

## What Can You Do With A Pumpkin?

The most popular use of pumpkins may be for jack-o-lanterns and fall decorations but they have many more uses.

When selecting a pumpkin for cooking, the best selection is a “pie pumpkin” or “sweet pumpkin.” These are smaller than the large jack-o-lantern pumpkins and the flesh is sweeter and less watery. You can substitute the jack-o-lantern variety with fairly good results.

Pumpkin seeds can be used in tossed salads, casseroles, soups, and other baked goods, either ground or whole. Although roasted pumpkin seeds tend to be better-tasting, you'll receive higher nutritional value from the raw seeds.

So decorate your place with a pumpkin and make something tasty, all from the same wonderful fruit!

### PUMPKIN PAST:

- Native Americans introduced the pilgrims to pumpkins and corn. They taught the pilgrims how to grow and cook pumpkin and how to prepare dried pumpkin to last through the winter. The dried pumpkins were also used as mats.
- The Irish were the first to carve their pumpkins. They originally used turnips, but switched to pumpkins because they were more abundant and easier to carve.
- Stewed pumpkin was so much a part of the pilgrims diet that one settler in 1630 wrote: “We have pumpkins at morn, and pumpkins at noon, if it were not for pumpkins we should be undone.”

### Roasted Pumpkin Seeds:

1 c. pumpkin seeds, cleaned  
1 TBSP Butter, melted  
1/2 tsp. salt or other seasoning

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine pumpkin seeds, butter and salt in medium bowl. Spread pumpkin seeds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

### *OR TRY THIS VERSION*

1 quart water  
2 TBSP salt  
2 c. pumpkin seeds  
1 TBSP vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Remove stringy fibers from seeds. Bring water and salt to a boil. Add the seeds and boil for 12 minutes. Drain. Toss seeds in a bowl with oil. Spread evenly on a cookie sheet, and bake for about 30 minutes. Stir every 10 minutes. Cool and enjoy.

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## Fresh Facts

**ORANGE You Interested In...**

**PUMPKINS**



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# Pumpkin With a Purpose

Made up of 90% water, pumpkins are a fruit with many uses. Pumpkins are the focal point of festivals, holidays and even nursery rhymes such as “Peter, Peter, Pumpkin-Eater.” We all know pumpkins traditional roles have included being an ingredient in soups, pies, breads and having their seeds roasted and eaten as a snack, or their visual use in a cornucopia at Thanksgiving, and probably their most popular role as a carved decoration at Halloween. But do you know the nutritional value of a pumpkin?

The bright orange color of most pumpkins is due to its richness in beta-carotene, which is an important antioxidant. Beta-carotene is converted to vitamin A in the body. Once converted to vitamin A, beta carotene performs many important functions in overall health. The University of Illinois Extension reports that current research indicates that a diet rich in foods containing beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offers protection against heart disease. Beta-carotene offers protection against other diseases as well as some degenerative aspects of aging.



## Real Pumpkin Pie

2 c. pumpkin, cut into half-inch pieces  
1/4 cup liquid from cooked pumpkin  
1 c. raisins, soaked in 1/4 cup dark rum  
1 c. sugar  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. nutmeg  
1/4 teaspoon cloves  
1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1 tbsp. molasses  
1 tbsp butter  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract  
1 egg yolk, beaten



**Directions :** This recipe uses cubes of raw pumpkin rather than canned pumpkin. Winter squash may also be used.

In medium saucepan, add 1 tbsp. of butter and 1/2 cup water to pumpkin, and simmer over medium heat, for about 10 minutes. Drain, reserving 1/4 cup liquid. Mash or puree pumpkin. Add raisins, rum, cooked pumpkin, and remaining ingredients. Stir until well combined.

Turn into pastry lined 9 in. pie plate. Flute edges. Set in preheated 400 degree oven. Bake 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake about 30 minutes longer. The pie is done when a knife inserted near the middle comes out clean.

**The name pumpkin originated from the Greek word for “large melon” which is “Pepon.” Then the Pepon went through cultural phases and was known as “Pompon”, then Pumpion, and eventually to what we call it today, the PUMPKIN.**

## PUMPKIN FACTS:

80% of the pumpkin supply in the U.S. is available in October

Pumpkins are fruit – from the gourd family (cucurbit)

Pumpkins are the largest fruit

Pumpkins come in 7 different colors – orange, green, yellow, red, white, blue & tan

The greener the pumpkin, the more water it contains and the faster it will freeze

Pumpkins need as much sun as possible when growing

Pumpkins are grown on 6 of the 7 continents - the only place they aren't grown is Antarctica

## PUMPKINS in IOWA:

- **There are more than 38 pumpkin patches in IOWA**
- **Anamosa was officially named Pumpkin capitol of Iowa by the Iowa Legislature in 1993.**
- **Pumpkin patches are on the rise: Acres dedicated to pumpkin harvest rose from 330 in 1989 to 839 in 2000 according to the 2000 Iowa Commercial Horticultural Survey**
- **For pumpkin patches visit our website: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov>**