

How to Cook a Pumpkin!



Not sure how to cook a pumpkin? Now you can learn how!

Yummy Pumpkins

It's no secret around my house...when the summer air turns crisp and autumn leaves are falling I crave dinner in a pumpkin!

It must trigger memories of my childhood, Cinderella- watching days. I can still see her garden pumpkin turn into a beautiful golden carriage with the flip of the fairy godmother's wand. So I got to thinking, without a fairy godmother of your own, cutting into that golden orb for the first time may seem a little daunting! Here are my tips and tricks for selecting, preparing and cooking pumpkin.

-Eating: Due to their tough outer skin, pumpkins are cooked and only the inside flesh is eaten. Pumpkins are most commonly used to make bread, cookies, pies, pumpkin butter, custard, and soup.

– **Selecting:** Select pumpkins that are firm and heavy for their size. Round pumpkins tend to be lighter and less meaty than oblong pumpkins.

– **Cleaning and Preparing:** Clean the pumpkin when you are ready to use it. Rinse with cold running water. If the pumpkin has been waxed, scrub it well.

– **Storing:** Store pumpkins in a cool, dark place. They have a 2 to 3 month average storage time.

– **Cooking:**

To make pumpkin puree, cut a medium (about 6 pound) fresh pumpkin into 5-inch square pieces.

Remove the seeds and fibrous strings.

Arrange the pieces in a single layer, skin side up, in a large, shallow baking pan.

Cover with foil. Bake at 375o F for 1 to 1- 1/2 hours or until tender.

Scoop the pulp from the rind. Place part of the pulp in a blender container or food processor bowl.

Cover and blend or process until smooth.

Transfer the pumpkin into a strainer lined with cheesecloth or overlapping, large coffee filters.

Set over a large bowl and press out any liquid.

Cover the surface of the puree with plastic wrap and let it drain, chill overnight.

If you have a favorite pumpkin recipe or tip, please share it in the comments!

This article was written by Amanda Christensen, Extension Assistant Professor for Utah State University
