



Perfect Pumpkins

Pumpkins are a fun way to celebrate Halloween, but did you know that of the 40 million bought for Halloween in 2022, half went to waste? That's £32.6 million worth of edible food!

Read on for tips which will mean you can enjoy pumpkins without contributing to the huge mountain of discarded pumpkins each year.

Buy the right pumpkin

Bigger pumpkins aren't grown for taste, so for a carveable pumpkin that is good enough to eat, buy a smaller pumpkin or gourd and have a sealable pot next to your carving area so you can pop the flesh straight in. You can then use the flesh in soups, casseroles, curries or roast it – it will freeze too. You can still eat larger pumpkins, but they're best cooked in pumpkin bread, pie or cake so the additional fats and sugars will enhance the flavour.

Paint your pumpkin

This way you can use the whole pumpkin after Halloween, maybe by roasting some slices or in a soup. You can simply scoop out the insides after Halloween, or use food-safe paint and peel after use.

Eat your seeds

Wash, dry and roast your pumpkin seeds for about 40 minutes at 160° for a perfect breakfast or crumble topping. You can also roast them with spices or a drizzle of honey for a delicious snack.



Dry your seeds

Wash and dry your seeds to use in a homemade musical instrument or as other sensory toys. You could even keep them to plant next year!

Feed the birds

Birds, squirrels and other garden wildlife would love to eat your chopped up leftovers as long as they are free of soot, wax and paint. You can hang from trees, add to a bird table or just leave in a corner of the garden.

Donate to a local farm

Some farms and animal sanctuaries now collect pumpkins to feed animals such as pigs, so keep an eye on your local social media pages.

Compost it

If you have eaten the flesh, then pop the carcass on the compost heap – just make sure you remove the seeds or you might create an accidental pumpkin patch!

Make pumpkin play dough

- 1 Steam or roast your leftover pumpkin chunks until soft
- 2 Use a food processor or potato masher to turn into a purée with no lumps
- 3 Once cooled, add the vegetable oil to 3tbsp of your pumpkin purée and mix together
- 4 In a separate bowl, combine your baby rice or rice flour, cornflour and ground cinnamon
- 5 Mix your wet and dry ingredients together until it comes together and then knead into a ball to use straight away

Ingredients

leftover pumpkin or other gourd
2tbsp vegetable oil
40g of baby rice or rice flour
40g of cornflour
pinch of ground cinnamon

Equipment

food processor or potato masher
2 mixing bowls

Storage: The play dough will keep for a few days in the fridge in a sealed container, or longer with the addition of salt or cream of tartar.

Top tip: The colour won't be bright orange, so you could use food colouring to achieve a spooky orange colour!

