SHANGRI-LA LIFE™ PRESENTS

From Shangri-La with Love



A Cozy Pumpkin Autumn

12 comforting pumpkin recipes, 3 heartfelt fall crafts,
and simple seasonal touches to warm your home and feed your soul

A Cozy Pumpkin Autumn

Recipes, projects and words by Carol Douthitt

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Recipe-use note

Recipes were tested in Carol's home kitchen. Ovens, ingredients and conditions vary; use your judgment and follow current food-safety guidance. Allergen needs and dietary substitutions are the reader's responsibility.

Photography & imagery

Many food, craft and Shangri-La photographs are Carol's originals. Some surrounding backgrounds or styled settings were enhanced with AI; the recipes, dishes and craft projects themselves were made and tested by Carol unless noted.

Illustration credit

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Digital edition

This review proof is intended for editorial approval and is not the final customer-delivery edition.



DEDICATION

For John,

who shares this beautiful, ordinary life with me—
and makes it extraordinary simply by being part of it.

For our family,

who have taught me that the sweetest memories
are so often made around a table,
in a kitchen,
or in the quiet comfort of home.

And for you, dear reader—

May these pages remind you to slow down,
make something with your hands,
gather the people you love close,
and savor the season you are in.

Don't wait for someday
to enjoy the life you've created.
Light the candle.
Bake the pie.
Set the table.
Open the door.

The beautiful life you are waiting for
may already be happening all around you.

From Shangri-La, with love,

Carol

Shangri-La Life™

Welcome to Shangri-La

We are John and Carol—partners in life, love, and this beautiful chapter we call Shangri-La.

Together, we are parents, grandparents and great-grandparents blessed with a wonderfully blended family. We would love to welcome you into our extended circle, right here in this cozy corner of the world.

For much of my life, I have been a creator at heart—a writer, entrepreneur and the proud owner of brick-and-mortar craft stores. I wrote a column for a national craft magazine, taught internet marketing for two decades, and wore more hats than I can count. Today, my happiest moments are often the simplest: hot tea, a good book, warm touches of beauty and people gathered around our table.

John, with his Permaculture Design Certification and years in IT behind him, calls himself a “pragmatic tree-hugger.” He is happiest with his hands in the soil, sharing practical wisdom and finding ways to live in harmony with nature.

We married in October 2023 and found our little piece of heaven in southwest Indiana: nine wooded acres and a French-country-style home beside a small lake.



Our wedding day at Shangri-La
October 28, 2023

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TWELVE TESTED RECIPES

From the Autumn Kitchen



Comforting food, simple instructions
and a little room to make each recipe your own.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Pumpkin Roll

A moist pumpkin cake wrapped around a classic cream-cheese filling - Carol has been making this for over 20 years and it's still everyone's favorite!

Yield · 10–12 slices	Pan · 15 × 10-inch jelly-roll pan
Bake · 375°F · 15 minutes	Chill · 4 hours or overnight

Cake

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ⅔ cup pumpkin purée
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Filling

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Powdered sugar, optional, for serving





1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a 15 × 10-inch jelly-roll pan with parchment; grease the top of the parchment.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt together.
3. Beat the eggs with a mixer for 5 minutes. Gradually beat in the sugar, then stir in the pumpkin purée and lemon juice. Fold in the dry ingredients.
4. Spread the batter evenly in the prepared pan and bake for 15 minutes, until the top springs back when lightly touched.
5. Lift the warm cake from the pan with the parchment. Sprinkle the top lightly with granulated sugar. Starting at a short end, roll the cake with the parchment inside; cool on a rack.
6. Beat the cream cheese, powdered sugar, butter and vanilla until smooth. Unroll the cooled cake, spread with filling, and reroll without the parchment.
7. Wrap and chill at least 4 hours or overnight. Dust with powdered sugar before slicing.

There is something wonderful about making something with your own hands. It doesn't have to be perfect to make the people you love feel cared for.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Classic Pumpkin Pie

Silky pumpkin filling, warm spice and a simple oil crust come together in the pie that belongs on every autumn table.

