



# MARY'S MEMO

*Recipes • Menu Ideas • Shopping • Cooking Tips*

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Chief and Rays Supermarkets

## **POWER TO THE PUMPKIN!**

If you think of pumpkin primarily in connection with Halloween jack-o-lanterns or Thanksgiving pie, you're missing out on a nutritional powerhouse of a vegetable.

"Pumpkin's bright orange color is due to its abundance of beta-carotene, a carotenoid that your body converts to vitamin A," says Georgia Giannopoulos, RD, CDN, CNSC, a dietitian at Weill Cornell Medical Center. "Vitamin A is essential for eye health; an early sign of vitamin A deficiency is night blindness, although most people who enjoy a variety of healthy food get all the vitamin A they need." Vitamin A also plays an important role in bone growth and helps regulate the immune system, your primary defense against infections.

Pumpkin is a nutrient dense food, meaning it offers a lot of nutrition in a low-calorie package .... just 49 calories per one cup of cooked pumpkin.

According to Giannopoulos, "Both fresh and canned 100% pumpkin are nutritious, delicious and versatile."

Pumpkins that are to be used for cooking are often referred to as sugar or pie pumpkin. An ideal one is about the size of a cantaloupe and it is a deep orange color. Its skin is hard and smooth without bruises or holes. Like other squashes, pumpkins are dense and firm so exercise caution when cutting.

Cut pie pumpkin into cubes and roast with onions, peppers and carrots for a hearty nutritious side dish. Pumpkin cubes can also be tossed into soups, stews or chili. For quicker cooking, cut pumpkin into small cubes and boil for 10 minutes or microwave for 5 minutes before adding to your soup pot.

**SOURCE:** *Weill Cornell Medical College Women's Nutrition Connection*, October 2011.

## **I'LL TAKE MINE CANNED!**

Some of you may puree your own pumpkin for pies and other desserts but I have been buying Libby's® and using their pumpkin pie recipe my entire life. It's been on the label as long as I can remember so a lot of people must be doing the same. I've mentioned before that I like Libby's® filling so much that I bake it in custard cups to eat. Ohio is one of the top ten producers of pumpkins in the USA.

Since this week's memo is all about pumpkin we're sharing a pumpkin muffin and a pumpkin brownie to make now through the holidays.

### **PUMPKIN MUFFINS**

- 4 cups unsifted all-purpose flour
- 1-3/4 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 2-3/4 cups raisins
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin pie spice
- 4 large eggs
- 2-1/2 cups canned pumpkin
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 cup water

In a large mixing bowl combine flour, baking soda, salt, raisins, walnuts and spice. Make a well in the center of mixture. Combine egg, pumpkin, butter and water; add the dry ingredients, stirring just until moistened. Spoon batter into paper-lined muffin pans, filling 2/3rds full. Bake in preheated 375°F oven for 20 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in center comes out dry. Recipe makes 3.5 dozen (can be frozen).

**SOURCE:** Adapted from recipe in *Christmas with Southern Living Cookbook*, 1997.

**PS:** Chief and Rays have fall motif paper muffin cup liners for a more attractive presentation.

### **BUTTERSCOTCH PUMPKIN BROWNIES**

- 3/4 cup unsifted all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup quick-cooking oatmeal
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup butterscotch chips

In mixing bowl combine flour, oatmeal, baking powder and baking soda. In another bowl blend egg, softened butter, vanilla, brown sugar and pumpkin. Stir in nuts and butterscotch chips. Spread evenly into buttered 8x8x2-inch pan. Bake in preheated 350°F oven 25 to 30 minutes. Cut into 24 bars.

### **FINAL WORD**

For years when I carved a jack-o-lantern for the kids I threw away the pumpkin seeds inside. And then a good friend shared a recipe for toasting them. The recipe is in *Thank You, I'm Glad You Liked It*. In case you don't have my cookbook or you've never toasted pumpkin seeds here's how you do it: In this particular recipe just wipe away excess fiber that clings to the seeds; don't wash. Toss 2 cups of pumpkin seeds with 2 tablespoons of melted butter or olive oil and spread in a single layer in a shallow pan. Salt lightly. Bake in 250°F oven for about 2 hours, stirring occasionally.