



SEPTEMBER 2025

# DARLING DOG

— Tails Worth Telling —

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SUBMIT YOUR  
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## Letter From The Editor

# DEAR DARLING DOG READERS,

As the summer winds down and September ushers in cooler mornings and softer sunsets, I've found myself thinking about porches—the old-fashioned kind, with wide railings, rocking chairs, and enough space for neighbors, friends, and, of course, our dogs. For me, *Darling Dog* feels like that front porch. It's a place where dog lovers from all walks of life gather to share stories, laughter, and the pure joy that comes from the wag of a tail or the nudge of a wet nose.

When we launched *Darling Dog*, we dreamed of more than just a magazine. We wanted to build a community—a warm, welcoming place where our shared love of dogs could bring us together. Month after month, thanks to you, that dream has grown into something bigger and more beautiful than we imagined. Every new subscriber, every story shared, every photo sent in of a beloved pup adds another chair to our porch and another voice to our ever-growing circle.

This past month, I've been amazed watching our community expand beyond these pages. Whether it's connecting on Instagram, swapping tips and encouragement in the comments, or meeting in person when our team travels, each interaction feels like a reminder of why we started this journey. Our social channels have become a lively extension of the magazine, filled with behind-the-scenes glimpses, sneak peeks of upcoming stories, and snapshots of the wonderful dogs who bring so much color to our world. If you haven't yet, I encourage you to join us there—it's where our porch truly comes alive in real time.

At *Darling Dog*, we believe the best stories are the ones we tell together. Each month, our readers share heartfelt tributes to their pets, tips for life with dogs, and those moments—funny, messy, heartwarming—that make our canine companions family. Your contributions keep our porch filled with warmth, humor, and heart.

As we step into the fall season, I want to take a moment to thank you for being here. For reading, sharing, sending in your stories, and simply being a part of what we're building. Our community wouldn't be what it is without your voices, your dogs, and your love for this shared space we've created.

So, here's to more conversations on the porch, more tails wagging at our feet, and more chances to celebrate the dogs who make our days brighter. Thank you for continuing to grow with us, and for making *Darling Dog* feel like home. 🐾

With gratitude and a wag,

Beau Boyd  
Editor, *Darling Dog*

# Summer Paws & Sunshine





# Quell *The* Quiet House Gloom

Helping Your Dog Adjust to Back-to-School Changes with Confidence and Comfort



**A**s families settle into new school-year routines, there's often one family member who doesn't understand why the house suddenly feels so empty during the day: your dog. September marks a season of change. With kids returning to school and parents resuming full work schedules, our canine companions can find themselves confused, anxious, or even lonely. This sudden shift can lead to behavioral issues, stress, and separation anxiety. In this month's Dogter's Corner, let's talk about how to help your pup adjust to the back-to-school season with comfort and confidence.

## UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONAL SHIFT

Dogs thrive on routine. When their human companions suddenly disappear for long hours during the day, it can trigger a range of emotional reactions:

- Separation anxiety (whining, barking, pacing, chewing furniture)
- Depression-like symptoms (loss of appetite, lethargy, disinterest in play)
- Attention-seeking behavior (excessive barking or acting out when you return)



# The good news? With a little preparation and ongoing care, you can help your dog ease into the new routine.



## TIPS TO HELP YOUR DOG COPE

### 1. Ease Into The Routine Gradually

If possible, begin adjusting your dog's schedule a week or two before the big change. Slowly shift feeding, walking, and play times to match your new daily rhythm.

### 2. Create A Soothing Departure Ritual

Keep goodbyes calm and brief. Give your dog a special treat or toy used only for when you leave—like a frozen peanut butter-filled Kong or a puzzle feeder.

- **Kong**  
<https://amazon.rockporch.com/prdlink/AkucdAFcy3>
- **Puzzle Feeder**  
<https://amazon.rockporch.com/prdlink/NyUc8qezkY>

### 3. Leave Comforting Cues

Leaving behind something that smells like you, such as a T-shirt or blanket, can provide comfort while you're away. Background noise like a softly playing radio or dog-friendly music can also soothe anxiety.

