



Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm ~ Vol. 13, No. 27 ~ September 30, 2018

Farmer's Notebook

We are now well into Fall - or as the marketers of America must call it, Pumpkin Spice Season. You can't walk down the grocery store aisle or go on-line without tripping over something simply bursting with pumpkin spiciness.

Pumpkin spice lattes? Who needs something so pedestrian when you can munch on pumpkin spice cookies, waffles, pretzels, crackers, bread, english muffins, Doritos, breakfast cereal, chocolates, nuts, soda, or beer?

If your belly is full, try lighting a pumpkin spice candle, plugging in a pumpkin spice air freshener, washing your clothes in pumpkin spice laundry detergent, serving your snacks on pumpkin spice paper plates, or stocking your bathroom with pumpkin spice toilet paper. I promise you, I did not make up any of these products. On a road trip to Maine a few years ago, we even passed a pet grooming salon with a sign out front reading "pumpkin spice dog baths." We never figured out if that last one was a joke, but I fear it was not.

For all you pumpkin spice lovers out there, I have a bold, possibly heretical suggestion to try: pumpkin spice pumpkin. Yes it's true, you can actually cook with pumpkin. And add spices to it. It's delicious.

Pumpkins are really just a particularly cute variety of winter squash. The pumpkins grown for food in the United States - often referred to as "pie pumpkins" - have thick orange shells and golden pulp with a nice amount of natural sweetness. In contrast, pumpkin types grown for carving jack o'lanterns (sadly, one of this year's casualties) have thinner shells and relatively little pulp with a large seed cavity.

The flavor of pie pumpkins is very similar to

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This Week's Harvest

our best guess for what will be in this week's share boxes - subject to change at packing time:



pie pumpkins - our fourth and final variety of winter squash for this season. This traditional variety is called New England pie pumpkin.

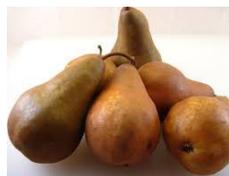
The dark orange, sweet flesh is well suited for pies or other baking. Once baked, the soft flesh, can be mashed or pureed to use in your favorite pumpkin bread or pie recipes. So much better than canned! Store in a cool, dry place with good air circulation. (ideally around 50°F).

lettuce - we got rave reviews on the lettuce at this weekend's farm dinner - here's to hoping you enjoy your salads at home just as much! Heads may be small. Store unwashed in plastic bag. Wash and dry completely before using.



also...

eggplant or peppers
onions
red potatoes



Fruit Shares: bosc pears from our friends at Fix Bros Fruit Farm (Hudson). Bosc are a golden-brown variety with creamy, sweet and slightly spicy flesh excellent for fresh eating or baking. Picked tree ripe; leave on counter (bottom side down) to reach desired ripeness, then eat or store in fridge. Boscs do not change color when ripened, but the skin will appear more matte and fruit will be more fragrant. *Conventionally grown.*



Recipe of the Week: Farmer's Pumpkin Spice Bread

- 2 cups all-purpose flour (or 1 cup each white and whole wheat flours)
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp ground ginger
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- 1 cup cooked & pureed pumpkin
- ½ cup milk (you can use buttermilk, in which case you should increase baking soda to 1 tsp)
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup oil or melted butter
- ½- 1 cup walnuts, seeds, raisins, chocolate chips, or your choice of extras

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x5x3" loaf pan, or two mini pans.

Combine *1 cup* of the flour with the sugar, baking powder & soda, salt & spices in a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl whisk together the pumpkin puree, milk, eggs & oil/butter. Pour the wet into the dry and mix until well blended. Add the *remaining cup* of flour and beat until combined. Stir in nuts or other extras.

Pour batter into pans. If desired, sprinkle top with cinnamon sugar and/or chopped nuts. Bake for about 1 hour, until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool in pan for about 10 minutes, then remove from pan and let cool completely on rack. Easiest to slice if you wrap it and let it rest overnight, but good luck waiting that long.



HOW TO ROAST PUMPKINS (& OTHER WINTER SQUASH)

1. Remove woody stem from squash. Scrub outer skin to remove visible dirt.
2. Pierce squash in a few places with a knife. Place whole squash on a rimmed baking sheet

OR

Cut squash in half top-to-bottom, scoop out and discard seeds, and place cut side down on oiled baking sheet.

3. Roast at 400°F until very soft (should be easily pierced with a fork)
4. Remove from oven, let cool then scrape the cooked flesh from the skin (if you roasted whole, cut in half then scoop out and discard seeds first)
5. For smooth puree (ideal for baking) process in blender with just a splash of water. For more rustic servings (such as a side dish) simply mash the cooked flesh with butter and seasonings of your choice.

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other winter squash, particularly butternut. In fact, many commercial pumpkin purees and pies are made with butternut. Pie pumpkins can also be baked and mashed as a side dish, for soup, or other dishes that you might typically make with winter squash.

Like other winter squashes, cooked pumpkin pairs beautifully with traditional spices of cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger and allspice – there is a good reason this “pumpkin spice” blend is so popular. But they are also fantastic with edgier spice mixes featuring chili powders, curries, ras el hanout and chinese five-spice.

There's lots of great ways to prepare pumpkin, but for this week I'm sticking with the basics and paying homage to America's pumpkin spice frenzy with my go-to recipe for pumpkin bread. I like mine with walnuts and a little cinnamon-sugar topping. Clara loves it with chocolate chips. You can even do both. Just please, don't serve it on a pumpkin spice napkin. ~ Rachel