

A top-down view of a large number of small, bright orange pumpkins. The pumpkins are packed closely together, filling the entire frame. They have a ribbed texture and a small stem at the top. The lighting is even, highlighting the vibrant orange color of the pumpkins.

Smashing Pumpkin Recipes

Our favourite ways to enjoy pumpkins
with tips for growing your own festive
fruit in New Zealand

HOW TO GROW!

Once I got over the fact that gardening in New Zealand means that our seasons are the exact opposite of the Northern Hemisphere - I had to adjust my holiday foods! Pumpkins are not harvested during the Thanksgiving to Christmas season (although they do store well). We start sowing seeds indoors or cool frames in September/October for pumpkins in March/April. Fortunately, our volcanic soils are rich and bugs seem less voracious. Gardeners are particularly plentiful. Horse and sheep manure are available at garden gates for a few gold coins!

Our Autumn is similar to the Pacific Northwest of the USA in terms of cool rainy seasons and more temperate summer conditions. However, our microclimates differ vastly north to south and according to local marine and alpine microclimates.

So the first thing to consider is where you are going to grow those plump beauties to be sure they get enough sun and warmth to fully develop. Introduce yourself to your garden club for local knowledge. I've heard of pumpkins to growing up ladders in Auckland.

The choice of which pumpkin to grow in your small kitchen garden is a personal taste. Different types are mentioned in our recipes so feel free to experiment. Pumpkins (and winter squash) are both prolific and economical in season and easy to find at your local farmer's market.

Our star of this recipe collection is the Small Sugar Pumpkin which is easy to grow at home. Some pumpkins simply are not pie worthy!

World Kitchen Sugar Pumpkin

These bright orange gems are famous for their sweet tender flesh. They are well suited to small kitchen gardens or containers, producing fruit 15-20 cm in diameter, with 4-6 fruits per vine weighing up to 2 kg each. One pumpkin is the perfect size for a pie or dinner for two.

Pumpkins prefer rich well-drained soil with at least 5 hours of sun daily. They are easy to grow and are highly disease-resistant. The vines will happily wind their way between your hollyhocks or corn stalks. You can hand-pollinate using a small brush to flick pollen from a male stamen into the female flowers (females have a small pumpkin bud below).

Save some seeds to plant next year! Just pop a few into an envelope SOW 15mm deep in full sun, spring to summer. Typically plant 3 seeds in a clump and thin to 2, spacing 50-100cm apart. You can grow a single vine in a 30-litre (8-10-gallon) pot on a sunny patio.



KNOW YOUR PUMPKINS!

Pumpkins are a member of the species *Cucurbita pepo*, and is the most widely-grown member of the Cucurbita genus of gourds. The Cucurbita pepo group includes other pumpkins, winter squash, summer squash, and ornamental gourds.

There are two types of squash: summer and winter squash. While summer squash (like zucchini) have thin skins, winter squash (like pumpkins) tend to have thicker rinds. Pumpkins, like all other squash, originated in the Americas. More information about pumpkin varieties by Sarah Bond at <https://www.liveeatlearn.com/types-of-pumpkin/>

At 7-12 calories per 28 grams and loaded with vitamins A, B, C, potassium, iron, antioxidants, important anti-aging bioactives, and fibre. Pumpkins are a seriously healthy alternative to pasta or potatoes.

History: Native Americans taught the colonists that they would get higher yields per acre if they planted potatoes or corn in the same field as the pumpkins and to put fish heads in the mounds as fertilizer. Pumpkins ramble along the ground between other plants. Harvest them after the vines begin to die back (turn yellow). Field pumpkins were noted as early as the mid-16th century by early French explorers.

Native Americans grew pumpkins as food and for the making of medicine. They dried and stored pumpkins over winter and they used them to make bread. The Cherokee tribe ate the seeds to cure internal parasites and other native American tribes used pumpkin as a diuretic.



American colonists soon learned the significance of sturdy storable fruits over their first harsh winters. American Thanksgiving naturally features pumpkins along with other fall-harvest vegetables.

Choosing your pumpkin

- AVOID Halloween carving pumpkins. Even though they are edible, they are not grown for flavour or texture. Bloated with water and pesticides, the flesh turns mushy when roasted with very little flavour.
- The Native American small Sugar Pumpkin or larger Pie Pumpkin is best for sweet pies with smooth flesh and less fibre.
- Delicata Pumpkins are great for roasting – they have green skin
- Colourful varieties at farmers' markets or greengrocers will tend to be tasty. If they feel light for their size then they're not the best quality.
- Swap out squash which may easier to find than pumpkins. Onion squash have a nutty flesh and lovely sweetness.
- Butternut squash, the long-necked tan variety is great for soup and baking and are very high in Vitamin C. Acorn squash are round, dark green and easy to bake halved, facedown on a baking tray.