Yield · 8 servings	Pan · 9-inch pie plate
Bake · 425°F, then 350°F	Tested second stage · 45 minutes

Pie crust

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 3–4 tablespoons cold water

Filling

- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin purée
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- ⅛ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk





1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Mix the flour and salt. Add the oil and stir until crumbly, about the size of small peas.
2. Add cold water 1 tablespoon at a time until the dough forms a ball. Flatten between parchment sheets and roll about 2 inches larger than the pie plate.
3. Remove the top paper, invert the crust into the plate, peel away the remaining paper, then build and flute the edge.
4. Whisk the filling ingredients in the order listed, gradually adding the evaporated milk. Pour into the unbaked crust.
5. Shield the crust edge with foil. Bake 15 minutes at 425°F; reduce to 350°F and bake 40–50 minutes, removing foil for the final 15 minutes. A knife near the center should come out clean.
6. Cool at room temperature no longer than 2 hours, then refrigerate, covered, up to 4 days.

Some of life's sweetest memories begin in an ordinary kitchen—with something warm in the oven and someone you love nearby.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Pumpkin-Shaped Cheese Ball

A playful pumpkin shape turns Carol’s savory Port Wine Cheddar cheese ball into an autumn gathering centerpiece.

Yield · 10–12 servings

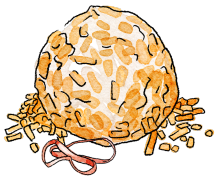
Chill · Overnight

Serve with · Crackers or vegetable sticks

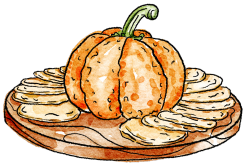
Cheese ball

- 1 container (8 ounces) Spreadable Port Wine Cheddar Cheese
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- About 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, for coating
- 1 bell-pepper stem, for finishing









Pumpkin illustrations by Sandra Ingebretsen of SweetnSandy. Used with permission.

1. Blend the Port Wine Cheddar, cream cheese and softened butter thoroughly. Stir in the bell pepper, onion, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice.
2. Spread a thick layer of shredded cheddar on parchment. Shape the mixture into a ball and roll it in the cheddar until completely coated, adding more if needed.
3. Wrap the ball tightly in plastic wrap. Space four rubber bands or pieces of string evenly around it to create pumpkin ridges.
4. Chill overnight. While the cheese ball is cold, remove the bands and plastic carefully. Press the bell-pepper stem lightly into the top.
5. Serve chilled with crackers or vegetable sticks. Refrigerate promptly after serving.

A beautiful life isn't made only of grand occasions. More often, it is created in the quiet moments we almost forget to notice.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Pumpkin Cheesecake

Rich, gently spiced and creamy, this cheesecake rewards patience with a beautiful slice made for sharing.

Yield · 12 servings	Pan · 9-inch springform, 3-inch sides
Bake · 60 minutes at 325°F	Chill · Overnight

Crust

- 1½ cups graham-cracker crumbs (13 full sheets; 1 sleeve)
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Filling

- 24 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 1½ cups packed light brown sugar
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin purée
- 4 large eggs
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2½ teaspoons pumpkin-pie spice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- Whipped cream, optional





1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Mix the crust ingredients; press into the pan bottom and about ½ inch up the side. Bake 8–10 minutes and cool.
2. Reduce the oven to 325°F. Beat cream cheese and brown sugar until smooth. In another bowl, whisk pumpkin, eggs, sour cream, flour, spice, salt and vanilla. Mix into the cream cheese on low just until combined.
3. Pour over the crust. Place an 8 × 8-inch pan half-filled with hot water on the rack below. Bake 50–60 minutes; Carol's took 60. The edges should be set and center slightly wobbly.
4. Turn off the oven, prop the door open and cool 30 minutes. Run a knife around the edge; cool on a rack about 2 hours.
5. Cover and chill at least 4 hours or overnight. Refrigerate 4–5 days, or freeze well wrapped up to 1 month; thaw overnight in the refrigerator.

Light the candle. Use the pretty dishes. Bake something just because it makes the house smell wonderful. Ordinary days deserve a little celebration, too.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Soft Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

Soft, cake-like pumpkin cookies filled with warm spice and plenty of semisweet chocolate.

Yield · 24 cookies	Prep · 15 minutes
Bake · 12 minutes per batch	Oven · 350°F

Cookies

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon cloves
- ½ cup salted butter, softened
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¾ cup pumpkin purée
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips





1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment. Whisk together the flour, leaveners, salt and spices.
2. Beat the butter and both sugars until creamy. Beat in the egg and vanilla; mix in the pumpkin.
3. Stir in the dry ingredients just until combined. Fold in the chocolate chips, reserving a few for the tops.
4. Drop rounded tablespoons 2 inches apart; press reserved chips on top. Bake 10–12 minutes; Carol's baked 12 minutes.
5. Cool 5 minutes on the pan, then transfer to a rack. Store airtight 2 days at room temperature or 5 days refrigerated; freeze up to 2 months.
6. Optional: replace ½ cup of the chips with ½ cup toasted pecans. If the purée is watery, blot it before measuring.

