

“Sugar pumpkins” also known as “pie pumpkins” are sweeter and more flavorful than their Jack O’Lantern cousins. At the Winter Farmers’ Market you’ll find pumpkins and winter squash in all shapes and sizes. A few popular pumpkin varieties known for their delicious flavor include ‘New England Pie’, ‘Long Pie,’ and ‘Long Island Cheese’.

When to Buy

Pie pumpkins and winter squash are typically available from local farms beginning in October, and lasting through January or February. They can be stored for several months so stock up early and eat them all winter long!

How to Store

Pumpkins and squash should be stored in a moderately warm and dry place, between 50 - 55 degrees (avoid colder temperatures). An unheated spare room, closet, or a dry spot in a cellar can work well. Store in a single layer if possible and check regularly for soft spots.

Preparing Pumpkin Purée

To prepare whole pumpkins for the soup and pie recipes below, you first need to cook them. Pumpkins can be either baked or steamed. To bake, cut the pumpkin in half or pieces, remove the seeds, cover with foil and bake at 375 for 1 1/2 hours or until tender when poked with a knife. Allow to cool, then scoop out flesh. To steam, peel pumpkin and cut into chunks, set aside seeds for roasting. Place in a saucepan with 1-2” of water. Steam over high heat until tender, about 25 minutes. Drain, allow to cool, then mash with a potato masher, or purée in a food processor. Your pumpkin is now ready for your favorite pie recipe, or put it in the freezer for later use. The same method can be used to cook winter squash, which also make great pies!

Pumpkin Soup

- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 cups pumpkin purée
- 1/2 cup diced onions
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 12 oz. mushrooms
- A dash of nutmeg
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 tsp curry powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup cream or whole milk

In a large pot, melt the butter and brown the onions and mushrooms. Stir in the flour and mix to combine. Stir in the curry powder, broth, pumpkin, honey, nutmeg, salt, and pepper, then simmer for 15 minutes. Add the milk or cream and heat until just warm. Serves 6 to 8.

"Kick the Can" Pumpkin Pie

If you’ve never made pumpkin pie from a whole pumpkin before, you are in for a treat. It’s so easy, and delicious! You can find almost everything you need for this recipe at a winter farmers’ market!

The Crust

- Best-Ever Pie Crust, Bon Appetit, July 2007
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 cup chilled lard, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 5 Tbsp (or more) ice water

Blend flour, sugar, and salt in processor. Add butter and lard; using on/off turns, blend until mixture resembles coarse meal. Transfer mixture to medium bowl. Add 5 tablespoons ice water and mix with fork until dough begins to clump together, adding more water by teaspoonfuls if dry. Gather dough together. Divide dough in half; flatten each half into disk. Wrap each disk in plastic and refrigerate at least 1 hour. Can be made 3 days ahead. Keep refrigerated. If necessary, soften slightly at room temperature before rolling out. Makes two 9" crusts.

The Filling

- (Makes one 9" pie)
- 4 medium eggs
- 1 cup cream or whole milk
- 2 cups pumpkin purée
- 2/3 cup maple syrup
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp cloves

Preheat the oven to 350F. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and cream together until blended. Add the pumpkin puree and the maple syrup and again whisk well. Add the vanilla, salt and spices and stir to combine. Pour the mixture into the pie shell. Cook for about an hour, until knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

source: briciole.typepad.com

Tip: Soak them first! Measure an amount of water 4 times the volume of pumpkin seeds. Add 1 tablespoon of salt for every 2 cups of water. Bring salted water to a boil and dump pumpkin seeds in it. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Boil gently for 10 minutes, then drain and pat dry with a kitchen towel. Spread the seeds in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast them in the oven for 15-20 minutes (depending on their size). Stir the seeds a couple of times while in the oven and make sure they don't get over-toasted. Let seeds cool thoroughly, crack them open and enjoy!

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