

NUTRIGRAM

October 2007

PUMPKINS: THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR CARVING

THE HISTORY OF PUMPKINS

Pumpkins are believed to have originated in Central America. Seeds from relative plants have been found in Mexico, dating back over 7,000 years. Native Americans used pumpkin as a staple in their diets centuries before the pilgrims arrived in America. When European settlers arrived, they saw pumpkins being grown by the Native Americans and soon made it a staple in their diets, too. The settlers brought pumpkin seeds back to Europe, where they quickly became popular. Just like today, early settlers used pumpkins in a wide variety of recipes, from desserts to stews and soups to snacking on their edible seeds. Early settlers made pumpkin pie by filling a hollowed out shell with milk, honey and spices and then baking it. In addition to cooking with pumpkins, they also dried the shells and cut strips to weave into mats.

PUMPKIN NUTRITION

The bright orange color of pumpkins is a giveaway that it is loaded with an important nutrient called beta-carotene, which is made into vitamin A in the body. Beta-carotene helps protect the body against many diseases and is important for preventing vision loss. Pumpkins are also a great source of the following vitamins and minerals: vitamin C and E, iron and potassium. Lastly, pumpkins are low in calories and high in fiber, making them an excellent addition to any meal or recipe.

Monthly SUPERFOODS Promotion

BALANCED CHOICES
for a healthy lifestyle

FISH
It's good for your heart!
go fish!

All fish, but in particular fatty fish, such as salmon and tuna are packed with **OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS**.
Two servings a week may help prevent heart disease and stroke.

SUPERFOODS

HALLOWEEN VS. EATING PUMPKINS

Pumpkins are available in all shapes, colors and sizes, from the miniature to the gigantic. While most of us think of the Halloween jack-o'-lanterns when we hear the word pumpkin, they are not the same—some varieties are better for eating and cooking while others are better for carving. Jack-o'-lantern pumpkins are grown to have large hollow centers and thin walls so that they are easy to carve, but don't taste as good in recipes. The miniature varieties are cute, but are better for decorating than cooking. The medium-sized varieties are the best for cooking and baking as they have smaller hollow centers and thicker walls.

PUMPKIN PICKING

Pumpkins, both the cooking and carving varieties, are grown and sold in markets all over the United States. So, when you go to your local grower to purchase a carving pumpkin, why don't you also pick up some varieties that are good for cooking. After you've carved your pumpkin, spend some time making a delicious pumpkin recipe. Now that's a Halloween treat!

Answers to your questions online...

"Ask the Food & Nutrition Experts"

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