

Pumpkin, King of Squash

You're wasting a wonderful resource if you carve your pumpkin into a jack-o-lantern and throw out the rest. Most people buy pumpkins only for its decorating ability and don't think twice about the nutritional value it has.

Pumpkin meat is very high in carotenoids. They're what give pumpkins their orange color—but that's the least of their benefits. Carotenoids are really good at neutralizing free radicals, nasty molecules that can attack cell membranes and leave the cells vulnerable to damage.

Pumpkins are also high in lutein and zeaxanthin, which scavenge free radicals in the lens of the eye. Therefore, they may help prevent the formation of cataracts and reduce the risk of macular degeneration, a serious eye problem that usually results in blindness.

Pumpkins have a lot of common nutrients, like iron, zinc, and fiber. Iron, of course, is needed by red blood cells. Zinc deficiency may be related to osteoporosis of the hip and spine in older men. And fiber is important for bowel health.

Since pumpkins are a variety of squash, there are many recipes available for pumpkins. Bake up a delicious side-dish to your favorite Harvest meal. You'll appreciate not only the fresh baked aroma of pumpkin, but the tasty addition to your meal.



Baked Pumpkin

Find the freshest pumpkin you can from a genuine pumpkin patch or farmer's market and whip up a side dish with this simple baked pumpkin recipe.

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons of butter.
- 2 medium eggs.
- 2 cups of pumpkin.
- 1 cup of sugar.
- 1 cup of milk.
- ½ cup of flour.
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla.
- Pinch of salt.
- Pinch of baking soda.
- Cinnamon.

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Put the butter in a pan and melt.
3. Put the remaining ingredients except cinnamon in a blender and blend until smooth.
4. Pour into the melted butter and sprinkle top with cinnamon.
5. Bake for about 30 minutes. Serve.

Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

The seeds from a pumpkin are also healthy and when toasted, make a good portable or party snack. This recipe includes a triptych of flavors: Sweet & Spicy Pumpkin Seeds, Black Tea & Butter Pumpkin Seeds, and Curried Pumpkin Seeds. Each one makes one cup.

Sweet & Spicy Pumpkin Seeds

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg white
- 1/4 cup natural cane sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- scant 1/2 teaspoon fine grained sea salt
- 1 cup fresh pumpkin seeds

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375. In a medium-sized bowl whisk together the egg white, sugar, cayenne and salt. Add the pumpkin seeds and toss well. Drain off any excess egg white (using a strainer) and place seeds in a single layer across a baking sheet.
2. Bake for about 12 minutes or until seeds are golden. Sprinkle with a bit more sugar and cayenne pepper when they come out of the oven. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

Curried Pumpkin Seeds

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg white
- 2 teaspoon curry powder
- scant 1/2 teaspoon fine grained sea salt
- 1 cup fresh pumpkin seeds

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375.
2. In a medium-sized bowl whisk together the egg white, curry powder and salt. Add the pumpkin seeds and toss well. Drain off any excess egg white (using a strainer) and place seeds in a single layer across a baking sheet. 3. Bake for about 12 minutes or until seeds are golden. Sprinkle with a bit more curry powder when they come out of the oven. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

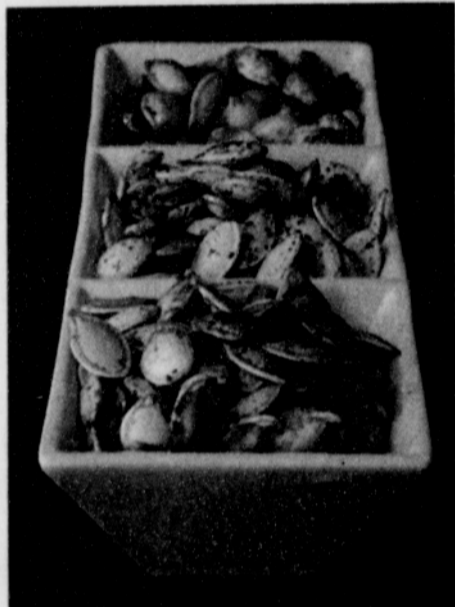
Black Tea & Butter Pumpkin Seeds

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon (black) tea
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- scant 1/2 teaspoon fine grained sea salt
- 1 cup fresh pumpkin seeds
- Preheat oven to 375.

DIRECTIONS

1. Using a mortar and pestle or spice grinder, grind the tea into a fine powder. Set aside.
 2. In a medium-sized bowl combine the butter and salt. Add the pumpkin seeds and toss well. Place seeds in a single layer across a baking sheet. Bake for about 12 minutes or until seeds are golden. Sprinkle with the ground tea. Taste and season with more salt if needed.
- Note: Choose a tea that is fragrant and has a pronounced flavor for best results.



Pumpkin Bread

A sweet quick bread flavored with pumpkin and a variety of spices including, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. This is just one of many recipes and variations for this popular bread.

Ingredients

- 2 medium eggs, beaten.
- 2 ½ cup of flour, sifted.
- 1 ½ cup Wheat Chex or similar breakfast cereal.
- 1 ¼ cup of brown sugar.
- 1 cup of canned pumpkin.
- ¾ cup of dark raisins, coarsely chopped.
- ½ cup of milk.
- ¼ cup of vegetable oil.
- 2 ½ teaspoons of baking powder.
- 1 teaspoon of salt.
- ½ teaspoon of baking soda.
- ½ teaspoon of cinnamon.
- ¼ teaspoon of nutmeg.

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Sift together the flour, baking powder, salt, baking soda and spices.
3. Combine the eggs, milk, oil, pumpkin and brown sugar.
4. Stir in cereal and dark raisins.
5. Add the dry ingredients.
6. Stir until moistened.
7. Turn into a greased pan.
8. Bake for 60 minutes.
9. Allow to cool for 15 minutes.
10. Remove from pan. Serve.

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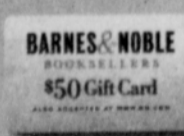
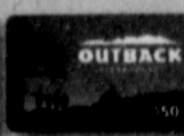
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