



THIS MONTH

- ▶ The hotbox
- ▶ Root vegetable casserole
- ▶ Pricewatch

THE WHAT. Pepitas, aka pumpkin seeds, (from Spanish *pepita de calabaza*, "little seed of squash") is an edible seed of a pumpkin or other cultivar of squash (genus *Cucurbita*), typically rather flat and asymmetrically oval. They're popular in Mexican cooking and are also roasted and salted and served as a snack.

THE STATS. Pepitas are a very good source of magnesium and iron, they're high in zinc – which aids the healing process and is useful in treating an enlarged prostate gland. They're also a good source of manganese, phosphorus, copper, potassium, niacin, folic acid, calcium, vitamin A, riboflavin, thiamin, pantothenic acid, omega-3 fatty acids, and antioxidants. A handful provides 57% of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for magnesium, 34% of the RDA for iron, 29% for manganese,

19% for copper, 17% for protein, 20% for mono-unsaturated fat, and 21% for zinc.



GOOD FOR?

- helps milk production in lactating mothers and to reduce postpartum swelling of the hands and feet;
- contains the amino acid L-tryptophan, which can help ease depression;
- contains the amino acid curcubitin, which has been shown to help treat intestinal parasite infections;
- reduces inflammatory symptoms in arthritis;
- may help prevent impotence, as well as difficult or dribbling urination;
- an alternative treatment for stage 1

PRODUCT OF THE MOMENT


Pepitas

- and 2 benign prostatic hyperplasia;
- helps reduce irritable bladder and the incidence of kidney stones;
- helps maintain bone mineral density and may reduce the incidence of osteoporosis at the hip and spine; and
- indicated for motion sickness and nausea.

HOW TO USE THEM

- Add whole or ground to cakes, breads, biscuits, muffins
- Grind in a coffee grinder or blender and add to winter porridges or raw savoury blends or smoothies
- Flavour risotto and stirfries and top hearty winter soups
- Sprinkle over cereal, add to muesli

THE BRAND

Our pepitas are grown using organic and biological farming methods. No  2



what's good in fruit+veg with Renata Field

direct. Swedes are similar to turnips and are an excellent staple, a tasty and nutritious base for soups and stews. Yakon, known as the apple of the soil, can be eaten raw and has a texture similar to a nashi pear.

their skins on for the best flavour.

▶ **BROCCOLI**, White and Romanesque
CAULIFLOWER

▶ **PUMPKIN**. Try some farmer-direct Gramma, Jarradale or Trombone. Shop staff can always cut you a piece if a whole pumpkin is too much.

ON THEIR WAY OUT

Enjoy them while you can!

- ▶ BANANAS, NSW Cavendish and Bonanza
- ▶ CAPSICUM, the green ones
- ▶ PASSIONFRUIT is so good right now.
- ▶ SQUASH, the bright yellow ones
- ▶ TOMATOES are still available sometimes, but don't expect to have them for the whole winter.
- ▶ ZUCCHINI

WHAT'S GOOD NOW

- ▶ PEARS, Packham and Beurre Bosc
- ▶ Table Queen and Pimpily SQUASH. Great in soup or roasted, cook them with

HERBS

We're trialing storing herbs in the shop fridge to keep them fresher. We currently stock Perennial BASIL, CORIANDER, LEMONGRASS, LEMONBALM, MAKRUT LIME LEAVES (or Kaffir), MINT, PARSLEY and ROSEMARY. Please contact me (produce@alfalfahouse.org) to order STINGING NETTLE and VARIEGATED THISTLE and other seasonal herbs.

- ▶ For week to week fruit+veg availability: go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/PRODUCTS/fruit+veg.htm

NEW ARRIVALS

- ▶ Lots of citrus. NAVEL ORANGES, MANDARINS, RUBY RED and YELLOW GRAPEFRUIT, TANGELLOS, CUMQUATS, three varieties of LEMONS; Tahitian and Makrut LIMES.
- ▶ Cold loving Brassicas. BRUSSEL SPROUTS, amazing Romanesque CAULIFLOWER and red CABBAGE.
- ▶ Now that it's winter, it's all about root vegetables. Purple and gold KUMERA, SUNROOT (or Jerusalem Artichoke), SWEDES, TURNIPS, PARSNIPS, five varieties of POTATOES, BEETROOT and YAKON. Sunroot and swedes are farmer-

2 NEW FACES

Please make most welcome two new faces around Alfalfa House. Aidan Calabria and Susannah Fox joined our team of Shop Coordinators in May.



