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See [www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm) for many other canning directions and recipes

## How to Cook a Pumpkin to have Pumpkin Puree to Make Pumpkin Recipes!

You probably take canned pumpkin for granted. You're there, the can is there, there's a pumpkin on the label... open it and mix it up with spices to make a pie, right. Ah, but a pumpkin pie, pumpkin soup, pumpkin bread made from a fresh pumpkin tastes so much better than the glop that was processed last year! Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. And it is much easier than you think, using my "patented" tips and tricks! You can freeze it for later use, too. Note: [If you want to can the cooked pumpkin: see this page!](#)

### Directions for Making Pumpkin Pie from Scratch

#### Ingredients and Equipment

- a pie pumpkin (see step 1)
- A sharp, large serrated knife
- an ice cream scoop
- a large microwaveable bowl or large pot

### Recipe and Directions

#### Step 1 - Get your pie pumpkin



"Pie pumpkins" are smaller, sweeter, less grainy textured pumpkins than the usual jack-o-lantern types. grocery stores usually carry them in late September through December in the U.S. Note: the Libby's can of cooked pumpkin is just there for reference - it is the small can, so that gives you an idea of the size of a typical pie pumpkin.

They're only about 8 inches in diameter.

<http://www.pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkinbutter.php>

Just like selecting any squash, look for one that is firm, no bruises or soft spots, and a good orange color.

Yield: Pie pumpkins are small, usually only 6 inches in diameter. You can usually obtain about 2 or 3 cups of puree per pumpkin.

### Step 2 - Prepare the pumpkin for cooking

Wash the exterior of the pumpkin in cool or warm water, no soap.

Cut the pumpkin in half. A serrated knife and a sawing motion works best - a smooth knife is more likely to slip and hurt you!



### Step 3 - Scoop out the seeds...



And scrape the insides. You want to get out that stringy, dangly stuff that coats the inside surface. I find a heavy ice cream scoop works great for this.

Note: SAVE THE SEEDS:

The seeds can be used either to plant pumpkins next year, or roasted to eat this year! Place them in a bowl of water and rub them between your hands. then pick out the orange bits (throw that away) and drain off the water. Spread them out on a clean towel or paper towel to dry and they're ready to save for next year's planting or roast. [Click here for roasting instructions!](#) (opens in a new window)

#### **Step 4 - Cooking the pumpkin**

There are several ways to cook the pumpkin; just choose use your preferred method. Most people have microwaves, and the use the least energy, so I'll describe that here. But others make good arguments in favor of using a pressure cooker, steaming on the stovetop or baking in the oven. I'll describe microwaving here, and at the end of this document, I've included alternative instructions to replace step 4, if you'd rather use a different method.

#### **Put it in a microwaveable bowl**

Remove the stem, and put the pumpkin into a microwaveable. You may need to cut the pumpkin further to make it fit. The fewer the number of pieces, the easier it will to scoop out the cooked pumpkin afterwards.

Put a couple of inches of water in the bowl, cover it, and put in the microwave.



#### **Step 5 - Cook the pumpkin until soft**

Cook for 15 minutes on high, check to see if it is soft, then repeat in smaller increments of time until it is soft enough to scoop the innards out. Normally it takes 20 or 30 minutes in total.



Note: You CAN cook it on the stovetop; it will just take longer (almost twice as long)

### **Step 6 - Scoop out the cooked pumpkin**

Using a broad, smooth spoon, (such as a tablespoon) gently lift and scoop the cooked pumpkin out of the skin. It should separate easily in fairly large chunks, if the pumpkin is cooked enough.



### **Step 7 - Puree the pumpkin**

To get a nice, smooth consistency, I use a Pillsbury hand blender. A regular blender works, too (unless you made a few frozen daiquiris and drank them first..). Or even just a hand mixer with time and patience.



With the hand blender, it just takes 2 or 3 minutes!



### **Step 8 - Done with the pumpkin!**

The pumpkin is now cooked and ready for the pie recipe. Get the frozen daiquiris out from step 7 and take a break! :)

It's ready to pop in the fridge or freezer (just pack it containers, like Ziploc bags or plastic containers, exclude as much air as you can, and freeze it!)

<http://www.pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkinbutter.php>

It is not suitable for home canning - See this page for the safety reasons why:  
<http://www.pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkinprecautions.php>

Start making tasty treats!

how about ...

- [How to make a pumpkin pie](#) and [How to make a flakey pie crust](#)
  - [How to make Pumpkin Bread](#)
  - [How to make pumpkin soup](#)
  - [How to make roasted pumpkin seeds](#)
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#### **Alternative Cooking methods for step 4**

If you don't have a microwave, or prefer another method, try these:

**Stovetop steaming** - Place your steaming basket or grid in the bottom of a large pot. Put enough water so it won't boil dry in 20 minutes, and yet is not so high that the pumpkin is touching the water level. You may need to add more water during the cooking. Add the pumpkin prepared in step 3, and get the steamer going. The cooking time is only between 8 and 12 minutes, depending on the range (gas or electric), and the pumpkin literally falls off the skin.

**Pressure cooker** - Place your grid in the bottom of the pressure cooker. If your pressure cooker came with directions, follow those for pumpkin and/or winter squash, like butternut squash. If, like most people, you've long since lost the directions, try this: Add enough water to just touch the bottom of the grid or shelf that you will place the pumpkin on. Add the pumpkin prepared in step 3, put the lid with the gasket, the weight and anything else your cooker requires in place, and turn the heat on high. Once it starts hissing, turn it to medium or medium high. The cooking time should only be about 10 minutes, and the pumpkin should literally fall out of its skin.

<http://www.pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkinbutter.php>

**Oven** - You can also bake the prepared pumpkin in the oven, just like a butternut squash. This method takes the longest. Just put the prepared pumpkin in an ovenproof container (with a lid), add about 3 cups of water to help prevent it from drying out and pop it in an 350 F (200 C) oven. It normally takes about 45 minutes to an hour; just test it periodically by sticking it with a fork to see if it is soft!

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