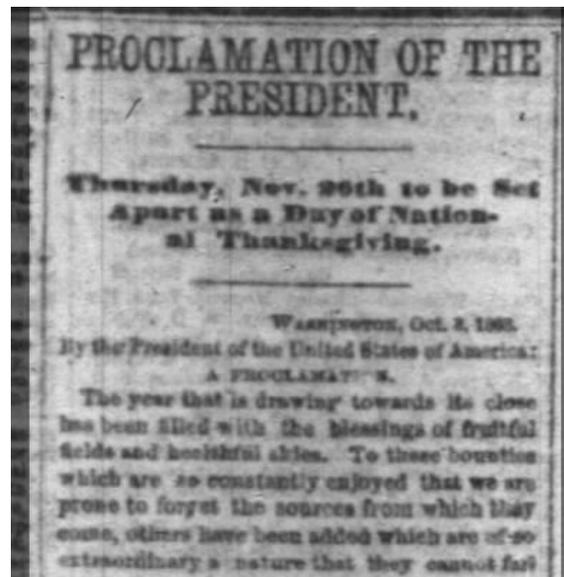


**Woooo-eee! When President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November** as a day of Thanksgiving, he missed two important consequences. The first is the five Thursday Novembers. Fast forward several decades and the big department stores were none too happy to delay the start of the holiday shopping season. It took a bit of lobbying but FDR eventually re-proclaimed Thanksgiving as the fourth Thursday in November. The second consequence is that, every other year our harvest feast comes right on the heels of an election. Sometimes those elections are calm, even uneventful while other are anything but.

**I think we'd all agree that this year's election was nothing short of prickly.** On top of that, the election was held on the last possible date and Thanksgiving is on the early side this year. If it feels like you just voted, you're right. It was only two weeks ago. Given that nerves may be a little frayed, what will you talk about around the Thanksgiving table? Will you avoid politics or jump in feet first?



**It all depends on your friends and family.** Some people love nothing better than a raucous political argument. They live for the day when Uncle George arrives with his absurd, antiquated views. Or when that hippie cousin stops by with all her balderdash. With any luck, George and the hippie share that enthusiasm for a raging argument. It's what some families do. However, if disagreements make you break out in hives, you'll need some alternative topics of conversation.

**Of course, many families are all in agreement.** Their ballots match both up and down the ticket. If that's you and yours and your candidate won, then you're somewhere between satisfied and ecstatic. After a few high fives, you'll want to get on to more important things. After all, nothing stops a conversation faster than cheerful agreement.

**On the other hand, you might all be in agreement but also in despair.** If that's the case, it's a good idea to lay off the political talk. Save it for Black Friday or a dismal, rainy afternoon during the January Thaw. For now, it's time to be thankful and take a break from the angst and sorrow.

**So then, whether it is fear of fisticuffs, campaign fatigue or whatever,** let's lay off the politics for a day, maybe two. Are you good with that? Assuming your answer is yes; will your friends and family be able to keep up a conversation? It's not an unreasonable question. If you're worried that your Thanksgiving feast will be eaten in resounding silence, well then, let's give 'em somethin' to talk about.

**Thanksgiving is a good time to count our blessings** look to the future and focus on the issues that matter. You know, important stuff like whether the Patriots will make it to the Super Bowl. Once you agree they will, you can move on to debate the virtues of online dating and Coke versus Pepsi. Be sure to save some time to puzzle out if it is El Niño or La Niña that brings all the snow. From there you can discuss alien abduction – truth or fiction, consider if the 1969 moon landing was faked and figure out if there is a heaven for dogs. And what about cats? Artistic types will want to debate where creativity comes from and if shyness is a condition or a choice. And what about those boisterous extroverts?

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and bon appétit!

## Homemade Butternut Squash Ravioli with Browned Butter

*A delicious way to use up any Thanksgiving leftovers. If you don't have any leftover squash, well, it's worth making a new batch!*

*Enjoy!*

Serves 4

### Butternut Squash Filling

About 1 1/2 cups leftover [Roasted & Mashed Butternut Squash](#), at room temperature

1/2 cup mascarpone or cream cheese at room temperature

1/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

### Pasta Dough

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

1 teaspoon salt

3 large eggs

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

### Putting it all together

1 large egg

6 tablespoons butter

About 1/4 cup chopped hazelnuts or walnuts, toasted

Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese



**Make the filling:** Put the leftover squash, mascarpone and Parmigiano-Reggiano in a bowl and stir to combine. *(Any extra filling makes a great bruschetta topping.)*

**Make the pasta dough:** Put the flour and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook and beat on medium speed to combine. Continue beating while adding the eggs, 1 at a time. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil and continue to mix until the dough forms a ball.

Dust your work surface with flour. Knead and fold the dough until elastic and smooth, this should take about 10 minutes.

Put the remaining olive oil in a bowl. Roll the dough in the oil until evenly coated. Cover the bowl and let the dough rest for about 30 minutes.

Cut the dough into 2 pieces. Dust your work surface and the dough with flour. Flatten the dough into rectangles and roll them through a pasta machine 3 or 4 times on the widest setting. Reduce the setting and continue to crank the dough through the machine, 3 or 4 times at each setting until each piece is about 1/8-inch thick.

**Putting it all together:** Beat the egg with 1 tablespoon of water to make an egg wash.

Dust your work surface and one side of each pasta sheet with flour. Using a large cookie cutter, make 2 1/2 – 3-inch circles.

Brush one side of half of the circles with egg wash and add a dollop of filling. Top with the remaining pasta circles and gently press together. Crimp the edges with a fork to tightly seal. Let them sit uncovered for 30 minutes to dry slightly. *(The ravioli can be made ahead, covered and refrigerated until ready to cook.)* Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the ravioli and cook for 3 minutes or until they float to the top. Don't overcrowd the pot.

While the water comes to a boil and the pasta cooks, cook the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat until golden brown.

Using a large strainer, transfer the ravioli to a platter or individual plates, drizzle with browned butter, sprinkle with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and chopped nuts and serve.

