

Pumpkin Facts



1. The word "pumpkin" showed up for the first time in the fairy tale Cinderella.

A French explorer in 1584 first called them "gros melons," which was translated into English as "pompions," according to History. It wasn't until the 17th century that they were first referred to as pumpkins.

2. The original jack-o'-lanterns were made with turnips and potatoes by the Irish.

In England, they used large beets and lit them with embers to ward off evil spirits. Irish immigrants brought their customs to America, but found that pumpkins were much easier to carve.

3. Pumpkins are grown on every continent except Antarctica.

Which makes quite a bit of sense considering Antarctica is a 24/7 icy tundra.

4. Over 1.5 billion pounds of pumpkin are produced each year in the United States.

The top pumpkin-producing states are Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and California.

5. Morton, Illinois, calls itself the "Pumpkin Capital of the World."

According to the University of Illinois, 95% of the pumpkins grown in the U.S. are harvested in Illinois soil. Morton is allegedly responsible for 80% of the world's canned pumpkin production.

6. 80% of the U.S.'s pumpkin crop is available during October.

Out of the total 1.5 billion pounds, over 800 million pumpkins are ripe for the picking in a single month of the year.

7. The world's heaviest pumpkin weighed over 2,600 pounds.

It was grown in Germany and presented in October 2016.

8. The largest pumpkin pie ever baked weighed 3,699 pounds.

Pumpkin pie originated in the colonies, just not as we know it today. Colonists would cut the tops of pumpkins off, remove the seeds, fill the pumpkins with milk, spices, and honey, then bake them in hot ashes.

9. Pumpkin-flavored sales totaled over \$414 million in 2017.

But people are starting to opt for fresh pumpkin instead, according to Nielsen Retail Measurement Services. Some pumpkin-flavored products have seen consistent growth over recent years, including cereal, coffee, and even dog food.

10. Each pumpkin has about 500 seeds.

They take between 90 and 120 days to grow, which is why it's recommended to plant them between May and July. High in iron, they can be roasted to eat. The flowers that grow on pumpkin vines are also edible.

11. Delaware used to host an annual "Punkin Chunkin" championship.

Teams competed in a pumpkin launching competition, where pumpkins were shot almost 5,000 feet from an air cannon. The event was canceled in 2017 after there was a tragic accident the year before.

12. There are more than 45 different varieties of pumpkin.

They range in color like red, yellow, and green, and have names like Hooligan, Cotton Candy, and Orange Smoothie.

13. Pumpkins are technically fruit.

More specifically, they are a winter squash in the family Cucurbitaceae, which includes cucumbers and melons. But because they're savory, many people just call them vegetables anyway.

14. Every single part of a pumpkin is edible.

Yep, you can eat the skin, leaves, flowers, pulp, seeds, and even the stem!

15. Pumpkins are 90% water, which makes them a low-calorie food.

One cup of canned pumpkin has less than 100 calories and only half a gram of fat. In comparison, the same serving size of sweet potato has triple the calories. They also have more fiber than kale, more potassium than bananas, and are full of heart-healthy magnesium and iron.

16. Surprisingly, pumpkin pie isn't America's favorite.

According to a survey by the American Pie Council, it's apple that is the favorite pie. Pumpkin is in second place with a respectable 13%.

