

Pumpkins are multi-dimensional gourds

By Mandy Kendall

With All Hallows Eve nearly upon us, I thought I would explore some fun ways to use those ever present pumpkins and take a look at some alternatives for treats and Jack-o'-lanterns, too.

With the avalanche of corn syrup drenched candy that kids are likely to be presented with on Halloween, how about being a treater with some alternative treats to offer.



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Here are a few ideas for healthier snacks for those trick or treaters:

- mini boxes of raisins
- sesame seed bars
- granola bars
- popcorn (uncoated if possible)
- small packs of trail mix
- pretzels (uncoated if possible)
- Clementines with Jack-o'-lantern faces draw on with a

Sharpie. These are a fun way of getting kids to look at fruit in a different way.

Once you've made your Jack-o'-lantern what can you do with all that pumpkin flesh?

Pumpkin face mask – Pumpkin is full of vitamin A, vitamin C and zinc is good for sun-damaged, dry or sensitive skin. Take a couple of tablespoons of pureed pumpkin. Add a touch of honey and a dab of milk, apply to face for fifteen minutes then wash off. You can also use canned pumpkin, just make sure it pure pumpkin and not pie filler!

Pumpkin hair mask – Pumpkin is also a great hair conditioner. Blend 1 cup fresh cooked pumpkin (or canned pumpkin) with four tablespoons of coconut oil in a food mixer. Apply to your hair, cover with a shower cap (or plastic wrap) and leave on for 30 minutes. Then rinse thoroughly. (Courtesy of Organic Authority.)

Alternative uses for pumpkins

Pumpkin bowl: Small sugar pumpkins make great bowls. Just cut off the tops, scoop out the seeds, rub the insides with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Put the lids back on and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Remove lids, turn pumpkins upside down and bake another 25 minutes. Once they are cool you can use them like a bowl ... which is edible.

Table décor: Glue fall flowers-leaves (real or fake) to pumpkins to use as table decorations for your holiday table or as give as gifts.

Plant pot: Use a cleaned out pumpkin as a pot to grow pumpkin seeds in.

Bird feeder: String up carved pumpkins as bird feeders. You could even put the seed and guts for the birds to eat.

Pumpkin potpourri: I thought this was a great idea.

Frosty the pumpkinman: This is my favorite.

Family fun

Pumpkin bowling: Remove the stem from the roundest pumpkin you can find. Set up some kitchen paper towel rolls, or stack up bathroom tissue rolls as bowling pins. It's all the more fun as it never rolls straight.

Guessing games: Play guess the weight of the pumpkin for prizes.

Mystery bowls: Fill covered bowls with mystery items and have the kids (big kids too!) stick their hands in and try to guess what's in there. You could fill the bowls with peeled hard boiled eggs, cold pasta, chopped up Jell-O, mini marshmallows, and other slimy foods or objects and ask guests to guess what's in there. You could tell them it's "body parts" for extra yuck factor.

Alternative Jack-o'-lantern: These make a great alternative to pumpkin lanterns.

You can use white light electric tea lights or multi color changing tea lights for a more ghoulish effect. (I found some on Amazon just as an example.)

Until next time ... Happy Halloween!

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