### 4. Build Independent Play

Encourage your dog to enjoy solo activities by introducing interactive toys that engage their mind. This helps them become more confident and content when alone.

- **Interactive Toys**  
<https://amazon.rockporch.com/prdlink/LC1dINp3Gz>

### 5. Ensure Adequate Exercise

Morning walks or play sessions before everyone leaves can help reduce nervous energy. A tired dog is more likely to nap than worry!

### 6. Hire Help If Needed

Consider a dog walker, pet sitter, or reputable doggie daycare if your dog struggles with being alone for long stretches.

## WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

Some dogs may have a harder time than others adjusting. If your dog shows any of the following signs, it may be time to seek professional help:

- Persistent destructive behavior
- Excessive barking or howling
- Refusing to eat or drink while you're away
- Accidents by a previously house-trained dog

Your veterinarian can rule out medical issues and may recommend behavior modification strategies—or refer you to a professional trainer or veterinary behaviorist.

## RECONNECTION IS KEY

When the school or work day ends, reconnect with your dog. A short walk, a snuggle session, or some playful fetch goes a long way toward reinforcing your bond and reminding your pup they're still a cherished part of the family.

## A NEW SEASON OF BALANCE

Change is inevitable, but with patience, love, and structure, your dog can thrive even during schedule transitions. By providing reassurance and consistency, you're teaching them that even when apart, your bond is as strong as ever. 🐾

## MEET DR. MAX HARPER, DVM



Dr. Max Harper, DVM, is a practicing veterinarian with a special interest in behavioral wellness. He believes that emotional health is just as important as physical health for dogs, especially in times of change.



# Bitch, Please

The Life Of Mae, A  
Boykin From Mobile  
Installment X





**D**o you know the N.W.A. song “Express Yourself”? I do. This bitch knows how to articulate what is going in her mind. Yes, you heard me. My humans, or anyone else for that matter, are never in doubt as to what mood in which I find myself. This sort of expressiveness is not unique to me. I suppose most ladies have the ability to communicate in ways subtle, and not so subtle; their pleasure, displeasure, or general mehness (neologism derived from the word “meh,” which means neither here nor there or neither good nor bad). My human’s paternal grandmother was a grand lady. Pictures of her abound at the Bungalow and up the country. Tall, slim, tailored, and witty, the grand was divine. She was an artist at communicating much without necessarily saying a word. That art is one I must have inherited. A transition in a facial feature and a change in posture are means by which I let people, namely the human, know what I feel about the status quo.

One of the physical attributes that people, and probably other animals, notice first about me is my pair of yellow eyes. My human always heard that dogs with yellow eyes are batshit nuts. He can now confirm theory. My eyes are very expressive. They convey the full gamut of my emotions and, at times, my expectations.

For instance, I can do soulful like no other canine. This eye maneuver, a look that is knowing tempered by sadness, is employed for multiple purposes. Being a chow hound, I deploy soulful eyes most often to con my way into getting some nosh. Yes, you got that right. This home girl likes some food. If I see anyone eating, I need to join them. No one should eat alone. That is sad. Do you perceive how thoughtful I am? Soulful eyes are not limited to securing people-food. I use them to soften if not negate punishment. You undoubtedly realize by now if you have read one of my articles that I am mischievous to say the least. Look at the title of this column. I am always up to something. Lewis Grizzard never had the divine pleasure of meeting me, but I would have been his canine muse. For benefit, not to mention the benefit of the whole of humanity, there are consequences to actions. I have found that I can lessen the severity of retribution by way of soulful eyes.

