

### Flora & Fauna

#### *Many Uses of Pumpkins*

Halloween is approaching and many people will include pumpkin carving in their list of fun activities for the holiday. The most popular use of pumpkins may be for jack-o-lanterns and fall decorations, but there are many more healthful ways pumpkin can be used. When eaten, pumpkin provides vitamin A, potassium, protein and vitamin C. Pumpkin is also low in calories.

When choosing a pumpkin for cooking, choose a small pumpkin that weighs between two and six pounds. Look for one that has one or two inches of stem left. Pumpkins with shorter stems decay more quickly. Choose a pumpkin that has a rich orange color with skin that cannot be easily broken or scratched by your fingernail.

If you want your pumpkin to have multiple uses, you can first paint a funny face on it for a decoration using non-toxic paints. After the holiday, you can wash and cook it. When selecting a pumpkin for cooking, “pie pumpkin” or “sweet pumpkin” is a good choice but the jack-o-lantern variety also works just fine for eating. For every pound of whole pumpkin, you can expect to get one cup of pumpkin puree.

To maximize the use of your pumpkin, start by removing the stem with a sharp knife. Cut the pumpkin in half and scoop out the seeds and scrape the stringy part away. Wash the seeds in warm water and spread them out to dry.

Roasted pumpkin seeds make a tasty, healthy treat. To roast, lightly spray a pan with oil and spread the seeds out thinly. You don’t want to clump them together or use too much oil – then they won’t cook right and will just be soggy. Sprinkle salt or any seasoning that appeals to you like cheesy popcorn or Cajun seasoning. A bit of cayenne pepper really livens up this tasty snack. Bake them in a 250°F oven for 15-20 minutes. Let them cool slightly and then serve!

There are three ways to prepare the pumpkin so you can get pumpkin puree. To bake it, cut the pumpkin in half and place the pumpkin, cut side down on a cookie sheet and bake at 350°F until fork tender or about an hour. To microwave it, place the cut side of half of the pumpkin down on a microwave-safe plate and microwave on high for fifteen minutes or until fork tender. To boil, cut the pumpkin into large chunks and rinse in cold water. Place the chunks in a large pot in about an inch of water. Cover the pot and boil for 20-30 minutes until tender. Then, to make the puree, cool and peel the pumpkin and use a food processor, blender, ricer or a potato masher.

Pumpkin puree can be used in any recipe in which you use the canned pumpkin puree you find in the store. You can make pies, pancakes, muffins, soups, and the list goes on! Pumpkin puree can be frozen for up to one year. If you run out of time and energy before you start the puree process, remember, pumpkins can be stored for several months if kept at 50-55°F in a dry, airy place.

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#### *Cleaning Corner: Cleaning a Microwave*

- 1) Place a non-metallic, microwave-safe bowl of water in the microwave and heat for 3-5 minutes. When the microwave stops, keep the door closed to give the moisture and steam time to work. Remove the bowl (careful, it’s hot!) and take a moist, warm cloth to the inside of the microwave. The crud bits should wipe off easily.
- 2) Add a couple teaspoons of baking soda to a bowl of water and place in microwave. Follow same process as above. The baking soda will act as a deodorizer.
- 3) Mix 1/4 cup of vinegar and 1 cup of water in a bowl, place in microwave. Follow the same procedure as in method one. The vinegar also acts as a freshener and deodorizer.
- 4) Soak a clean, thick sponge with vinegar and water (you can also use a hand towel instead of a sponge), set the microwave on high for 3 minutes. Let the microwave sit closed for a few minutes. Then, open it and use the sponge to wipe down insides. The sponge will be hot, so wear rubber gloves to protect your skin from the heat.

## October

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|------|---|
| 1446 | The Korean Hargual alphabet was invented  |
| 1661 | During England’s first yachting race, King Charles II beat his brother James                                  |
| 1818 | British boxers are the first to wear padded gloves in the ring  |
| 1881 | The player piano was invented and patented by Edward Leveaux of England                                       |
| 1890 | The Mormon Church outlaws polygamy  |
| 1931 | Comic strip Dick Tracy debuts in the Detroit Mirror; within the week, hundreds of other newspapers pick it up |
| 1957 | Congress orders B-52 bombers on full-time flying alert in case of a USSR attack                               |
| 1968 | Cult favorite “Night of the Living Dead” premieres at movie theaters across Pittsburgh                        |
| 1988 | In a single day, a takeover bid pushes Pillsbury stock from \$18.37 to \$57.37 per share                      |

## Health Tips: Losing Weight by the Numbers

So you've been dieting and exercising yet the weight just isn't coming off. Ever thought that your math might be wrong? In order to lose weight, you have to burn more calories than you consume. Here's a handy formula that may help you reach your weight loss goals.

