

Go Nuts with Pumpkin Seeds

What to do with the innards of hard squashes: Make butters, infuse butter, or even “risotto”

by *Aki Kamozaawa and H. Alexander Talbot* • NOVEMBER 30, 2011

For seasonal cooks, the change from the fall harvest to winter is tinged with sadness. But take comfort—even though the jack o’lanterns are long gone, pumpkins and their hard squash siblings won’t leave you. Gorgeous and full of flavor, our favorite method is whole-roasting them in a 350°F oven, rubbed with just the tiniest bit of oil, until they soften and caramelize, about an hour depending on the size. Once cooked, it’s easy to peel off the skin, cut through the flesh, and scoop out the seeds and pulp.

But squash seeds, too, are one of our favorite ingredients. Most people know how to make roasted seeds or pumpkin seed brittle. Here are a few more unusual options for making the most of their rich, nutty flavor.

Make squash seed sauce... or pumpkin coffee. Take the seeds and pulp from a pumpkin and put them in a medium saucepot with some sweet pie spices and enough water to cover. Simmer for 30 minutes, then cover and steep for an additional 30 minutes. Strain out the solids, leaving a dark orange liquid. This pumpkin seed stock can be reduced, seasoned with salt, and emulsified with cold butter to make a clean, pure-tasting sauce for fish or pasta. It can also be used as a steaming or poaching liquid for shellfish and vegetables. Finally, we’ve been known to bring it to a simmer and pour it over ground coffee in a French press to make a non-traditional but absolutely delicious version of pumpkin coffee.



MURRAY'S CHEESE
**La Tourangelle
Hazelnut Oil**

\$19.95 · 250 ml

[View](#)



MURRAY'S CHEESE
**La Tourangelle
Pistachio Oil**

\$47.95 · 250 ml

[View](#)



LA BOÎTE À ÉPICE
Smoked Cinnamon

\$15.95 · 2.5 oz

[View](#)

Infuse butter with pumpkin: Melt a generous quantity of butter over medium heat and cook the seeds and pulp in it until toasted and golden brown. Leave the mixture to steep, even overnight, and then strain off the butter—it will have wonderful flavor for drizzling on anything that wants a gloss of sweet richness. After straining, separate out the seeds and discard the pulp.

Toast the seeds for a snack: Coat the seeds lightly in oil or butter (or the infused butter, above). Dry out the seeds in a low oven (250° - 275°F) until they are toasted and crunchy. Season them with salt and eat, or crack them open and extract the inner seeds to make our next suggestions.

Grind seeds with spices to make complex seasoning blends: Gomasio is a classic Japanese condiment of ground sesame and salt. We like to toast our hulled pumpkin seeds and grind them with sea salt and pie spices to make a twist on the original. We also like to amp up the flavor by combining pumpkin seeds and pistachios with whole coriander, whole cumin, black peppercorns, cinnamon and salt. You can scale the ratio to your taste; we like to use equal amounts of pistachios and pumpkin seeds, weigh them and then use half that weight in spices, and add salt to taste. We toast the seeds and spices, let them cool (or even get them cold in the freezer) and then pulse them to a coarse grind in a spice grinder. These seasoning blends add complexity and richness to both sweet and savory dishes.

Make pumpkin seed butter: If you have a juicer or a food processor you can make pumpkin seed butter. Toast the seeds first until light golden brown for flavor, and then puree them. Pumpkin seeds tend to make a dry butter so if you're looking for something smooth and creamy, add a drizzle of high quality pumpkin seed oil, pumpkin butter (see above) or a neutral oil to the mix, anywhere from ¼-½ cup to 2 cups of pumpkin seeds. Use a bit of salt and maybe a spoonful of agave nectar or simple syrup for flavor. If you use a food processor it will take anywhere from 5-10 minutes to form a smooth pumpkin seed butter, so be patient and remember to scrape down the sides every so often to make sure you have a homogenous finished product. This will make about a cup and a half of pumpkin seed butter and it will happily go anywhere you like to use peanut butter in your kitchen.

Make squash seed "risotto": Haul out your pressure cooker for something totally unexpected. Toast and crack your seeds to get the inner seed, and pressure cook those with some stock (the pumpkin seed stock, above, is great), a pinch of salt, and butter at high pressure for 30 minutes. This tenderizes the seeds into a risotto-like texture and makes a stunning side dish. Gild the lily by topping with diced, cooked pumpkin and roasted mushrooms, a few fresh herbs and thinly sliced green onions.

Photos by Tejal Rao

More Eat Shoots & Leaves

Cook broccoli stalks Iron Chef-style

Apple core values

Have a celery heart...and some leaves, too

Orange you glad you saved the peels?

Yes, carrot tops are edible, and delicious



Aki Kamozaawa

Aki Kamozaawa is a partner in Ideas in Food: a blog, a book (Ideas in Food, Great Recipes and Why They Work), and a culinary consulting business based in PA. She believes that there's always something new to learn and



LE SANCTUAIRE
Organic Coriander Seed

\$5.95 · One 0.5 oz tin

[View](#)



WHOLE SPICE
Whole Cumin

\$5.95 · 1 jar

[View](#)

MORE STORIES

Hoppin' John: Pork, Peas and Rice for New Year's Luck

Two ways to make the classic - one traditional, and a risotto with a stunning green pesto [Read more](#)

New Year's Brunch: Dutch Baby with Tangerine Cream Recipe

Puffed pancakes with a sauce like Creamsicles: Hangover food at its most refined [Read more](#)

A Christmas Fruitecake Recipe to Dread... and Love

Black Cake, part cake and part pudding, is what it means to be from the Caribbean [Read more](#)

The Fight of the Seven Fishes

One man's sad, beautiful quest to modernize an Italian Christmas Eve tradition [Read more](#)

Finding Apple Stack Cake, a Classic Holiday Recipe

A rustic layer cake - baked by guests, frosted with apple butter and rarely spotted outside Appalachia - finally gets its due [Read more](#)

How I Learned to Love the Latke

I was traumatized by potato pancakes when I was a kid, but making 1500 of them got me over it [Read more](#)

Olive Oil Scallion Pancake Recipe

Chewy, crisp and fragrant, and perfect when you're in between batches of Hanukkah latkes [Read more](#)



Alexander Tabbot great meal. Aki can be found at <http://www.ideasinfood.com>. He is passionate about culinary creativity and pushing boundaries in the kitchen through education and innovation. The more you know, the more questions arise. The more questions you ask, the better the food. Alex can be found at <http://www.ideasinfood.com>.

Share this story: [Tweet](#) 0 [Like](#) 2

Comments



Add a comment...

Comment using...

Facebook social plugin

[Stories RSS](#)

[Back to top](#)

[About Us](#) [FAQ](#) [Shipping & Tax](#) [Return Policy](#) [Terms of Service](#) [Privacy](#) [Security](#)

Follow us on:

©2007 - 2011 GILT GROUPE, INC. All rights reserved.

[GILT.COM](#) [GILTCITY.COM](#) [GILTASTE.COM](#) [PARKANDBOND.COM](#) [JETSETTER.COM](#)