



## Plan your fall foliage excursion



Autumn means different things to many people. Students may embrace the dawn of a new school year, while others might embrace the crisp weather after a season of heat. One of the more widely enjoyed aspects of autumn is the chance to take in the brilliant foliage.

Although New England may be renowned for its bright, orange, red and yellow panoramas, dazzling displays of foliage can be witnessed anywhere temperatures descend enough for deciduous trees to shed their leaves.

The first step to a successful fall foliage excursion is to find the right spot. The Catskill and Adirondack Mountains of New York, Amish Country in Pennsylvania, the Great Lakes from Michigan to Ohio, and many other areas can be great places to witness nature at its most colorful. To make the most of fall foliage road trips, drivers can keep the following suggestions in mind.

• Get off the highway. To see great fall vistas, take a detour from major thoroughfares and visit small towns and mountain passes. Invest in some maps, as cellular networks may be inaccessible in remote locales. *Continued on Page 4* 



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• Avoid tourist-heavy areas. Drivers may prefer less crowded roadways to accompany the great scenery. Such drivers should visit areas that are not tourist meccas. Any area that plays home to forests and sprawling landscapes will do.

locales.

• Go on foot. To get the best photos, head out at sunrise or sunset. Soft, golden light dappled by leaves will bring out the golden tones in photos. Going on foot will help you discover the nuances of the season and slow down for a change. locales.

• Don't overlook overcast days. Traveling in the rain may not be fun, but overcast days might be ideal. On such days, the sun won't be too warm and drown out the colors.

locales.

• Bring along binoculars. Wildlife is often mobile and abundant in the fall, as animals scurry to feed and gather supplies before the winter. As a result, autumn is a great time to spot wildlife that's normally hiding in thickets and woodland areas. locales.

• Plan for stops along the way. Don't forget to bring some spending money in the form of cash so that you can enjoy the small farm stands and shops that often dot rural landscapes. Pick up farm-fresh produce or choose a plump pumpkin. Yard sales also are abundant this time of year. Small shops may not take credit cards, so if you plan to buy, cash is king.

Trees begin shedding their leaves as early as the beginning of September in Canada and the northern United States. As the days press on, the fall finery will gradually shift southward. For those who can afford to take a weekday off, do so, as weekends might be overcome with fellow nature enthusiasts.





### **Seven Uses For Fall Leaves**

By the time autumn hits full swing, many trees will have shed their leaves for the season, and the last vestiges of red, yellow and orange magic will have faded to brown. Raking, blowing and collecting leaves becomes the primary chores of lawn and yard maintenance, and presents most homeowners with large piles of gathered leaves to tend to.

It is impossible to count just how many leaves fall to the ground each year, or just how many pounds of leaves get collected curbside, but the numbers are substantial. Cleaning up leaves is considerable work, but not all of those leaves need to be carted away. In fact, there are several different uses of leaves that can be beneficial.

1. Spread leaves as a protective mulch to cover tender perennials or root crops/bulbs in the ground. The leaves will form a natural insulating cover that keeps the soil and the plants within a bit warmer over winter.

2. Create a pile of leaves that will break down and form a crumbly, compost-like material called leaf mold. Even though leaf mold may sound like a blight, it's actually a good amendment to garden soil, improving its structure and ability to hold water. Leaf mold also attracts beneficial organisms that are vital in healthy soil.

3. Brown leaves can be added to green materials in compost piles to improve the health of the compost being formed. According to the healthy living resource Care2, the ideal ratio is 75 percent brown to 25 percent green materials in compost. Turn compost piles regularly to aerate them.

4. Store dried, mulched leaves in a dry spot so they can be used in the spring as a weed barrier for spring plantings. They will keep weeds at bay and help retain soil moisture to ensure small sprouts have the resources to grow.

5. Use shredded leaves as a lawn supplement. Pass a lawn mower over leaves left on the lawn to break them down into pieces too small to rake. This will help keep the lawn healthy throughout the winter without blocking out needed sunlight. 6. Bag dried leaves and pack them tightly together in cold areas of the home, such as basements or garages. They can act as added insulation. Bags of leaves also can be placed around planting containers to protect them from frost.

7. Gather a few of the best-looking leaves and preserve them. Use an iron on a low setting and press leaves between two pieces of waxed paper until the waxed paper seals together. Or use clear contact paper to achieve the same effect.



