



# Pumpkin

There is so much you can do with this versatile food! Whether you choose fresh or canned, warm or cold, there are so many options! For example, pumpkin is delicious in soups or ice cold in a smoothie. You can also try stir frying strips of fresh pumpkin in addition to other vegetables. Finally, try combining pumpkin with other foods for maximum nutritional value:

- Try adding pumpkin to your mashed potatoes
  - Add small amounts to your hot cereal and sprinkle with brown sugar
  - Use in soups to thicken the base
- Finally, don't forget about the pumpkin seeds. If you decide to purchase a fresh pumpkin, why not roast the seeds as well. Begin by removing the seeds

from the pumpkin and rinse them off in a colander. Blot them dry on a paper towel and coat them lightly with olive oil. Finally, spread the seeds on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with salt. Roast your seeds for about 45 minutes at 375 degrees. After the seeds cool, store them in an airtight container.



## Nutrition Facts

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Serving Size 3/4 cup (87g)   |                     |
| Servings Per Container       |                     |
| Amount Per Serving           |                     |
| <b>Calories 25</b>           | Calories from Fat 0 |
| % Daily Value*               |                     |
| <b>Total Fat 0g</b>          | 0%                  |
| Saturated Fat 0g             | 0%                  |
| Trans Fat 0g                 |                     |
| <b>Cholesterol 0mg</b>       | 0%                  |
| <b>Sodium 0mg</b>            | 0%                  |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate 6g</b> | 2%                  |
| Dietary Fiber 0g             | 0%                  |
| Sugars 1g                    |                     |
| <b>Protein 1g</b>            |                     |
| Vitamin A 130%               | Vitamin C 15%       |
| Calcium 2%                   | Iron 4%             |

Research has shown that orange fruits and vegetables like the pumpkin are packed with vitamin A and fiber. In addition to providing a variety of vitamins and minerals, they are also shown to help protect against heart

disease, cancer, as well as, contribute to better vision and a healthier immune system. The best part is, a full cup of pumpkin has only a mere 80 calories and is fat and cholesterol free!

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## The Holidays Are Coming!

Ready or not, here they come! The holidays are just around the corner. Whether you are a seasoned chef or preparing your very first holiday meal, keeping guests safe from foodborne illness is an important goal. Regardless of the meat you choose to serve, following some simple guidelines can help you cook it safely and save you a lot of grief!

If you don't know how much meat or poultry you need to buy, remember it is better to have too much than not enough. The following table will give you some idea of how much to buy:

| Product         | Purchasing Guide            |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Turkey (Whole)  | Buy 1 pound per person      |
| Beef Tenderloin | 1 pound—4 (3 oz. ) servings |
| Beef Brisket    | 1 pound—4 (3 oz. ) servings |
| Bone-in Ham     | ½ to ¾ pound = 1 serving    |
| Boneless Ham    | ¼ to ½ pound = 1 serving    |



## Don't Let Food Poisoning Spoil Your Holidays

Cook Turkey about 15 to 20 minutes per pound and check the internal temperature in several places. Continue cooking until the internal temperature reaches at least 165°F to be safely cooked. If you like yours a little more done, you can continue cooking to a higher temperature such as 170 or 180°F.

For ease of carving, wait 20 minutes after removing from oven to carve. Beef and pork must be cooked until the internal temperature reaches at least 145°F, and it should be allowed to “stand” or rest for at least three minutes before carving or serving as part of the cooking process.

The temperature of cooked foods should never stay in the temperature danger zone between 40 and 140°F or at room temperature for more than two hours.

*Use a food thermometer to tell when foods are safely cooked. Insert a clean thermometer into the thickest part away from bones. Check the temperature in several places.*

## Healthy Eating During the Holidays

Sticking to your healthy eating behavior is tough enough from January to September but when the leaves start changing, the air gets cooler and the holiday season rolls around, it gets even harder. Here are a few tips to make it easier for you this holiday season.

\* Remember you can still have your favorite recipes just give them a make over! Substitute fat-free or low-fat

items in recipe (example: low fat cream cheese instead of regular)

\* Use sugar substitutes such as spices that taste sweet when warmed, store bought sugar substitutes, honey or just cut the amount of sugar you add to your recipe.

\* Remember your “right size” portions, and that you can have more of that tasty dessert tomorrow.

\* Be sure to keep moving, take family walks before or after meals instead of sitting all day, or have family games that include physical activity

\* Most importantly remember all the benefits you will have and how good you will feel for staying on track!

