

Pumpkin





During the month of October many people find themselves using pumpkins. Pumpkins are the large orange and rounded fruit native to warmer parts of America. The thick shell contains the seeds and the pulp. Pumpkin is considered the fruit of the pumpkin vine (due to its seeds).

Pumpkins can be used to carve, to decorate, and can even be cooked to eat! Pumpkin is high in: Vitamin E, thiamin, niacin, Vitamin B 6, and Vitamin C. Vitamin C is great for immune health. This may help some people avoid the common cold and other sicknesses often seen this time of year. Some foods that people enjoy making with pumpkin include: muffins, breads, pies, soups, pancakes, cookies and smoothies. One can even roast the pumpkin seeds found inside of the pumpkin for a nutritious low-calorie snack.

Different Types of Pumpkins

Often those big pumpkins that you see in pumpkin fields are great for carving, but are not ideal for cooking with or baking. Usually these pumpkins are stringy and very watery. Pumpkins that are good for baking are sweet and have a smooth texture. When choosing a pumpkin at the grocery store, choose one that is between four and eight pounds. Make sure there are not any bruises or soft spots on the pumpkin. It is important to note that pumpkins have a long shelf life and can last for a few months if kept in a cool environment.

Often times when shopping for a pumpkin at the grocery store they will be labeled as either “pie pumpkin” or “sugar pumpkin”. Some other types of common pumpkins to bake or cook with are listed below.

Type of Pumpkin	About the Pumpkin	Picture of the Pumpkin
Baby Bear	This miniature pumpkin is 2 lbs and is great for pies.	
Baby Pam	This pumpkin is a tad bigger than the baby bear, (4lbs) and makes a starchy dense pie	
Long Pie	Also known as the Nantucket Pie. Is 5 lbs, stringless and is not your typical round pumpkin	
New England Pie	Known to make a great pumpkin soup or a thick filling for pies.	

How to Prepare a Pumpkin for a Recipe—Pumpkin Puree

You can prepare pumpkin like any other hard winter squash. First, remove the stem. Preheat the oven to 325°. Then cut the pumpkin in half stem to base. Scoop out the seeds and pulp. Cover each half with foil. Bake in the preheated oven (foil side up) for one hour or until tender. Scoop the pumpkin flesh from the shells. Puree in a blender. Strain the pumpkin to remove and stringy pieces.

*Don't forget to freeze the rest of your puree for another day!

*For a safe and easier way to cut your pumpkin, simply wash your pumpkin, poke holes in it using a fork and microwave for 3 to 5 minutes. This will soften the pumpkin and make it easier and safer to cut.

Cook Pumpkin Seeds for a Low Calorie Snack

1. Separate the pumpkin seeds from the rest of the pumpkin. Rinse and dry them.
2. Preheat the oven to 300°
3. Season seeds with your favorite spices. Most people use: salt, pepper, garlic powder or cayenne pepper if they like them spicy.
4. Spread the seeds evenly on a baking sheet and cook for 45 minutes to an hour. Stir seeds occasionally.

Recipes

Roasted Pumpkin Soup

Serves 4

Source: marthastewart.com

Ingredients:

- 2 3/4 lbs of sugar pumpkin, halved and seeded
- 2 shiitake mushrooms , stemmed, caps wiped clean
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 5 cups of homemade or store bought low sodium vegetable broth
- 1 onion peeled and quartered
- 1 garlic clove peeled
- coarse salt and ground pepper

Directions: Preheat oven to 450 °. Cut pumpkin into 2 inch pieces. Combine pumpkin, onion, mushrooms and garlic on a rimmed baking sheet. Add oil and 2 teaspoons of salt. Toss to coat then spread for a single layer. Roast until pumpkin is tender (about 30 minutes) . Let cool and remove skins of the pumpkin. Transfer vegetables to a medium saucepan and heat over medium. Pour in 2 cups of stalk. Puree mixture in an immersion blender until smooth. With the blender running, slowly add the rest of the stalk and puree until smooth. Bring soup to a simmer and remove from heat.

Nutrition: 1 Serving Calories 392, Fat 27g, Saturated Fat: 3g, Carbs 40g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 515mg, Protein 3g.

Whole Wheat Pumpkin Applesauce Muffins

Serves 12

Source: allrecipes.com

Ingredients :

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin spice
- 2 eggs slightly beaten
- 2/3 cup brown sugar, tightly packed
- 1/3 cup white sugar

Directions : Preheat an oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Grease 12 muffin cups, or line the cups with paper muffin liners. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and pumpkin pie spice; set aside. Combine the brown sugar, white sugar, oil, applesauce, pumpkin, buttermilk, and beaten eggs and mix until well blended. Pour the pumpkin mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until combined. Fold in the raisins and pecans, if desired. Divide the batter evenly in the prepared muffin pan. Bake in the preheated oven until the tops spring back when lightly pressed, 15 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool the muffin pan on a wire rack for 5 minutes before removing the muffins from the pan.

Nutrition: 1 Serving= Calories 227, Fat 7g, Sat. Fat 1g, Sodium 273mg, Carbs 38g, Fiber 3.4g, Sugar 21g, Protein 4.5g.

Healthy Banana Pumpkin Pancakes

Serves 4

Source: allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- Half a banana, cut into chunks
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/4 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tbsps. all purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Directions: Beat banana, pumpkin puree, flour, eggs, honey, vanilla extract, cinnamon, and nutmeg together in a bowl until smooth. Heat a lightly oiled griddle over medium heat. Drop batter by small spoonful's onto the griddle to form 1 1/2-inch to 3-inch pancakes and cook until bubbles form and the edges are dry, 1 to 3 minutes. Flip and cook until browned on the other side, 1 to 2 minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.

Nutrition: 1 Serving Calories 89, Fat 2.7g, Saturated Fat 1g, Carbs 12.6g, Fiber 1.1g, Sodium 72mg, Sugar 6g, Protein 4.1g.

If you try any of these recipes and have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Nutrition Coordinators. Either email Amber (amberl@foodbankwma.org) or Kristina (kristinam@foodbankwma.org) and tell us what you think of the recipes!