



Home Food Preservation



Preserving Pumpkin

It wouldn't be fall without pumpkins. Some types are for decorating, while others are for eating. Preserving pumpkin is a great way to enjoy this seasonal treat all year long.

Quick Tips

- Mature pie pumpkins are best for canning and freezing.
- Carving pumpkins are not ideal for eating, but their seeds work well for drying.

Freezing

- Freezing is the fastest and best way to preserve pumpkin, this method changes the texture the least
- Select mature pumpkins with smooth-textured flesh; avoid stringy or dry pumpkins.
- Cut into chunks and remove seeds. Boil, steam, pressure cook or bake until soft.
- Once cooked, scrape the flesh from the rinds and mash.
- Place the mashed pulp into a pan and set pan in cold water and stir. Once cool, package in freezer containers (leaving ½" headspace) or freezer bags (pressing out all of the air) and seal.



Canning

- Pumpkin is a low acid food (pH > 4.6) that requires pressure canning for proper processing to reduce the risk of botulism.
- The form of the pumpkin is important, mashed or pureed pumpkin should not be canned, as there are no current tested recipes for pumpkin in this form.
- Slice or cube pumpkin no larger than 1" and boil for 2 minutes before filling jars, fill with the boiling water to the proper headspace.
- Find can find tested home preserved pumpkin recipes here: nchfp.uga.edu.

Drying

- **To dry seeds**, gently wash them to remove all of the pumpkin flesh and stringy matter.
- If using an electric dehydrator, dry at 115-120°F for 1 -2 hours. Pumpkin seeds can also be dried in the oven on the lowest setting; it will take 3-4 hours. Check and stir often during oven-drying so they do not burn.
- **To dry pumpkin flesh**, cut into 1"x 1/8" strips and blanch. Use an electric dehydrator at 125°F for 8 -10 hours until tough or brittle. Oven drying is not recommended.
- Make sure seeds or flesh are completely dry before storing. Once cool, place in a bag or jar and seal. If moisture accumulates in the bag or jar, remove and continue drying. Moist pumpkin will rot during storage.
- Store the seeds in a dry, cool, dark area. The cooler the area the longer the storage. Most dried foods are good for 4 months to a year.

