



WATERCREST

SENIOR LIVING

The Chef's Corner

The Great Pumpkin

As the chefs at Watercrest introduce fall flavors into our culinary creations, take time to carve out a special place on your plate for the seasonal tastes of pumpkin. The golden colors and sweet flavors of pumpkin are a wonderful addition to autumn dishes. Not only does pumpkin appeal to the palate, it also serves as an impressive health benefit.

That vibrant orange color tells us something about pumpkin's health properties. It's an excellent source of the powerful antioxidant beta carotene. Our bodies translate beta carotene into Vitamin A, which is thought to protect us from certain cancers and other diseases. Vitamin A is also key for keeping your eyesight keen. The same free-radical-neutralizing powers of the carotenoids in pumpkin may keep cancer cells at bay can also help keep the skin wrinkle-free, according to Health magazine.

Pumpkins are also a good source of fiber, potassium, and vitamin C. The seeds are packed with fiber and protein and provide an excellent source of zinc, magnesium, manganese, iron, and mono-unsaturated fat. Delight your palate even further with spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, sage and cummin which contain lots of polyphenols — compounds that offer numerous benefits for memory and brain health. Spices such as these have the ability to eat away at brain plaque and reduce inflammation to prevent cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's.

We invite you to try incorporating this unmistakable icon of fall by crafting your own pumpkin creations. Here is a Watercrest chef favorite recipe to liven up your meals, while also keeping your brain healthy.

Chef's Recipe: Savory Pumpkin Hummus

Ingredients:

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups dry garbanzo beans
1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
5 fluid ounces lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tahini paste

3 cloves garlic, minced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground allspice
salt to taste

Directions:

1. Place the garbanzo beans into a large container and cover with several inches of coolwater; let stand 8 hours to overnight. Or, bring the beans and water to a boil in a large pot over high heat. Once boiling, turn off the heat, cover, and let stand 1 hour. Drain and rinse before using.

2. Place the soaked garbanzo beans into a large saucepan and cover with several inches of water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the garbanzo beans are tender, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours. Once cooked, refrigerate the beans and liquid until cold.

3. Drain the garbanzo beans, reserving the cooking liquid. Place the beans and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the reserved cooking liquid into a blender, and puree until a smooth paste forms. Add the pumpkin puree, lemon juice, olive oil, tahini, garlic, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice. Cover and puree again until smooth. Use additional cooking liquid as needed to achieve a smooth consistency. Season to taste with salt.

