

Pumpkin

Nutrition, Preservation, & Recipes

Nutrition & Selection



Pumpkins belong to the gourd family and are a variety of the winter squash species. Pumpkins are usually obtained for their seeds, jack-o-lantern creation, or flesh and can be boiled, baked, steamed, or roasted. When selecting pumpkins for edible reasons, look for smaller pumpkins with a duller finish that is blemish free (a glossy finish indicates the pumpkin was picked too early).

As their orange cast shows, pumpkins are high in vitamin A (carotenoids) which helps keep immune systems healthy. They also supply a good source of fatty acids, fiber, potassium, zinc, and protein. Foods high in potassium lower the risks of hypertension. Zinc also boosts the immune systems as well as improving bone density. Pumpkin seeds contain a fair amount of L-tryptophan, a compound that has been found to help alleviate depression. The seeds also are a natural protector against osteoporosis. Each part of pumpkin is full of nutrients.

1 cup Pumpkin (boiled)

Calcium - 37 mg
Carbohydrate - 12 gm
Dietary Fiber - 3 gm
Folate - 21 mcg
Iron - 1.4 mg
Magnesium - 22 mg
Niacin - 1 mg
Potassium - 564 mg
Protein - 2 grams
Selenium - 0.50 mg
Vitamin A - 2650 IU
Vitamin C - 12 mg
Vitamin E - 3 mg
Zinc - 1 mg
Calories - 49

Preservation & Storage

Pumpkins require around 120 to grow to maturity. They should be picked when the skin has a deep orange, dull finish to it. A period of curing can extend their storage life. This can be done by placing the pumpkins in a warm, dry atmosphere (70° - 80°) for up to two weeks. After the curing, to further extend their life, place in a cooler climate (50° - 60°); here pumpkins can be stored up to 6 months long.

Pumpkins can be preserved by pressure canning, freezing, drying, or refrigerating (in foil up to 4 days). The seeds can be preserved by drying or roasting.

Baked Pumpkin Wedges

1 Pumpkin (2 lbs.)
2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
Salt and Pepper

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Slice off the pumpkin stem and then cut pumpkin into 4 equal pieces. Remove all fibers and seeds (save seeds to make pumpkin seeds: roast in pan at 400° oven for 15-20 min). Drizzle the slices with olive oil, salt, and pepper evenly. Place on a cookie sheet cut side up, bake at 350° for about 15-20 minutes and serve warm or cold.



Pumpkin Puree

Follow above recipe until baking method. After removing fibers and seeds, place cut side down on a foiled and greased baking sheet (to retain moisture place another sheet of foil over top). Cook for 50-60 minutes at 350° and then let cool completely. Use a spoon to scrape out inside pulp. Place pumpkin in a food processor until smooth, or simply mash with a fork or potato masher until desired consistency is reached.

Roasted Pumpkin Salad

Ingredients:

3 cups of pumpkin, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
Extra-virgin olive oil
Fine grain sea salt
12 tiny red onions or shallots, peeled (OR 3 medium red onions peeled and quartered)
2 cups cooked wild rice
1/3 cup sunflower seeds
1/3 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. honey
2 tbsp. warm water
1/2 C. cilantro, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 375. Toss the pumpkin in a generous splash of olive oil along with a couple pinches of salt, and turn out onto a baking sheet. At the same time, toss the onions with a bit of olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and turn out onto a separate baking sheet. Roast both for about 45 minutes, or until squash is brown and caramelized. The same goes for the onions, they should be deeply colored, caramelized, and soft throughout by the time they are done roasting. You'll need to flip both the squash and onion pieces once or twice along the way - so it's not just one side that is browning.

If pumpkin is dry, add ¼ cup of water to get a more pureed consistency. If it is too moist, put puree in a strainer to let some of the moisture seep through. At this point, you can use this puree for any recipe that calls for pumpkin puree or canned pumpkin. Most 2 lb. pumpkins yield the same amount that of Libby's canned pumpkin.

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In the meantime, make the dressing. With a hand blender or food processor puree the sunflower seeds, olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and honey until creamy. You may need to add a few tablespoons of warm water to thin the dressing a bit. Stir in the cilantro, saving just a bit to garnish the final plate later. Taste and adjust seasonings (or flavors) to your liking - I usually need to add a touch more salt with this dressing. In a large bowl, toss the wild rice with a large dollop of the dressing. Add the onions; gently toss just once or twice. Turn the rice and onions out onto a platter and top with the roasted squash (I'll very gently toss with my hands here to disperse the pumpkin a bit). Finish with another drizzle of dressing and any remaining chopped cilantro.

Serves 4.

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Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients:

- 1 pumpkin can (3 1/2 cups or 29 oz)
- 1 1/2 cups of oil
- 1 1/2 cups of water
- 2 TBSP vanilla
- 3 cups of sugar
- 1 cup organic raisins
- 1/2 cup of organic apples (peel and chop)
- 3 eggs – beaten mixed together

- Mix dry ingredients – sift together:
- 5 1/4 cups of flour
 - 1 1/2 TSP salt
 - 1 TSP cloves
 - 1 TBSP baking soda
 - 1/2 TSP allspice
 - 1 1/2 TSP cinnamon
 - 1 1/2 TSP nutmeg
 - 1/2 TSP ginger



Preheat the oven to 350°. Mix all dry ingredients together in medium size bowl. In a large bowl, blend the sugar, pumpkin, water, oil, and egg until all are incorporated evenly. Slow blending speed to low and slowly add dry mix ingredients. Then, add the vanilla, raisins, and apples blending until all are mixed evenly. Grease three 9 x 5 baking pans and distribute the mixture evenly between the three loaf pans. Place in oven and bake for 60-75 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

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Cheese Tortellini with Pumpkin & Ricotta

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 pounds sugar pumpkin seeded, peeled, and cut into 3/4-inch cubes (about 4 cups)
- 1/2 cup chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon leaf sage, crumbled
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 12 ounces cheese tortellini
- 1/2 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup grated Romano cheese
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

In large nonstick saucepan over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion. Cook until golden, about 10 minutes. Add pumpkin, broth, sage, salt, and pepper. Cover. Cook just until pumpkin is tender, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, in large pot of lightly salted water, cook tortellini until tender, following package directions. Drain. Toss with ricotta in large bowl.



Add pumpkin, Romano cheese, and parsley to tortellini mixture. Gently toss to combine. Serve at once. Serves: 4

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