

What Can I do With a Pumpkin?



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ASK AN EXPERT:
WHAT CAN
I DO WITH A
PUMPKIN?

Pumpkins can be more than a porch decoration. Read on to learn about their nutritional value, and for a delicious pumpkin soup recipe.

It is that time of year again. Autumn is here with cooler nights, falling leaves and pumpkins around the town. In addition to being a welcome sign of fall, pumpkins are a welcome addition at the table. The bright orange color is a dead giveaway that pumpkins are loaded with beta-carotene, which is an antioxidant and pro-vitamin to Vitamin A.

Vitamin A is needed for healthy skin, strong bones, eye health and may reduce the risk of some cancers. Let's use these great vegetables for more than just pies. They make tasty soups, breads, side dishes and additional desserts. Pumpkin puree can become a great breakfast smoothie by adding yogurt, milk and some spice.

This year, try roasting the pumpkin seeds instead of throwing them out. They are a great snack and are rich in fiber and vitamins B and E. Kids especially love them. Try washing the seeds and patting them dry. Soak them in soy sauce, butter or Worcestershire sauce for about an hour. Then spread on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with garlic powder, seasoning salts, Italian spices or even a Cajun seasoning. Roast at 250 degrees for about 1 hour. Turn seeds throughout the roasting time and enjoy the crunchy bite when they are done.

While the seeds are roasting, take a little time with the family and enjoy a book about pumpkins. Enjoy reading, *Pumpkin Circle: The story of a Garden* by George Levelson.

This season, visit a pumpkin patch with your family and bring home a pumpkin. This may become an activity to remember or even a new fall tradition!

You might like using pumpkins to dot your outdoor pathway on Halloween. It is recommended that you use battery-powered or plug in jack-o-lanterns instead of a live candle. If you do use a live flame, be sure it will be away from trick or treaters and in a secure place. Make sure the pathway to your door is safe with no objects in the way of a child. Keep your home well-lit and inviting, and put all pets away for the evening.

The bright colors of pumpkins can be added to a beautiful decoration, used as a centerpiece or can stand alone.

Pumpkins are inexpensive, nutritious, colorful and a sure sign that autumn has arrived. Be creative and find new ways to use a pumpkin in your home. Try this soup recipe or visit [USU Extension](#) for additional pumpkin recipes.

Easy Pumpkin Soup

(source: verybestbaking.com-Libby's Pumpkin)

- 1 pumpkin
- 2 cups milk or half and half
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 3 cups seasoned croutons

Cut the lid from the pumpkin, remove seeds and fibers.

Alternate layers of croutons and cheese in pumpkin. Add chicken broth and milk. Bake for about 2 hours at 350

degrees. To serve, stir the contents and create a thick soup.
Enjoy.

This article was written by Carolyn Washburn, retired Utah State University Extension associate professor