

# Autumn in Arizona

How can you tell?

Like many people who live in Arizona, my husband and I are transplants from the Midwest who were seduced by turquoise skies, mild winters, spectacular sunsets, and the way you can see a million stars in the clear night sky. But, I'll admit, I miss fall. The desert has seasons, but the changes are subtle. You have to be on the lookout or they will pass you by. Here's how I know it's autumn in Arizona:

## **Forget about Daylight Savings time**

Arizona is one of the two states that doesn't observe it. (The other being Hawaii, where they don't worry about time anyway.) It's rather nice. There's no adjustment period when the clock suddenly "falls back" or "springs forward" causing you to lose sleep or miss appointments. The only change I make is keeping track of what time it is when I call friends and family in Michigan, Illinois, or Indiana.

## **Close out the pool**

Sometime during the month of October, I'll enjoy my last swim in our small, unheated backyard pool. Though the daytime temperatures run in the mid to upper 80s, it's not unusual for the temperature to drop 30 degrees overnight, making the water too chilly even with the solar cover on. I say goodbye to summer as I remove the cover and stash it in the garage. I'll roll it out in April when the pool welcomes me back.

## **Add Some Fall Decor**

There are few deciduous trees in the area, so forget about seeing a glorious autumn display of leaves unless you head to the mountains. If you own a pomegranate

tree, however, you will experience a bountiful ruby harvest, after which the tree will shed its leaves (although not enough to make a pile to jump in). Here in Arizona, you need to make your own autumn ambience. Hang a fall themed wreath on your front door or gate, burn some pumpkin spice candles. It's a feeble attempt, but anything helps. (Tip: DO NOT put real pumpkins or squashes outside. The javelinistas will think you are serving sacks. I learned this the hard way.)

### **Wardrobe Changes**

It took me years to figure out how to dress for the seasons in Arizona. A friend of mine who's been here longer than I have says, "It's all about layering." I still can't get it right. One October morning, I met some friends for coffee. It was 50 degrees when I left home. I wore a long-sleeved tee and a pair of jeans. We sat outside, and by the time our lattes arrived, I was too hot. Back home, I changed into shorts and a tee shirt. That afternoon I had my bathing suit on (for my last-swim-of-the-year.) When I got out of the pool I was freezing; I put on yoga pants and a sweat shirt for the evening. We do a lot of laundry at our house this time of year.

### **Seasonal Food**

As the seasons change, so does my menu. Cool, crisp salads make way for soups, stews, spicy chili and homemade bread. After dinner, you can gather around the gas fire table or stoke up your mesquite fire pit and make some s'mores. The sun is kinder this time of year, taking on a mellow tone making the sunsets even more spectacular. Pull on a sweatshirt for the evening. Then you will know autumn has arrived in Arizona.

Yeah, I know, it's not the same. Those who live in other parts of the country will have beautiful leaves, the first snowfall, White Christmas. I miss it sometimes. But come January, February, and March, my guest room fills up with Midwestern friends.

