

A photograph of several large orange pumpkins resting on a grey stone patio. In the background, there is a dense bed of green foliage with many small, bright yellow and orange marigold flowers.

October 2025

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension

Director's Note

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Wyandotte County Director

What is the best part of being in Wyandotte County? It is the sense of pride that comes from living in the “Dotte”. The passion for building and growing a positive community. Ask anyone and they will say that this is the place that they choose to stay, live, work, worship, and play. Here are a few ideas to live your best life!

KANSAS STATE
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4-H Youth Development

KANSAS STATE FAIR PLACINGS

Congratulations to the 4-H members who represented Wyandotte County at the Kansas State Fair! WyCo 4-Hers participated in various divisions including Dog, Cattle, Swine, Goat, STEM, Arts, Photography, Food & Nutrition, and Sewing & Textile Design.

Cattle

Emma McCracken, 1st Place and Breed Reserve Champion, Registered Breeding Heifer- Simmental
Miles McCracken- 2nd Place
Registered Breeding Heifer- Simmental

Swine

Emma McCracken, 3rd Place
Market Hog- 29-Dark Crossbred
Emma McCracken, 2nd Place
Market Hog- 32- Dark Crossbred

Goat

Eli Hall- 3rd Overall
Eli Hall, 1st Place
Market Goat- Division 4
Eli Hall, 7th Place
Meat Goat- Division II
Eli Hall, 5th Place
Breeding Doe- Division I
Eli Hall, 6th Place
Breeding Doe- Division II

Dog Show

Abigail S.- Purple, White, White
Ruby Y.- Blue, White, White
Amber Y.- Blue, White, White, Purple, Purple, White, Purple

Photography

Abigail S.- Blue
Anson G.- Blue
Ellen G.- Blue
Andrew S.- Blue
Grace S. Blue

Visual Arts

Anna S.- Blue
Maxim T.- Purple
Abigail S. – Purple
Daniella W.- Red

Food and Nutrition

Anson G.- Purple
Abigail S.- White
Eli H.- Purple
Ellen G.- Blue
Sewing & Textile Design- Ellen G.- Blue

Ag Mechanics Welding

Anson G.- Blue

Woodworking

Anson G.- Red

Shooting Sports

Andrew S.- Red

Wildlife

Grace S.- Blue



Family and Consumer Sciences

HOW TO THROW A CREATIVE FUN FALL PARTY

It's autumn, the season of crisp weather and warm, comfort food. This is the perfect time to reunite with your neighborhood and kick-start a fun fall party. When picking a theme for your party, you want to consider your audience. Does your audience have a lot of children? Then you may want to go with a younger theme like an "Autumn Carnival" that has face painting and crafts. Maybe you have an older audience who loves to read? Then let's look at putting together a 'cozy murder mystery' themed party! Think of your guest list and you will know which theme will suit your crowd best.

This is the season when I want to host a fall party theme to help my guests feel like they're celebrating the season. When the hot summer air shifts to a cool autumn breeze, I begin to feel like I'm genuinely in my element. I get inspired to bring people together and host outdoor movie nights, pumpkin carvings and share lasting memories we can cherish as a family.

Our country has been under a lot of strain recently. We could all benefit from some seasonal cheer. A community gathering may be just what people need to help relieve some of the mounting tension, but it may not be so easy. Fortunately, an autumn party is a great way to greet and learn more about your neighbors, friends and family.

Four Fun Fall Party Ideas

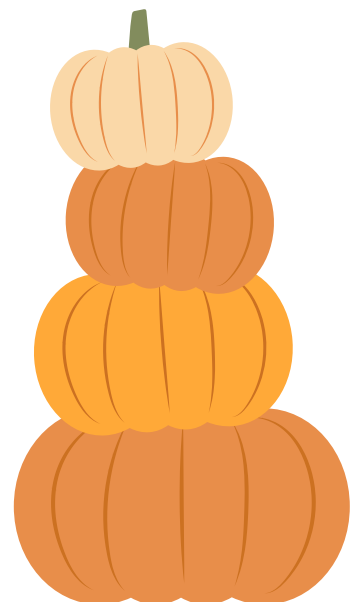
Brainstorm. Before you start making plans for a fall party, start brainstorming. Come up with a few ideas that would best fit your group. For instance, you'll need lots of games if there are plenty of kids in your neighborhood, family or friends. Or if you love a good competition, maybe a cook-off would be best. Poll the guests to get input.