# Tips for safe use of dry ice and fog machines for Halloween fun

Who doesn't want to add a dramatic effect to Halloween hijinks? Haunted displays can be taken up a notch with the use of some scene-setting enhancements, including dry ice and fog machines.

Dry ice and fog machines can help Halloween revelers create a smoky, mysterious feel, but each of these haunting accessories must be used with safety in mind at all times.

Dry ice

Dry ice is the solid form of carbon dioxide. Dry ice is often used for spooky effects because it produces a vapor when it sublimates from its dry form. This occurs after exposure to air and liquid that is warmer than the dry ice.

Because the temperature of dry ice is extremely cold, (-109.3 F or -78.5 C), people can suffer from frostbite if they touch it, warns the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. People who intend to handle dry ice need to use tongs or protective gloves when doing so. Children may not understand the danger of dry ice, so they should never be allowed near it.

Dry ice should be kept in an insulated cooler and stored and used in a well-ventilated area, as the CO gas can sink to low areas and replace oxygenated air. High concentrations of CO gas may be fatal when breathed in.

If dry ice is used in drinks, it is important that no dry ice fragments are ingested, which can cause tissue damage as well as pressure from the buildup of the release of gas, states the information site ThoughtCo.

Fog machines

Fog machines can produce a scary and realistic Halloween tableau. When using fog machines, it is essential that users confirm which solution is being used to produce the fog. Many utilize a water and glycol so-

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lution that has been deemed safe if inhaled. However, some people may find it causes throat irritation. Some products use proprietary formulas, concealing the identity and proportion of ingredients. Users should avoid these products unless they can confirm which chemicals are being used and that those chemicals are safe.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour says that fog/ smoke generating machines should be placed in locations where exposure to the concentrated smoke is minimal. The machines also should be used exactly as the manufacturer directs and not altered by using dyes, fragrances and other chemicals.

Fog machines can create many illusions, but they also can impede vision if the fog is too thick. Therefore, caution must be heeded to prevent mobility issues due to the fog. Also, sometimes fog machines can produce a slippery residue, so users should be aware of this and monitor conditions around the machines.





### **Prepare Vehicles For Harsh Weather**

As the seasons change, motorists must take steps to safeguard their vehicles, especially when the season changes from fall to winter. Each winter, many vehicles are subjected to sub-zero temperatures, snowfall and icy roads, and such conditions can take their toll on vehicles over time. Taking steps to prepare vehicles for winter weather is a vital step that can make cars and trucks safer for drivers and their passengers.

#### Battery

Old batteries should be replaced before winter begins. Without a strong, properly functioning battery, engines cannot turn over. Most batteries last between three and five years. However, extreme cold can compromise batteries, especially those that have been around awhile. Batteries are made up of acid and water, and cold temperatures can freeze the water, thereby affecting battery performance. According to AAA's Automotive Research Center, at 32 F, the average battery

loses 35 percent of its strength.

Newer batteries can be protected by starting the vehicle each day to warm up and recharge the battery. Let the car run for at least 10 minutes if you cannot take an extended drive.

#### Exterior maintenance

Keeping a car waxed and sealed can help maintain a durable exterior finish. This includes not only the paint, but the rubber and vinyl parts of the car's exterior.

Winter is a good time to switch to a heavy-duty synthetic wax that can shield against water and road salts. High-quality sealants can be used on bumpers, trim and rubber door seals as added protection. Speak with an automotive retailer or even the car dealership if you are unsure which products will make your car's parts most durable for winter weather.

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NOW TAKING

By far, our biggest holiday seller is our signature boneless seasoned beef rib roast. We take out the fat and season it with a gluten free, MSG free rub that tastes delicious. These roasts are custom cut to order specifications and are available not only during the holidays but year round for any special occasion. Advanced order is required. During the month of December, we sample this roast on Fridays and Saturdays so folks can try before they buy.

"Our turkey season starts in October," says Office Manager Susan Hefling. "That's when our customers start placing their Thanksgiving turkey orders. Customers can just give us a call and we will hold the size bird they request." Pickups occur the Monday through Wednesday before Thanksgiving day. Turkey size ranges do sell out, so it is best to order early to guarantee size selection. All-natural bone-in turkey breasts and extra turkey parts may also be ordered.

