

Golden Treasure

Autumn has arrived and with it comes a wealth of pumpkins and squashes bringing rich flavour, texture and colour to our tables

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Per 100g Energy (kcal)
495, Fat (g) 27, Of
which saturates (g)
15, Carbohydrate (g)
57, Of which sugars
(g)34.5, Salt (g) 0.5

COOK'S TIPS

We are most familiar with the Cinderella pumpkin and butternut squash but others such as Blue Ballet and red onion squash (Uchiki Kuri) have good flavour and are well worth trying.

Spiced pumpkin pie with sugared walnuts serves 8 - 10

Pumpkin pie is beloved in the USA as a Thanksgiving dessert but not so very long ago it was a popular pudding in the countryside here too. This is based on my grandmother's recipe. Make mince pie sized pies for Hallowe'en parties.

INGREDIENTS FOR PASTRY CASE

- 200g plain flour
- 20g corn flour
- 75g icing sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 120g softened butter
- 1 egg yolk - reserve the white for brushing
- 2 tablespoons of whiskey liqueur or iced water
- Tart tin with a loose bottom measuring 27-28 cm in diameter

INGREDIENTS FOR FILLING

- 600 - 700g pumpkin
- 125g caster sugar
- Good pinch of salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground mixed spice
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 large eggs
- 400ml single cream
- Finely grated zest of half a lemon
- 12 walnut halves soaked in cold water
- Granulated sugar
- Extra mixed spice and/or icing sugar for serving

1 Pre-cook the pumpkin. Cut into wedges, wrap in foil and roast in a hot oven, 180° C, gas mark 4, until just tender, say 40 - 50 minutes depending on the size of the pumpkin. When cool enough to handle, peel and discard the skin.

2 To make the pastry, sieve the dry ingredients in a bowl, add the butter, egg yolk and water (or whiskey liqueur) and work them quickly and lightly into a smooth round ball with your hands. Flour a work surface and using a rolling pin, flatten the ball of pastry into a 2cm thick circle. Wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for 1 hour

3 Roll the pastry into a large circle and carefully transfer to the baking ring. Press it into the sides and trim the edges. Bake blind (line the case with baking parchment and fill with baking beans or dry pulses) at 200° C, gas mark 6, for ten minutes. Take out of the oven (remove the paper and beans) reduce the heat to 180° C, gas mark 4, cook for a further 10 minutes and leave to cool. When cool, paint the base of the pastry case with the reserved egg white.

4 Put the cooled pumpkin in a blender with half the cream and process until smooth. Add the spices, sugar and eggs and process again. Add the remaining cream and lemon zest. Pour the pumpkin mixture into the tart ring and bake for 40 - 50 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 140° C, gas mark 2, should the pastry brown too quickly. The custard should be wobbly. Cool the tart in the tin.

5 While the tart is cooking, drain the soaked walnuts and shake off the excess water but do not dry them. Put a couple of tablespoons of granulated sugar in a small basin, add the wet walnuts and toss well until coated. Set on a baking tray and cook at 160° C, gas mark 3 until golden - say 15 minutes. Cool the nuts and arrange on the cooled pie. Dust with sieved mixed spice or icing sugar and serve.

VARIATION

For small tarts, you'll need 3 x 12 mince tart trays. First, roll the pastry and using a 7cm diameter cutter, cut 36 disks and line the trays. Then partially fill each pastry disk with the pumpkin mixture. Do not sugar the walnuts, simply cut them into quarters and put one in the middle of each tart and bake for 15-20 minutes at 180° C, gas mark 2. Leave in the tins to cool. Finally, dust with mixed spice or icing sugar.