Home becomes special through the little things we repeat with love—the meals we make, the traditions we keep, and the welcome we offer.

Pumpkin Spice Bundt Cake

A moist pumpkin cake with fragrant autumn spice and a cream-cheese glaze that falls into every ridge.

Yield · 10–12 servings	Pan · 10-inch Bundt pan
Bake · 45–55 minutes at 350°F	Carol's test · 45 minutes

Cake

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon cloves
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin purée
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Glaze

- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons canned full-fat coconut milk
- Toasted pecans, optional





1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease every ridge of a 10-inch (10- to 12-cup) Bundt pan; lightly flour.
2. Whisk flour, leaveners, salt and spices. Beat eggs and both sugars; add oil, pumpkin and vanilla. Stir in dry ingredients just until combined.
3. Spread in the pan. Bake 45–55 minutes, until a skewer comes out clean or with moist crumbs. Cool in the pan 15 minutes; invert and cool completely.
4. Beat glaze ingredients until thick but pourable; spoon over the cake. Add toasted pecans if desired.
5. Because of the cream-cheese glaze, cover and refrigerate up to 4 days.

There will always be something else that needs doing. Give yourself permission to linger over the moments that make life feel good.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Pumpkin Pecan Pancakes

Thick, fluffy pumpkin pancakes with crushed pecans—made for a slow breakfast in a warm kitchen.

Yield · 9 generous pancakes	Prep · 15 minutes
Cook · About 20 minutes	Portion · Generous ⅓ cup

Pancakes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1½ teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pumpkin purée
- 2 large eggs
- 4 tablespoons salted butter, melted
- 1½ cups whole milk
- ½ cup raw pecans, crushed small

For serving

- Butter and warm maple syrup
- Toasted pecans and orange slices, optional





1. Heat a griddle or nonstick skillet over medium. Whisk the flour, baking powder, salt and spices.
2. In another bowl, whisk both sugars, vanilla, pumpkin, eggs, melted butter and milk. Stir wet into dry just until combined; fold in pecans. Rest 5 minutes.
3. Lightly grease the griddle. Spoon a generous ⅓ cup batter for each pancake and gently spread; the batter is thick.
4. Cook 3–4 minutes, until bubbles form and edges set. Flip and cook 2–3 minutes more. Serve warm with desired toppings.

You don’t need a perfect home to create a beautiful one. Warmth, laughter, something delicious to share, and a generous heart will do quite nicely.

Pumpkin, Apple & Walnut Salad

Flavorful pieces of roasted pumpkin, Gala apple, toasted walnuts, and feta bring color and contrast to this delicious autumn salad.

Yield · 4–6 servings

Prep · 20 minutes

Roast · 20 minutes at 400°F

Salad

- 4 cups mixed greens with spinach
- 2 cups peeled ¾-inch pie-pumpkin cubes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt; black pepper
- 1 Gala apple, sliced
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped
- ⅓ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup crumbled feta
- ¼ small red onion, optional

Vinaigrette

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple-cider vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch ground cinnamon





1. Heat the oven to 400°F. Toss pumpkin cubes with oil, salt and pepper. Roast on parchment in a single layer for 20 minutes, turning once; cool 10–15 minutes.
2. Toast walnuts in a dry skillet 3–5 minutes. Whisk the vinaigrette ingredients.
3. Arrange greens, pumpkin, apple, cranberries, walnuts, feta and onion, if using. Serve dressing on the side or drizzle lightly just before serving.
4. For make-ahead, refrigerate components and dressing separately; slice the apple and assemble shortly before serving.

Every season brings something worth savoring. Autumn simply reminds us to slow down long enough to notice.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Creamy Harvest Pumpkin Soup

Silky pumpkin, savory herbs, a touch of cream and gentle heat make this an easy autumn comfort.