### 1. Calculate your BMR – Basal Metabolic Rate, the amount of calories you burn at rest

BMR for a woman =  $655 + (4.35 \times \text{weight in pounds}) + (4.7 \times \text{height in inches}) - (4.7 \times \text{age})$

EX: Susan is 38, is 5'5" tall and weighs 145 pounds. So her formula looks like this...

$$655 + (4.35 \times 145) + (4.7 \times 65) - (4.7 \times 38) = 1,412.65$$

So if Susan did nothing all day, she would need to eat 1,412 calories just to keep her body functioning (heart, lungs, etc.)

### 2. Factor in your activity level

- If you are not active (you get little to no exercise) multiply your BMR by 1.2
- If you are moderately active (you work out 3-5 times a week) multiply by 1.55
- If you are very active (you work out 6-7 days a week) multiply by 1.725
- If you are extremely active (you work out 6-7 days a week and have a physically demanding job) multiply by 1.99

EX: Susan works at an office sitting down all day and she doesn't go to the gym. So we multiply her BMR by 1.2 to get 1,694 - the number of calories she burns each day. If Susan eats around 1,700 calories a day, she will maintain her weight.

### 3. Create a calorie deficit to lose weight!

There are 3,500 calories in a pound. So, to lose just one pound a week (1-2 pounds per week is healthy), you'll need to create a daily deficit of 500 calories. This can be achieved by increasing physical activity and reducing your caloric intake.

EX: If Susan eats 250 fewer calories and burns 250 calories a day with exercise, she'll lose about a pound every week.

Calculate your numbers and see how you're adding up. Are you eating too much? Are you eating too little? Eating too little doesn't cause accelerated weight loss. It actually causes your body to hang on to stored fat to use as "emergency fuel" to keep the body functioning. For most women, however, it's hidden excess calories that prevent weight loss. Keep a food journal to keep track of your daily caloric intake. You might be surprised to see how much you're eating. A handful of M&Ms, a daily cappuccino and extra mayo on a sandwich all add up! Try leaving a few bites of food behind at every meal and pay close attention to food labels. Cutting back or eliminating juices and sodas, which have empty calories, may be all you need to easily eliminate 250-500 calories from your diet.

And as always, before you try a new diet or exercise plan, consult your physician. He or she may have extra advice to help you make sure you create a diet and exercise plan that is safe and appropriate for you.

## Kid Corner: Halloween Safety

Halloween should be a fun time for children. However, there is potential for danger – and no, we're not talking about ghosts and vampires! Listed below are Halloween safety tips for adults with young children.

**Dress for safety.** If you buy a costume, choose one labeled "flame resistant" to protect against accidents such as a close encounters with jack-o'-lantern candles. Be sure that costumes aren't too long and that shoes fit well. Masks can make it hard for kids to see (and breathe!), so cut out large eyeholes or opt for face paint instead. If you do choose face paint, make sure it is non-toxic and avoid putting it around the eyes. A sweaty brow can drip paint into eyes, so bring tissues along for quick and easy clean ups.

**Lay out the ground rules.** For years you've been telling your child not to talk to or take candy from strangers – on Halloween, you'll be going door to door to do just the opposite! Explain to your little one that this is a special occasion, but before any candy can be eaten, you have to inspect it. And while most people he or she will meet are nice, some might not be so friendly, so there will be no running ahead, no going into anyone's home and no approaching any homes that have their lights turned off.

**Make sure he/she has identification.** Pin a piece of paper with your child's name, address, and phone number to the inside of her costume. If you get separated, another adult will be able to help her find you.

**Keep him/her company.** Don't let a child under 12 head out alone. Aim for a ratio of one adult to every two trick-or-treaters. Walk together on sidewalks, if available, and cross only at corners and pedestrian walkways.

**Travel by foot.** Leave bikes, skateboards, and in-line skates at home.

**Light the way.** Carry a flashlight, and stick reflective tape on costumes and goody bags. Glow sticks and necklaces are popular to help illuminate at night during Halloween, too.

**Wait until after rush hour.** Your child is four times more likely to be fatally injured by a motor vehicle on Halloween than any other day of the year. There will be less traffic and more people at home after 5:30-6:00pm. But try to wrap up your excursion before 8:00pm.

**Pre-treat them.** Bring a pocketful of sweets from home for impatient trick-or-treaters to nibble on instead of on Halloween bounty. The candy that kids receive needs to be checked for signs of tampering such as unsealed packages or puncture holes.

**Inspect candy when you get home.** Only eat treats in original, unopened wrappers. Throw away candy if wrappers are faded, have holes or tears, or if the candy has been unwrapped. Check fruit and homemade treats for punctures or contamination.

Allow your child to eat these items only if from someone you know and trust. Fruit can be cut into sections to check for sharp objects. And remember that some treats, especially chocolate, can be poisonous to pets.

