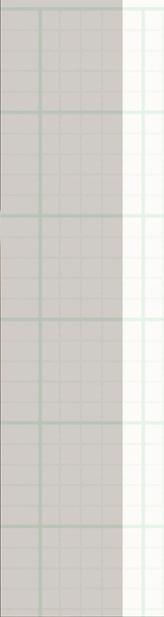
Eat Seasonally

September farmers markets are legendary for a reason. The growing season is over, and the ultimate harvest is in; stalls lined with crates of glass gem corn and butternut squash, spiraling links of smoked sausage hanging from hooks, jars of homemade blackberry jam. Fresh-baked loaves of pumpernickel, wedges of salted cheese, pots of wildflower honey. Go early in the morning for the best produce, and don't be afraid to chat up your local farmers and ask them for recipes and tips. This time of year, I love roasting carrots and beets with maple syrup, sprinkling cinnamon and nutmeg into my morning coffee, and letting a pot of vegetable stew simmer on the stovetop.

Cozy-Up

Home is the inner sanctum where we begin and end each day. As we're transitioning to the colder months when we spend more time inside, a few quick atmospheric adjustments can make all the difference. Stock up on extra pillows and blankets, switch out harsh overhead lights for lamps, and spin a few jazz and folk records instead of turning on the TV for background noise. Take a long, hot bath to warm your bones, start on a new knitting project, or try your hand at baking artisan-style bread. Brew a cup of tea, light a few candles, and curl up with a good moody book — "The Hound of the Baskervilles," "Wuthering Heights," and "Frankenstein" are perfect for getting into the autumn mood.





Aleksandar Noroselski



Release

Fall has this wonderful energy of release. The world is letting go of the old, preparing for rest and reflection, and I like to take the opportunity to do the same. Set aside some time to journal, and just write your thoughts down as they come. Are you happy with your life? Are you proud of yourself? What can you release — an attitude, a habit, negative self-talk? Are you fulfilled in your relationships, in your career? What are your goals? Rejuvenation is a slow process, but over the next few months, when the wind is cold and the nights are long, you can begin to work toward a new and improved you to build upon in the springtime.

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PROMPT

Autumn is such a beautiful, romantic time of year. Most of us have very clear ideas about what should fill those long fall days. *What does autumn look and feel like to you?*