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That soulful stuff only goes so far in life, and in my life in particular. I am one feisty bitch. Sometimes the attitude or mantra is not No, but Hell to the no. I squinch my eyes together to let the human, yes mainly him, know that I am having none of this. Yes, whatever this might be, if it is not to my liking, no ma'am to it. Nada. Feisty bitch can cause frustration and fear for the human. If dude cuts a male human equivalent to feisty bitch eyes, he is going to win the standoff. I do not surrender easily. I run off, box him in the privates, plot revenge, etc . . . All of the above are cause for fear at some moment or another. The human and others are afraid I might get hit by a car. When I dart off in town, I could become roadkill. Yes, I should not run off. I do it at times all the same. A good blow to the equipment should be the mental toolkit of any lady. There is no faster way to shut a man down than a blow below the belt. A feisty-eyed punch to the privates gives me a little more time to avoid consequences for actions or simply put off doing something that does not blow wind up my figurative skirt.

Artful employ of my yellow eyes are not the only armament in my arsenal. The turn of my head can emphatically impart how I feel about any goings on. For instance, the turn of the head communicates to the human, why, yes, I heard you. I just do not give a . . .

**You can keep talking, but the ears are not telling the mind and body to obey.**

The turn of the head communicates no, be it ma'am, sir, or way. The turn of the head is my way of showing whatever is happening or expected does not involve moi.

Cocked ears express all sorts of things for docked-tail dogs like me. When I hear something, it can result in any number of ear postures. Intruder, be the threat real or imagined: fast, quick, straight up ear posturing. I do not want to do what you are telling me to do: regular ear posture. Scratch behind my ears: another positioning. I am up to something now: the worst of all for my human. Shit is going down!

Tails communicate a lot. All dogs have them. Like many spaniels, my tail is docked. It still swings, and often. Swinging nub means happy swamp poodle. Straight out nub indicates I am going to pounce on a real or imagined intruder, interest, or prey. Tucked nub is the worst for me. It expresses that no, I did not mean to do what I did, even if I consciously did so.

Dogs might not be able to express themselves in the King's English, but I do talk, and quite often. My spare wonders what my voice would be like if I could speak. He and the human think I would sound like either Wanda Sykes, Karen Walker, or Madea. I am down with all of those!

In the morning, I am particularly vocal. My wakeup time varies with the day of the week, type of weather, place of stay, and time of the year. I rise early on weekdays, usually between five and seven. Weekends are cause for later slumber. The last is a good thing for my humans. When up the country, I stay in my grandmother's room. Sometimes I adapt myself to her shelter and other times not. Even though I am a water dog, I do not do rain. Any water that falls from above is not my thing. I will not get up and walk in the rain. My morning routine begins with doggie yoga. I am an expert of the downward dog. I raise my snout and speak while I stretch.

I yell, too. Yelling is human-speak for barking. I bark at other dog's, all things that fly, and my human when he ticks me off. Growling is related to barking, but different. I growl at cats and my human when he gets on my nerves.

One very distinctive way that I express my emotions is slapping. I can bitch slap. The human is the sole recipient

of this action. When he baths me, I swat at him. When he tries to keep me in his lap when I want to be free, I swat him. Sometimes, and just for kicks and giggles, I swat him. I have to keep that bastard on his toes.

This bitch has all of the feels. I feel and express my emotions in lots of ways. Bottling that shit up is not good for anyone, you know. Expression is one thing, but artful expression is another. I do everything with panache. You might inquire as to why I do what I do the way I do it. The answer ismple. To quote the great Karen Walker, "I am lady as face." 🐾



## MEET CART BLACKWELL

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Cartledge Weeden Blackwell III, "Cart," is a historian and a curator. Blackwell was born in Selma, Alabama. He obtained an undergraduate degree from the College of Charleston and his graduate degree from the University of Virginia. He authored *Of People and Of Place: Portraiture in Alabama (1870-1945): Reconstruction to Modernism for the Alabama Chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America (NSCDA)*. His second book, *Of Color and Light: The Life and Art of Artist-Designer Clara Weaver Parrish*, is to be published by the University of Alabama Press in the winter of 2025.

