

A person with long blonde hair, wearing a light blue and white striped sweater, is carving a large orange pumpkin. Their hands are visible, one holding the pumpkin steady and the other reaching into the hollowed-out center. The pumpkin sits on a light-colored surface. To the right, a glass bowl contains pumpkin pulp, and a small pumpkin stem lies nearby. In the foreground, a white plastic spoon and a knife are partially visible. The background is bright and out of focus.

Fall's superfood

When the cool autumn air blows in and the fall colors start to make their appearance, we often hear, **"It's pumpkin spice season!"** Whether you love or hate that pumpkin trend, rest assured there are dozens of ways to incorporate this fall superfood into your diet without an expensive trip through the drive-thru.



Make use of those pumpkin seeds

One cup of pumpkin seeds contains:

- 49 calories
- 245% daily value vitamin A
- 2 grams of fiber
- 2 grams of protein
- Beta carotene
- High levels of
 - vitamin C
 - potassium
 - copper
 - manganese
 - vitamin B2
 - vitamin E
 - iron

Is pumpkin a vegetable or fruit?

Pumpkins are often thought of as a vegetable, but they're actually an edible fruit and members of the Cucurbitaceae family, which is comprised of squash, melons and cucumbers. In fact, all varieties of squash are edible fruit, and there are a multitude of ways to eat and use them.

Benefits of pumpkins

Not only are pumpkins edible, but they offer amazing health benefits:

- **Pumpkins contain antioxidants** that can help curb chronic illness and prevent cell damage.
- **This nutrient-dense food, which is low in calories but high in fiber**, keeps you full longer without the extra calorie intake, meaning that pumpkins can be a great food to eat if you're trying to lose a few pounds.
- **Pumpkins contain some of the best nutrients for skin health, such as vitamin A, E and C.** In addition, vitamins A and C are associated with immune-boosting benefits we could all use more of as flu season kicks up and we spend more time indoors.



Turn to page 34 for some delicious autumn-inspired pumpkin recipes.

Pumpkins aren't just for baking into pie or using for holiday decoration and pumpkin carving. There are many other healthy uses for this fall fruit:

Pumpkin puree

Make your own pumpkin puree to use in pie, smoothies or as a replacement in baked goods such as cakes, pies, brownies and pancakes:

How to make puree: Cut a small 4-6 lb. baking pumpkin in half, scoop out the insides, bake cut side down at 400 degrees for 45-60 minutes, scoop flesh out into food processor to process until smooth.

(Try experimenting with other varieties of pumpkin and squash.)

Oil substitute

Replace the oil or butter in a recipe with pumpkin puree.

Oil to pumpkin is 1:1, butter is ¾ pumpkin to 1 cup butter

Egg substitute

You can also replace the eggs in baked goods with ¼ cup pumpkin puree per egg.

Baby food

Roast, soften or puree pumpkin for babies 6-plus months.

Hummus flavoring

Add pureed pumpkin to a traditional chickpea hummus for a pumpkin flair.

Soups

Dice pumpkin and add it to soups, stews and chili.



Trail Mix

Roast your jack-o-lantern pumpkin seeds (picking out those seeds is a good project for little hands).

Salad toppings

Buy pre-packaged pepitas (a specific variety of pumpkin seed) and sprinkle on a salad or mix into loaves of bread or cookies.



Pumpkin facials

Pumpkin isn't just for eating – it's a topical superfood, too!

Try this pumpkin facial to fight inflammation and get an extra dose of vitamin A:

- One tbsp pumpkin puree
- One tsp honey
- One tsp apple cider vinegar

Mix the ingredients above and apply to face, kick back and relax for 15 minutes. Then rinse or wipe off with a wet cloth.

Check out our Summer 2021 issue, where we focused on ways to fight the sun from the inside out (p. 14).

Grow your own pumpkin microgreens or save some seeds to start your own pumpkin patch in the spring!

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