Spiced butternut squash and carrot chutney Per dessert spoon (20g) (kcal) 16, Fat (g) 0.1, Of which saturates (g) 0.0, Carbohydrate (g) 4.0, Of which sugars (g) 3.5, Salt (g) 0.0



Spiced butternut squash and carrot chutney Makes 6 x 250 ml jars or 2 x 750 ml jars

There are plenty of pumpkins and squashes around at the moment and this is as good a time as any to make chutney. A morning spent chopping and preserving now will bring rewards throughout the winter. Chutney improves with keeping, so other than the cook's perks (the few tablespoons left over that are not quite enough to fill a pot), ideally keep it to mature until Christmas before opening.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g peeled and deseeded firm butternut squash or pumpkin cut into 1.5 cm cubes
- 400g onions chopped
- 500g carrots cut into 1 cm cubes
- 50g sultanas
- 250g Demerara sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 egg-sized lump fresh ginger root, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 head garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 level teaspoons cumin seeds
- 6 cardamom pods, crushed and chaff discarded
- 1 tablespoon turmeric
- 400ml cider vinegar plus 100ml extra
- 6 x 250ml or 2 x 750ml sterilised, warmed jars with lids or covers and waxed paper discs to suit

1 Put the prepared butternut squash or pumpkin, onions, carrots, sultanas, sugar, salt, ginger, garlic, spices and the 400ml vinegar in a saucepan and bring slowly to the boil. Simmer for 1 hour, stirring from time to time. The chutney should look dark, dense and rich. Top up with extra vinegar if it dries out too much during cooking.

2 Transfer to sterilised and warmed jars. Cover the surface of the chutney with a waxed disc, wipe the jar with a clean damp cloth and seal at once.

3 Label when cool and store for 2 or 3 months in a cool, dark cupboard before opening.

Pumpkin and pancetta risotto serves 4 - 6

Pumpkins and squashes make delicious risotto. This simple way of making risotto, which requires little stirring, is a classic method used in the Veneto region of Italy. It gives equally good results as the classic version, especially when made with Vialone Nanno rice but works well with Arborio as well. Vegetarians can omit the pancetta and use vegetable stock – also double the amount of onion and garlic and add a handful of sun blushed tomatoes with the chopped parsley.

INGREDIENTS FOR BASIC RISOTTO RECIPE

- 100g butter
- 50ml cold water
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 stick of celery, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon parsley stalks, finely chopped
- 500g arborio rice or vialone nanno
- 150ml white wine
- 1200ml simmering chicken (or veg) stock
- Black pepper
- 100g Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

FOR THE PUMPKIN AND PANCETTA

- 750g pumpkin or squash, pre-cooked
- 80g butter
- 2 shallots, finely sliced
- 2 fat garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
- 160g of pancetta or streaky bacon, finely chopped
- 1 handful chopped parsley
- To serve 6 tablespoons pumpkin seeds

1. Start by roasting the pumpkin; cut into wedges, wrap in foil and roast in a hot oven, 180° C, gas mark 4, until just tender, say 40 - 50 minutes but this will depend on the size of the pumpkin. When cool enough to handle, peel and cut into bite sized cubes, discarding the skin.

2. Put a large saucepan over a low heat, add 50g butter, 25ml cold water and one finely chopped shallot, celery and parsley stalks and cook gently until transparent; approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Increase the heat and add the rice and stir continuously until golden. Add the white wine and leave to evaporate, continuing to stir fry then add a little stock and stir again. Level the rice and then add the remaining stock in one go without stirring and then cover the pan with a lid. Reduce the heat and leave to cook slowly for 12 minutes.

3. While the rice is cooking, take a second pan, add 80g butter and set over low heat. Add the two finely sliced shallots, garlic and pancetta and then cook until the shallot is transparent. Increase the heat, add the prepared pumpkin or squash and chopped parsley and cook until tender. Stir well and switch off the heat.

4. When the rice has absorbed most of the stock, stir for a minute then add the pancetta and pumpkin and mix well, then the remaining 50g butter, cubed and the cheese. Stir well. Switch off the heat, cover and leave to rest for 10 minutes then serve topped with roasted pumpkin seeds, grated parmesan and black pepper to taste.

COOK'S TIPS

Roast whole wedges of pumpkin (no need to peel) with ginger or garlic and serve as a side vegetable or whiz them up to make soups and fillings for pies or ravioli. Discard the skin and cut the flesh into cubes for risottos or pasta sauces. Alternatively, steam or cook them in a microwave oven.



Per 100g Energy (kcal) 152, Fat (g) 9, Of which saturates (g) 5, Carbohydrate (g) 14, Of which sugars (g) 0.5, Salt (g) 0.5