Yield · About 6 cups

Prep · 15 minutes

Cook · 30 minutes

Soup

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 cups pumpkin purée (two 15-ounce cans)
- 4 cups regular chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup

Garnish, optional

- Heavy cream, pumpkin seeds, fresh thyme, black pepper





1. Melt butter with oil over medium heat. Cook onion 5–7 minutes until translucent; add garlic for 30 seconds.
2. Stir in pumpkin, broth, spices, salt, pepper and cayenne. Bring to a gentle simmer; reduce heat and cook uncovered 20 minutes.
3. Blend carefully with an immersion blender until silky. Stir in the cream and maple syrup over low heat. Adjust seasoning and thin with broth if needed.
4. Cool and refrigerate within 2 hours for 3–4 days. Reheat gently, stirring; do not hard-boil after adding cream.

One day, the ordinary moments you are living right now may be the ones you remember most fondly. Enjoy them while they are still yours to live.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Pumpkin Cream Cheese Bread

Spiced pumpkin quick bread surrounds a creamy center, with powdered sugar as a simple finishing touch.

Yield · 10–12 slices	Pan · 9 × 5-inch loaf
Prep · 20 minutes	Bake · 60 minutes at 350°F

Bread

- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon cloves
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup pumpkin purée
- ½ cup avocado oil
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Filling

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- Powdered sugar, optional





1. Heat oven to 350°F. Grease and line a 9 × 5-inch pan with parchment. Whisk dry ingredients.
2. Whisk eggs and both sugars; add pumpkin, oil, milk and vanilla. Stir in dry ingredients just until combined.
3. Beat filling ingredients smooth. Spread half the pumpkin batter in the pan. Spoon filling down the center, leaving a border; cover with remaining batter.
4. Bake 55–65 minutes; Carol's took 60. Test the pumpkin portion slightly off-center. Cool 20 minutes in the pan, then about 1 hour on a rack before slicing.
5. Refrigerate within 2 hours and keep covered up to 4 days. Let slices stand 10–15 minutes before serving if desired.

Make room for simple pleasures—a warm cup in your hands, something baking in the oven, leaves turning outside the window, and nowhere you need to hurry.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Pumpkin Lasagna Rolls with Cream Sauce

Inspired by Chicago's Walnut Room special pumpkin tortellaci, one of Carol's favorite holiday dishes, these rolls are dripping with a flavorful, comforting cream sauce.

Yield · 12 rolls · 6 servings	Dish · 9 × 13 inches
Bake · 20 minutes covered + 10 uncovered	Oven · 375°F

Rolls

- 12 lasagna noodles, cooked al dente
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin purée
- 1 cup ricotta
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, or 1 teaspoon dried
- Salt and pepper

Sauce & topping

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium leek, sliced (about ½ cup)
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup diced red sweet pepper
- ¾ cup whipping cream
- ½ cup vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ cup mozzarella + ½ cup Parmesan





1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Combine filling ingredients. Spread 2–3 tablespoons on each noodle, roll and set aside.
2. Melt butter; sauté leek, pepper and garlic 3–4 minutes, until leek is translucent. Add cream, then broth, parsley, cranberries, sage, pepper and salt; cook 5–7 minutes to thicken slightly.
3. Spread half the sauce in a greased 9 × 13-inch dish. Add rolls seam-side down; top with remaining sauce and both topping cheeses.
4. Cover and bake 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes more, until bubbly and beginning to brown.
5. Refrigerate 3–4 days. Reheat covered at 350°F, adding a little cream or broth if the sauce has thickened.

Hospitality isn't about impressing people. It's about making them feel that, for a little while, there is nowhere else you would rather be than together.

FROM THE AUTUMN KITCHEN

Savory Stuffed Mini Pumpkins

Edible miniature pumpkins make charming individual servings; larger pie-pumpkin halves turn the same filling into a cozy meal.

Yield · 12 minis or 4 pie-pumpkin halves	Oven · 375°F
Prebake · 20 minutes	Filled bake · 15 minutes + 5–10

Pumpkins & filling

- 12 edible 4-inch mini pumpkins, or 2 five-inch pie pumpkins
- 1 tablespoon olive oil; salt and pepper
- 1 pound mild Italian sausage
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 can (4 ounces) sliced mushrooms, drained and chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1½ cups cooked long-grain white rice (about ¾ cup uncooked)
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 1½ cups mozzarella, divided
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley





1. Heat oven to 375°F. For minis, cut and reserve lids; do not prebake them. For pie pumpkins, halve lengthwise. Remove seeds and pulp.
2. Brush interiors with oil; season. Set shells cut-side down on parchment and prebake 20 minutes.
3. Brown sausage. Add onion, celery and mushrooms; cook about 5 minutes. Add garlic 30 seconds. Stir in rice, herbs, pepper and broth; heat 2–3 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in 1 cup mozzarella and parsley.
4. Fill shells. Bake 15 minutes. Top with remaining ½ cup mozzarella and bake 5–10 minutes, until bubbling and browned. Replace mini lids only for presentation.
5. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours for 3–4 days; reheat covered until hot.

