



Pumpkins

Pack a Nutritional Punch

Botanically speaking a pumpkin is a **fruit**. Culinarally speaking, it is a **vegetable**. Pumpkins are members of the vine crops family called cucurbits.

Pumpkins are not just for Halloween decorations: they can be used to make pancakes, breads, dips, soups, tapenade, muffins, pies and so much more.

Pumpkins are the only fruit/vegetable to contain three different carotenoids: lutein & alpha-carotene and beta-carotene (antioxidants that protect against heart disease, cancer and may even help slow the aging process).

Pumpkin seeds are very nutritious as they are chock full of protein, zinc, magnesium, calcium, iron and may even aide in lowering cholesterol.

Pumpkins are loaded with vitamins A and B and potassium (which regulates water balance, muscle function and helps keep blood pressure in check)

Pumpkins are 90% water, a fruit, a member of the gourd family, and therefore related to various melons and squashes

Pumpkins are a good source of fiber (which aids in digestion and helps lower cholesterol).

Most of the pumpkin is edible including the flesh, seeds, flowers, and even the leaves.

Pumpkins can be steamed, roasted, boiled, or dried, while the leaves and flowers are used as snacks or soup flavorings

Pumpkin seed oil has a strong nutty flavor and is sometimes used combined with other oils to make salad dressings and other cooking oils.

A study by the USDA indicated that diets high in pumpkin as a fiber source tended to curb the appetite. The subjects in this study also absorbed less fat and calories from their food.

The Balanced Body Center

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Pumpkin nutrition facts for one cup of pumpkin cooked/boiled/drained without salt:

1. Calories: 49
2. Carbohydrates: 12 gram
3. Dietary Fiber: 3 grams
4. Cholesterol: 0
5. Fat: less than 1 gram
6. Potassium: 588 milligrams
7. Protein: 2.4 grams
8. Calcium: 37 mg
9. Iron: 1.4 mg
10. Vitamin A: 2650 IU: (310% of RDA)
11. Vitamin C: 12 mg (20% of RDA)
12. Vitamin E: 3 mg
13. Zinc: 1 mg
14. Magnesium: 22 mg
15. Niacin: 1 mg

Health: Modern science is researching how pumpkin helps cure elements of both diabetes and cancer. It turns out that some of the same phytochemicals that give pumpkin its unique color can also help regulate glucose and insulin production in diabetics. Meanwhile, early research is promising for breast and prostate cancer patients who take pumpkin seed oil, as the alpha-linolenic acid it contains can prevent metastases and the spread of the disease.

Animals: Cats and dogs with digestive problems can be treated with canned pumpkin, while chickens that are fed pumpkin in the wintertime lay more eggs than other hens. As a high-fiber plant with lots of nutrition, pumpkin can also be used to plump out feed for horses, cattle, and pigs.