

Fun, Traditional, and Nutritional; The Great American Pumpkin

Legend has it an Irish man named Jack, who was too stingy to enter heaven yet played tricks on the devil and couldn't enter hell either, had to walk the earth with his lantern until judgment day. Hence the term Jack o' lantern.

Did you know that the original Jack o' lanterns were carved in potatoes, turnips, and beets? It wasn't until the Irish brought their tradition to the United States and found that pumpkins were more plentiful and easier to carve.

Pumpkin, part of the squash family, is one of the fourteen "super foods" as recognized by Dr. Steven Pratt in his best selling book: Superfoods Rx: Fourteen Foods that will Change Your Life. Rich in beta-carotene, potassium and fiber, pumpkin is also loaded with carotenoids, an antioxidant that may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and heart disease.

Beta-carotene, which converts to vitamin A in the body, promotes good circulation, a healthy heart, eyes and lungs and is also believed to slow degenerating conditions of aging.

Although we mostly think of pumpkin as a dessert item, it can be eaten like winter squash; whipped with a little butter, sugar, and cinnamon, or baked by the chunk with your favorite squash topping.

But for those of you looking for something a little more exciting, try the pumpkin cake and don't spare the cream cheese icing!

Pumpkin Cake with Cream Cheese Icing Yield: 1 Cake

In a large mixing bowl, combine the eggs, granulated sugar, and

Eggs	4	Ground Ginger	1/4 tsp.
Cooked Pumpkin	2 Cups	Ground Cloves	1/4 tsp.
Flour	2 Cups	Nutmeg	1/4 tsp.
Sugar, granulated	2 Cups	Baking Soda	1 tsp
Vegetable Oil	1 Cup	Salt	1/2 tsp.
Cinnamon	1.5 tsp.	Baking Powder	2 tsp.
Raisins (optional)	1/2 Cup	Cream Cheese	8 oz.
Butter	1/4 Cup	Powdered Sugar	1 lb.
Vanilla	2 tsp.		

oil, Whip until smooth. Add the pumpkin, flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Continue to mix on medium speed until batter is smooth; stir in the raisins.

Pour the batter into a greased 13 x 9 inch baking pan. Bake at 350° for approximately 1 hour or until an inserted toothpick pulls out clean. Let cool.

Cream Cheese Icing. In a mixing bowl, place softened cream cheese, butter and vanilla; whip until smooth; add the powdered sugar and continue to whip until creamy.

Evenly spread the cream cheese mixture over the cool cake.