Aidan



Susannah

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE

If you'd like to help shape the future of the co-op, feel free to come along to the next Management Committee meeting, which are the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm Black Rose, 22 Enmore Road Newtown. ALL CO-OP MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

PEPITAS

FROM PAGE 1

herbicides, pesticides or chemical sprays are used and the farm's remote location means it doesn't receive any overspray or contaminated runoff from neighbours. However, because the farm isn't certified by an outside body the seeds as referred to as 'chemical free'. As Australian stocks are small, the company does import some seeds from Europe, which have been through numerous tests to ensure they are free of heavy metals, allergens, chemicals and genetic modification and not irradiated. (The company's current strategy is to use

STAFF/MC VISION DAY Getting on the same page

On Sunday May 25 the shop was closed for the day to allow all staff and members of the Management Committee (MC) to get together for a one-day vision workshop.

The day was generously facilitated free-of-charge by MC member Linda Grkinic, whose paid work includes facilitation, and was scrumptiously catered by staff member, Monika Baumann.

Our purpose was to share our visions of what Alfalfa House as a community food co-op is and could be, to build trust between staff and MC, to lay the foundations of good communication and to continue the evolution of a stronger and more diverse Alfalfa House community.

The workshop drew upon our collective skills and knowledge, our cooperative structure and principles along with the objectives of Alfalfa House. From this fertile ground and often working in small groups, we fleshed out some core values we hold as staff and MC, such as respect, sustainability, and a commitment to fostering community. We also discussed our future hopes for the co-op and while they were diverse, we were able to begin to identify the paths toward those hopes.

As a passionate and committed group, full of ideas and different life experiences we didn't always agree. However, the day was not intended to be a forum for decision-making but rather the beginning of many

conversations and initiatives that Alfalfa House could engage in to build itself as a community and create social change.

Some of the questions that lie ahead for us all include:

- Should we expand Alfalfa House or do we seed new co-ops and buyers' groups?
- Are there natural limits to Alfalfa House?
- What is the most engaging and supportive process for welcoming and involving new members in the co-op?
- How can we facilitate ongoing clear communication channels amongst the membership, staff and MC?
- How do we ensure any profit is used for the benefit of the Alfalfa House community as a whole?

The day was a wonderful way to generate a greater sense of shared purpose and vision for those of us responsible for the day-to-day running of Alfalfa House. In future we hope to have forums open to all members.

We'll have more on the day on the website and will let you know when in a future eNews.

To become more involved in Alfalfa House there are various volunteering opportunities and we welcome any ideas and feedback you may have. Please email feedback@alfalfahouse.org or have a chat with a staff member next time you shop.

- Lara Daley and Renata Field

local contract growers to boost the Australian pumpkin seed supply and to one day eliminate the need to import.)

THE FARM The West family has lived on their 400-hectare property 70km north-east of Chinchilla in Queensland since 1983. They began selling pepitas at local markets in Noosa in 2004. The pumpkins from which the seeds are extracted have always been grown principally on animal manures. The family spent many years as active members of the local Landcare group and say they remain committed to sustainable farming and efficient, cost effective water use. All that pumpkin

flesh isn't wasted either. It's crushed in the harvester and fed to the cows, which in return produce lots of organic manure, which is used as fertiliser. The pumpkin is a special variety grown specifically for seed and the flesh, according to the Wests, doesn't taste as good to humans as it does to the cows. Any the cows don't eat are simply ploughed back into the soil, which helps replace nutrients and moisture.

STORAGE Pepitas should be stored in a sealed container in a cool, dark place or the fridge to maintain quality and freshness. Flour moths love them. MORE INFO www.pumpkinseed.net.au

Recipe of the moment

WITH GENEVIEVE DERWENT

Root Vegetable Casserole

I got this recipe from a friend and co-op member, Katherine Myers, but I made a few changes. I added roasted kumera to the parsnips, used a lot of leeks in place of the shallots and added more cheese and more parsley to the dumplings. I cooked it longer too . . . long, slow cooking made it extra tasty I think. Anyway we found it was delicious, the perfect winter comfort food!