Perhaps abundance isn't having more. Perhaps it is recognizing just how much goodness is already gathered around us.


THREE PROJECTS
Fall Crafts to Feed the Soul
Simple materials, time-tested techniques
and the pleasure of making beauty by hand
Maison
de
Shangri-La
Welcome

CRAFT ONE

Fall Wreath

An abundant autumn wreath with layered foliage, crimson mums and a full two-ribbon bow.

Supplies

- 18-inch grapevine or twig wreath
- Two 10–12-inch greenery or fall-leaf stems
- Three 8-inch accent leaf stems
- About 4 additional fall-leaf picks
- Three 4–5-inch crimson mums
- About 2 yards 24-gauge wire
- 4 yards 1½-inch ribbon
- 2½ yards ¾-inch accent ribbon
- Hot glue, wire cutters and scissors

Time: Approximately 1 hour for a first-time maker.

Use hot glue carefully and protect your work surface. Wire ends can be sharp; turn them toward the back.



Build the Shape Before You Glue

If you are unsure of the final arrangement, place all foliage and flowers first. Then lift one stem at a time, add a little hot glue and return it to its place.



1 · Select your materials

Select your grapevine or twig wreath, at least 3 different types of silk flowers—some large and some smaller for filler—and ribbon.



2 · Lay the foundation

Insert one long greenery stem at the center-left and bend it to follow the wreath. Place the second opposite it so the ends meet in the middle.



3 · Add accent stems

Layer the three accent stems over the greenery—two toward the bottom and one toward the top—with their ends meeting at center.



4 · Place the mums

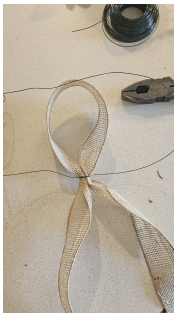
Trim the mums, leaving about 4–6 inches on the stems. Arrange all three in a staggered grouping over the greenery.



5 · Fill bare areas

Tuck additional fall leaves into open areas until the arrangement looks full and balanced.

Seven Loops Create a Full Bow



6 · Start the wide-ribbon bow

Cut about 1 yard of wire. Leave an 8-inch tail, form a 5-inch loop and wire it at the base.



7 · Build the loops

Alternate sides until you have about seven loops. Leave a second 8-inch tail and cut both ends diagonally.



8 · Secure at center

Wire the wide bow firmly to the middle of the wreath; shape the loops so they sit above the foliage.



9 · Add the accent bow

Make the narrower bow the same way with 4-inch loops. Wire it into the center of the first bow and make final adjustments.

Turn the wreath upright, shape the foliage and trim any exposed wire. Add a touch of hot glue wherever a stem needs extra security.



FROM SHANGRI-LA — WITH LOVE

The Shangri-La Love Knot

A little reminder of what makes a house a home

A handmade autumn keepsake inspired by an old sailor’s symbol of enduring connection—and by the love we choose to create within our own walls.

Project, words & photography by Carol Douthitt

A Little Reminder of What Makes a House a Home

There is something beautiful about a knot. Separate strands are brought together, intertwined and held close. Perhaps that is why knots have long symbolized love, friendship, fidelity and enduring connection.

Swedish knot scholar Hjalmar Öhrvall recorded a sailor's tradition associated with the kärleksknop, or "love knot." A sailor away on a long voyage could tie the knot in fine silk and enclose it in a letter to his sweetheart. The small token carried what he found difficult to put into words: a question of love and faithfulness across the miles.

That old maritime custom is the inspiration behind this decorative Shangri-La version—not an exact reproduction of the historical knot, but a keepsake shaped by the same beautiful idea: that love is strengthened by the ties we tend.

Hung from an inside doorknob or near the entrance, it can quietly represent the intention that everyone who crosses the threshold will be greeted with kindness, hospitality and love.