Blackwell has penned scores of articles for magazines and numerous essays for exhibit catalogues. An eighth-generation Alabamian, Cart loves his native state. When not found on his family's farm in Wilcox County, he is on the Gulf Coast. Regardless of where he finds himself, Mae, his crafty spaniel, is always by his side!



# DOG IS MY CO-PILOT

## *Anticipation*

Cross all of  
your paws and  
send good  
vibes that my  
co-pilot has the  
time of her life.







---

Winnie Lew is not aware that she is a dog. As her human, I suppose that is my fault. As she was my COVID companion, it was just the two of us for several years. It has always been my intention to find her some dog friends. For some reason, I never got around to it. There is no dog park in Selma and no doggie day care. I rationalized that if I were in a larger city, I would have sent her to a sanctioned day care. It was a pretty good excuse for five years.

And then, one Friday evening, I am driving past a local park and I see a gathering of dogs and a bus that has fun graphics all over it. Canine Strides—The Bark Bus. So, I pull in and start asking questions. It turns out Selma now has a doggie day camp and the Bark Bus goes around picking up dogs to take to its private dog park for a morning of fun. I was intrigued and got a post card with all of the information. But the card lingered on my desk, and I didn't take any action. Then, on a recent visit to the vet, I saw a stack of the cards, asked the staff if they knew anything about it, and they gave it a thumbs up. I took that as a sign.

I got home and gave the number a call and left a message. Not long after, a cheerful voice called back. She scheduled an in-home meet-and-greet for the following week. With the nervousness of a mother hoping her child does well on their private school interview, I started talking with Winnie Lew about what was going to happen. I explained to her that she needed some friends of her own species. She didn't seem too anxious about the whole thing and that was okay—I had nerves for the both of us. What if she didn't pass? What if she had a meltdown when the Bark Bus drove up for her interview? What if I had a meltdown when the Bark Bus drove up? I knew it was going to be a long five days wait. I almost felt the need to have prayer circles form to offer intercessions for a successful interview. Maybe I needed to light a candle. Maybe I needed to invoke the powers of St. Roch, the patron saint of dogs.

All weekend we prepped. I was giving Winnie Lew all sorts of advice on how to make a good impression to which she would cock her head and look at me as though I were nuts. Because basically, that was how I was behaving. I had filled out the 12 pages of paperwork. I thought the paperwork was a good sign—it

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meant it was a legit business. So many questions. Does she take medication? No. Does she have any anxiety issues? Yes. Does she have separation anxiety issues? Don't know yet. Does she have territorial issues? Yes, with her human. Does she have any disabilities? Yes. She is a spoiled-rotten only-child.

Finally, interview day arrived. I couldn't get a thing done at work. When I got home, I gave Winnie Lew a good furminating—I didn't want to her to shed any more than usual at her "pre-school" interview. Like my mother used to tell me, "Always brush your hair before you leave the house. You don't know who might see you. And yes, Amy, that means brush the back, too."

At long last, the Bark Bus drove up the long winding driveway. Winnie Lew went into a frenzy as the owner cheerfully jumped out of the bus. I held my breath as she came through the screened-in porch door. The owner introduced herself as Dawn. Winnie Lew stopped barking and covered a little bit, but Dawn got down on the floor with her and quickly put her at ease. After a little time getting to know Winnie Lew inside, it was time to go out to the Bark Bus. Dawn's Boston Terrier was sitting in one of the seats. Winnie Lew gave a good sniff which he took in stride. We finally got her to get up on one of the seats so she could see out of a window. After she had performed that duty, Winnie Lew jumped down—she was ready to go back inside her house. Dawn even tried to offer her a treat, which she refused. Once again, Winnie Lew shot me a look as if to say, "Stranger Danger," like I was allowing Dawn to offer her poison.

All three of us hopped off the bus to go in and finalize the deal. Winnie Lew had passed with flying colors! Although Dawn did say there would be a period of adjustment, she thought it was a good fit. She promised to let me know if she didn't think it was working out. I handed over my paperwork and a check to cover the first day at camp. Dawn announced Winnie Lew could start next week and that she would send me a text to let me know which day the Bark Bus would arrive.

