

Food of the Week: Pumpkin

Most of us typically tend to think of pumpkins as a decoration and not a food, which is too bad because we're missing out on some really great benefits. Pumpkin is full of potassium, and in fact one cup of pumpkin has about 33% more potassium than a medium sized banana. Most people think of potassium when they want to soothe muscle cramps, but increased potassium intake has also shown a decreased risk of stroke. Pumpkin also contains high amounts of beta-carotene. This is what gives pumpkins their orange color. Beta-carotene, along with alpha-carotene and beta-cryptoxanthin (all of which are found in pumpkins) reduce the risk of lung and colon cancer as well as arthritis. The last things I want to mention are that pumpkins contain lutein and zeaxanthin, two carotenoids that protect your eye health, and pumpkins also provide a decent amount of fiber. Not bad for a squash that we usually only think of once a year.

Although it's kind of a pain in the neck to cook with pumpkin when you're starting with the whole pumpkin, cooking it, and scraping out the flesh inside, it is **super** easy to pick up a can of pumpkin puree in the grocery store and use that in a recipe instead.



GET COOKING: PUMPKIN TURKEY CHILI

Okay, I know this sounds weird, but trust me, it's one of my absolute favorite dishes. If you like the taste of pumpkin, you should like this. Make sure you get a can of pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie puree) because the pumpkin pie puree will be too sweet and it won't taste right.

Ingredients

- * 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- * 1 cup chopped onion
- * 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- * 1/2 cup chopped yellow bell pepper
- * 1 clove garlic, minced
- * 1 pound ground turkey (93/7 if you can get it).
- * 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- * 2 cups pumpkin puree
- * 1 1/2 tablespoons chili powder
- * 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper & 1 dash salt
- * 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (reduced fat)
- * 1/2 cup sour cream (light or fat free)



Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat, and saute the onion, green bell pepper, yellow bell pepper, and garlic until tender. Stir in the turkey, and cook until evenly brown. Drain, and mix in tomatoes and pumpkin. Season with chili powder, pepper, and salt. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 20 minutes. Serve topped with Cheddar cheese and sour cream.