Make it a community effort. Get the word out about your fall party. Send out a note by email, tape it on mailboxes or tape it onto doors. On your note put a date and time of an initial meeting at your home or community center. At this meeting, you can further discuss ideas and plans for a fall party. Don't forget to put your email address or phone number on the note so your neighbors, friends, and family can get back to you.

Sign up. Encourage people to sign up for hosting activities so that everyone can help with the party. People can bring food, drinks, or set up booths for games and activities. For a Halloween party, consider hosting costume contests. You can also have pumpkin carving or painting stations. People can even make their own candy apples or s'mores. You'll also need people to help with set-up, clean up, and chaperoning.

Bring your family, friends, or neighborhood together. Keep everyone up-to-date with the party planning information and consider adding icebreakers and "getting to know you" games to the festivities. This may just help the people forge stronger bonds with each other, which is great for establishing a community and for reducing stress.

<https://mindfullivingnetwork.com/how-to-throw-a-creative-fun-fall-party/>



THE WORLD OF FERMENTATION

Fermentation is one of the oldest methods of food preservation. It has been practiced worldwide for thousands of years – long before we understood the science of fermentation. Today, fermentation not only preserves food, but is praised for its cultural roots, nutritional benefits, and bold flavors. Consumers are using fermentation to make yogurt, sourdough, kimchi, kombucha, and more!

What is fermentation?

Fermentation is when “good” microorganisms (bacteria, yeasts, and mold) break down sugars or carbohydrates in foods or beverages without oxygen. This creates acids, alcohol, and gases that help to preserve and create big flavors and diverse textures in fermented foods and drinks.

Types of Fermentation

There are three main types of fermentation: alcohol (beer, wine, spirits), acetic acid (vinegar, kombucha), and lactic acid (yogurt, kimchi, sauerkraut). Sourdough uses a combination of alcohol and lactic acid fermentation. The yeast from alcohol fermentation helps the bread rise, while lactic acid contributes unique, tangy flavors.

Health Benefits of Fermentation

Many people enjoy fermented foods for their use of raw ingredients and little to no added preservatives. However, much of the popularity of fermentation stems from the health benefits.

- **Improved Digestion:** Fermentation partially breaks down sugars, starches, and proteins, for easy digestion. For example, the lactic acid in yogurt and kefir breaks down lactose. People with lactose intolerance may better tolerate these foods.
- **Probiotics:** Fermented foods can contain “live” bacteria or probiotics that may help improve gut health, immune function, and balance the gut microbiome.
- **Nutrients:** Fermented foods can be rich in vitamins! In fact, they can have increased levels of vitamins like A and C. Fermentation can break down compounds that block mineral absorption, helping your body absorb more iron, calcium, and zinc.

The benefits of fermented food can vary based on the type of food, whether it contains live cultures, and your individual health goals. Look for “Live Active Cultures” on the food label, as not all store-bought fermented foods will contain live probiotics.

For more information on fermenting, go to the following link from the [National Center for Home Food Preservation, University of Georgia](#), [K-State Extension also has a fact sheet that will provide the how-tos of successfully fermenting foods](#), (Source: The September/October issue of the North Central Food Safety Extension Network Food Preservation Newsletter)



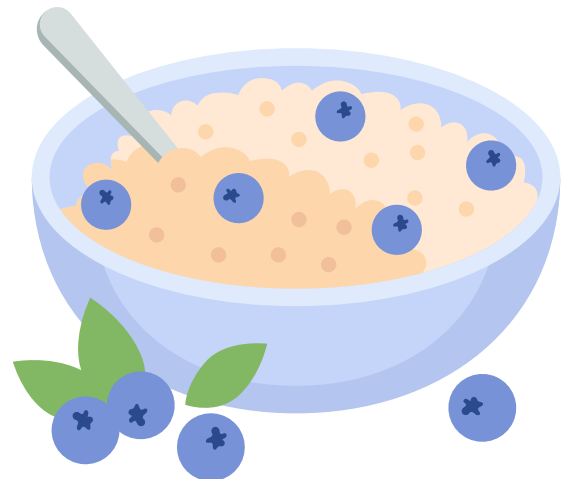
OATMEAL FOR BREAKFAST!

