

In The Garden

Pumpkin

The name 'Pumpkin' is derived from the Greek word 'pepon' which means 'large melon'. Pumpkins are found all over the world and people cultivate them to sell for food. Pumpkins are one of the most famous crops in the USA.

Pumpkins grow throughout the warm summer months and are usually ready to harvest late summer or early fall.

Pumpkins are called a winter squash, because they can be stored all winter due to their tough outer shell. Pumpkins are usually orange but can sometimes be yellow, white, green, red or striped.

Pumpkins have thick shells which contain pulp and seeds that can be eaten.

However, some pumpkin varieties are grown for carving and decoration.



Pumpkins come in many sizes and weights.

An average pumpkin might weigh around 13 pounds. A small pumpkin may only weigh 1 pound. Giant pumpkins, often grown for competitions, can weigh over 1000 pounds! In 2021 the world record pumpkin weighed 1,823 pounds!

Pumpkin plants feature both male and female flowers, and bees are the most common pumpkin pollinator.

Over 1 billion pounds of pumpkins are grown in the United States every year.

Pumpkins are popular decorations during Halloween. A carved pumpkin illuminated by candles is known as a 'jack-o-lantern'.

The tradition is believed to have come from Ireland, where they would carve faces into turnips, beets and other root vegetables as part of the Gaelic festival of Samhain.

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Pumpkin Walnut Muffins

Makes 12 Muffins

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon canned pumpkin pie spice
- 15 ounces pumpkin
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup milk or non-dairy alternative
- 1/2 cup walnuts chopped

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt and pumpkin pie spice. Mix well.
3. In a large bowl, combine pumpkin, maple syrup, eggs, milk and vanilla extract. Mix well.
4. Add the pumpkin mixture to the flour mixture and stir until combined. The batter will be thick, do not add water or over-stir. Add batter to a muffin tin

sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.

Fill each muffin well about ¾ of the way full. Sprinkle each muffin with chopped walnuts.

5. Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly browned on top and a toothpick inserted in the middle of the muffins comes out clean. Allow to cool and enjoy!

Source: <https://eatfresh.org/recipe/baked-goods-desserts/pumpkin-walnut-muffins>

Pumpkins are a good source of vitamin A, potassium, and fiber.

Pumpkin flesh (the meat of the pumpkin) can be baked, roasted, steamed or boiled. Pumpkin can be used as an ingredient in pies, breads, soups, and other foods.

Pumpkin seeds are a good source of protein, B vitamins, vitamin K, and contain a variety of minerals. Seeds can be roasted and eaten as a nutritious snack or sprinkled on top of soups and salads.

