

Any Way You Carve It

Out with the pie and in with the quesadillas. Thirteen new ways to cook pumpkin from some of America's top chefs

By **PERVAIZ SHALLWANI**

You may have noticed that it's pumpkin season. Which of course means sunset-colored monsters are weighing down porches and piling up outside farmstands.

But it also means that thousands of other varieties are hitting their prime—tender, mild-flavored squashes ripe for culinary experimentation. "We are fixated on the large orange balls of cucurbita," says Amy Goldman, author of "The Compleat Squash," referring to the scientific name for the squash family. "It's time to wake up to some of the finer-flavored varieties and species."



COOL PATCH Clockwise from orange pumpkin on far left: Ambercup, Australian Blue, Red Kuri, Green Striped Cushaw, Galeux d'Eysines, Cheese, Sugar Pie, Turban, Blue Hubbard, Sweet Dumpling. *Romulo Yanes for The Wall Street Journal, Food Styling by Karen Evans*

Little green ones called kabocha, for instance, are delicious in curries. Sugar pie, a chef favorite, can do double duty as a savory side or a sweet custard, as it does at Gramercy Tavern in New York City. In Mexico, the seeds and flesh of a forest green variety called calabasa go straight into stews, tacos and empanadas.

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Those are just a few of the ways to take pumpkin beyond the jack-o-lantern, and way beyond the Thanksgiving sideboard. "I think there is a misconceived notion that pumpkin is only good for pie," says chef Jose Garces of Distrito in Philadelphia.

Here, his recipe for pumpkin quesadillas, along with 12 others from chefs around the country—no creative knife work required.

Pumpkin Quesadilla

Roast a halved and cleaned pumpkin seasoned with salt and olive oil for 30 minutes, or until tender. Remove flesh. Mix with caramelized onions, a roasted, peeled and sliced poblano pepper, toasted pumpkin seeds and Chihuahua cheese. Press a heaping of mix between two corn tortillas and griddle on both sides. --chef Jose Garces, Distrito in Philadelphia

Pumpkin Cake

Cream five egg yolks and a ½ cup of sugar. Mix in 1 cup grated pumpkin and ½ cup tempered chocolate until smooth. Mix in 2 tablespoons almond flour, 1 cup flour, 2 tablespoons bread crumbs, ½ cup chopped hazelnuts, a dash of cinnamon and seeds from 1 vanilla bean. Don't over mix. Separately, beat 5 egg whites while gradually adding ¼ cup of sugar until stiff. Fold in meringue. Fill buttered loaf pan and bake at 325 degrees for 35 minutes. --chefs Wolfgang Ban and Eduard Frauneder, Seasonal Restaurant & Weinbar in New York City

Stew-in-a-Pumpkin

Cut off top of a softball-sized pumpkin and clean out guts. Season with salt, pepper, olive oil, brown sugar and a pinch curry powder. Roast at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, or until flesh is tender but not mushy. Fill with your favorite meat stew. --chef Cathal Armstrong, Restaurant Eve in Alexandria, Va.



Roasted Pumpkin

Toss large cubes of pumpkin with salt, pepper and olive oil. Roast at 400 degrees for 30 minutes, or until tender, mixing every few minutes for even color and cooking. Serve as a side dish or tossed with short pasta. —chef Michael Anthony, Gramercy Tavern in New York City

Pumpkin Custard

Halve and remove seeds from pumpkin. Season with salt, pepper, olive oil and brown sugar, and roast at 350 degrees until tender. Remove meat. Blend 1 quart of pulp with 4 egg yolks and 1 cup of cream.