That was a week ago. Fast forward to today. Winnie Lew has gotten up and gone for her morning constitutional. She has gotten a back-to-school haircut of sorts—I trimmed off some of her back fluff. I know it will be hot outside, and I thought a little less fluff might make her a little cooler.

I know she doesn't realize it is her first day of school, but her mother does. I feel like I should be packing her a lunch and putting it in a Paw Patrol lunch box.

At 7:48 a.m., we hear the rumble of the bus. It is already full of Winnie Lew's new classmates and hopefully new friends. I hustle to get Winnie Lew's harness adjusted as the bus door opens with a hydraulic hiss. Dawn stands in the doorway, clipboard in hand.

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**“Good morning, Winnie Lew! Ready for your first day of adventure?”**

*Dawn chirps.*

---

Winnie Lew freezes beside me, her tail tucked firmly between her legs. From inside the bus comes a cacophony of excited barks and yips. I can see furry faces pressed against windows, tongues lolling, eyes bright with anticipation.

“It's okay, baby,” I whisper, crouching down to her level. “You're going to have so much fun today.” The look she gives me can only be described as betrayal incarnate. I hand her off to Dawn and tell Winnie Lew to “be a friend” and “make good choices.” I will neither confirm nor deny that a tear went down my cheek.

I hope this goes well. This will be one nervous mama until that Bark Bus returns. Cross all of your paws and send good vibes that my co-pilot has the time of her life. 🐾



## MEET AMY GEORGE

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Amy George is an Episcopal priest in Selma, Alabama, where she shares an office with her volunteer pastoral care assistant, Winnie Lew. When not doing God's work, you can find Amy doing Dog's work—vacuuming a never ending supply of dog hair, chauffeuring Winnie Lew, and being the provider of endless dog treats. Amy feels blessed to have no fear of ever being attacked by squirrels, UPS delivery people, or small lizards.



# *Back-To-School Blues:* Helping Your Dog Adjust To Schedule Changes

Because your  
pup misses you  
more than you  
think.



**S**eptember hits, and suddenly everything shifts. The morning hustle is real, the afternoons get busier, and the dog who used to have a full-time audience now watches the door . . . waiting.

Whether your kids are headed back to school or your schedule's just picking up again, dogs feel the change. And just like humans, they can get a little mooney—or downright anxious—about it.

Here's how to help your pup adjust, feel secure, and even enjoy the new fall rhythm.

## **WHY DO DOGS GET THE "BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLUES"?**

Dogs are creatures of habit, and when their routine changes—especially when it involves their favorite humans disappearing for most of the day—it can trigger:

- Separation anxiety
- Excessive barking or whining
- Pacing or destructive behavior
- Lack of appetite or energy
- Clinginess when you're home

Even dogs who don't seem outwardly anxious may feel unsettled by the quiet and lack of interaction during the day.

## **1. EASE INTO A NEW ROUTINE**

If you know change is coming, start adjusting a week or two ahead. Dogs thrive on rhythm, so gradually shifting feeding time, as well as walk and play times, can help avoid a shock.

- Set regular times for meals, walks, and bathroom breaks.

- Practice short separations by leaving the house for brief periods during the day, even if you're just going for a walk around the block.
- Keep departures and arrivals low-key to avoid triggering stress.

## 2. BUILD IN MORNING CONNECTION TIME

Even just 10–15 minutes of focused play, cuddling, or a walk in the morning can set your dog up for a calmer day.

### Try:

- A short game of tug-of-war
- A breakfast walk (sniffing = natural calming)
- A morning cuddle on the couch while the kids eat cereal

It's not about tiring them out—it's about filling their little love tank before you go.

## 3. PROVIDE MENTAL STIMULATION WHILE YOU'RE GONE

When the house is quiet, boredom can creep in fast. Giving your pup interactive toys and puzzles can keep their brain busy while you're away.

