

**Carve Your Pumpkin, Keep the
Seeds!**

A close-up photograph of numerous pumpkin seeds, some light yellow and some green, scattered on a light-colored wooden surface. The seeds are the central focus of the image.

CARVE YOUR
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KEEP THE
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LIVE WELL UTAH

Today we're talking about pumpkin seeds— how to prepare them and different ways to use them. So as you get ready to carve pumpkins this year, don't forget to save the seeds!

When you are carving that Halloween Jack-o'-lantern this year, here is one request I have for you, keep your seeds! Did you know that 1 oz of pumpkin seeds has around 5 grams of protein? Pumpkin seeds are an easy, cheap way to add a nutritious boost to your trail mix, baked goods and granola.

First and foremost, remove the pulp and seeds from the inside of your pumpkin. I like to put the seeds and pulp in a bowl of water while carving my pumpkin. This helps to pull away all the strings from the seeds. When you have only seeds left in your bowl, give them a good rinse. Move seeds to a new bowl and sprinkle with your favorite seasonings and oil. Make sure to mix well. Next you will want to spread them evenly over a large baking tray. Bake at 350 F for 10 to 20 minutes or until lightly brown. Make sure to check and stir the seeds frequently to avoid burning. Cool pumpkin seeds and then store them in an air-tight container.

When choosing a seasoning for your pumpkin seeds, think about what you plan to do with them. The outer part of the pumpkin seed can be removed (hulled) after they have been roasted. The inner part of the pumpkin seed is a green color and is a great addition to breads and muffins.

Check out these five ways to use pumpkin seeds below:

Traditional Roast

When using this method, try different spices to give your seeds some flair. Here are some combinations:

- Cinnamon Toast Pumpkin Seeds: 1 tsp cinnamon, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt, 2 Tbsp sugar, 3 Tbsp melted butter or olive oil

- **Chili Pumpkin Seeds:** 1 Tbsp chili powder, 1 Tbsp tamari sauce, 2 tsp garlic powder, salt to taste, 1 Tbsp olive oil
- **Spicy Pumpkin Seeds:** $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp paprika, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cayenne pepper, 1 Tbsp red pepper flakes, 2 Tbsp melted butter or olive oil
- **Ginger Zest Pumpkin Seeds:** 2 Tbsp ground ginger, 2 Tbsp sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp orange zest, 2 Tbsp melted butter or oil
- **Parmesan Pumpkin Seeds:** $\frac{1}{4}$ c Parmesan cheese, 1 tsp ground black pepper, 2 Tbsp melted butter or oil.

Pumpkin Seed Pesto

This one was new to me, but has quickly turned into a favorite. Making a traditional pesto with pine nuts can be pricy, but not when you are using your pumpkin seeds! For this it is important to have hulled (green) pumpkin seeds.

Ingredients- 2 c. hulled pumpkin seeds, 4 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp sea salt, 2 Tbsp lemon juice, 3 cloves of garlic, 1 c. fresh cilantro, and $\frac{1}{4}$ c. water. Combine all ingredients in a food processor. Cover and chill until ready to use.

More Ideas

- **Add them to trail mix or granola.** Do your granola or trail mix recipes call for nuts? Reduce the portion of nuts and add pumpkin seeds for the remaining portion.
- **Add them to baked goods or use in brittle.** Instead of making a nut brittle this year, sub in hulled pumpkin seeds to make a new fall favorite.
- **Garnish soups, salads and desserts.** Add a little extra crunch to any meal by topping your dish off with pumpkin seeds!

This article was written by Jaqueline Neid-Avila, Utah State University Extension nutrition faculty for Davis County. Comments or questions may be sent to jaqueline.neid-avila@usu.edu or call 801-451-3404. Republished from October 2016.