# Energy Conservation: Save Money and Stay Warm this Winter

Take steps now to improve energy efficiency during the home heating season. Energy dollars can pour out of homes through drafty doors, windows, and un-insulated attics, walls, floors, and basements. Most winterizing investments pay for themselves relatively quickly with lower heating bills. Weather-stripping and caulking are inexpensive and among the simplest, most effective ways to boost efficiency and cut energy costs year round. A small investment now can pay big dividends in keeping your home warm this winter. **Don't overlook simple energy-saving steps that are low cost—or no cost:**

- \* Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable this winter. Turn down the thermostat when you go to bed, leave for work, or when you will be away for an extended period of time. According to the Department of Energy's Energy Savers, setting your thermostat 10 to 15 degrees lower for eight hours can save you up to 10 percent on your annual heating and cooling costs.
- \* To reduce water heating costs and water bills, lower the temperature of the water heater to 120°F and install low-flow water restrictors on showerheads and faucets. Repair leaky faucets.
- \* Replace or clean the furnace filter according to manufacturer's instructions. Check the filter at least once a month and change when dirty. Dirty or clogged filters can reduce the efficiency of the system and block air circulation. If you have pets, you may need to change your filters more often.
- \* Use drapes, blinds, curtains, or shutters on all windows to reduce heat loss through the glass. To maximize thermal energy from the sun, open window coverings during sunny days and close them at night to keep heat inside.
- \* Close the damper and the glass doors on the fireplace when not in use.

## Quick Tips to Save \$\$\$

With the gift buying season approaching saving a penny here and there may be hard to do. Here are a few cost-cutting tips that may help:

- **The way you drive can be costly.** Studies by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency show that your car requires more fuel when you accelerate forcefully. Also, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that each 5 mph you drive faster than 60 mph is about the same as paying an additional \$0.21 per gallon for gas.

- **Avoid the minimum payments trap.** If you pay only the monthly minimum –2 percent of the balance –on \$5,000 of credit card debt at an annual percentage rate (APR) of 18%, you will accumulate more than \$12,000 in interest charges, and it would take 38 years to pay it off! Pay as much of your monthly credit card debt as you can to avoid or reduce interest charges



- **Plug spending leaks.** Little expenses can add up. For instance, spending \$8 eating out every workday instead of packing a lunch that costs \$2 will cost you an extra \$30,000 over 20 years.
- **Eat healthier.** You may think the fast-food value menu saves you money but if it leads to obesity, it may cost you in the end. Spend nearly \$1,500 more per year in medical costs than those at healthy weights.

## Stretch Your Grocery Dollars

### Planning Shopping Trips

- ◆ Keep a pad and pencil handy for jotting down foods as they run low. Encourage all family members to add to the list.
- ◆ Don't shop with a hungry or tired child, or when you are hungry.

### At the Store

- ◆ Stick to your shopping list; avoid impulse purchases. However, watch for "in-store" specials that you know you can use.
- ◆ Use in-store flyers to find items on sale
- ◆ Invest in staple foods like canned fruit, tuna or sauces when they are on sale



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### *Wondering What's For Dinner Tonight?*

**Dinner Tonight!** is a collection of quick, inexpensive and healthy recipes for your family and each has a instructional video on how to prepare the meals. To receive the weekly Dinner Tonight! email blast every Monday morning please call the Extension Office at 903-756-5391 to be added to the email list.



<http://cass.agrilife.org/>

If you know of someone who would like to sign up to receive the Cass County Lifestyles newsletter or if you have a suggestion for an article or information that you would like to see, please contact Pamela Lincoln, P.O. Box 471, Linden, TX 75563, 903-756-5391 or email [plincoln@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:plincoln@ag.tamu.edu).

## The Dreaded Chores!

When getting the home ready for the company that is coming for the holidays it is an overwhelming task. Getting your children to help you can seem even more overwhelming. When children are old enough to walk, they are old enough to start taking responsibility. Determining the appropriate chores and making them fun is the key!

- ◆ **2 to 3-year-olds** –pick up toys and put them in toy box, dump small trash cans.
- ◆ **4 to 6-year-olds** –Make beds, wipe up spills, feed pets, water low-level plants
- ◆ **7 to 10-year-olds** –put dishes in the dishwasher, unload (most of) the dishwasher, fold clothes, take trash to curb

As children grow they can handle more detained jobs. Young children generally want to help and are interested in “big people” activities. They love to sweep and vacuum, set the table, and put clothes in the washer. However, retaining a list of “to do’s” in their head is unlikely. It helps to make a chore chart. Cut out magazine pictures related to their chores. Write the chore on the chart beside its picture. List the days of the week across the top and two to three chores down the side. Hang a pencil on the chart and before you know it, they will be checking the chart to show they picked up their toys and brushed their teeth without being reminded!

Positive praise helps. Have fun by working with them, singing, playing children’s music, and modeling good chore completion to reinforce the task and make it fun.