This year customers will have two top turkeys to choose from—the first is our Premium Specialty Brand Certified Range Grown Turkeys from northern Minnesota. These birds are raised in forested areasnot barns--and are sold fresh at Thanksgiving only. Sizes

come in two pound weight ranges, the smallest is 8-10 lbs up to 24-26 lbs. Fresh means the birds were processed for this holiday season, not sitting around in a freezer. But they are transported from Minnesota per USDA regulations, so they may have a hard shell. Customers should pick up their birds early enough to allow a little thaw time.

New to our store are non-GMO free range whole turkeys from Bowman Landes in Ohio. These turkeys are available in only two sizes-12-14.99 lbs and 15-18.99 lbs. They are raised free range on pasture, are vegetarian fed with non-GMO grain and verified non-GMO verified by the Non-GMO Project. "While these birds are more expensive, we wanted to give our customers the option of a non-GMO turkey," Susan commented. Limited quantities are available so early orders are recommended.

Also for the holidays, Hefling's offers Niman Ranch uncured spiral half hams. These are great tasting hams that do not have sodium nitrate or nitrite. These are great for any party or dinner and will be available from Thanksgiving to Christmas and at Easter. Please call the store for holiday pricing and

holiday hours.



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Do not stop washing your car just because the weather is cold. Slushy, wet roads and snow-melting salts can speed up the formation of rust or other decay on the undercarriage of the vehicle. These materials will need to be periodically cleaned off. Flush the underside of the vehicle whenever possible, taking advantage of any dry, slightly warmer days.

#### Tire pressure

According to the automotive retailer Pep Boys, vehicle tires lose a pound of air pressure for every 10-degree drop in temperature. Many modern cars will alert to changes in air pressure, and drivers should be diligent in maintaining the proper tire pressure. Fuel economy as well as handling ability can decline when tires are not inflated properly. Tires can be refilled at many gas stations for little cost.

#### Wipers

Visibility is key in hazardous weather conditions, and



keeping the windshield clean is a priority. This means ensuring there is enough windshield wiper fluid in the car and that it is a product that will not freeze.

Wiper blades can freeze and crack in the winter. Older blades may be more susceptible to damage. It's a worthy investment to replace existing wiper blades at the start of each winter. When vehicles are parked, pull the wipers off of the windshield to safeguard them from sticking and cracking.



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WINDOW BLINDS & TREATMENTS

#### Prepare your deck for winter

Homeowners often take steps to winterize the interior of their homes in the weeks before winter's arrival, but such efforts should extend to the outside of a home as well. Decks make for great gathering places when the weather permits. Decks are where many people spend their free time and eat their meals come spring and summer, when the temperatures climb and the sun sets well into the evening. But as summer turns to fall, homeowners must take measures to protect their decks from potentially harsh winter weather.

• Inspect the deck for problems. Decks tend to be used more often in summer than any other time of year. That makes fall and early winter an ideal time to inspect for wear and tear and any additional issues that may have cropped up throughout the summer. Damaged boards and loose handrails should be fixed before winter arrives, especially for homeowners who plan to use their decks in winter. Fixing such issues in winter and even into spring may be difficult thanks to harsh conditions, so make good use of the relatively calm autumn weather to fix any issues on the deck.

• Clear the deck of potted plants. Even homeowners who intend to use their decks in winter should remove potted plants from the deck in the fall. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that moisture can get trapped between deck boards and plastic, wood or ceramic containers in cold weather, and that can contribute to mildew, discoloration or decay.

• Store unnecessary furniture. Homeowners who like to sit on their decks in winter will no doubt want to leave some furniture out over the winter. But those with lots of furniture for entertaining guests can likely move the majority of that furniture into a garage or shed for the winter. HGTV notes that doing so will prevent the potential formation of blemishes on the deck that can result from inconsistent weathering.

• Remove snow, but do so carefully. Prolonged contact with snow and ice can damage a deck. As a result, homeowners should clear snow from their decks when accumulation is significant. HGTV recommends using a snow blower on the deck to avoid scarring. If a shovel must be used, push snow with the planks to reduce the risk of damaging the deck.

Homeowners who take steps to protect their decks throughout the winter months can ensure these popular areas are ready once entertaining season returns in the spring.



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