



▶ VERSATILITY



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PUMPKIN *Power*

Since fall has arrived, pumpkins can be seen almost everywhere you look. While the most popular use of pumpkins is for decorations, such as carving jack-o-lanterns, pumpkins are also wonderful for cooking. They are a nutritional powerhouse.

Pumpkins are very versatile. Not only do they provide us with great fall decorations, they also offer us an alternative to the usual winter vegetables. They also fulfill our daily nutritional requirements.

One serving supplies enough Vitamin A for the entire day. It also contains potassium, folate, and calcium. Since the vegetable has a water content of 90%, it is low in calories, with only 38 calories per serving.

Pumpkins range in size from less than 1 pound to over 1,000 pounds. When selecting your pumpkin

for cooking, choose small, immature pumpkins. They provide the most flavor.

Pumpkins that are smaller in size are tenderer and less stringy than the larger variety. Select pumpkins anywhere between 5 to 8 pounds.

Also, look for a pumpkin with 1 to 2 inches of stem left. If the stem is cut too low, the pumpkin will decay quickly or may even be decaying at the time of purchase. Avoid those with blemishes or soft spots.

If you are trying to determine the size pumpkin needed, keep this general rule of thumb in mind. One pound of raw, untrimmed pumpkin will equal one cup of finished pumpkin puree. For example, a 10-pound pumpkin will yield roughly 10 cups of pumpkin puree.

Pumpkin Nutrition

The bright orange color of pumpkin is a dead giveaway that pumpkin is loaded with an important antioxidant, beta-carotene. Beta-carotene is one of the plant carotenoids converted to vitamin A in the body. In the conversion to vitamin A, beta carotene performs many important functions in over-all health.

Current research indicates that a diet rich in foods containing beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offers protection against heart disease. Beta-carotene offers protection against other diseases, as well as some degenerative aspects of aging.

Pumpkin Pulp



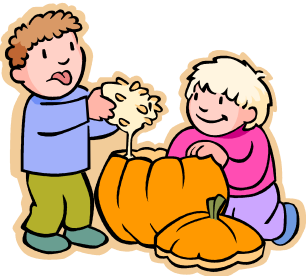
If your pumpkin pulp begins to turn dark during the cooking stage, this is normal. Just be sure to use the puree within 36 hours. If you plan to use it later, keep in mind that pumpkin freezes well.

Measure cooled puree into one-cup portions; place in rigid freezer containers, leaving 2-inch head space, or pack into zip closure bags. Label, date, and freeze for up to one year.

This pulp is great for making pumpkin pie, breads, muffins, and even soup. Simply use the same amount in any recipe calling for solid pack canned pumpkin.

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Pumpkin Puree



Making your own puree is really an easy task. It is surprising that more people do not do this.

If you have ever made puree from a butternut, Hubbard, or other squash, you can follow the same process. Here is our recommendation for making pumpkin puree (or pulp):

- Select a ripe and firm medium-size pumpkin. Larger pumpkins can be used; however, they tend to take on a grainy texture the larger they get.
- Cut open the pumpkin and remove the seeds and fibrous strings (or pumpkin brains).
- Line a large baking pan with aluminum foil. This minimizes the cleanup task.

- Place the pumpkin pieces onto the baking pan.
- Bake in the oven at 375° for 1 to 1 ½ hours, or until pulp is soft.
- Remove the pulp from the rind with a spoon and discard the rind.
- Blend the pulp until smooth using a blender, food processor, or mixer.
- To create a really thick puree, put the pulp into cheesecloth and squeeze out excess water.

Make and use fresh puree whenever possible for the best taste and freshness. Leftover puree can be frozen for a short period of time. However, the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service does not recommend canning pumpkin puree.

Pumpkin Lore and More

The pumpkin has been a longtime favorite of children, featured in their literature (Cinderella's coach) and in song (the keeper for Peter Pumpkin Eater's wife). The jack-o-lantern is their Halloween celebrity. In China, the pumpkin is still called the emperor of the garden.

