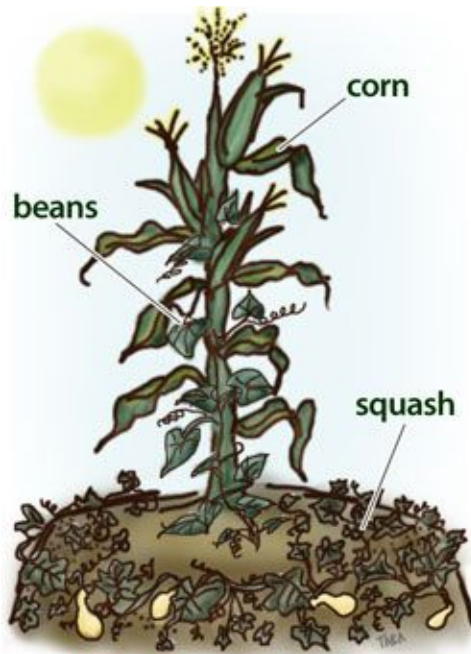


Baked Pumpkin **A home-based lesson plan and recipe**

Historical Background

Pumpkins are one of the oldest food crops in the Americas. Pumpkins are a winter squash that grows easily. It was, and still is, an important food. It allowed Native Americans and early European colonists to survive harsh winters. All of the pumpkin is edible, it's shell, seeds, flowers, and leaves. Pumpkins contain **beta-carotene** which is a great source of vitamin A. They also contain vitamin C, fiber, calcium, and potassium.

The “three sisters” planting is one of oldest, and well-known **companion planting** techniques. Native American groups in North America planted winter squash (pumpkins), maize (corn), and climbing beans together on a mound of soil. Rotten fish or eels were sometimes buried with the seeds to act as fertilizer. The corn stalks provide a structure for the beans to climb, the beans provide nitrogen to the soil, and the squash provides shade to help the soil retain moisture, prevent weeds, and its prickly hairs prevent pests. The corn is planted first. When the stalks are 6 inches tall, the squash and beans are planted around it. Together, corn, squash, and beans provide enough nutrients to support a vegetarian diet.



*Direct-Sow, Easy-to-Grow:
The Ancient **Three Sisters** Method*

Photo credit: Old Farmers Almanac

Moving far from home to a new place can be scary. The earliest European colonists to arrive in the New World had to start their villages from scratch. They sailed across the Atlantic Ocean not knowing if they would survive the trip. Once they arrived, they had to worry about where to get food, how to build shelter, catching a disease, and **malnourishment**. The survival of the early

colonists depended on the **generosity** of the Native Americans. The local tribes knew where to find and how to grow local crops, build shelter, and survive the winters. Foods like the pumpkin were essential for early colonist's survival, especially because pumpkins can be harvested in cooler weather and preserved throughout the winter. Today, Native Americans continue to harvest pumpkins and other winter squash and make delicious meals from them.



Photo credit: tes.com

Key Words

Beta-carotene - a red-orange pigment found in plants and fruits, especially carrots and colorful vegetables

Companion planting - the planting of different crops close to one another because they benefit each other and increase crop productivity

Malnourishment - a lack of proper nutrition; not having a balanced diet of grains, fruits, veggies, proteins, fat, and salt

Generosity - kindness, being kind

Activity - Baked Pumpkin

Ingredients

- 1 small pumpkin
- 1/4 cup apple cider
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Instructions

1. Wash your pumpkin off to remove any dirt and preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. Have an adult cut the stem off the pumpkin then cut the pumpkin in half.



3. Use a big spoon to scoop out the pulp and seeds into a bowl. You can bake the seeds with some oil and salt if you wish!
4. Place the halves face down on a foil-lined baking sheet.



5. Bake for approximately one hour or until tender.

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6. Let the pumpkin cool slightly then use a big spoon to scoop out the tender pumpkin from the outer shell.
7. Put the pumpkin in an oiled or parchment paper-lined casserole dish and add the remaining ingredients.
8. Mix well and place the casserole dish in the oven for another 25 minutes.
9. Your baked pumpkin side dish is complete! Enjoy this Native American-inspired dish. We recommend pairing this with any savory dish!