Roasted Pumpkin



Roast Delicata pumpkin, buffalo mozzarella, candied almonds and chili

Ingredients:

Select a Medium Delicata Pumpkin (or a good quality winter squash)

2 tbsp good olive oil

Flaky sea salt

Heat your oven to 220°C or 200°C fan. Cut in half with your sharpest knife through the stalk. Scoop out the seeds with a dessert spoon and SAVE (see roasting seed recipes on page 13).

Slice into chunky wedges and sit standing up in rows, skin side down, in a large roasting tin. Do not peel!

Drizzle with oil and roast (bake) for 25-30 mins (check after 25) or until a cutlery knife can easily be inserted into the flesh. You may want to rearrange the slices if your oven heat is uneven - move outer slices to the center of the pan. Fan baking is faster and more even.



Cooking Tips

- Sitting the squash up in rows helps you to get a nice even roast so don't be tempted to lay them flat and let them overlap.
- Add a whole halved garlic bulb to the roasting tin and use the roasted garlic in pumpkin soups, a salad or spread on bruschetta.
- Get spicy! If you're eating this as a side dish with roast chicken or lamb add some herbs or spices. Whole sprigs of rosemary or thyme are nice. A tbsp of crushed coriander seeds and Aleppo pepper works particularly well with slow-cooked lamb.
- Eat the skin - the better quality the pumpkin the tastier the skin.

Other Uses

- Scoop the flesh out and blend into an easy soup with roasted garlic, a sweated onion and celery, stock and spices (Glorious Soup page 20).
- Serve on a bed of creamy cannellini beans with sweated shallots, wine and cream. Top with roasted hazelnuts and sage.
- Add to grain salads or have in a salad (Susan's page 12) with chunky wedges of gorgonzola, walnuts, radicchio and a vinegary dressing.
- Scoop the flesh out for sweet pumpkin pies, fold into cheesecake batter or add to rice pudding or porridge with cinnamon and nutmeg.

Smashing American Pumpkin Pie



This is THE Classic American Thanksgiving Pie from Allrecipes.com

Allrecipes has tested over 130 pumpkin pie recipes and assures us that this one takes the cake (or pie) with over 2,600 five-star ratings. And it's proof that a good recipe doesn't necessarily need to be a complicated one — (you get a great result with canned pumpkin puree and store-bought pie crust) best with your fresh home grown pumpkins.

Make ahead of time and refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

Flakey Pie Crust

Of course, you can use prepared pie pastry in sheets and plop into a pie dish but you get extra points for making your own flakey crust.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/220996/easyhomemade-pie-crust/>

There is something very soothing about cutting the butter into the flour with an old fashioned pastry hand blender or a couple of dinner knives like my granny taught me!

Test Kitchen Tips

- If the unbaked filling has any bubbles after you pour it into the pie shell, you can give it a gentle tap or two on the counter.
- Letting the pie cool completely before slicing is essential - chill it in the fridge after letting it come to room temperature.
- Only homemade whipped cream will do!

Blind Bake the Crust

After rolling out and forming in your pie dish, you'll need to blind-bake it partially before you fill it. Pie with a custard-based filling generally requires less oven time, so may want to give your crust a head start to ensure you don't end up with a raw, soggy bottom.

If you've never blind-baked a pie crust here's how:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/article/how-to-bake-a-pie-crust/>



After forming the crust in your pie plate, used dried beans as weights

Pie Directions:

1. Gather all ingredients and preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C).



Pie Filling Ingredients

Serves 8

- 1 400g can of pumpkin puree = 1-1/2 cups
- 1 400g can of Sweetened Condensed Milk (or sweet coconut cream)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 (9-inch) unbaked pie crust

How to Make Fresh Pumpkin Puree

Note that this recipe calls for canned pumpkin but it's so easy to make yours from your very own homegrown pumpkins! A 1.5 pound (.70 kilo) pumpkin yields about 2 cups of mashed pumpkin or 500g pumpkin puree. Save extra for your next batch of pancakes (Pikelets page 19).

Cut the pumpkin in half, remove the seeds and pulp, cover each half in foil, and bake until tender. Scrape out the flesh and puree in an old-fashioned Mouley mill or masher. Puree stores well chilled or frozen.

2. Whisk pumpkin puree, condensed milk, eggs, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and salt together in a medium bowl until smooth.



3. Pour into a half-blind-baked crust. Bake (preheated) for 15 minutes.



4. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C) and continue baking until a knife inserted 1 inch from the crust comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes (less if fan-baking).