Placed in the kitchen or another gathering place, it becomes a reminder of the relationships nourished within those walls—the conversations around the table, the meals shared, the laughter, celebrations and ordinary moments that eventually become our most treasured memories.

It also makes a meaningful handmade gift for a wedding, anniversary, new home or someone beginning a new chapter of life.

> A beautiful home isn't created simply by what we put in it. It's created by what happens within it.

A Shangri-La Thought

The knot doesn't create the love. It reminds us to create the love.

- Be a little more patient.
- Welcome people warmly.
- Forgive a little faster.
- Linger around the table longer.
- Say what sometimes goes unsaid.
- Treasure the people who share our ordinary days.

Historical note: Hjalmar Öhrvall, Om knutar (Stockholm, 1916), pp. 213–214; see also P. van de Griend, "On the True Love Knot," in History and Science of Knots (1996), pp. 397–417.

MAKE THE AUTUMN VERSION

Warm Color, Natural Texture

The knot remains the same. Only the season surrounding it changes.

Supplies

- 3 yards of ½-inch cotton rope, jute or sisal rope
- 3 yards of 1½-inch wired ribbon
- 1–2 small picks of autumn flowers and leaves
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- 24-gauge floral or craft wire
- Scissors and wire cutters

Before you begin: Protect your work surface and keep the hot-glue gun away from children and pets. Wired ribbon gives the bow enough structure to hold its shape.

Finished character

Soft natural rope creates the foundation. Rust-colored ribbon, golden flowers and autumn leaves add the warmth and texture of the season.

Make yours as simple or elaborate as you wish.



The completed autumn Love Knot. Hang it from an interior doorknob, cabinet pull, wall hook or peg.

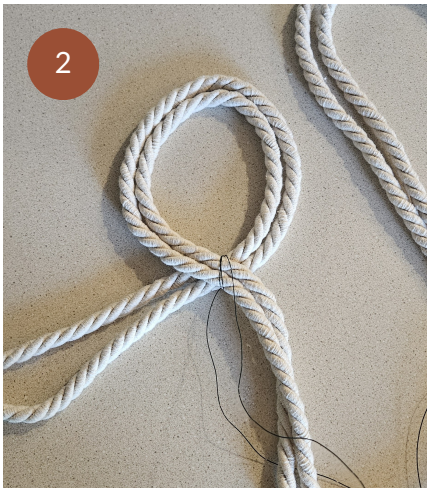
FORM THE ROPE KNOT

Three Loops, Gathered at the Center

1

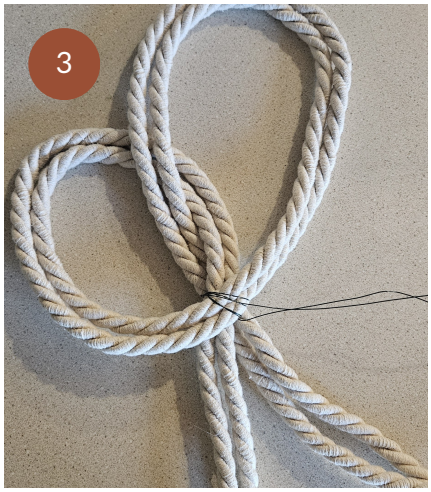
Fold and secure the tails

Fold the 3-yard length of rope in half so the two cut ends meet. From the cut ends, measure 7 inches. Bind the two strands together at that point with 24-gauge wire, twisting the wire securely at the back. This preparation step is shown without a photograph.



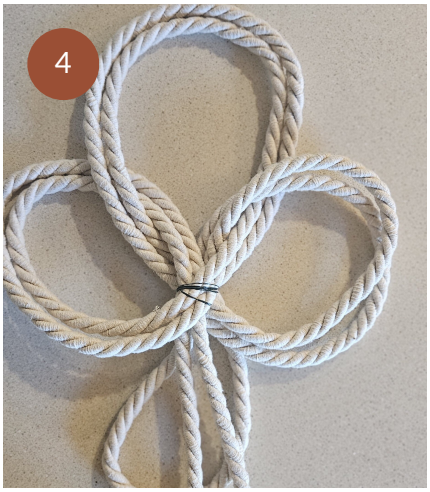
Make the left loop

Using the long doubled section of rope, form a 5-inch loop to the left. Bring its base over the first wired section and bind all the strands together with wire.



Make the center loop

Pass the folded end of the rope up through the first loop. Shape it into a center loop approximately 7 inches tall, then wire its base firmly on top of the existing bindings.



