What’s in a Pumpkin

by Christine Alongi, Registered Dietitian

Did you know that nearly every part of the pumpkin can be eaten? Pumpkins are not only for carving jack-o-lanterns but are a nutritious vegetable in the squash family. Pumpkins are rich in Vitamin A which is important for growth and development, the immune system and good vision. Pumpkin seeds are a rich source of magnesium and zinc which play a vital role in important physiological functions such as proper bone and tooth formation, relaxation of blood vessels, immunity, and insulin regulation to name a few. The cooked pulp can be used in breads, pies, cakes, pastries, soups and the list goes on and on. Pumpkin seeds make a great snack eaten whole or shelled. So this year when you carve your jack-o-lantern get adventurous and try some new recipes!

*Sugar or pie pumpkins are better for eating than carving pumpkins.

Pumpkin Puree

Ingredients
1 sugar pumpkin

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 325°F
2. Cut the pumpkin in half, stem to base. Remove seeds and pulp. Cover each half with foil.
3. Bake in the preheated oven, foil side up, 1 hour, or until tender.
4. Scrape pumpkin meat from shell halves and puree in a blender. Strain to remove any remaining stringy pieces. Store in the freezer in freezer safe bags.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Ingredients
Original recipe makes 1 ½ cups.
1 ½ cups raw whole pumpkin seeds
2 teaspoons butter, melted or olive oil
1 pinch salt

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 300°F
2. Clean the seeds. You have to meticulously clean the seeds until there are no signs of pumpkin strands. Give them a GOOD rinse with water in a colander.
3. Toss seeds in a bowl with the melted butter or olive oil and sea salt. Spread the seeds in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake for about 5-20 minutes or until golden brown; stir occasionally. The kernel cooks quickly so crack open a seed to make sure the kernel is not burning.

Enjoy!
Meet the Staff: Breanna McGehee

Breanna joined the ACNC team as a Clinical Technologist in July of this year. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Therapy from the University of Central Arkansas and has experience as a Certified Paraoptometric. Breanna had always wanted to be part of ACH, and when she visited the Center she fell in love with the people and with research and felt it was the perfect fit. Outside of work, Breanna likes to spend time with her fiancé- they enjoy going to drag races, hiking, bowling, playing video games, and the occasional movie night.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

MyPlate says:
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

The Budget Shopper says:
Buy fruits and vegetables in all their forms – fresh, frozen, and canned.

Fresh, frozen, and canned are all nutritious forms of fruits and vegetables. In fact, canned and frozen produce is typically picked and packed at its peak, when it’s chock-full of nutrients. It also lasts longer than fresh, which can cut down on the amount you waste. Try these tips for choosing wisely with fresh, frozen, and canned:

- Buy fresh produce when it’s in season. It will cost less and taste better than out-of-season produce.
- Buy canned or frozen produce year-round. Look for veggies that have not been pre-sauced and say “no salt added,” “low sodium,” or “reduced sodium.” Look for fruits canned in 100% fruit juice, light syrup, or water.
How Much Produce Can You Buy For $10?

The USDA’s MyPlate recommends that we fill half our plates with all forms of fruits and vegetables, or about 2.5 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit each day. Using a combo of fresh, frozen, and canned produce, you can get 3 extra servings of fruits and veggies compared to buying only fresh!

**All Fresh**
- Pears: 2 cups
- Tomato: 1 cup
- Peas: 2 cups
- Green Beans: 2 cups
- Corn: 4 cups
- Peaches: 4 cups

**Fresh/Canned/Frozen**
- Pears: 1 cup
- Tomato: 1 cup
- Peas: 4 cups
- Green Beans: 3 cups
- Corn: 3 cups
- Peaches: 6 cups

9 one-cup portions of vegetables + 6 one-cup portions of fruits = **15 total portions for $10**

11 one-cup portions of vegetables + 7 one-cup portions of fruits = **18 total portions for $10**

1 Based on average prices. Actual prices will vary throughout the year based on location, seasonality, discounts, and other factors.

2 Combination bag contents include frozen peas, fresh green beans and pears, and canned corn, peaches, and tomato.

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**Pumpkin Chili**

**Ingredients**
- ½ pound lean ground turkey
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 (15-ounce) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 ounce) cans kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1½ cups pumpkin puree (canned or homemade)
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup cooked quinoa

**Optional toppings:** Plain Greek-style yogurt, shredded cheddar cheese

**Directions**

1. In a large pot over medium heat, cook turkey until brown; drain. Stir in onion, garlic, and peppers and cook 5 minutes. Stir in beans, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, pumpkin puree and chicken broth. Season with chili powder, ground cumin, paprika, ground cinnamon, salt. Simmer 1 hour. Add quinoa and mix together. Add toppings.
Currently Enrolling Studies:

**Glowing Study**
The purpose of this study is to learn how the health of a mom at conception affects the health of her child. Families are followed through pregnancy and until the child is 2 years old.

**Qualifications**
Moms must be healthy, less than 12-weeks pregnant, over the age of 18, have a BMI ≥ 30, sedentary, and meet other specific entry criteria.

**Compensation**
To thank you for your participation, diapers and monetary compensation will be provided.

**fMRI Study**
This is a short-term study designed to look at how the food kids ate as babies affects how they think today. Participants attend up to three study visits on the campus of Arkansas Children's Hospital.

**Qualifications**
Children participating in this study must be healthy, between the ages of 7½ and 8½ and have been fed mostly breast milk, milk-based formula or soy-based formula from birth until their first birthday.

**Compensation**
Those completing each visit will receive monetary compensation.

To learn more:
501-364-3309
email: acncstudies@uams.edu

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