



Pumpkins are more than a frightening face

Think about this, a 2 ounce chocolate bar is the nutritional equivalent of four teaspoons of oil or butter, plus 10 teaspoons of sugar. Talk about a toothache! If your children receive quantities of high sugar candies for Halloween, monitor how much and when they are consumed. Eating too much candy affects their appetite and sleep patterns. Children don't have to go trick-or-treating to have a memorable Halloween. Parties can be a wonderful way to spend Halloween night, and you can provide wholesome goodies for treats.

Vegetable

Halloween is also the perfect time to teach children that a pumpkin is a vegetable rich in vitamin C, not just another scary face. You can even let the kids help you make something from scratch using a "real" pumpkin. The Indians were planting pumpkins between rows of corn long before the Pilgrims arrived. The entire pumpkin was used, the flesh, the seeds, and then the inside shell was dried and used as a water container. The seeds were eaten as a snack or saved for the next year's planting. Pumpkin alices were sun-dried then ground to make flour for cooking. If you plan on using your pumpkin for cooking, don't carve or draw on it. Rinse the pumpkin with water and pat it dry. Cut the pumpkin into several large pieces (use a large, sturdy knife to cut through the hard shell).

Cooking tips

To bake, arrange the pumpkin alices, skin side down, in a greased baking dish. Bake at 375°F until fork tender, 30 minutes to an hour depending on the size of the alices. Pumpkin can also be cut into small pieces and boiled just like you were boiling potatoes. In a large, covered saucepan, boil the pumpkin pieces in a small amount of water for 30 minutes or until tender. Drain and cool to remove outer rind of the hard shelled pumpkin. Mash the pulp with a fork. Place the pulp in a strainer over a bowl and let it drain for 30 minutes. Pumpkins tend to be very watery so don't eliminate this step. Another excellent and fast cooking method is in the microwave just like you would squash. You can reheat the pulp, season it, and eat as a vegetable. It will taste like any other winter squash such as acorn, butternut or hubbard. A tasty side dish can be made by adding fried bacon pieces, sautéed onions or garlic to mashed pumpkin. For those that say they don't like pumpkin, mix equal parts of mashed pumpkin and applesauce, mashed banana or crushed pineapple. Add a little mashed pumpkin to pancake or muffin batter. Stir cooked pumpkin into some low-fat yogurt with a little brown sugar for a sweet treat. Don't forget pumpkin bread or pumpkin cookies. Make them for the holidays now, and freeze.

Vitamin rich

Pumpkin, fresh or canned, is rich in beta carotene, which is an important antioxidant and precursor of vitamin A in the body. Pumpkin also contains some vitamin C, folacin (B vitamin), a little calcium and some fiber. Like all vegetables, it is low in calories — 83 calories per cup. Pumpkin soup can be quickly made by combining canned plain pumpkin (not the premixed pie filling) with fat-free chicken or beef stock. For added flavor, mince onions, carrots, celery or other vegetables and cook them in the stock before adding pumpkin puree. Add skim milk, and seasonings such as curry powder, dried thyme or cumin. They are all compatible flavorings for pumpkin. To enhance the flavor of

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:
■ Cheers for Beer
■ It's tailgating time!

Antipasto

AN ITALIAN FAMILY TRADITION

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Antipasto. Call it summer in a jar, Italian style. Every fall, the family of Chet and Norma Marson of Livonia comes together to cook up big, bubbling pots of this glorious Italian appetizer that tastes like a symphony of vegetables, oil, vinegar and just the right amount of anchovies.

It's a lot of work, but each sibling — Laura Stanhardt of Birmingham, Johnny Marson of Plymouth Township and Denise Cook of Novi — heads home with dozens of jewel-packed jars of grandma Vittoria Marson's original antipasto. They hoard their jars, serving the antipasto as a side dish and sipping up the oil with Italian bread.

"Johnny loves the antipasto the most," says Laura. "He'll just eat a jar for his lunch." Chet Marson presumes his mother's antipasto fame has spread far beyond Sault

Ste. Marie, Canada, where he and Norma grew up and were married. The recipe originally came from the Udine region in northern Italy.

"Everybody in Michigan has my mother's recipe," he says.

Not quite, but close.

"Aunt Virginia, Aunt Betty and Aunt Martha, my father's brothers' wives, all made it. My kids were raised with it. Johnny and I have been making it every year. Laura and Denise ran out last year."

Chet Marson criss-crosses the kitchen as the women deftly chop the celery, green beans, carrots, peppers, cauliflower and cucumbers. It's clear that, other than lifting heavy pots, the kitchen is not his domain. Still, he likes to oversee the annual ritual.

"I've had this since I was born," he says. "In the fall you get all these vegetables. There was no refrigeration, so this was their way of preserving the harvest."

Norma Marson puts out a plate of her fried peppers, alices some bread and offers aprons to her daughters. Both decline. Print aprons that snap in the back look better on their mother.