With fall temperatures coming our way, one of my favorite breakfasts is oatmeal. As an adult, if I ate breakfast with oatmeal, I would not feel like I was starving in a couple of hours. Looking back, it was a staple that my mom served because she knew it would help us on those cold mornings. Being on a cold bus at 7 am was always an adventure. Many times, it was the bus breaking through the snow drifts, not the snowplows, or we got stuck for a couple of hours.

Nutritionally rolled oats are a whole grain, which means it has fiber. It has soluble fiber that helps lower cholesterol, slows down the absorption of sugar in the bloodstream, and is good for gut health. Fiber also promotes satiety---makes you feel fuller longer. It also has essential vitamins and minerals, including magnesium, iron, zinc, and B vitamins. The antioxidants found in oats help protect against oxidative stress and inflammation.

Types of Oats

- **Steel-cut oats** are produced by chopping groats (hulled oat grains) into small pieces using a steel blade. This method keeps each part of the grain (the bran, endosperm, and germ) primarily intact, which helps to retain much of its nutrition. Steel-cut oats may also be called pinhead oats, Scottish oats, or Irish oats. These take longer to cook than other varieties of oats.
- **Rolled oats** are a bit more processed than steel-cut oats. These are steel-cut oats that have been cut a few more times, then steamed and rolled flat. These are often called “old-fashioned oats”.
- **Instant oats or quick oats** are groats that have been steamed and then rolled into very small pieces. These are the most processed forms of oatmeal and are commonly sweetened and sold in packets for convenience. They tend to contain more sodium and sugar than other varieties.



Community Development

WHY COMMUNITY

ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Citizens are 'engaged' when they play a meaningful role in the deliberations, discussions, decision-making, and/or implementation of projects or programs affecting them. Accordingly, organizational and government leaders must broaden their view of their responsibilities to include roles as facilitators, supporters, collaborators, and enablers of citizens and stakeholders.

This change requires letting go of some of the traditional reins of power and trusting that citizens can and will effectively engage in the issues. The result is a partnership that is nearly always healthy for a community and can address the issue or problem more effectively.

While research regarding the benefits and importance of community engagement varies, several key opportunities are commonly identified.

Among these are:

- Increase the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted. Citizens who participate in these processes show significant commitment to help make the projects happen.
- Create more effective solutions. Drawing on local knowledge from a diverse group creates practical and effective solutions.
- Improve citizens' knowledge and skills in problem-solving. Participants learn about the issues in-depth. Greater knowledge allows them to see multiple sides of the problem. Citizens can practice communication and decision-making skills.
- Empower and integrate people from different backgrounds. Groups that feel ignored can gain greater control over their lives and community. When people from other community areas work together, they often find much in common.
- Create local networks of community members. The more people who know what is going on and are willing to work toward a goal, the more likely a community is to succeed in reaching its goals.
- Create several opportunities for discussing concerns. Regular, ongoing discussions allow people to express concerns before problems become too big or out of control.
- Increase trust in community organizations and governance. Working together improves communication and understanding. Knowing what the government, community, citizens, leaders, and organizations can and cannot do may reduce future conflict.

In addition, a well-designed engagement effort allows you to identify and understand:

- Differing values and priorities
- Differing frames, or ways citizens view the community or a particular project
- Various alternatives and consequences
- Perceptions of benefits and risks
- Different ideas, potential solutions, and actions
- The characteristics and challenges of your "wicked" issue

References: Penn State University and Bassler, A. et al., "[Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-to Guide for Community Leaders](#)." *Center for Rural America*, 2008.

Upcoming Events



- October 1:** Go, Slow and Whoa
- October 1:** K-State Garden Hour
- October 3:** First Friday E-Call
- October 8:** Remote Work Wednesday
- October 13:** ServSafe Course
- October 17:** Working with Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- October 23:** Dining with Diabetes
- October 29:** Healthy Holidays

K-State Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (913-299-9300 or jo1@ksu.edu). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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