



In The Kitchen *October 2019* *with Christine Ciancetta*

Pumpkin Power

About using whole, fresh pumpkins: One pound of fresh pumpkin yields about 4 cups raw peeled and cubed, or 1 cup cooked then mashed or pureed pumpkin. A 5 pound fresh pumpkin will make 4 to 4½ cups of cooked puree or mashed pulp. If you want a thicker puree, place it in a colander or cheesecloth for a while to drain out excess water. If a recipe calls for a 15-ounce can of pumpkin, you can replace it with 1¾ cups mashed fresh pumpkin.

How to make homemade pumpkin purée:

Start by piercing the pumpkin all over with an ice pick or sharp-pointed knife — you want to get into the hollow interior. Microwave the pumpkin for about 10 minutes. It cuts the oven-baking time just about in half. If you don't have a microwave (or don't want to use it on your pumpkin), you can skip this step.

Place the pumpkin (or pumpkins), seeds removed, cut-side down, on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for about 45 minutes, longer if you didn't microwave, (for a 5-pound pumpkin), until the pumpkin's flesh is easily pierced with a fork. Remove, cool and scoop out flesh. Mash and place in a fine sieve to drain for about an hour. Save the liquid and add to smoothies or pancakes below.

Multi-Grain* Pumpkin Pancakes

1 cup whole-wheat flour
¾ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup oat flour
¼ cup cornmeal
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon baking soda

2 cups buttermilk or plain yogurt (not Greek)
¾ cup canned (or homemade) pumpkin puree
3 large eggs
¼ cup unsalted butter, melted, plus more for serving
1 tablespoon honey
Maple syrup, for serving

In a large bowl, mix together whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, cornmeal, oats, baking powder, salt and baking soda. In a medium bowl, mix together buttermilk, eggs, pumpkin, melted butter and honey. Mix the egg mixture into the flour mixture until smooth. Let rest. Mixture should be a little thin so the whole grains can soak up extra liquid. (Add additional yogurt or a little water or milk if the batter becomes too thick.)

Heat a griddle or large cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Check to see if it's hot by sprinkling a few drops of water on the surface. They should sizzle and evaporate immediately. Add a little butter to the pan and let it melt. Pour about ½ cup batter onto skillet; repeat to cook as many at one time as you can, leaving space for each pancake to spread.

Cook until bubbles form and start to burst, about 3 minutes. Flip and cook until golden on the other side, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate as they finish, and serve immediately with maple syrup and more butter on top, if you like.

*NOTE: You can make the multigrain mix ahead of time and double or triple the dry amounts to make your own pancake mix. Store in the pantry, if you use it a lot, or the freezer for long-term storage of whole grains.

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POWERS

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Pumpkin-Apple Soup

3 pound sugar (pie) pumpkin
3 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 small onion, chopped
3 Organic Granny Smith apples, grated
1 clove garlic, pressed
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon white pepper
¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
⅛ teaspoon cayenne

3 cups organic (or homemade) vegetable
(or chicken) stock
1 cup Latin's apple cider
½ cup heavy cream (optional)
1 Granny Smith apple cored and finely
diced for , garnish
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
¼ cup pumpkin seeds, for garnish

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until translucent; add garlic and cook until fragrant. Add pumpkin, apples, cinnamon, white pepper, nutmeg, and cayenne, and ¼ teaspoon salt; cook about 5 minutes, stirring often. Add stock and cider and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer 25 minutes or until pumpkin and apples are tender.

While soup cooks, combine pumpkin seeds, sugar, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt in a medium nonstick skillet. Cook over medium heat until sugar melts and seeds are toasted, stirring often (5-7 minutes). Transfer to a plate; cool completely and break up any clumps.

Using an immersion blender, blend soup to desired smoothness. If using a blender, place half of pumpkin mixture in a blender, remove center piece of blender lid (to allow steam to escape). Secure blender lid on blender. Place a clean towel over opening in blender lid (to avoid splatters); blend until smooth. Place soup in a bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining pumpkin mixture. Pour in apple cider, taste for seasoning and reheat in pan, if needed. Divide soup evenly among 8 bowls; sprinkle evenly with pumpkin seeds.

Pumpkin-Sage Sauce

1 pie pumpkin, about 1½ pounds
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons butter + 1 tablespoon olive oil
½ onion, minced
Salt and pepper

Pinch ground nutmeg
6 fresh stems of sage leaves, cut in strips
1 cup chicken broth
½ cup freshly grated Pecorino Romano

Cut the pumpkin in half lengthwise to remove the seeds and strings. Peel the skin using a knife and cut the squash into small cubes.

Place the olive oil and onion in a deep skillet over medium heat. When the onions begin to color, add the pumpkin and season with salt and pepper. Sauté a few minutes to lightly caramelize the surface of the cubes then add chicken broth, bay leaf, nutmeg, and sage. Cover the pan and cook until pumpkin is tender but still holding its shape, about 8 minutes. In a separate pan, heat butter and olive oil. Add sage and fry until sage is crispy. Set aside. Puree the sauce with a standard or immersion blender, or for a chunkier sauce, use a potato masher. Top with grated cheese and crispy sage before serving.

Baked Pumpkin Risotto

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1½ cups Arborio rice (risotto rice)
1 onion, diced
1 pie pumpkin, about 1½ pounds, diced into cubes
(about 4 heaped cups)
3 garlic cloves, minced

¼ cup dry white wine (or water or broth)
3½ cups vegetable or chicken broth
2 tablespoon sage leaves, roughly chopped
½ cup parmesan cheese, finely grated
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in ovenproof pot (with a lid) over medium high heat. Add garlic and onion and cook until onion is translucent. Add chopped sage and cook for 1 minute. Add rice and stir so all the rice grains are coated with the butter and semi-translucent. Add white wine and cook until the liquid evaporates - about 1 minute. Add pumpkin and broth, stir. Let the liquid heat up but do not bring to simmer.

Put lid on (or cover tightly with foil) and place in oven for 25 minutes, until rice is just cooked (firm but not raw) - don't worry if there's excess liquid. If rice is still uncooked, return to oven for 5 minutes. Add remaining butter and parmesan cheese. Stir vigorously until the pumpkin turns into a puree and blends into the risotto. If it's too thick then add a splash of hot tap water. Should have a porridge like consistency, rather than staying in a tall, firm pile. Melt butter in a small pan over medium high heat. Once foaming, add sage leaves and stir gently. Cook for a few minutes or until crispy. Garnish with crispy sage, 1 or 2 teaspoons of brown butter and parmesan cheese.