

## This spiced pumpkin butter is perfect for fall



Pumpkin butter

Photo Susie Iventosch

### By Susie Iventosch

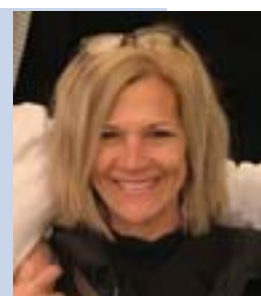
Fall is in the air and that means it's time for pumpkin recipes! So how about some pumpkin butter? It's really just like apple butter, only made with pumpkin purée, brown sugar, pure maple syrup, spices, vanilla and a little splash of apple juice. It's tasty with peanut butter or all by itself on toast in the morning, and you can mix it into

scone dough for autumn breakfast treats. If you happen to have any pie dough leftover, roll it out, spread the pumpkin butter over the entire circle of dough, roll it up like a jelly roll, slice it and bake it for some delicious pumpkin pie dough roll ups. I usually we do that with butter, cinnamon and sugar, but this is a fun fall option for sure. Don't forget to sprinkle the tops of the pie dough roll

ups with a little cinnamon sugar before you bake them!

If you're ambitious, you can cook your own pumpkin purée, but I take the easy route and make this with canned pumpkin. There are several brands of canned pumpkin on the market and I've used Trader Joe's and Farmer's Market for this recipe. I slightly preferred the flavor of Trader Joe's, and have yet to try Libby's or homemade, but I think any of them would work just fine.

Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



### Pumpkin butter

(Yields 1 ½ cups of Pumpkin Butter)

#### INGREDIENTS

1 15-oz. can pumpkin purée  
(I like to use Trader Joe's pumpkin purée for this recipe)  
½ cup light brown sugar  
½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice  
¼ tsp. nutmeg  
½ tsp. cinnamon  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 tsp. pure maple syrup  
1/3 cup apple juice

#### DIRECTIONS

Stir all ingredients together in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring often. Once it reaches a boil, immediately reduce heat to low and simmer until thickened to the consistency of apple butter, about 30-40 minutes. Stir occasionally during the cooking process. Remove from heat and cool. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

## Sundance Film Festival winner 'Luzzu' at Orinda Theatre for one week



Image provided

### By Sophie Braccini

A crack appears in the hull of a small fishing-boat. Is it a simple case of maintenance or a call from destiny signaling that something more existential has to change?

In the movie "Luzzu," opening Oct. 15 in Orinda,

everything in Jesmark's life is starting to take on water; his generations-old boat is showing signs of dangerous decay; his infant son is diagnosed with developmental delay; to navigate his circumstance he grows more likely each day to compromise his morals to make ends meet. Life is get-

ting tougher in Malta, the European Union island mid-way between Tunisia and Italy, and for the small fishermen who wants to play by the rules. In this idyllic Mediterranean Sea, the luzzu is the traditional wood vessel that has been used by fishermen for generations. It is Jesmark's only possession, his way of life, and his identity.

The luzzu Ta' Palma has been in Jesmark Scicluna's family for generations. The 12-foot-long wooden boat is a traditional Maltese coastal fishing boat that is emblematic of the island and has been around since the 18th century. Boats are painted with vibrant colors, each different from the next, and they harbor the traditional Phoenician eyes on the boats' bows called oculus that protect the luzzijiet (plural of luzzu) against the dangers of the sea. Jesmark loves his job and the small town's fishermen community, but the economic reality is harsh, fish are rare or forbidden at certain times per EU regulations, and the fish auc-

tioners ignore the small fishermen. In order to prove to his wife that he can support her and their young child, Jesmark will make hard choices and will discover darker sides about himself and about his world.

"Luzzu" was written and directed by Alex Camilleri and it is his first full feature film. The movie describes beautifully and in detail the life of the fishermen, including aspects of fishing, slicing, or boat repair. This documentary aspect of the movie is reinforced by the inclusion of non-professional actors in the making of the film. In the words of Camilleri in an interview for Sundance, "The reality pokes through the edges of the frame." This is on the surface a simple story about the waning of a traditional way of life, but along the way it evokes complex realities such as the changes of the ecosystem; EU regulations and opportunities; the diverse trafficking and mafias; the different social strata in Malta; and also, environmen-

tal issues. With climate change, and depletion of fish stock, what will become of the lonely fisherman?

