

Take Part in Pumpkin





SPA CUISINE By Kate Hamilton

It's the season for warmed cider, brisk walks, falling leaves and the American tradition of Thanksgiving.

One of my fondest memories growing up was diving into a large piece of my mom's pumpkin pie topped with a generous helping of whipped cream. I reveled in its smooth texture and spicy flavor, complemented by the accents of sweetened condensed milk and sugary cream. Today, it's one of my favorite desserts that I often request for birthdays, holidays and special occasions.

Grown on six of the seven continents, pumpkin plants are vegetables that produce an edible fruit that is commonly orange in color when ripe. A member of the Cucurbitaceae—or gourd—family, it has a long relationship with American history, frequently associated with the first Pilgrim Thanksgiving and considered a classic treat for fall.

Facts

This low-fat, low-sodium food is packed with potassium, vitamin A, and the antioxidants lutein, and alpha- and beta-carotene. Adding this healthy ingredient can reduce your risk of developing certain cancers and protect against heart disease. One cup of cooked pumpkin has only 80 calories. With its mild taste, pumpkins make great breads, soups, custards and butters.

In the kitchen

The fleshy interior can be baked, broiled and roasted to make a variety of tasty treats. Pumpkin seeds often are baked with a light coating of salt for an appetizing snack; they also are packed with fatty acids, potassium and magnesium. Start your day off right with homemade Health Spa Granola from Rio Caliente Hot Springs Spa and Nature Resort in Primavera, Mexico, which includes whole pumpkin seeds. At Carefree Resort & Villas in Carefree, Arizona, sample a Pumpkin Seed Bran Blueberry Muffin. Try a slice of Pumpkin Nut Bread with a cup of tea from Canyon Ranch in Lenox, Massachusetts. For dessert, dive into Chocolate Napoleon Sheets With Pumpkin Mousse at Miraval Life in Balance in Catalina, Arizona. See also **Spiced Pumpkin Soup**, courtesy of Chef Jesus Gonzalez at Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Baja California, Mexico.

Quick Facts

- The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 1,469 pounds. The largest pumpkin pie took more than five hours to bake in a custom-made oven, and measured 12.4 feet and weighed 2,020 pounds. Both records occurred in 2005.
- The word “pumpkin” comes from the Greek word *pepon*, meaning “large melon.”
- American colonists used pumpkin as an ingredient for piecrust, not as a filling. The origin of the delicious Thanksgiving treat we enjoy today evolved from filling a seedless pumpkin with milk, honey and spices, and baking the gourd in hot ashes.
- Jack-o'-lanterns, traditionally used as decorations for Halloween—or All Hallows Eve—are based on a Celtic custom that welcomed deceased ancestors and warded off evil spirits on the last day of the old Celtic calendar year.
- In the United States, 80% of the pumpkin supply is available during the month of October. Among the pumpkins sold, 90% are purchased to carve jack-o'-lanterns.
- The term “pumpkin” often refers to a significant other as a term of endearment.

In the spa

Packed with antioxidants, pumpkin helps to prevent free radical damage, as well as minimize fine lines and wrinkles. The Perfect Pumpkin Peeling Enzyme Masque, from June Jacobs Spa Collection, gently exfoliates dead skin cells and impurities, leaving smooth, cleansed skin. Éminence Organic Skin Care's Yam & Pumpkin Enzyme Pro Peel increases collagen production, and can be complemented by a cup of the company's Vanilla Pumpkin Spice Tea. Apply Oatmeal Pumpkin Walnut Scrub, from HEAT Inc., to cleanse and exfoliate. Packed with salicylic and lactic acids, Rhonda Allison's Pumpkin Cleanser deeply cleans the skin during dry winter months.

Fall isn't all about pumpkin pie. Pumpkin enzymes add rejuvenating benefits into the Avia Skincare Vital Peel at Avia Spa in Santa Barbara, California, to reduce the appearance of fine lines and dark spots. At The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation in Greensboro, Georgia, the Fall Body Glow includes a blend of pumpkin seeds, sweet orange and patchouli that is massaged onto the body to nourish and repair delicate skin. At June Lake, California's Double Eagle Resort and Spa, choose from a wide range of salts and scrubs, including Pumpkin Pumice, utilized in the Vichy Shower and Exfoliation.

From the pumpkin patch

Reminiscent of a chilly fall day, pumpkin packs a punch to your healthy living diet. When applied to the body, it protects the skin from free radical damage. Whether baked in a pie like mom used to make or used in a variety of spa cuisine recipes, make sure to treat yourself to something featuring this versatile gourd. Don't forget to visit a pumpkin patch this season for a fun family trip. ✂



Photo courtesy of Rancho La Puerta, Tecate, Baja California, Mexico.

Spiced Pumpkin Soup

From Chef Jesus Gonzalez at Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Baja California, Mexico

Makes 10 servings



1 small pumpkin
(about 1 ½ pounds)

1 small onion, diced

1 teaspoon cold-pressed oil

2 stalks celery, chopped

1 carrot, chopped

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground allspice

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

6 cups vegetable stock

Coarse sea salt and black pepper, to taste

½ cup nonfat yogurt, for garnish

8 parsley sprigs or chives,
for garnish

1. Cut pumpkin in half and seed.
2. Arrange pumpkin on a baking sheet, placing the cut sides down. Bake in a 350° F oven for

1–1 ½ hours, or until tender when pierced with a knife. Let cool. Peel away skin and discard.

3. In a large heavy saucepan, sauté onion with oil over medium heat until onion is translucent. Add chopped celery and carrot. Cover and cook, stirring frequently, until soft. Add cooked pumpkin and spices. Stir in vegetable stock and simmer covered for 20 minutes.
4. In a blender or food processor, puree mixture until smooth. Season with sea salt and black pepper.
5. Serve immediately in warmed bowls. Garnish with a drizzle of nonfat yogurt from a squeeze bottle, and top with a sprig of parsley or chives.