

Nutrition News

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Fat and Cholesterol Content of Wild Game

With the fruits of hunting season – venison steaks and deer bologna, health-conscious hunters and their families may want to know how wild game stacks up against domesticated meat in fats and cholesterol.



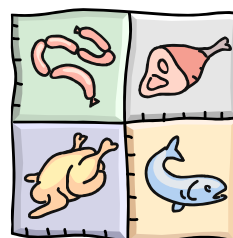
"Many people in rural areas consume a significant amount of wild game," says J. Lynne Brown, associate professor of food science in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. "But they often don't have information on the fat and cholesterol content of deer, squirrel and other game. Game meat tends to have the same amount of cholesterol as beef or pork, but considerably less fat than domestic meat," she says.

Nutrition experts agree it is important for all adults to limit their fat and cholesterol intake, but it's especially true for those with heart problems. The National Cholesterol Education Program recommends that healthy adults limit their daily cholesterol consumption to less than 300 milligrams and their fat intake to no more than 30 percent of total calories ingested daily.

Many hunters and their families like to eat organ meats of wild game, but the cholesterol content of both heart muscle and liver is high. Heart muscle can contain 275 milligrams of cholesterol per 3.5 ounces of tissue and liver contains 450 milligrams per 3.5-ounce portion.

"The extent that you should worry about these cholesterol and fat figures should be balanced with how often you eat these organ meats," says Brown. "If heart stew is a once-a-year specialty dish, a moderate portion shouldn't cause problems."

110B Industrial Park Rd.
P. O. Box 848
Harrison AR 72602
(870)741-6168
www.uaex.edu/boone



Drying and Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

Many people are interested in how to roast pumpkin seeds during the fall months. Here are some tips from Florida Cooperative Extensive Service:



Drying seeds and roasting seeds are two different processes.

To dry: Carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in a dehydrator at 115 to 120⁰ F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on warm for 3 to 4 hours. Stir them frequently to avoid scorching.

To roast: Take dried pumpkin seeds and toss with oil and or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250⁰ F for 10 to 15 minutes.

Source: Reynolds, Susan, Drying Seeds, Popcorn and Nuts, Fact Sheet FCS 8506, a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: June 1998

Can You Eat Your Jack-o-Lantern Pumpkin?



It's fall, and thoughts turn to pumpkin pie and to Halloween jack-o-lanterns. But, can you use a pumpkin for BOTH a jack-o-lantern AND for eating?

"Young children can enjoy creating jack-o-lanterns by drawing the eyes and mouth on the pumpkins with markers," states

Ann Hertzler, extension specialist, Virginia Cooperative Extension. "They can be creative and have a good time, and the pumpkin is still safe for eating."

Pumpkin pie tastes great this time of year and is also an excellent source of nutrients. "The bright orange color of pumpkin is a dead giveaway that pumpkin is loaded with an important antioxidant, beta-carotene," according to the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension. "Current research indicates that a diet rich in foods containing beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offers protect against heart disease. Beta-carotene offers protection against other diseases as well as some degenerative aspects of aging."

Here are some tips from the University of Illinois on preparing a pumpkin for making pumpkin pie. Work on a clean surface. Before cutting, wash the outer surface of the pumpkin thoroughly with cool tap water to remove any surface dirt that could be transferred to the inside of the pumpkin during cutting.

Preparing the Pumpkin

Start by removing the stem with a sharp knife. Cut in half with a sharp knife. In any case, remove the stem and scoop out the seeds and scrape away all of the stringy mass. A messy job, but it will pay off.

Cooking the Pumpkin

Boiling/Steaming Method: Cut the pumpkin into rather large chunks. Rinse in cold water. Place pieces in a large pot with about a cup of water. The water does not need to cover the pumpkin pieces. Cover the pot and boil 20 to 30 minutes or until tender, or steam 10 to 12 minutes. Check for doneness by poking with a fork. Drain the cooked pumpkin in a colander. Reserve the liquid to use as a base for soup. Follow the steps outlined below in Preparing the Puree.

Oven Method: Cut pumpkin in half, scraping away stringy mass and seeds. Rinse under cold water. Place pumpkin, cut-side down, on a large cookie sheet. Bake at 350⁰ F for one hour or until fork tender. Then follow the procedure outlined below in Preparing the Puree.

Microwave Method: Cut pumpkin in half, place cut side down on a microwave-safe plate or tray. Microwave on high for 15 minutes; check for doneness. If necessary, continue cooking at 1–2 minute intervals until fork tender. Continue as outlined below in Preparing the Puree.

Preparing the Puree

When the pumpkin is cool enough to handle, remove the peel using a small sharp knife and your fingers. Put the peeled pumpkin in a food processor and puree or use a food mill, ricer, strainer or potato masher to form a puree.

Pumpkin puree freezes well. To freeze, measure cooled puree into one-cup portions, place in ridged freezer containers, leaving 1/2-inch headspace or pack into zip closure bags. Label, date, and freeze at 0° F for up to one year.

(NOTE: Transfer hot foods to shallow containers to speed cooling. You can place loosely covered foods in the refrigerator while still warm; cover when food is completely cooled.) Use this puree in recipes or substitute in the same amount in any recipe calling for solid pack canned pumpkin.

NOTE: Don't let your cooked pumpkin sit at room temperature longer than two hours in the process of making puree.

T-U-R-K-E-Y Tips

Take out the neck and giblets from the neck and body cavities.

Use an oven temperature of 325° F. If you use a lower temperature than this, your turkey may not cook fast enough to be safe. A 12-pound unstuffed turkey will take about three hours to roast while a 24-pound unstuffed turkey may take up to five hours. Most turkey packages will give guidelines for approximately how long to cook your turkey.



Roast your turkey until the pop-up timer in the breast has popped up. Or, use a meat thermometer to check the internal temperature. Insert the thermometer in the inner thigh area near the breast of the bird, but not touching bone. (Even if your turkey has a pop-up timer, it's always a good idea to use a meat thermometer to double-check the temperature.) A turkey is done when the thigh temperature reaches 180° F. When you poke into a cooked turkey with a fork, the juices should be clear. For greatest safety, it is recommended to cook stuffing outside the bird, in a casserole dish or on the stove top until the center of the stuffing reaches 165° F.

Keep cooked turkey at room temperature no longer than two hours. Debone turkey and refrigerate all leftover turkey, stuffing and gravy in shallow pans within two hours of cooking or freeze these foods.

Enjoy leftover turkey. Use leftover refrigerated turkey within three to four days, stuffing and gravy within one to two days, or freeze them. For best flavor, use frozen turkey in about four months and stuffing and gravy in one month. For some recipe ideas on enjoying leftover turkey, check the Lancaster County Extension Web site at: lancaster.unl.edu/food/turkey.htm

You can roast your turkey up to a year later if you don't get around to fixing it this year! Just keep it stored at 0° F or lower.

Sincerely,

Trudy G. McManus
County Extension Agent –
Family and Consumer Science