Pumpkin technically belongs to the squash family but performs so beautifully as pie filling, it is often considered a fruit. It is also a good main course vegetable and an ingredient in soup, quick breads, cookies, cakes and pudding.



Store Your Pumpkin Properly



Pumpkins are ready to harvest when orange in color and the skin is hard, anytime before frost. The rind should not be easily penetrated by a thumbnail. Smaller varieties are best for storage and cooking.

They store best when part of the stem is left on and carefully handled. By storing at about 55 degrees F., in a dry place, they have a two to three month storage life.

In the U.S., along with many cultures, a traditional winter holiday favorite is pumpkin pie. There are many variations on the old-fashioned pumpkin pie that Grandma made, but most recipes still contain eggs and/or dairy products. For this reason, the pumpkin pie belongs in the refrigerator, not on the kitchen counter.

Too often, pies are stored on the counter before and after the big holiday meal. Many fail to realize that even commercially prepared pumpkin pie filling has a high proportion of milk and eggs, so it is highly perishable.

The high water, protein and sugar content of pumpkin pie provide a prime growing environment for bacteria. When pumpkin pie is kept at room temperature, bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels, possibly causing illness.

Keep pumpkin pie, custard pies and other rich egg-laden desserts hot or cold until ready to serve, and then store leftovers in the refrigerator. Fruit pies are safe in the cupboard, pantry shelf or in a pie keeper on the countertop for no longer than two days. After that time, the fruit may ferment or mold, spoiling the pie.



Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Don't throw away the seeds when carving your jack-o-lantern. Instead, try roasting them as a snack. Simply wash the seeds well; then spread them in a single layer on a cookie sheet to dry. Roast at 375°F for 20 to 30 minutes or until they are dry. Then dot them with margarine and brown for five to ten minutes. Stir often until toasted. Sprinkle with salt; cool and serve.

Spicy Pumpkin Butter

¼ cup dark brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons sugar
¼ cup water

¼ teaspoon each: ginger, cloves, nutmeg
½ teaspoon each: cinnamon, allspice
1 ½ cup pumpkin puree

Combine all ingredients except pumpkin puree in a 4-cup mixing bowl. Mix on high for 3 minutes. Add pumpkin and mix on high for 5 minutes. Let cool and refrigerate. Yield: 2 cups. Serve on hot rolls or with gingersnaps or vanilla wafer cookies.



Apple Pumpkin Streusel Muffins



2 ½ cups flour
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon soda
1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
½ teaspoon salt
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 cup pumpkin puree

½ cup vegetable oil
2 cups finely chopped apples
2 tablespoons flour
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup margarine

Heat oven to 350°F. In a bowl, combine the first five ingredients; set aside. Combine eggs, pumpkin and oil in a bowl; mix well. Add to dry ingredients and stir until moistened. Stir in apples. Spoon into greased muffin pan, filling 2/3 full. In a separate bowl, mix last four ingredients until crumbly. Sprinkle over muffins. Bake at 350°F for 35 to 40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Makes 18 to 20 regular muffins.

Sweet and Spicy Pumpkin Seeds

1 pumpkin
5 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon coarse salt
¼ teaspoon ground cumin

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
Pinch of cayenne pepper
1 ½ tablespoons oil

Gut the pumpkin and remove seeds. Do not wash them first, since washing removes all the natural flavors. Remove the strings from seeds and place in a single layer on cookie sheet sprayed with non-stick cooking spray. The less they lay on each other, the better they bake. Bake at 375°F for 20 to 30 minutes, or until dry, stirring occasionally.

In a medium bowl, combine 3 tablespoons of the sugar, salt, cumin, cinnamon, ginger and cayenne pepper. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add baked pumpkin seeds and remaining 2 tablespoons sugar. Cook until sugar melts and the pumpkin seeds begin to caramelize, about 45-60 seconds. Transfer to bowl with spices and stir well to coat. Let cool. Package in containers with lids or tins.