Make the right loop

Guide the remaining folded end through the center loop and shape a 5-inch loop on the right. Wire it to the center. A small hanging loop will remain behind the knot; adjust the three front loops until they look balanced.

Shangri-La tip: The measurements are guides, not rules. Before tightening the wire completely, step back and adjust the loops so the silhouette feels even and relaxed.

Build Fullness One Loop at a Time



Prepare the wire and first loop

Cut about 1 yard of 24-gauge wire. Leave an 8-inch ribbon tail, then form a loop about 5 inches long. Pinch the ribbon at the center and wrap the wire around it to hold the loop in place.



Add the remaining loops

Form a second loop on the opposite side and secure it beside the first. Continue alternating sides until you have about seven loops. Leave a second 8-inch tail, then cut both tail ends on the diagonal to help prevent fraying.



7 · Attach the bow

Position the finished bow over the wired center of the rope knot. Wrap the remaining bow wire around the center several times and twist securely at the back.

8 · Add the autumn flowers

Tuck the flower and leaf picks into the center of the bow. Trim stems as needed, hide all bare ends, and secure the pieces with wire or small dots of hot glue.

FINISH & MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Find a Happy Place to Hang Your Knot

Shape the bow loops, turn the leaves so their best sides face forward, and make sure no sharp wire ends remain exposed. Use the small loop at the back to hang your Love Knot somewhere you will see it often.

Not for luck or superstition, but as a gentle reminder:

Love lives here.

Change it with the seasons

Spring
Delicate blossoms, pale ribbon and soft greens

Summer
Wildflowers, lavender or herbs

Christmas
Velvet ribbon, cedar and berries

Use what you already have, gather a few natural elements, or choose colors that carry meaning for the person receiving it.

> Gift idea: Pair the finished Love Knot with the enclosed keepsake card for a wedding, anniversary, housewarming or fresh beginning.



Your finished knot is a reminder of the home you choose to create—one ordinary act of welcome, patience and gratitude at a time.

THE SWEDISH LOVE KNOT

An old symbol of love, friendship and devotion

The Love Knot reminds us that the strongest homes are created by the ties that bind us together.

Hang this knot within your home as a gentle reminder to fill these rooms with kindness, laughter, gratitude and love.

May all who enter here feel welcome.
May all who live here feel loved.
And may the ties that bind us grow stronger with every passing year.

FROM SHANGRI-LA — WITH LOVE

CRAFT THREE

White Pumpkin Floral Arrangement

Crimson mums and autumn foliage rise from a white faux pumpkin for a centerpiece that feels both rustic and graceful.

Supplies

- One faux pumpkin, about 10 inches wide × 7 inches tall
- One 3-inch round Styrofoam disk
- About 3 feet 24-gauge wire
- Five crimson silk mums, 4–5 inches across
- Nine smaller accent-flower stems
- 7–9 filler stems with berries, pinecones or leaves
- Hot glue, wire cutters and scissors

Time: Approximately 1 hour for a first-time maker.

Hot glue can burn. Protect your hands, your work surface and the pumpkin's finish.



A Little Note from Shangri-La

"Beauty often begins with ordinary pieces, gathered patiently until they belong together."

Shape First, Secure Last



1 · Select your materials

Select your faux pumpkin and varied sizes of silk flowers that complement each other.



2 · Attach the Styrofoam

Cut the Styrofoam disk in half and position the halves around the pumpkin stem. Wrap wire tightly around the foam to secure it. If there is no stem, use two long strips of clear tape in a crisscross pattern.



3 · Cover the base

Insert filler leaves around the bottom of the foam to hide it.



4 · Establish the height and place the focal flowers

Place an accent flower stem in the center to establish an overall finished height of about 14–15 inches. Alternate the height of the five large mums. Insert each stem near the foam's center, then bend the stem outward to shape the arrangement.

Fill, Shape and Secure



5 · Add smaller flowers

Place smaller accent flowers in and around the mums, varying their height and direction.



6 · Balance the silhouette

Add berries, pinecones and leaves. Bend and shape until the arrangement feels full from every angle.



7 · Glue one stem at a time

When satisfied, remove each stem individually, add a small amount of hot glue to its end, and return it to the same position.

FALL REFLECTION

Carry the Warmth Forward



There is something about autumn that always makes me want to slow down and pay a little closer attention.