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Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice. Pour into oven-safe ramekins. Bake in water bath at 300 degrees until set. —*chef Michael Anthony*

Pumpkin Marmalade

Tie 10 sprigs of thyme and seeds of 1 orange and 2 lemons in cheesecloth. In stainless steel pot, combine thinly sliced orange and lemons, 3 cups water and cheesecloth. Bring to boil, simmer for 30 minutes. Remove cheesecloth bag. Add 4 cups brown sugar and cook on low until sugar dissolves. Add 8 cups cubed pumpkin. Cook on medium heat until mixture has thickened, about 45 minutes. Serve with warm bread and cheese. —*chef Tyson Podolski, Summer Winter Restaurant in Burlington, Mass.*



Pumpkin Seed Granola

Heat 1/3 cup brown sugar, 1/4 cup canola oil and 1/4 cup honey until incorporated. Transfer to bowl and mix in 2 cups each of rolled oats and pumpkin seeds and a pinch each of cinnamon and ground ginger. Transfer to a lined sheet tray and bake at 325 degrees, mixing every 15 minutes for about 1 hour. —*chef Alex Seidel, Fruition Restaurant in Denver*

Pumpkin Pickles

Boil 3 cups each of water and vinegar, a 1/4 cup each of sugar and salt, 2 tablespoons of peppercorns and 6 sage sprigs. Simmer for 5 minutes. In a bowl, combine 4 pounds of shaved pumpkin and 20 leaves of sage chiffonade. Strain liquid over mix. Let cool. Cover and refrigerate for two days. Store in airtight container for a month. —*chef Tyson Podolski*

Pumpkin Gratin

Peel, seed and slice a two-pound pumpkin into 1/4-inch strips. Toss in melted butter, salt and pepper. Roast until cooked but firm. Combine 1/2 cup cream, bay leaf, 4 cloves and a pinch of nutmeg in a saucepan. Reduce over heat by a third. Strain. Reserve cream. Layer a quarter of the cooked pumpkin in bottom of buttered baking dish. Dot with some of a 1/2 cup of fromage blanc. Repeat until you have four layers. Pour cream over gratin. Top with 1/2 cup Gruyere, cover with toasted brioche bread crumbs and bake for 20 minutes at 400 degrees. —*chef Chris Kronner, Bar Tartine in San Francisco*

Austrian Pumpkinseed Spread

Bring 1 cup Austrian farmer's cheese to room temperature. Mix in 3 teaspoons of ground pumpkin seeds and 4 teaspoons pumpkin seed oil. Refrigerate and serve with bread. —*chefs Wolfgang Ban and Eduard Frauneder*

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Spiced Pumpkin Puree



Season a halved and cleaned pumpkin with salt and pepper, and top each with 1 tablespoon of butter. Bake skin side down at 400 degrees until fully cooked, roughly 1 hour. In skillet, simmer 4 cloves and ½ cup wine for 5 minutes to remove alcohol. Strain. Reserve wine. Transfer pumpkin meat to blender with 2 tablespoons butter, wine and a pinch each of fresh ground nutmeg, cayenne and mace. Puree until smooth. Season to taste. Pass through a fine mesh sieve if smoother texture desired. Serve alongside roasted chicken or pork chops. —*chef Chris Kronner*

Sweet-and-Sour Butternut Squash

Heat 3 tablespoons of canola oil in a wok or frying pan over medium heat. Add a small piece of peeled and minced ginger. Cook for 1 minute. Add a chopped green chili and a pinch each of fenugreek and cayenne. Cook for 30 seconds. Stir in large cubes of a two-pound pumpkin. Add 1½ teaspoons each of salt and sugar. Cover and cook over medium, stirring every few minutes until pumpkin is tender, about 25 minutes. Reduce heat if spices begin to burn. Stir in juice of half a lemon or lime, mashing in a few pieces for texture. Season and serve. —*chef Suvir Saran, Devi in New York City*

Pumpkin Cream Cheese

Cut ¼ cup of cream cheese into cubes and leave out until soft. Mix cream cheese, 1 tablespoon of sour cream, 1 cup of roasted pumpkin puree, 1 teaspoon of brown sugar, 1 teaspoon of salt and a pinch each of cinnamon and nutmeg until incorporated. —*chef Alex Seidel*