

HOME-MADE “SOLID PACK” PUMPKIN - from KH



Use this puree in recipes; substitute it in the same amount in any recipe calling for solid-pack canned pumpkin. A 3-lb pumpkin will make about 1 3/4 cups, about a 15-oz can.

1. Choose a 3 to 4 pound sugar ('pie') pumpkin for preparing puree. (Do NOT cook or eat a carved Halloween pumpkin, as the cut surfaces breed bacteria.)
2. Preheat oven to 350F (175C).
3. Rinse the pumpkin under cold water to remove any dirt or debris from the outside of the pumpkin; wipe dry with a cloth or paper towel.
4. Split the pumpkin in half and remove the seeds and stringy fibers by scraping the insides with a metal spoon. Discard fibers and save seeds for toasting, if desired.
5. Rub the cut surfaces of the pumpkin with canola oil and place the 2 halves (cut-side-down) in a roasting pan. Add 1 cup of water.
6. Bake in preheated oven until pumpkin flesh is tender when pierced with a knife (approximately 90 minutes).
7. Remove from oven and place pieces on a cutting board or other flat surface to cool.
8. When cool enough to handle, scoop the baked flesh out of each piece with a spoon.
9. Puree pumpkin in a food processor with a metal chopping blade or mash by hand.
10. Place the puree in a sieve lined with a paper towel or coffee filter and set over a deep bowl. Let drain, stirring occasionally, until the puree is as thick as canned solid pack pumpkin, approximately 1 to 2 hours. (Important: Do not allow cooked pumpkin to sit at room temperature longer than 2 hours in the process of making puree.)

Note: Pumpkin may also be cut into chunks and steamed or cooked in boiling water until soft. Remove pulp from rind then mash or run through a food mill or food processor. This technique yields a more 'watery' puree, so it is important to drain out moisture as mentioned above, or by gently warming in a heavy-bottomed saucepan to remove any excess water before use.

Note 2: Homemade puree can be frozen for later use. Cool it completely, measure into 1 3/4 cup portions, place in freezer containers with 1/2 inch headspace.