



A pumpkin is a squash known for its round, smooth, slightly ribbed skin and deep yellow to orange coloration. It has a thick shell containing seeds and the pulp. We basically eat the seeds and pulp.



The pumpkin has 30 calories per cup, along with lots of vitamin A, vitamin C and potassium. Also pumpkins have carotenoid pigments that turn into vitamin A when eaten. Pumpkin pie is a traditional part of Thanksgiving meals in Canada and in the United States.

Pumpkins, like other squash, are thought to have originated in North America. However, the oldest seeds found show that it may have come from Mexico dating back to 4500 BC.

The word pumpkin comes from the Greek word *pepon* which means “large melon”, something round and large. Later the French took the word and made their word *pompon* which the British picked up changing it to *pumpion*. Later American colonists changed the word to *pumpkin*.

Of the seven continents, only Antarctica is unable to produce pumpkins. In America, over 1.5 billion pounds of pumpkins are produced each year. Top producing states are Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and California.

Pumpkins are warm-weather crop that is usually planted in early July. Pumpkins are hardy and can regrow when the leaves and portions of the vine are removed or damaged. Honeybees play a role in pollinating the plants.



Pumpkins are great when used in cooking. Most people only make pumpkin puree which can be frozen and used later. When ripe, the pumpkin can be boiled, steamed, or roasted. In America, the pumpkin plays a big role in the autumn harvest where it is eaten mashed or in soups. Pureed pumpkin makes a fantastic pie. The shells are used as decorations at many fall harvests, feasts and holidays.

In many parts of the world some varieties of pumpkins are small and green. These are cooked and eaten the same way we use squash or zucchini. In the Middle East, pumpkin is used for sweet dishes. In India, pumpkin is cooked with butter, sugar and spices. In China, the leaves of the pumpkin plant are cooked and used as a vegetable and in soups. In Australia and New Zealand, pumpkin is roasted often with other vegetables. In Japan, small pumpkins are served in savory dishes including tempura. In Korea, pumpkin is deep fried much like we do chicken wings in this country and served in a spicy and sweet sauce. Many countries even dry then roast the seeds. This is common in Mexico. These seeds are called *pepita* and are snacks.

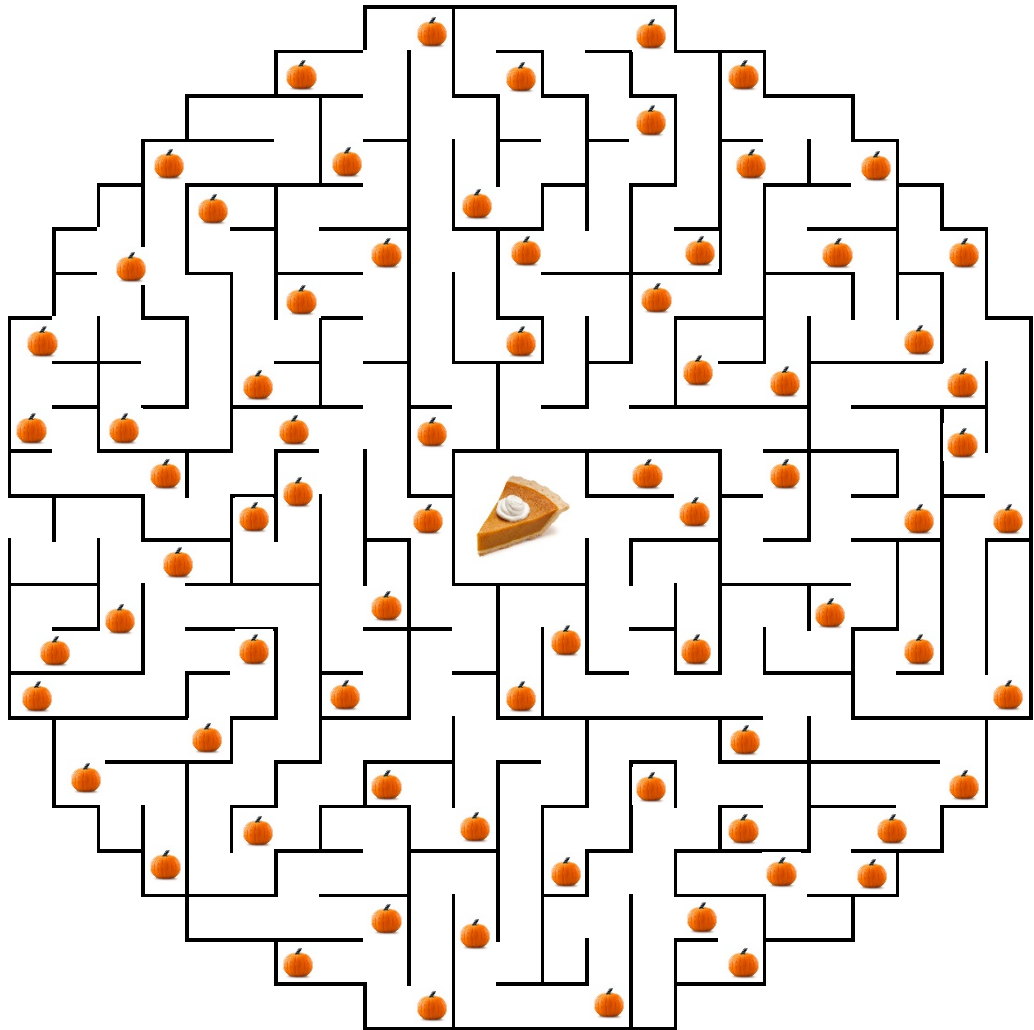
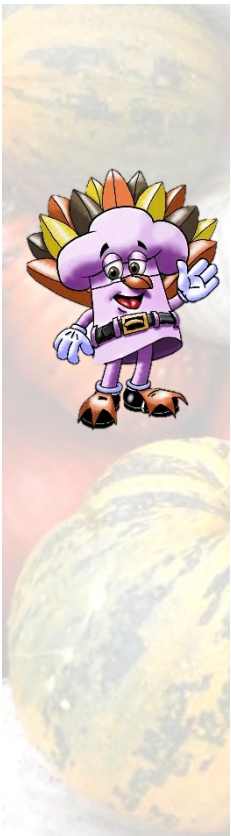


Pumpkin seed oil and salted pumpkin seeds are used in many dishes and salads as a healthy alternative to croutons. There are wonderful gourmet dishes that take use of pumpkin found all over the world.

Pumpkins are used in medicine especially by Native Americans to treat intestinal worms and urinary ailments. The seeds were also used as folk remedies for irritable bladder.

PUMPKINS

Help Chefy get through the pumpkin patch to the center!



What ingredients do you think are in pumpkin pie?
