

Pumpkin Basics

PUMPKIN INFORMATION

- The deep orange color of pumpkin flesh is a sure sign that pumpkin is a good source of vitamin A.
- A one-half cup serving of cooked pumpkin contains more than 100 percent of the required vitamin A and 26 calories. Pumpkin seeds are high in protein and fat.
- For pie filling and other cooking needs, select sugar pumpkins — a smaller, sweeter variety with close-grained flesh.



PUMPKIN PUREE FOR PIES OR BREAD

Boiled: Cut washed, peeled 2- to 4- pound pumpkin in 2-inch chunks; cook in boiling water until tender.

Baked: Wash the outside and cut crosswise. Clean out the seeds and pulp and put flesh-side down in a baking pan with a bit of water. Bake at 350 °F for 1½ hours or until flesh is tender.

PLAIN PUMPKIN FOR EATING

Cut off the top of a washed 2½- to 3-pound sugar pumpkin, saving the lid and stem for a handle. Scrape out the seeds and pulp, wipe out the inside, then brush with melted butter and sugar or salt. Replace the lid and bake in 350 °F oven for 35 minutes. Coat the inside again with butter, sugar or salt and bake another 10 to 15 minutes or until fork-tender. Slice into wedges to serve.

FREEZING PUMPKIN

Select full-colored mature pumpkin with fine texture. Wash, cut into cooking-size sections and remove seeds. Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker or in an oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash. To cool, place pan containing pumpkin in cold water and stir occasionally. Package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Freeze.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

To dry: Carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Seeds can be dried until crisp in the sun, in a dehydrator at 115 to 120 °F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on warm for 3 to 4 hours. Stir frequently to avoid scorching.

To roast: Toss dried pumpkin seeds with oil (1 teaspoon per cup of seeds). Salt or season to taste. Roast in a preheated oven at 250 °F for 10 to 15 minutes.

PUMPKIN PIE OR CUSTARD

Preheat oven to 375 °F. Blend together a 13 oz. can of evaporated skim milk, 2 eggs, a 16 oz. can pumpkin, ¾ cups sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon cloves, ½ teaspoon ginger and ½ teaspoon salt. Pour into pie shell. Bake at 375 °F for about 1 hour. Pie is done when a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. To cut the fat, omit the pie crust and bake in 8 individual custard dishes for 40 minutes at 375 °F.

For more information, request HGIC 3281, *Pumpkin and Winter Squash*, or HGIC 3086, *Drying Herbs, Seeds and Nuts*.

Sources: Reynolds, Susan and Paulette Williams. *So Easy to Preserve*, Bulletin 989. Revised 1999 by Elizabeth Andress and Judy Harrison. Cooperative Extension Service, Univ. of Georgia.

This information has been reviewed and adapted for use in South Carolina by P.H. Schmutz, HGIC Information Specialist; J.E. Campbell, graduate student; and E.H. Hoyle, Extension Food Safety Specialist, Clemson University.

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