TIP: If you are concerned that the crust will over bake on the edges, you can cover them with strip of tin foil.

5. Let cool before serving. Preferably chill in the refrigerator before slicing and top with a dollop of whipped cream on each slice.

Any egg-rich pie should be refrigerated and will keep up to 3 days if it lasts that long. Allow your pie ample time to cool and set.

Whipped Cream Topping

Whipping is so easy and much better!

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/18352/whipped-cream/>

Southern Living Dip



from Southern Living magazine

A very festive way to serve pumpkin and surprise your guests!

To make this easy pumpkin dip, you'll need:

- 1 400g can pumpkin puree (or fresh)
- 350g cream cheese (or Greek coconut yogurt)
- 1 cup sifted powdered sugar
- 1 and 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 and 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 and 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Blend:

- Combine pumpkin, cream cheese, powdered sugar, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, and vanilla in a processor and blend until smooth.
- Transfer the dip to a serving dish, cover, and chill for 30 minutes.

Serve with crackers, ginger cookies, bagel chips, pretzel sticks, pita bread, sliced apples or celery sticks.

Stores well for a few days in the fridge.

Susan's Spinach Pumpkin Salad



Perfect for the salad lovers and vegetarians at your table:

Ingredients:

- Large bunch of baby spinach leaves, washed and chilled
- 2 cups of roughly cubed pumpkin pieces (bite size)
- Handful of dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup of pine nuts or pecan halves
- 2 tbs Olive Oil
- 1 tbs Maple syrup
- 1 tbs Balsamic vinegar
- 100 ml of Feta cheese - rinse and drain
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Saute lightly bite-size chunks of fresh (sweet) pumpkin in a covered skillet until just tender on medium heat with olive oil.

Turn off the heat and drizzle a tablespoon of balsamic and maple syrup over the pumpkin in the pan. Toss in a handful of pecans or pine nuts and warm them in the mixture. Set aside to cool.

Serve over a bed of baby spinach leaves with chunks of fresh feta cheese and cranberries with fresh black pepper.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds



from Martha Stewart

Pumpkin seeds are very nutritious! They're high in unsaturated "good" fatty acids, protein, fibre, and essential minerals, including calcium, magnesium, and iron. Pumpkin seeds also contain antioxidants, the beneficial compounds that reduce cell damage in the body.

Ingredients:

1 cup of raw seeds (in the husk)

One pinch each of:

- Salt & Pepper
- Cayenne or chilli powder
- Cumin
- Cinnamon

1 tbs Honey and 1 tbs Olive Oil

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spread dry raw seeds on a baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes.

Remove from oven. Toss seeds with the spices, oil and honey
Return to oven and roast coated seeds until golden, about 15 minutes.
Scrape from pan and stir as they cool to prevent sticking. Snack!

Pepitas



How to remove the husks to reveal your pepitas:

1. Rinse the seeds to remove pumpkin residue (they will float)
2. Lay clean whole pumpkin seeds on a flat surface.
3. Gently run a rolling pin over the seeds to lightly crack them open.
4. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the seeds and boil until the shells separate - about 5 minutes.
5. Remove the pot from the heat and carefully strain the seeds.
6. Spread the seeds on a clean cloth or paper towel. Using your fingers, pull apart the shells from the seeds. You can use a nutcracker for the stubborn ones.

Now you can roast, spice or just keep them fresh in a jar in the fridge for up to 6 months.

Pepitas are fantastic, microwaved or sauteed in a pan over medium heat in soy sauce, then tossed over salads, a stir fry, or a poke bowl.

Pumpkin & Ginger Cake with Sage Caramel



By Benjamina Ebuehi

The sage caramel is optional but I love what she brings visually and flavour-wise without making everything sickly sweet. The recipe will make more caramel than you need for this cake but it will keep in an airtight jar for up to 2 weeks. Rewarm to pour.

Cake Ingredients:

40g caster sugar
70g dark brown sugar
2 large eggs
90g neutral oil
120g pumpkin puree
130g plain flour
40g ground almonds
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch salt
1 tbsp stem ginger, finely chopped

For the frosting:

100g unsalted butter, softened
100g icing sugar
75g cream cheese, cold (if you're based in the US, our cream cheese is not the same! make sure it's at room temp)
pinch of salt

For the sage caramel:

120ml double (heavy) cream
8-10 fresh sage leaves
200g caster sugar
1/4 tsp salt

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C (160°C) fan. Grease and line an 8-inch cake tin.
2. Add both sugars and eggs to a bowl and mix well to combine. Stir in the oil followed by the pumpkin puree.
3. Add in the flour, ground almonds, spices, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt.
4. Mix well until smooth.
5. Stir in the chopped stem ginger and pour the batter into tin.
6. Bake for 25-32 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.
7. Set aside to cool completely.
8. To make the cream cheese frosting, beat the butter and sugar well for a couple of minutes until pale and creamy. Add in the cream cheese and a pinch of salt and beat briefly until well combined. Set aside in the fridge until you're ready to use it.
9. To make the sage caramel, add the cream and sage leaves to a small pan and heat until steaming. Remove from the heat, cover and let it infuse for at least 20 minutes. Strain the cream and set aside.
10. In a separate pan, add the sugar and heat gently until it dissolves and turns a light amber colour. Swirl the pan every now and again to help the sugar caramelize evenly. Slowly pour in the cream and whisk constantly. Be careful as it will bubble up quite rapidly. Let the caramel simmer for 30 seconds before removing from the heat.
11. When you're ready to assemble, top the cake with the cream cheese frosting and a couple of big spoonfuls of the caramel.

More great recipes on *Sweet Things* by Benjamina Ebuehi
<https://benjaminaebuehi.substack.com/>

Chocolate Pumpkin Loaf with Cinnamon Streusel



By Edd Kimber

More wonderful recipes at *The Boy Who Bakes* by Edd Kimber
<https://substack.com/@eddkimber>

Edd was the first winner of The Great British Bakeoff in 2010. His monthly newsletter is free.

Cinnamon Streusel

60g plain flour
35g caster sugar
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
40g unsalted butter, diced

Cocoa Pumpkin Loaf

120ml olive oil
2 large eggs
200g light brown sugar
250g pumpkin puree
125g plain flour
50g cocoa powder

1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1/4 tsp fine sea salt

To make the streusel Add the flour, sugar, and cinnamon and whisk together to combine. Add the butter to a small saucepan and heat until melted. Pour the butter into the flour mixture and stir together until a crumbly dough is formed. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled and firm.

Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C (160°C) fan. Lightly grease a 9x5 loaf pan and line with a strip of parchment paper so that the excess hangs over the two long sides of the pan - this will help you lift the cake from the pan once it's baked. Use metal binder clips to secure the parchment in place (you don't want the fan of the oven to blow the parchment into the batter as the cake bakes).

To make the cake In a large jug, add the oil, eggs, sugar, and pumpkin puree and whisk together until smooth. Make a well in the dry goods and pour in the liquid ingredients. Use a whisk to stir until you have a smooth batter. With batter cakes like this, it is very important not to over-whisk the batter because it can make the cake chewy rather than dense. Pour the batter into the loaf pan and spread into an even layer. Remove the streusel from the fridge and crumble atop the cake batter.

Bake in the preheated oven for about 45 minutes or until the skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. Allow to cool in the pan for 15 minutes before using the overhanging parchment to carefully lift the cake onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Serves 10

Pumpkin Pikelets



A mashup of recipes
inspired by Ali Shambrook

After a night out, these mini pancakes will perk up your tastebuds!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of pumpkin puree
- 1-1/2 cup real buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Spices: 1 tsp each of ground allspice, ground cinnamon, ground ginger, 1/2 tsp fresh grated nutmeg and 1/2 tsp salt
- Optional pecans, walnuts, fresh berries or banana slices

Blend the wet ingredients first, fold in dry sifted flour/salt/soda mixture,

Heat a large flat iron skillet or griddle with grape seed oil until it ‘pops’ when a drop of water hits it. Ladle spoonfuls of batter into the pan. Once they bubble, flip and cook evenly (lower temperature as you go).

Plate a short stack of pikelets with real butter, fruit, nuts, and maple syrup. The batter will keep a day or two in the fridge.

Glorious Roasted Pumpkin Soup



by Jamie Oliver

Ingredients:

- 1.5kg sweet pumpkin
- Olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried chilli
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 large onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 carrot
- 1 stick of celery
- 1 litre hot vegetable stock

Preheat the oven to 170°C/340°F. Half the pumpkin and remove the seeds (you can keep these for roasting), then chop into wedges. Place the pumpkin on two large baking trays and drizzle with oil.

In a pestle and mortar, grind the chilli and coriander seeds with a pinch of salt until finely ground. Sprinkle the spices over the pumpkin with some black pepper. Roast the pumpkin for 1 hour, or until soft and slightly caramelised at the edges.

Meanwhile, roughly chop the onion, garlic, carrot and celery. Heat a lug of olive oil over a medium heat in a large saucepan then add the vegetables and cook for 15 minutes, or until soft and sweet but not coloured. When the squash is ready, add to the pan with the hot stock.

Blend with a stick blender, adding a little more water if you like a thinner consistency. Ladle into bowls and add your favourite toppings.