SERVES 4

- 300g parsnips, cut lengthways into 4
- 6 tbsps olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 8 shallots, cut in half
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 350g carrots, cut into 3mm slices
- 350g turnips, cut into 2cm chunks
- 175g button mushrooms
- 1 strong veg stock cube dissolved in 350mls water and 200ml cider
- 1 bay leaf
- 1.5 tsp cornflour

DUMPLINGS:

- 125g self raising flour
- 60g cheddar, grated
- 3 tbsps chopped parsley
- 60g butter
- salt and pepper
- Preheat oven to its highest setting. Toss parsnips with 2 tbsps oil, season and roast 25 mins, until golden. Set aside.
- Heat remaining oil in large heavy bottomed saucepan. Add shallots, garlic, fry 2 mins. Add carrots and turnips, sauté 4 mins, add mushrooms, sauté a minute.
- Meanwhile, make dumplings. Lightly mix all ingredients together and season. Add about 1 tbsps water to form soft dough. Form about 16 walnut size balls. Set aside.
- Add stock to veges, along with about 175ml of cider and bay leaf. Let stew bubble about 5 mins, stirring occasionally. Dissolve cornflour in remaining cider, add to stew and boil to thicken.
- As soon as it has thickened, place dumplings in gently so they are about 3/4 immersed. Cover and simmer about 15-20 mins, until dumplings have risen, stew looks rich and veges are meltingly soft. Scatter parsnips on top to serve.

MEAL-MAKING IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL WARMING

The hotbox

Hotbox cooking uses insulation to slowly cook food, using much less energy and preserving more flavour and nutrients. If you used the Hotbox just five times a



pot with more insulating material. There are plenty of polyboxes and cardboard at Alfalfa House if you need them.

HOW TO USE A HOTBOX. Using a hotbox is easy. Just

bring a pot of food to the boil on your conventional stovetop, then pop the whole pot into the hotbox, cover it and leave to slowly cook. At my house, we soak beans or peas overnight. In the morning we bring them to the boil on the stove then put the pot in the hotbox, giving us warm, cooked beans ready for dinner when we get back from work. Hot food will stay warm for up to eight hours.

MAKING A HOTBOX. All you need is a polystyrene box filled with any insulating material such as old jumpers, blankets, cardboard or even hay – don't worry, they won't touch your food! You'll need to leave a space in the middle of the box for your pot. You can cover blankets with tea towels to avoid marks from the bottom of saucepans. After you place your pot in the hotbox, you'll need to cover the

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– Renata Field

PS. You can also pop a piece of glass on top of the hotbox and leave the box in the sun to speed up the process.

PRICEWATCH

Product	Alfalfa House Cert. Organic	Health Food Store Cert. Organic	Supermarket Cert. Organic	Supermarket Not Organic
Dried Basil, 100g	\$7.21	\$67.00	\$64.60	\$5.50
Gala Apples, 100g	\$0.62	\$0.94	\$0.70	\$0.43
Soft white flour, 100g	\$0.29	\$0.34	\$0.54	\$0.24
Toilet paper (Tree-free), per roll	\$0.64	\$0.70	\$0.60	NOT APPLICABLE
Udon noodles, 100g	\$0.85	\$1.51	\$1.04	\$0.69
Sugar, 100g	\$0.27	\$0.50	NOT AVAILABLE	\$0.21

– Compiled by Jo Rose

Survey results out

The results from the Members' Survey, which we reported in the last eNews, are now ready for viewing online. For the full story, including all the comments, go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/who_are_we.htm and click SURVEY 2007 RESULTS in red, in the left-hand column.

NEXT ISSUE
DIY Preserving
Lemons
for years without
refrigeration!

FEED THE eNEWS

This newsletter is your voice and a great way to communicate with other members. Please feel free to send in your hints, tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to feedback@alfalfahouse.org

E-News is edited and designed by Stevie Bee for Alfalfa House Community Food Cooperative Ltd