

# Michigan Fresh

## INGREDIENTS

- » One 4- to 6-pound pie pumpkin or winter squash



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# Pumpkin Puree

You can use a pie pumpkin to prepare your own fresh pumpkin puree. Use this simple homemade pumpkin puree in place of canned pumpkin in soups, stews and muffins, or add your own seasoning to make a tasty pumpkin pie filling.

## TO PREPARE

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Rinse the outside of the pumpkin to remove any dirt. Remove the stem and cut pumpkin in half.
3. Use a spoon to scoop out stringy mass and seeds. Seeds can be cleaned and roasted for a snack or added to your compost.
4. Cook the pumpkin by any of the following methods:

Do not use a Jack-O-Lantern type of pumpkin, as they are not as sweet and have a high water content. Feeling creative? Winter squash such as acorn, butternut, Hubbard or kabocha squashes all make for tasty pumpkin substitutes. Ask your local farmer what variety they recommend.

- Steaming method: Cut into large chunks. Place pieces in a large pan with about one cup of water. Cover and steam for 10 to 20 minutes, adding additional water as it evaporates. Pumpkin should be tender and easy to pierce when done. Drain in a colander.
- Oven method: Spray a large cookie sheet lightly with oil. Place pumpkin halves cut side down. Bake at 350 °F for one hour or until tender.



# Pumpkin Puree

 (Continued)

- Microwave method: Place pumpkin halves cut side down on a microwave-safe plate. Microwave on high for 10 to 15 minutes until easily pierced with a fork.
- 5.** Remove the rind by scooping out interior with a spoon.
- 6.** Cut the pumpkin into small chunks and place in a food processor or blender. Process until smooth.
- 7.** Put the puree through a fine strainer to remove any strings. Then, transfer pumpkin to a colander lined with cheesecloth or a flattened out coffee filter to remove excess liquid.
- 8.** Wrap puree in plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator overnight.

Use pumpkin puree immediately or freeze in an airtight plastic freezer bag for up to 6 months.