

Fall has arrived and so have the pumpkins. Although canned pumpkin is around throughout the year, whole pumpkins are a fall treat. There is no secret that I absolutely love the small, miniature white pumpkins as well as tiger pumpkins. Yes, you can eat these miniature pumpkins, but there are some that are labeled "ornamental only!"

Stuffing pumpkins can be a time-consuming, but is well worth the time and effort. I recommend making many at one time and freezing for the future, after all, pumpkins are only around in the fall.

Black Lentils & Barley Stuffed Mini Pumpkins

By Debbie Zimmerman

Ingredients:

6 miniature pumpkins (white or tiger pumpkins or acorn squash)
1 pie pumpkin or 2 large sweet potatoes
2 cups black lentils, cooked (can substitute black beans)
2 cups hullless barley, cooked (can substitute wild rice)
8 scallions, chopped (both white & green)
4 large carrots
1-2 cups vegetable broth (I use Imagine Broth)

Seasoning:

8 cloves of fresh garlic chopped
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 tablespoon chili powder
1-1/2 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon oregano
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1/2 cup nutritional yeast

Optional toppings:

Nutty parm
Pumpkin seeds

Instructions:

1. I recommend prepping pumpkins a day in advance and allow them to cool completely.
2. Wash pumpkins well with scrub brush and allow to dry. Some miniature pumpkins can be hard to cut. It is easier to pierce a small slit in the skin and microwave two at a time for 10 minutes to soften. Do not overcook.
3. When pumpkins are cool, cut in half or remove the top crown. If cutting in half, cut horizontally, each half will be fluted. If there is a long stem on the top of the pumpkin, take a knife and remove the plug of the stem. Leaving the pumpkins whole provides a more dramatic appearance, but can be very filling. To remove the top crown, use a sharp knife to cut around the crown. Save the crown for roasting.
4. Remove the seeds and membrane from the miniature pumpkins. Put on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper or silicone mat. Place to the side until ready to stuff.
5. For pie pumpkin, pierce the top of the pumpkin with a knife and microwave for 10-15 minutes. You want it soft enough to remove the meat (or pulp) from the shell. Once

the pumpkin is cool, slice open and remove the seeds and membrane. Slice the skin away from the meat and leave meat in slabs if possible. Once the skin is removed, chop the pulp in 1/4-inch chunks. Store in a bowl till ready to use. (If using sweet potatoes, remove the skin and chop in small chunks. (Use Saladmaster food processor cone #3.)

6. In Saladmaster 12" skillet, sauté scallions in 1/2 cup vegetable broth. Add garlic, carrots, and chopped pie pumpkin adding more vegetable broth as needed. Sauté veggies until tender.
7. Remove from heat. Add cooked black lentils, cooked barley, remaining seasonings, walnuts, and nutritional yeast. Blend all ingredients well using large spoon.
8. Stuff prepared miniature pumpkins and top with optional nutty parm, pumpkin seeds or both.
9. Bake for 30 minutes at 350F. Enjoy!