

Making Ripples

Unusual Pumpkin Projects

by Amanda Bancroft

If you love pumpkins but are tired of the “usual” pumpkin activities that accompany autumn like flocks of honking geese, here are some untraditional things to do with a pumpkin! People have used pumpkins for an anti-aging facial mask or body scrub, pumpkin floating candles, pumpkin fries, piñatas for a smashing fall birthday party, embroidered table decorations, and more.

By melting old bits of crayons and even colorful candle wax from the bottoms of used candles, you can recycle them into a new fall decoration. Just use a blow dryer or small flame to let the bits of crayon or wax drip over the sides of the pumpkin. Mix and match colors for a rainbow effect!

After your Halloween jack-o-lantern has served its purpose scaring (or delighting) neighborhood kids, recycle it into a wildlife feeder by filling the pumpkin with a seed mixture. Set it in your yard or hang it from a tree by poking sticks into holes in the side of the pumpkin and attaching rope. Be creative with the shape and style of your feeder – it can be anything you want it to be!

This pumpkin bread recipe is sure to be a spin around a different block for those who enjoy pumpkin desserts. From Alisa Fleming at GoDairyFree.com, “it is not only gluten-free, but also food allergy-friendly. It is made without any gluten, wheat, dairy / milk, egg, soy, tree nut, or peanut ingredients and is completely vegan and delicious to boot!” It’s moist and much healthier than your average sweet bread – I enjoyed it so much I made them into cupcakes topped with vegan cream cheese frosting!

- 1-1/3 Cups Brown Rice Flour (can use white rice flour if preferred)
- ½ Cup Potato Starch
- ¼ Cup Tapioca Starch
- ¼ Cup Buckwheat Flour
- 2 Teaspoons Xanthan Gum (can sub guar gum for corn-free)
- 2 Teaspoons Baking Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1-1/2 Teaspoons Pumpkin Pie Spice
- ½ Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
- ½ Teaspoon Salt
- ⅔ Cup Packed Brown Sugar or Coconut / Palm Sugar
- 1 15-ounce Can Pumpkin Puree
- ½ Cup Oil (grapeseed, coconut, canola, etc.; your choice)
- ½ Cup Pure Maple Syrup
- ¼ Cup Water
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Combine the dry and wet ingredients in separate bowls, then mix the dry into the wet. Bake the bread (or cupcakes) for 45 to 55 minutes at 325°F, or until firm to the touch and lightly browned. The bread should pull slightly away from the pan when done. Let cool completely before

serving.

The most untraditional thing to do with a pumpkin might be the most ancient practice – harvest their seeds, plant them the following year, and continue the tradition of enjoying a natural food that helped our ancestors survive harsh winters. Enjoy!

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