

Most recipes use pumpkin puree, but the flesh also can be cut into chunks and baked. Smaller pumpkins are preferable, and you should look for deep yellow/orange, fine-grained flesh. Generally, 1 pound of pumpkin yields $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cooked puree.

To prepare the puree, cut and remove the stem from the pumpkin, then cut it in half. Remove the seeds and fiber, reserving the seeds for roasting. Line

a heavy baking sheet with sides with aluminum foil. Place the halves on the foil cut side down. Cover lightly with another piece of foil and bake on the middle rack of a 450-degree oven for about 1 hour. The pumpkin is cooked when the outer shell is easily pierced with a fork.

Remove the baking sheet from the oven and, while the pumpkin is still hot, peel back and discard the shell. Most of it will come off easily, but you may have to scrape some off with a knife. When the pumpkin is cool enough to handle, cut it into chunks and puree it in a food processor, blender or food mill. Refrigerate or freeze the puree until ready to use.

Remember, though, that if you've cut your pumpkin into a jack-o'-lantern, the flesh probably has rotted. But if you've kept it pretty much out of the sun, and only drawn the funny face on, it is probably still good for eating.