This movie remains the touching intimate drama of a man and a father fighting to prove himself, save his marriage and support his child. As Camilleri describes it, it is a movie about family and sacrifice. It is easy to empathize with the young couple at the center of the story and the director has managed to include elements of surprise as well as moments of calm and peace in his narrative.

"Luzzu" got a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and it premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival where it won the festival's World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award. It is brought to Orinda by the International Film Showcase starting on Oct. 15 for at least one full week with three screenings each day. There is limited seating and proof of vaccination is required at the door. Tickets: [www.OrindaMovies.com](http://www.OrindaMovies.com)

## College trends to consider for the classes of 2022 and 2023

### By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

Understanding the reality of today's college application process is an important element in managing expectations. For instance, the notion that great grades and test scores will automatically guarantee entry into highly selective colleges no longer holds true. Strong stats certainly open doors, but colleges ranked in the top 25 or even 50 expect much more: a uniqueness, one that distinguishes the student at the national and even international level of accomplishment in some area of the sciences, arts or athletics, as well as a concrete connection to schools' mission, educational program and institutional goals.

Here are some trends worth mentioning, as they will impact your experience applying to colleges this cycle and likely next cycle for the Class of 2023.

More colleges continue to allow self-reported grades and test scores, only requiring an "official" report if you choose to attend. You'll need to be super accurate, otherwise you risk having an acceptance rescinded.

Offering a student admission in the spring instead of the fall is gaining momentum as an enrollment management tool. Some students may even be selected to start on a dif-

ferent campus – perhaps even internationally. Don't let this possibility throw you off course. Your ability to be flexible will create more possibilities. Instead, explore the advantages of taking a break between high school and college. You can plan a hiking excursion, get a job or land an internship that will begin to build your resume before you even start college!

More students will take gap years. Colleges appreciate the maturity and perspective that gap year students bring to campus. Just be sure you have applied and are accepted at a college first and that the college has agreed to defer your admission.

Test Optional is here to stay. With over 1,500 colleges already on board, it is possible to apply to college without ever taking an ACT or SAT.

(Visit [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org) to see which colleges offer this.) However, submitting a really good score allows admissions one more puzzle piece to consider. Submitting a strong score that compliments your grades and rigor of coursework is an advantage. Deciding what a "really good score" is depends on the college you apply to and a question to bring to your college advisor. Remember, test optional does not mean test blind.

Test blind, where a college does not consider standardized tests in admissions even

if submitted, is gaining momentum. Last year 69 institutions were test blind, including the entire UC and CSU systems. UCs and CSUs will again be test blind for the Class of 2022.

AP exam scores will rise in importance. Colleges will now buy names of sophomores and juniors who are taking APs for marketing purposes and some may begin to examine AP scores with greater scrutiny.

Colleges that offer merit aid tend to award money to students who take advantage of the early action and priority dates. Regular decision applicants are often the last in line for merit aid consideration. While most schools will award money without standardized tests, there are still some schools and programs that require them. Be sure to check out each college's policy, since going test optional may help you gain admission but hurt your chances for financial aid.

Applying early action is losing some of its luster. Whereas in the past students were given a significant advantage if they applied early, quite a few schools in 2021 elected to defer students into the regular pool. This may have been due to the surge in applications and thus a temporary phenomenon, or it may be here to stay. In 2022, a significant number of colleges

dropped their early action option altogether. In 2021, early decision, though, seemed to give an advantage. Data from top colleges this year showed that in general a larger percent of the applicants were admitted through the binding early decision program.

Applications to top colleges exploded last year, and it is likely this trend will continue. Be sure to not apply to super reach schools that are out of reach for your profile, and balance your list with more target and anchor schools. Here are some current application growth numbers in percentages: Colgate-104%, MIT-66%, Columbia-51%, BC-36%, Tufts-35%, UC Berkeley and UCLA both saw a 28% increase in applications and U of Wisconsin Madison-17%. What do these increases mean? It means the tippy top colleges will remain nearly impossible for most, while the high-end target schools will be reaches for many.

The UCs now routinely deny or waitlist smart, qualified California students. Be sure your college list includes other options. Resist the urge to apply to every UC – you must be a good fit for the UC major you apply to and your activities and essays must reflect as much.

More online interviews will be offered. Some might include a prompt to which a student will give a video re-

sponse. Work with your advisor on interview skills.

Now that you know some of these trends, seniors will be more well prepared to apply more thoughtfully to colleges this fall and juniors can begin to assemble their college lists with these tips in mind.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com); Visit [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com); or Call: 925.385.0562.