Maybe it’s because we know the season won’t last.

The leaves will fall. The pumpkins will disappear from the porch. The holidays will come, and before we know it, another year will be tucked away among our memories.

And perhaps that is autumn’s gentle reminder to us:

Enjoy this while it’s here.

I hope somewhere in these pages you found more than a recipe or a project.

Maybe you discovered a pumpkin recipe that will find its way back to your table every fall. Maybe you made something with your hands that you'll pull from a box years from now and remember exactly where you were when you created it.

Or maybe this book simply reminded you to light a candle, linger over dinner a little longer, invite someone you love to the table, or step outside and notice how beautiful the trees are today.

Those things may seem small.

But after living a good many seasons of my own, I've come to believe they aren't small at all.

They are the pieces a beautiful life is made of.

So as autumn gives way to the season ahead, carry some of its warmth with you.

Keep making things.
Keep gathering people around your table.
Keep creating a home that feels like a welcome at the end of the day.

And most of all, keep noticing the goodness that is already right there in front of you.

You don't have to wait for a special occasion to make life special.

This is your life.
This is your season.
Don't miss it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carol Douthitt

Founder, Shangri-La Life™



For as long as I can remember, I've loved making things.

I've made crafts and decorated homes, planted gardens, baked for people I love, built businesses, raised a family, and filled more notebooks than I could ever count with ideas for *something I wanted to create next.*

For 18 years, I owned craft stores where I had the joy of helping other women discover what they could make with their own two hands. Along the way, I wrote for a national craft magazine, taught, spoke, built online businesses, and spent more than two decades helping entrepreneurs turn their own ideas into something real.

But life has also taught me lessons that had very little to do with business.

I've loved deeply, experienced loss, watched life change in ways I never expected, and discovered that beginning again can happen at any age.

Today, my husband John and I live at the place we call *Shangri-La*, our home tucked among the woods and beside a quiet lake in southern Indiana. Here, life has become a little slower and a little more intentional. We garden. We cook. We create. We welcome family and friends. And we try not to overlook the small, ordinary moments that so often turn out to be the ones that matter most.

That is how *Shangri-La Life*™ began.

It isn't really about creating a perfect home or a perfect life.

It's about noticing the life you already have—and tending it with love.

Through the recipes, projects, traditions and stories I share, I hope to inspire women to make their homes a little warmer, their days a little more beautiful, and their lives a little richer in the things that cannot be measured.

Bake something wonderful.
Grow something.
Make something with your hands.
Set the table even when no one special is coming.
Light the candle.
Invite someone in.

And don't wait for a special occasion to enjoy the life you've worked so hard to create.

Because I've come to believe that home is not simply the backdrop to a meaningful life.

It is one of the places where that life is made.

Made with Gratitude

No book created at Shangri-La could ever really be mine alone.

It is shaped by the people who have shared this life with me—the ones who have gathered around our table, tasted recipes straight from the oven, watched projects take over the kitchen counter, offered encouragement, and filled our home with the laughter and memories that give it meaning.

To my husband, John: thank you for building this life beside me. For believing in my ideas, joining in my adventures, and sharing all those wonderfully ordinary days that somehow become the best parts of a life. Shangri-La would not be Shangri-La without you.

To our blended family and the dear friends who gather around our table: you are part of every recipe, every celebration, and every tradition shared in these pages. A home becomes richer because of the people who fill it, and we are so grateful for each of you.

To Sandra Ingebretsen of SweetnSandy: my special thanks for the beautiful custom pumpkin-cheese-ball illustrations and for so graciously allowing me to include them in this book. Your creativity added something very special to these pages.

And to you, dear reader: thank you for inviting a little piece of Shangri-La into your home.

MADE WITH GRATITUDE

Of all the things I hope you take from this book, I hope one stays with you long after autumn has passed:

Your ordinary life is worthy of your attention.

Use the good dishes.
Make the recipe.
Gather the leaves.
Create something beautiful with your hands.
Invite someone to stay for supper.
Notice the people around your table.

Because someday we discover that these weren't the little moments in between the important ones.

They were the important ones.

And to every woman who is learning to see her life with fresh eyes … notice what is good, create what is beautiful, and cherish what is already yours. I hope Shangri-La reminds you that it is never too late to fall in love with your life again.

Welcome, friend.
There will always be a place for you at our table.

With gratitude and love,
Carol
Shangri-La Life™