## Ingredients

- 1/4 cup butter or margarine
- 10-oz. bag of marshmallows
- 2½ cups Cocoa Pebbles
- 5 cups Cocoa Puffs
- Cooking spray
- 1 red Fruit Roll-Up
- 4 yellow M&Ms or Skittles
- 16 pieces of black licorice

Serves 4 – 2 per spider

## Instructions:

1. Melt butter in pot over low heat. Add marshmallows and melt over medium-low heat, stirring.
2. Pour 1/3 marshmallow mixture into a bowl; add Cocoa Pebbles. Combine, cool slightly, and roll mixture into two balls to form spiders' heads.
3. Pour Cocoa Puffs into remaining marshmallow mixture and stir until all cereal is coated.
4. Coat two bowls with cooking spray. Cool Cocoa Puff mixture slightly and press half into each bowl for bodies.
5. Put one head and body each onto two plates. Cut two circles out of the red Fruit Roll-Up and place each on top of spiders. Add M&Ms for eyes. Cut licorice pieces in half and stick four under each side of the spiders for legs.

## The Many Names of Halloween

Halloween, or the “Hallow E'en” in Ireland, means “All Hallows Eve,” or the night before the “All Hallows,” also called “All Hallowmas,” or “All Saints,” or “All Souls’ Day,” observed on November 1. In old English, the word “Hallow” meant “sanctify.” Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Lutherans used to observe “All Hallows Day” to honor all Saints in heaven, known or unknown. In Scotland, the celebration was known as Hallowe'en. In Welsh it's Nos Galen-gaeof (that is, the Night of the Winter Calends.)

## Create a Comfortable Reading Nook

Reading nooks provide comfortable, quiet places to retreat to and curl up with a good book. They aren't just for reading, either. A nook is great for talking on the phone, drawing, or listening to music.

Start by **finding a good spot for your nook**, such as a corner, alcove or even in a closet. You may find it necessary to rearrange your furniture; doing so will open up spaces that are good potential nooks. Pick a spot that's as quiet as possible. You don't want a lot of loud noises to disturb your peaceful little getaway.

**Next, pull up a seat.** A good chair is very important. Decide what kind of chair you want. Do you want a big fluffy chair that swallows you up? Do you want a chair that you can curl up in sideways? Do you prefer a bunch of pillows on the floor instead? Or, do you like to sprawl across a long seat that buoys you up as if bobbing on a salty sea?

**Get a table or nightstand for your nook.** This will help keep it organized and give you a place to set a glass of water or hold your book when you're away. It is also helpful to include a little holder for pencils and a small notepad, for those moments of inspiration that may hit as you read.

**Be sure to have good lighting.** A simple lamp will do, as long as it is adjustable. You don't want anything too bright, but having a light that is too dim will make it that much harder to see the print. For daytime reading, nothing beats glorious daylight but if it is too bright, pull across the curtains or some other barrier which can block direct sunlight.

**Make it comfortable.** The most important part of a reading nook is comfort. It must be something that appeals to you and encourages you to curl up in it time after time. Think of softness and textures that delight you. Surround yourself with the things that make you the most comfortable, such as a plushy throw or soft pillows. Use colors, patterns and textures that make you feel safe and warm. Do not use anything that you do not like or gives you an unsettling feeling.

**Use curtains for seclusion.** Seclude the reading nook from other parts of the room if possible. This can be as simple as putting a low dresser perpendicular to one wall to give the impression of division, or it can be as complicated as hanging curtains around the nook. The division will give you a sense of ownership of the nook and keep others from invading your private space.

Feel free to improvise to accommodate your space and your needs. Have fun using your imagination to create new ideas. Enjoy your nook!

## Carpet Talk: *Cosmetic Rx*

Cosmetic makeup makes us look great, but it's not so terrific if our foundations, lipsticks, blushes and eyeliners spill onto our carpet. So what do you do when your lipstick drops? Experts recommend using a little dry cleaning fluid on the spill.

Your carpet care specialist would be the first person to urge you to exercise the same cautions he does, so follow this practical advice and use very small amounts of each liquid in the following order. If it's not irreversible, your cosmetic spill could be history in minutes.

- 1) Always test the liquid on an inconspicuous spot (Ex: the closet floor) before starting.
- 2) Start the job with a dry, white cloth so you don't transfer fabric colors.
- 3) Pour a bit of solution over the stain and blot, don't rub. Turn the cloth often to expose clean areas.
- 4) Apply a small amount of liquid detergent to the area and blot again with a cloth.
- 5) Pour a small amount of ammonia on the area and blot again with clean areas of the cloth.
- 6) Repeat step four.
- 7) Flush the area with water and blot up one more time.

Ask your carpet care professional about carpet protector treatments when you book your next service call. This quick-to-apply extra will extend your carpet for years, help mediate future spills and pay for itself fast!



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