### Some ideas:

- Frozen treat toys like a Kong filled with yogurt, banana, or peanut butter
- Lick mats spread with soft foods
- Puzzle toys that dispense kibble or treats
- Snuffle mats to mimic scavenging behavior

Rotate what you give them to keep it interesting!

## 4. SOOTHING SOUNDS CAN HELP

Many dogs find comfort in background noise. Leaving calm music, a white noise machine, or even a dog TV channel running can make the house feel less empty.

You can even create a “Charlie Playlist” on Spotify—just include

relaxing instrumental songs or nature sounds. (Yes, some dogs do have music preferences.)

## 5. CREATE A COZY SAFE ZONE

Designate a spot in the house that's just for your dog—a comforting space where they can rest and feel safe.

### Think:

- A quiet corner with a bed or crate
- A blanket that smells like you or your kids
- A favorite toy or chew

Bonus if this space gets natural sunlight—dogs love to nap in sunbeams.

## 6. OFFER EXERCISE & ENGAGEMENT AFTER SCHOOL

Just like kids need a snack and a brain break after school, dogs benefit from post-daytime playtime too.

### When everyone gets home:

- Go for a short walk together
- Play in the yard or toss a ball
- Let the kids teach the dog a new trick
- Include your dog in family wind-down time

These little rituals help rebuild the connection and ease any stress from the day.

## 7. WATCH FOR SIGNS OF ONGOING ANXIETY

If your pup is still showing signs of stress after a few weeks, it might be time to chat with your vet or a professional trainer. They can help rule out medical causes and suggest behavior strategies or calming aids.

Back-to-school doesn't have to be sad for your pup. With a little planning, a dash of creativity, and a whole lot of love, you can help them transition into this new season with confidence—and maybe even tail wags.

And hey—those after-school belly rubs? Worth waiting for. 🐾





# Charlie's After-School Club

**Starring a very bored dog, two determined kids, and one handmade sign**

Charlie had been staring at the front door for what felt like a million years. Every time a car drove by, he perked up. Every time a leaf moved, he got excited. But no Alex. No Sophie. Just . . . silence.

It was the first week of school, and Charlie was not okay.

At 3:12 p.m., the doorknob finally turned. The kids burst in, backpacks thudding to the floor.

“Charlieeeee!” Sophie shouted, dropping to her knees. Charlie howled with joy and flopped onto her lap like he’d been through an emotional war.

Alex laughed. “It’s only been seven hours, dude.”

But the golden retriever was not interested in reason. He wanted snuggles. Immediately.

## THAT NIGHT AT DINNER

“Charlie’s so dramatic,” Sophie said between bites of mac-and-cheese. “He literally sat by the door all day.”

“I think he’s lonely,” Alex said. “He’s used to us being home all summer.”

Sophie frowned. “What if we made him a . . . dog club? Like a secret after-school club. Just for him.”

Alex grinned. “Yes. Code name: Operation Cheer Up Charlie.”



### THE NEXT DAY: CLUB TIME

As soon as they got home from school, the kids got to work. Sophie made a sign that said:

#### **Charlie's After-School Club**

**Members:** Alex, Sophie, and Charlie

**Rules:** 1) Snacks 2) Play 3) Cuddles

They taped it to Charlie's dog bed like it was a clubhouse door.

#### STEP 1: SNACKS

They gave Charlie one of the frozen yogurt treats Sophie had made last weekend in their paw-print silicone mold. He chomped it in three seconds flat and wagged so hard, his ears flopped.

#### STEP 2: PLAY

Alex tossed a ball down the hallway while Sophie ran laps with Charlie in the backyard. He zoomed. He spun in circles. He galloped across the grass like a golden tornado.



#### STEP 3: CUDDLES

Everyone collapsed in the living room. Charlie smooshed himself between the two of them on the rug while they told him about math class, new teachers, and how someone dropped an entire tray of spaghetti in the cafeteria.

