

Pumpkin Purée

You can use the pumpkin purée in any recipe that calls for canned purée in the same amounts.



Prepare Your Pumpkin

Spread newspaper over your work surface to make clean up easier. With a sharp knife, remove the stem and cut the pumpkin in half. Scoop out the seeds and scrape away all of the stringy mass. Save seeds for roasting, if desired.

Choose Your Method

Boiling/Steaming Method: Cut the pumpkin into large, even chunks. Rinse in cold water. Place pieces in a large pot with about a cup of water. The water does not need to cover the pumpkin pieces. Cover the pot and boil for 20 to 30 minutes or until tender, or steam for 10 to 12 minutes. Check for doneness by testing with a fork. Drain the cooked pumpkin in a colander for at least an hour to remove excess liquid. Reserve the liquid to use as a base for soup.

Oven Method: Cut pumpkin in half, scraping away stringy mass and seeds. Rinse under cold water. Place pumpkin, cut side down on a large cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for one hour or until fork tender.

Microwave Method: Cut pumpkin in half, place cut side down on a microwave safe plate or tray. Microwave on high for 15 minutes, check for doneness. If necessary continue cooking at 1-2 minute intervals until fork tender.

Preparing the Purée

When the pumpkin is cool enough to handle, remove the peel using a small sharp knife and your fingers. Put the peeled pumpkin in a food processor and purée or use a food mill, ricer, strainer or potato masher to form a puree.

Freeze for Future Use

Pumpkin purée freezes well. When the purée has cooled completely, place in freezer containers, leaving ½-inch space between lid and container or pack into freezer safe plastic bags. Label, date and freeze for future use for up to one year.

Choose the Right Pumpkin

When choosing a pumpkin for making fresh purée, choose “pie pumpkin” or “sweet pumpkin.” These are typically smaller than the large Jack O’ Lantern pumpkins and the flesh is darker, sweeter and less watery. They’re perfect for pies, soups, muffins or breads.

Jack O’ Lantern pumpkins are bred to be perfect for Halloween carving, but tend to be too large and stringy for baking.

A medium-sized (4-pound) sugar, or sweet pumpkin should yield around 1½ cups of mashed pumpkin. This purée can be used in all your recipes calling for canned pumpkin.



Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Ingredients

Seeds from 1 large pumpkin, rinsed and dried
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Scatter pumpkin seeds onto a sheet pan in a single layer and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Bake for about 7 minutes, until light brown and crispy.

For spicy pumpkin seeds, mix ½ teaspoon each garlic salt, cumin, coriander and cardamom with seeds and oil before roasting.

For sweet pumpkin seeds, mix 1 teaspoon each ground cinnamon, cloves and ginger and 1-½ tablespoons dark brown sugar with seeds and oil before roasting.