Pumpkin Roll



3 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 cup chopped nuts
½ cup pumpkin puree
½ tablespoon lemon juice
¾ cup flour
2 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ginger
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons margarine
6 ounces light cream cheese
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 cup powdered sugar

Cream eggs and sugar; beat 5 minutes. Add next 9 ingredients. Mix well. Grease and flour 15x10-inch jelly roll pan. Pour ingredients in pan. Bake in 350°F oven for 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Sprinkle powdered sugar on towel; place baked cake on towel. Place in refrigerator until cool. Once cooled, remove from refrigerator and spread remaining four ingredients over cake; roll up. Sprinkle with additional powdered sugar if desired. Chill until serving time.

Pumpkin Dump Cake

29 ounces pure pumpkin, canned
12 ounces evaporated milk
3 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon cinnamon
Box cake mix with pudding
1 cup chopped pecans
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup margarine, melted

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix first 6 ingredients until well blended and pour into a prepared 9x13-inch pan. Sprinkle with cake, cover with pecans, pour margarine over top and bake 50 minutes. Serve with a dollop of whipped topping.

Pumpkin Praline Cake

1 box yellow cake mix
1 (16 ounce) can pumpkin or 2 cups
fresh cooked pumpkin, mashed
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dark brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon



1 teaspoon nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon allspice
3 eggs
1 cup chopped pecans
1 stick margarine, softened
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar

Combine first eight ingredients in order given. Add one egg at a time, beating a full minute between each addition. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ of the batter into a greased tube pan that has been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray or greased with flour and shortening. In small bowl, combine nuts, margarine and sugar; mix well. Place on top of batter in pan; carefully pour remaining batter over top of nut mixture. Bake 1 hour at 350°F or until toothpick or cake tester comes out clean. Remove from pan and place on cooling rack to cool.

Pumpkin Casserole

*Pumpkin dishes don't have to be sweet. This one is perfect with roast pork.
Hollow out a small pumpkin to serve this for a special presentation.*

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh pumpkin meat
1 large onion, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt (optional)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground white pepper

2 tablespoons unsalted butter,
melted
2 eggs
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup ricotta cheese

Preheat oven to 375°F. Using a paring knife or vegetable peeler, peel and discard outer skin of the pumpkin. Slice the pumpkin into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slices and place in a mixing bowl. Add onion, salt, pepper, and butter; toss well. Pour contents of the bowl into a 9-inch greased baking dish; cover with foil and place in the oven. Bake for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, beat eggs, milk and cheese together until smooth. Remove the baking dish from the oven; remove the cover and pour the cheese mixture over the top. Replace in oven, uncovered, another 20 minutes. The casserole is done when it turns golden brown.

Pumpkin Nut Bread

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
1 ½ cup finely ground whole-wheat flour*
¾ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon salt

Dash ground cloves
½ cup vegetable oil
2 eggs, beaten
1/3 cup water
1 cup pumpkin (freshly
cooked or canned)
½ cup chopped pecans

*Whole-wheat pastry flour or 1 cup whole wheat flour plus ½ cup enriched all-purpose flour may be substituted.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x5x3-inch loaf pan. Place all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well. Add oil and beaten eggs; blend in well. (This recipe is easy to mix by hand.) Add water, pumpkin, and pecans; stir until batter is well blended. Place in greased loaf pan and bake in top half of oven for 1 to 1 ¼ hours or until it tests done. Remove from oven and allow to cool in the pan and then place pan on its side and gently ease out the loaf. NOTE: This bread is excellent for freezer storage and can be frozen up to three months. It also keeps well for about a week, tightly wrapped in foil in the bread box.

Pumpkin Dip and Gingersnaps

1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin
1 box powdered sugar
16 ounces light cream cheese

2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
gingersnap cookies

Blend the first five ingredients until mixed well. Serve with gingersnap cookies.



I hope you will try some of these pumpkin recipes as we enter into the holiday season. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (870) 779-3609, e-mail Cdue@uaex.edu, or visit Room 215 in the Miller County Courthouse, 400 Laurel, Texarkana, AR. You may also visit us on the web at www.uaex.edu/miller

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carla Due".

Carla Due
County Extension Agent-Staff Chair/Family & Consumer Sciences