

# Freezer Pumpkin Butter and Other Goodies.



Let's talk about pumpkin for just a bit before we get to the recipes.

The only process recommended for home canning is to pressure can pumpkin chunks. Canning pureed pumpkin, or other winter squash, is no longer recommended. In fact, it has not been recommended since 1994. Winter squashes are a low acid food and have much less moisture than other vegetables. When pureed, the product can be too thick to safely process at home. You can read more on this subject here:

[http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/pumpkin\\_butter.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/pumpkin_butter.html)

Pressure canning your pumpkin in chunks, or cubes, allows you to store your pumpkin for use later. By canning plain, in chunks, it is also more versatile and can be used for many different recipes. Later, you can mash or puree your pumpkin or winter squash for soups, pie filling, pumpkin bread, cheese cakes, etc. Here is the recommended process for pressure canning pumpkins in cubes: [http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_04/pumpkin\\_winter\\_squash.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/pumpkin_winter_squash.html)

There are others ways to preserve food –dehydration and freezing. You can freeze your pumpkin or winter squash in pureed form. Here is the method for freezing pureed pumpkin and other winter squash:

**Freezing** is the only safe method for preserving pumpkin purees, butters and preserves.

- Select full-colored mature pumpkin with fine texture.
- Wash, cut into cooking-size sections and remove seeds.
- Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker, or in an oven.
- When soft, remove pulp from rind and mash.
- To cool, place pan containing pumpkin in cold water and stir occasionally.
- Pack into rigid containers leaving ½ -inch headspace, and freeze.

Freeze these items for up to one year. Frozen pumpkin or squash is great to use in pies, desserts and as a vegetable. Thaw pumpkin and squash in the refrigerator - not on the counter - before using.

Puree that is in contact with the air may turn dark. This does not affect the quality or flavor of the puree. Mixing lemon juice in with the puree may control its tendency to darken. Once your puree is in the freezer container you can cover it with plastic wrap, pressing the plastic wrap down such that it is in contact with the puree and air is not in contact with the puree.

If you enjoy **dehydrating foods** then here is a method for dehydrating pumpkin and other winter squashes:

- Wash, peel, and remove fibers and seeds from pumpkin or squash flesh.
- Cut into small, thin strips, no more than 1 inch wide by 1/8 inch thick
- Blanch strips over steam for 3 minutes. Drain and pat dry.
- Dry the strips in a dehydrator until brittle.
- To reconstitute, use one cup of dried food to two cups of water.
- Pre-soak for one hour and then boil until tender.

One cup of dried pumpkin or squash is enough for one pie.

And now, some recipes!!

### **Freezer Pumpkin Butter**

#### **Ingredients**

2 pints pumpkin puree  
3/4 cup apple juice  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 1/2 cups white sugar  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Note: you can play with the spices to suit your own taste.

#### **Directions**

Combine pumpkin, apple juice, spices, and sugar in a large saucepan; stir well. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes or to desired thickness. Stir frequently.

Transfer to sterile 1/2 pint freezer containers. Leave 1/2 " headspace and store in the freezer up to 1 year.

Yield: about 5 half-pint freezer containers.

There are many ways to use your pumpkin butter: on toast or muffins, in a cheesecake, cookies, pancakes, bread pudding...hmmmm...yes...

### **Pumpkin Butter Bread Pudding**

10 slices of bread, stale and torn into pieces  
4 large eggs  
2 cups milk (whole or low fat)  
1 tsp vanilla  
1/3 cup pumpkin butter  
1/2 cup sugar (white or brown)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place bread pieces into an 8x8 greased pan (preferably glass). Mix together remaining ingredients. Pour over bread. Allow mixture to be absorbed by the bread pieces for 10 minutes. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden and set. Serve with vanilla ice cream and another dollop of homemade pumpkin butter, of course!