

Pumpkin



Selecting

Pumpkins are part of the winter squash family. Pumpkins usually have orange or yellow skin however some varieties are dark or pale green, white, brown, red or gray. The flesh is golden yellow to orange.

Pie pumpkins are best for cooking. Choose ones that are small but heavy for their size with a stout stem. You want one with a smooth skin without cuts and bruises.

Halloween pumpkins should be large but not too heavy. Ones with thin skins are easier to carve.

Pumpkin is also available in cans. It comes as pure pumpkin or as pumpkin pie mix with added sugars and syrups.

Storing

Whole pumpkins can be stored for several months in a cool place. Once cut, store in the refrigerator and use within five days.

Once cooked, pumpkin can be frozen for up to two months.

Preparing

Wash the pumpkin. Cut stem end and slice the pumpkin into two equal halves. Scoop out the seeds and loose flesh.

To bake, place the halves cut-side down on a baking sheet. Bake at 350° F for one hour until fork tender. To puree baked pumpkin, remove outer peel and puree in a food processor. The puree can be used in pies, pancakes, muffins, custards, ravioli stuffing and soups.

Eating

If you don't have pumpkin pie spice you can easily make your own.

To make 1 tablespoon of pumpkin pie spice, combine
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon,
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg,
1/4 tsp ground cloves,
1/2 tsp. ground ginger.

Seasonality

Pumpkins are in-season in September and October, just in time for Thanksgiving and Halloween.

Nutrition

One cup of cooked pumpkin has 49 calories, is very high in Vitamin A (170%) and a good source of Vitamin C and source of fibre.



This Applesauce Stuffed Pumpkin recipe by Chef Michael Smith makes a great side or tasty dessert!
www.halfyourplate.ca/applesauce-stuffed-pumpkin

