



**PARKDALE
FOOD CENTRE**
NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR

**YOUR
LOCAL
FOOD
BANK**



FOOD OF THE MONTH

PUMPKIN

PUMPKINS—are they a fruit or a vegetable? Pumpkins, believed to be native to North America, are a fruit that belongs to the same family as gourds. Pumpkins come in all different shapes and sizes, the smaller ones having a sweeter taste. We often think of pumpkins being orange in colour, however, there are white pumpkins that have adopted the name, “ghost pumpkins”. Scarrrrryy!!!

There are many health benefits you will get from eating the flesh and the seeds of a pumpkin, so they are great to enjoy any time year, not just at Halloween.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF PUMPKIN

- The orange flesh is very rich in carotenoids, a powerful antioxidant that helps to reduce inflammation in the body
- Rich in alpha-carotene, pumpkin has been known to help with eye health, and specifically aids in reducing the onset of macular degeneration.
- High in fibre, pumpkin helps to promote a healthy digestive system and regularity
- The seeds are loaded with zinc **pumpkin seeds** promote overall prostate health
- High in protein, the seeds make a nutritious and healthy snack that helps to boost energy levels.

SELECTION AND STORAGE

- Look for pumpkins that are firm and heavy for their size, avoid any bruising or soft spots
- The smaller pumpkins are sweeter and are used in cooking pies or using the flesh as a puree. The larger pumpkins are “stringy” and pulpy and are generally only good for Halloween jack-o-lanterns.
- Store whole pumpkins in a cool location away from heat and light and should be consumed within 3-4 weeks for freshness

PREPARING PUMPKIN FOR EATING

- Cut the pumpkin in half and scoop out the stringy flesh, remembering to separate the seeds.
- You can either steam on the stove, or place in a microwaveable dish. You can also roast in the oven at 375 F for approximately 40 minutes. Cook until soft.
- The soft pulpy flesh should be easily removed with a spoon



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PUMPKIN SOUP

DIRECTIONS:

- 1** In a soup pot, sauté in olive oil 1 small onion chopped, 2 ribs celery, and 2 cloves garlic.
- 2** Add 1 cup pumpkin puree and mix thoroughly.
- 3** Next, add 4 cups of veggie or chicken broth.
- 4** Bring to a slow boil, reduce to a simmer for 20 minutes.
- 5** Add salt and pepper to taste.
- 6** Add a sprinkle of cinnamon.
- 7** Stir and serve.
- 8** For a creamier option, add 1 cup cream at the end of cooking.
- 9** Serve and add top with croutons for crunch.



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ROASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS

DIRECTIONS:

- 1** In a bowl, mix seeds together with olive oil and a sprinkle of salt.
- 2** Heat in a 275 F oven for approximately 10-20 minutes until golden brown. Check every few minutes and stir every 5 minutes.



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AUTUMN OATMEAL

DIRECTIONS:

- 1** Prepare oatmeal and put into bowl. Mix in ½ cup of cooked pumpkin, stirring in ½ cup of milk of choice. Top with pumpkin seeds, a sprinkle of cinnamon and a drizzle of maple syrup. Enjoy!



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