



Pumpkin, Spice And Everything Nice

ROAD TRIP: Three amazing pumpkin patches in Long Island.

BY MALLORY KASDAN

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t a certain moment every September—after the kids go back to school but before Halloween—it will become clear that you must get your family to a pumpkin patch, ASAP.

Your social media feed will fill with charming images of your friends' children partaking in delightfully autumnal activities in a bucolic setting. Plump babies pose among similarly shaped pumpkins. Pink-cheeked toddlers rest on dads' shoulders while waiting in line for fresh apple cider donuts. Tweens careen through corn mazes. One child pulls another in a red wagon piled with pumpkins and apples.

You will likely suffer a bit of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). The air will look so fresh, the food so delicious that the desire to make seasonal family memories will be too compelling to resist. And so,

you will wake up one crisp, blue-skied autumn morning with the wholesome plan to get your own crew out of the city and into a farm-like setting. You'll put on your chunky cardigan and boots and jump into the car. You'll fight over the radio station and hand out snacks, but your destination will be close: Long Island—a short distance from the city.

Before you know it, you're there. Picking the most charming pumpkin and the crispest apples. Petting some bunnies, feeding a goat and getting faces painted. Pony rides! Hayrides! Maybe even a haunted house, if you time it right and the kids are old enough. You're back home a few hours later; everyone is exhausted; there are pumpkins to carve in time for Halloween and farm fresh fruit for pies, cobblers and lunch boxes.

Go early, expect some cheerful lines on a beautiful day and enjoy the memory making. No more FOMO for you. And, of course, don't forget the family shot for the holiday card.



Hicks Nurseries

100 Jericho Turnpike
Westbury, NY 11590
516-334-0066

My friend Wendy, a Long Island mom of three kids ages 6, 10 and 12, says that Hicks Nurseries in Westbury is a great choice for fall fun, especially if you only have a few hours on a weekend to spare. Hicks Nurseries even has a resident ghost named Otto, with story-time shows and craft activities built around his antics. "Otto never disappoints, the hay rides are super fun and each year the fall harvest gets better," Wendy says. "Hicks has been around for 160 years—they know what they're doing."

White Post Farms

250 Old Country Road
Melville, NY 11747
631-351-9373

Wendy says, "You can spend the whole day at this amazing family farm. There is seriously so much to do!" During their Fall Farm Festival, White Post offers an animal farm and exotic bird aviary, sing-along hayrides, a bouncer park and face painting with Rosie the clown. There are also stage shows, including magic and comedy, a dog "cabaret," a barnyard game show and a true pumpkin patch. If you're looking for all day family fun, it doesn't get much better than this.

The Dees' Nursery & Florist

69 Atlantic Avenue
Oceanside, NY 11572
516-678-3535

Another friend, Audrey, grew up going to Dees', and now she travels there from NYC with her own daughter every fall to relive those nostalgic gourd-filled memories of her own childhood. Dees' has a Fall Festival that features a petting zoo, pony rides, face painting, story time and a pumpkin patch. They also offer a haunted walk, which is better suited for teenagers and adults—but that way, the little kids will always have something to look forward to.