#### THAT NIGHT . . .

Charlie curled up in his cozy corner bed, a blanket that smelled like Alex tucked beside him. He let out a big, sleepy sigh.

Sophie peeked in from the hallway. "Think he'll be okay tomorrow?"

Alex nodded. "As long as there's club after school, I think he'll survive."

Charlie thumped his tail in agreement, already dreaming about tomorrow's meeting agenda. 🐕



# Cozy Canine Kitchen

## September Treats To Welcome Fall

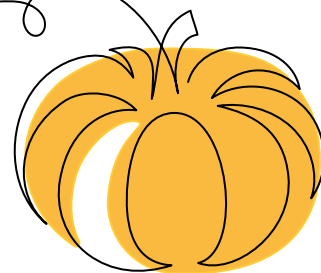
**A**s leaves start to fall and routines settle in, September brings a gentle transition into autumn. It's the season of warm flavors, crisp air, and harvest-inspired ingredients. These dog-friendly recipes are simple, seasonal, and perfect for pups who love a little something special after a stroll through the leaves.

### 1. PUMPKIN & PEANUT BUTTER BITES

A classic fall flavor combo your dog will adore.

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin (plain, not pie filling)
- 1/4 cup natural peanut butter (xylitol-free)
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour



#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In a bowl, mix the pumpkin, peanut butter, and egg.
3. Add the flour gradually until a dough forms.
4. Roll out on a floured surface and cut into shapes.
5. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 20–25 minutes.
6. Let cool completely before serving.

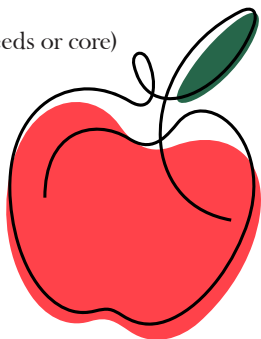
**Storage:** Store in an airtight container for up to a week or freeze for longer.

## 2. APPLE & CINNAMON CRUNCHIES

Perfectly crisp treats that smell like fall and satisfy with every bite.

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup finely chopped apple (no seeds or core)
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 egg
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon



### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In a bowl, mix all ingredients until well combined.
3. Drop by spoonful onto a baking sheet or form into small discs.
4. Bake for 18–20 minutes, until golden and slightly crisp.

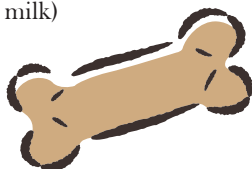
**Storage:** Keep in the fridge for up to 5 days or freeze extras.

## 3. WARM GOAT MILK & OAT SMOOTHIE (SERVED WARM OR COLD)

A calming treat—great for dogs winding down at the end of the day.

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plain goat milk (or lactose-free milk)
- 1 tbsp rolled oats
- 1 tsp peanut butter



### Directions:

1. Warm the goat milk gently on the stove (do not boil).
2. Stir in oats and peanut butter until smooth.
3. Let cool to a safe serving temperature if served warm.
4. Pour into a small bowl and let your dog lap it up!

**Note:** Also great chilled—just skip the heating step!

# September Tips For Dog Parents

## 1. WATCH FOR SEASONAL CHANGES

Some dogs grow thicker coats in early fall. Regular brushing helps reduce shedding and keeps their skin healthy as temperatures cool.

## 2. MIND THE MUSHROOMS

Wild mushrooms often pop up in damp autumn grass. Many are toxic to dogs. Supervise closely on walks and avoid forested patches unless you're confident in plant ID.

## 3. BACK-TO-ROUTINE ADJUSTMENT

If your household shifted into a post-summer routine, make time for consistent morning or evening walks and extra playtime to ease transition stress.

## 4. FALL FESTIVITIES AWARENESS

With festivals, farmers' markets, and football tailgates popping up, be cautious of event foods, decorations, and large crowds that may overwhelm or tempt your pup.



# FUR REAL!

**Your Pup  
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