"Mom, are these onions too big? Are the green beans the right size?" asks Laura.

"They're okay, but you're celery pieces are too big."

"I hate anchovies," says Denise.

"Then don't put them in."

Once the vegetables have been



A family affair: Norma Marson (center) and daughter, Denise Cook, assemble the vegetables as son Johnny stirs the pot. The basement serves as a second kitchen in the Marson household when it comes to making antipasto.



Proud heritage: Chet Marson displays a picture of his parents, Luigi and Vittoria Marson, along with a jar of antipasto, vintage 1959. Everybody in Michigan has his mother's recipes, he says.

chopped and bagged, operations move to the basement, where Denise begins heaping bags of cauliflower on an ancient baby scale.

"We're going less on everything and more on the cauliflower," she announces. "Everybody loves the cauliflower."

Johnny measures out the oil, vinegar and tomato paste into two gigantic pots and turns on the electric double-burner. As soon as the mixture boils, the women start handing him the bags of vegetables.

"I'm the dumper-inner," he says.

Laura begins teasing her brother, a captain with the Livonia Fire Department. "Isn't he handsome?" she says, hugging him. "You're still a hunk."

"Yeah, a 50-year-old hunk." Norma Marson opens a jar of last year's antipasto, sets out more bread and uncorks a bottle of deep-purple homemade wine. Denise runs upstairs for some crystal wine glasses. It's 11:30 a.m.

"We Italians don't look at the clock. Forget it's before noon. When it's wine time, it's wine time," says Laura.

Finally, the drained jars of mushrooms, onions, tuna and anchovies are added. The scent of Vittoria Marson's antipasto once again wafts through the basement. Denise plucks a green bean from the pot and plunks it into her brother's mouth.

"It's a little hard," he says. "You made it more al dente last year."

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Expert touch: Norma Marson gently stirs the antipasto. Her mother-in-law, Vittoria Marson, brought the recipe from northern Italy when she came to Canada more than 80 years ago.

Snare some scary Halloween recipes on the Web

By MAGGIE BOLTON
SPECIAL WRITER

There's no trick to finding yummy treats and Halloween fun on the Web. Here's a rundown of just a few of the more than 2,000 Halloween recipe pages available on the Internet. You'll find it's not so scary surfing for Halloween treats. Quick tips and Halloween hints can be found at

www.cakerecipe.com/hints/tips-halloween.asp

An easy, tasty pumpkin cake recipe was quickly found at the Halloween section of this site. You can send cake recipes to friends, convert the recipes to metric instructions, and print out two-page recipe cards as well as do full page printing of recipes from this Web site.

You can browse the "International Cake Glossary," to clarify some cake terms and ingredients. The neat thing about this glossary is you can translate selected terms between 16 countries. For example, granulated (white) sugar can be castor sugar in Britain, sucre en poudre in France, azucar en polvo in

Spain. The site is interactive, and you can submit or request translations. The entire site features more than 1,100 cake recipes. It is easy to navigate, and you may browse the site by alphabetical categories.

A spooky time can be had at www.spooky.org.uk

This site from Scotland has kid-friendly jokes, greeting cards, and a "Cauldron Cookery" section. You browse to sections from a horizontal, not a vertical, page frame.

Since the site's from the United Kingdom, you'll find instructions for "turnip lanterns" as well as jack-o'-lanterns. Fearful Halloween facts are also present.

ed. For example, in the U.S., children say "trick or treat" to receive their loot. In Scotland adults demand more value for their sweets. Children are expected to perform a party piece — joke, song or story — before collecting their goodies.

A fun "Witches Fingers" recipe, made from boneless chicken breasts, can be found on this site.

"Healthy Halloween" sounds like a complete contradiction in terms, but kid-pleasing snacks can be found at www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Dun-geon/2146/recipe.html

These recipes feature a variety of fresh, dried and canned fruits and vegetables, and children can generally make

the treats on their own. Some snacks, like the "ants on a log," require adult help to cut up the celery. Also included on the site are two recipes for pumpkin seeds.

Some very good soup recipes can be found at www.moonchild.ch/Halloween/Kitchen-Witch.html

The page is titled, "Pumpkin Soup for the Soul." Along with the recipe, a helpful feature on basic pumpkin cooking methods, from range top to microwave is included.

If you just want to carve, not cook, your pumpkin, patterns and selection tips can be found at www.jack-o-lantern.com

Everything you need to know about carving and displaying your pumpkin, including photography tips, can be found at this site. Bookmark this site for summer, as there are also melon carving patterns to create fun warm weather centerpieces.

Happy hunting for haunting new recipes!

See recipes inside.

Spooky Web sites

- www.spooky.org.uk
- www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Dun-geon/2146/recipe.html
- www.moonchild.ch/Halloween/Kitchen-Witch.html
- www.jack-o-lantern.com