

Graceful Living October, 2008

Note from Grace

Ah, change is in the air. Now that the Autumn Equinox has officially occurred, we can begin to feel that wonderful lifting of the humidity, which seems to energize all of us. My friend, Patricia, has a cat who yearly expresses his seasonal delight with his "fall frolics" which propel him through her house at top-notch speed. I'm experiencing my own version of fall frolics as I work in my yard, cleaning up after summer and planting my fall garden. We in Florida are so fortunate to have more than one growing season with the fall garden providing us with greens, lettuce, broccoli and other cool-loving vegetables. The farmer's market is teeming with new crop apples, fresh field peas, just-harvested corn, gourds of all shapes and sizes and new, tender greens. It just doesn't get any better than this.



THE GREAT PUMPKIN

"Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns. ~George Eliot

Pumpkin Stuffed with Wild Rice

Very few vegetables lend themselves as containers for other foods as well as the mighty pumpkin. Whether sweet or savory, you may stuff pumpkins with all manner of fillings. As a main dish vegetarian offering or as an appetizing side dish, this recipe will surely enhance your table.

Ingredients:

- 1 small 4-6 pound pumpkin
- 2 TBSP. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 pound mushrooms, sliced
- 4-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 2 cups long grain rice
- ¾ cup wild rice
- 5 cups water
- 1 cup pecans, roasted and chopped
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

3 TBSP. parsley, minced
2 tsp. thyme
Sea salt or soy sauce
Black pepper

- 1) Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- 2) With a sharp knife, cut a 4-6 inch wide lid off the top of the pumpkin. Scoop out the seeds and stringy fiber. Save the seeds for roasting.
- 3) Set a piece of foil over the opening cut and the lid on top of the foil. The foil will keep the lid from falling into the pumpkin.
- 4) Place pumpkin in a shallow baking pan with about ½ inch water and bake until the inside is just tender...about 45 minutes to an hour. Remove from oven
- 5) While the pumpkin is baking, prepare the rice by placing olive oil in a large saucepan and sautéing the vegetables until they are barely tender.
- 6) Add the rice, the water and thyme to the vegetables. Cover and simmer until all the liquid is absorbed...about 45 minutes.
- 7) As soon as the rice is done, stir in the pecans, raisins, parsley, soy sauce and pepper.
- 8) Place rice mixture into pumpkin and replace the lid for a beautiful presentation.
- 9) When serving, be sure and scoop up some of the pumpkin meat with each spoonful of filling.



Linus, Charlie Brown's good buddy, knew a good thing when he saw it. Autumn would not be complete without pumpkins...a smiling jack 'o lantern, that luscious piece of pie at Thanksgiving and the smallest ones gracing our tables with interesting centerpieces. Long revered by our Native Americans for its culinary and medicinal uses, pumpkin seeds were carried to Europe and beyond by the explorers of the New World. It was then that the pumpkin grew in popularity for its meaty flesh and crunchy seeds.

Though we've grown accustomed to mainly using the flesh to satisfy our desire for a sweet treat, pumpkin has been widely used in soups and hearty stews, with their casing providing a beautiful container for various rice and vegetable dishes. Though pumpkins come in many sizes and colors, we are most familiar with the deep orange ones whose color tips us off to the incredible supply of nutrition contained within.

Pumpkin (actually a member of the squash family) contains substantial amounts of the anti-oxidant, beta-carotene, which converts to Vitamin A in our bodies.

Along with the beta-carotene pumpkin contains potassium, niacin, calcium, iron and Vitamin C. Along with the vitamins and minerals, pumpkin contains a small amount of fat and a large amount of fiber rendering it a valuable addition to a healthy diet.

Though we often feel intimidated by cooking fresh pumpkin, it's really quite easy. Using one of the smaller pumpkins (not the mini's) creates a more palatable and usable flesh. Simply cut the pumpkin in half, scoop out the seeds and set aside, discard the seed webbing and place in a baking dish with about 1 cup of water. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes to an hour. The pumpkin flesh can then be easily scooped out so that you can move on to the next step in whatever recipe you are preparing.

Those seeds that you removed and set aside are also full of high quality taste and nutrition. Known as pepitas, these life-giving seeds are full of manganese, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus, iron and protein and have shown themselves to be of great assistance to the prostate, as well as other bodily functions and organs. They also contain a measurable amount of healthy Omega-3 oil.

Place the freshly removed seeds in a bowl of water and lightly move them between your fingers in order to remove any remaining pulp. Drain them and lay them out on towels to dry. They then may be used to grow more pumpkins next year or used as a wonderful addition to salads, stir-fries, cereals and casseroles.

Though many enjoy the seeds in their raw state, most people enjoy them after they have been lightly roasted. It is important to roast them at a low temperature (160 degrees) in order to preserve the quality of their oil. Simply spread them (in one layer) out on a baking sheet and bake them for about 1 hour.

One of the grandfathers of herbal and nutritional medicine, Jethro Kloss, made the statement that there is no disease for which we have not been provided a remedy. He stressed the wonderful science in nature, in trees, herbs, roots and flowers...a science that is only beginning to be understood.

With the advent of what we choose to call the "flu season", it seems prudent that we utilize the Earth's bounty in order to create an internal environment that is hospitable to only those organisms that work in our favor. By doing so, we place ourselves in harmony with our surroundings and in sync with the force that is inherent in all creation.



Testimonial

My son was born prematurely at 31 weeks after a very irregular pregnancy. He weighed 1 pound and 4 ounces (574 grams). He spent nearly 6 months in the hospital, had several surgeries, blood transfusions, and antibiotics, and was on oxygen and a heart monitor until he was a year old. For all of these things we were extremely grateful because they allowed us to have our beautiful son's life. But by the time he was about 18 months old he still did not have teeth or much hair and had nearly stopped growing. The doctors told us that they had done everything they knew how to do and if anything more went wrong he would die. Well, I couldn't accept this and a friend told me about Grace. We completely changed our lives according to what she told us. Within 2 months he had a full head of hair and all of his teeth. At 3 he was diagnosed with autism, but we had been doing so much that the dietary changes necessary to his health were not as difficult for our family to make as they were for other families. Today he is a healthy boy. We NEVER would have been able to save his life without the knowledge, love, and care of Grace. I look back on her in my life and am amazed that we were able to listen to her and HEAR what she had to say, but beyond that we DID it! We still do it! If she tells you what is wrong and you want to make it right then do what she says. It will save your life.

Melissa Reardon



We at Graceful Living are looking forward to a fantastic open house on October 25...Don't forget to RSVP!!!!