

Autumnophile Orange

On a brisk day in September, people who identify themselves as autumnophiles peek their bleary-eyed faces out from behind doors, curtains, and windows. Some sentiment deep within them, instinctive, has been awakened after a long period of hibernation, undertaken in an attempt to escape the searing wrath of the blistering summer sun. However, the cooling temperatures have drawn these people out of their abodes as a sense of impending winter sinks down upon the world. Unlike the majority of the human race, this group will relish in the transformation from fiery days to frosty ones because the interlude between these two extremes allows for the rare opportunity to seek out their most revered occurrence. For the next few months, these people will rabidly and invariably be drawn to anything ranging from crisp brown to warm red tones, falling under the general classification of a seasonal and elusive color: autumnophile orange.

This color is the fall equivalent of the light, jovial pastels of Easter and spring, the red-hot, simmering hues of summer, or the cool, dark and snowy evergreens of winter. It is symbolic of harvest, the end of the warm season, the beginning of the holidays, and of fresh starts. The autumnophile will see the appearance of this color as freedom from the tyranny of overbearing heat and humidity as temperatures slowly slide from nineties to fifties, mirroring the downward shift in hues of the season. Objects of this color are the Easter eggs of autumn, gathered enthusiastically in the spirit of cherishing this once-yearly occurrence.

Despite being completely absent from other months of the year, this color appears in a myriad of shades, hues, and saturations filling September, October, and November to the brim. Autumnophiles will search relentlessly to satiate themselves with this color and, eyes and noses alert, take full advantage of these late-month opportunities. They come in droves to Starbucks, purchasing pumpkin spice lattes, pumpkin scones, steaming apple cider, and anything else that is remotely orange-tinted. They clothe themselves from head to toe in all shades of autumn, manifesting in the forms of woolen sweaters, scarves, fuzzy socks, and jackets. Celebrations revolve around this color, which peeks out

from the brightly burning eyes of the fearsome jack-o-lantern, the striped stockings of the wannabe witch on Halloween night, and the marshmallow-shrouded sweet potatoes or pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving dinner. Thoughts of this color are evoked by anything remotely associated with fall, from the scent of cinnamon to the melody of Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue". The very earth is transmuted by Mother Nature's reverence of the season; every leaf on every tree sings out in joy of existence, blazoning the comforting warmth of autumnophile orange on bitterly cold days.

Unfortunately, this color is fleeting and transient. As the weeks progress and the balance between summer and winter begins to tip in favor of the latter, autumnophile orange will slowly fade from its peak of vibrant, pumpkiny hues to dull, dry browns, and finally into the frozen greens and blues of winter. That ingrained intuition and excitement within the autumnophiles will shrivel and die just as the browning leaves do, and once again revert to a dormant state until the next fall. Sweaters will be packed away and exchanged in favor of warmer coats, and pumpkin enthusiasts will have to settle for gingerbread lattes. By late November, the striking hues that once adorned the world have all but vanished, leaving no trace but a dwindling air of joy. The autumnophiles bundle themselves in layers upon layers of fabric, preparing for the long, dark months of winter and fondly anticipating the next harvest season, knowing that they will once again relish the festive warmth of autumnophile orange.