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Can You Eat Your Jack-O'-Lantern Pumpkin?

It's fall and thoughts turn to pumpkin pie and to Halloween jack-o'-lanterns. But, can you use the same pumpkin for BOTH a jack-o'-lantern AND for eating?

"Young children can enjoy creating jack-o'-lanterns by drawing the eyes and mouth on the pumpkins with markers," according to Virginia Cooperative Extension. "They can be creative and have a good time and the pumpkin is still safe for eating."

Soni Cochran, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County



Beware "pumpkins for jack-o'-lanterns usually are larger, with stringier pulp," recommends Cami Wells, Extension Educator and Registered Dietitian in Hall County. "If you decide to use fresh pumpkin, make sure to get the right pumpkin for the job. Sugar or pie pumpkins generally are smaller, less stringy and work well in recipes," says Wells.

To prepare a pumpkin for recipes, Wells advises "wash it, cut it in half, scoop out the seeds and microwave, bake or boil the pumpkin until the pulp is soft. Remove the skin, then mash it by hand or puree it in a food processor or blender."

North Carolina Cooperative Extension gives these easy directions for baking a pumpkin using the oven method: "To bake, place cut side down on a shallow

baking dish and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or longer. Test for doneness by piercing with a fork. When tender, remove from the oven and allow cooling."

Besides tasting great, pumpkin provides important Vitamin A and potassium for your body.

Here are two recipes by Wells, from her email newsletter, *Food Fun for Young Children* that children (and adults) will enjoy as a way to eat this vegetable throughout the year. If you'd like more recipes and tips for feeding young children each month, sign up for the newsletter at <http://food.unl.edu/subscribe-food-fun-young-kids>

MINI PUMPKIN SPICE OATMEAL MUFFINS

(Makes 32 mini-muffins or 12 regular-sized muffins)

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick oats
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 cup pumpkin puree or canned pumpkin
- 3/4 cup low-fat milk
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1 egg, slightly beaten

1. Spray mini-muffin tins with cooking spray or use mini-muffin liners.
2. In a medium bowl, combine flour, quick oats, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and pumpkin pie spice. In a separate bowl, mix pumpkin, milk, oil and egg.
3. Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients and stir until just

moistened. Fill muffin cups two-thirds full.

4. Mix topping ingredients. Sprinkle topping evenly over muffins. Bake mini-muffins at 400°F for 8-12 minutes or until evenly browned. Bake regular-sized muffins for 15-18 minutes.

Got leftover canned pumpkin?

If you use canned pumpkin to make the pumpkin spice muffins, you will have about 3/4 cup of pumpkin leftover. What should you do with the leftover pumpkin? Try these yummy pumpkin pancakes.

PERFECTLY PUMPKIN WHOLE WHEAT PANCAKES

(Makes 10-12 pancakes)

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1-1/2 cups low-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup white whole wheat flour
- 3/4 cup pumpkin puree or canned pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Mix together eggs, oil, milk, pumpkin and brown sugar in a medium bowl. Combine flours, baking powder and spices in small bowl.
2. Add dry ingredients to pumpkin mixture. Stir until combined. Pour 1/4 cup of batter for each pancake on a lightly oiled and heated griddle or skillet.
3. Cook until the pancakes are full of bubbles and the under-surface is lightly browned. Use a spatula and flip. Lightly brown the other side.



Mini Pumpkin Spice Oatmeal Muffins



Perfectly Pumpkin Whole Wheat Pancakes

Photos: Cami Wells

Makeover Your Leftovers

Thursday, Nov. 10, 6:30-8 p.m.

Bryan Health East Campus
Plaza Conference Center, 1600 S. 48 St.

Free Class

Presented by

Alice Henneman, Extension Educator, RDN

Pre-registration is required by calling 402-481-8886.



Got leftovers languishing in your refrigerator or foods almost past prime time to eat? Food tossed is money lost. The USDA estimates tossed food costs consumers about \$370 per person yearly.

Learn how to add new life to still edible foods. You'll receive tips and recipes (including an extensive handout) for using and/or preventing leftover meats, vegetables, pasta, fruit, vegetables, dairy foods, eggs and bread.