

Pumpkins and Their Kin



Grade Level: Adaptable for 2-5

Total Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Lesson Overview

This lesson is designed to introduce students to new fruits that are relatives of the pumpkin. It was taught during Halloween week. Pumpkins are members of the cucurbit/squash family, which includes cucumbers, zucchini, and squash. We used five different varieties of local squash for the exploration activity and served Cranberry Pumpkin muffins and pumpkin seeds as a snack. Students work in teams as ‘cucurbit explorers,’ making observations and using creative vocabulary to describe their cucurbit.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand the concept of plant families (WI.N.A; Science F.4.4)
2. Know foods that are grown in Wisconsin (WI.N.A; Social Studies D.4.3)
3. Know how to make healthy food choices (WI.N.E; WI.HE.C; Healthy Behaviors B.4.1, B.4.4)
4. Use descriptive vocabulary to communicate observations of fruit characteristics (WI.N.A; Language Arts D.4.1, D.4.2; Science F.4.4)

Preparation

1. Make the Cranberry Pumpkin Muffins
2. Squash being used in exploration should be sliced in half so students can observe the inside. If doing this ahead of time, hold the squash together with rubber bands or plastic wrap to keep them from deteriorating.
3. Students should wash hands before tasting.

Materials

Food (per class of 20)

24 Cranberry Pumpkin muffins (double the attached recipe)

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

2 each of 5 different types of squash (or cucurbit).
Suggestions: Pumpkin, Acorn, Butternut, Spaghetti, Turban, Banana, or any other variety of squash or pumpkin.

Supplies

Plates

Napkins

Explorations Sheet

Name tag stickers

Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch is a joint project of:



REAP Food Group:
www.reapfoodgroup.org

UW-Madison Center for Integrated
Agricultural Systems: www.cias.wisc.edu



Procedure

Review and Introduction

Review the Food Origins Lesson by asking students what they learned. Tell students this lesson focuses on a vegetable we associate with Halloween.

Pumpkin Facts: Share some interesting pumpkin facts with your students.

Pumpkin seeds can be roasted as a snack.

Pumpkins contain potassium and Vitamin A.

Pumpkin flowers are edible.

The largest pumpkin pie ever made was over five feet in diameter and weighed over 350 pounds. It used 80 pounds of cooked pumpkin, 36 pounds of sugar, 12 dozen eggs and took six hours to bake.

Pumpkins originated in Central America.

The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 1,689 pounds.

Pumpkins are 90 percent water.

Pumpkins are the fruit of the pumpkin plant.

Native Americans used pumpkin seeds for food and medicine.

Exploration

Divide students into groups of four. They will be acting as “cucurbit explorers.” They should carefully observe the outside and inside of the squash and prepare to present their discoveries to the class.

Each group should be given a different variety of squash and a name tag sticker. They should be given two samples, one whole and one cut in half.

1. Students should observe and describe the texture, feel, color, shape, and smell the squash, both inside and out.
2. If grade level appropriate, have students use the attached “Exploration Sheet” to record their observations. For younger children, teachers may want to record student observations on the board.
3. Students should come up with a creative name for the cucurbit they have discovered, write it on the name tag, and stick it to their cucurbit.
4. Students should choose a spokesperson or as a group present their findings and the name of their cucurbit to the class.
5. After all groups have presented, introduce the common name of the cucurbits and ask students to share opinions of how they got that name.

Serve Cranberry Pumpkin Muffins and pumpkin seeds. Cucumbers and dip also make a simple and appropriate snack for this lesson. **Eat. Enjoy.**

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“Pumpkin and Their Kin”: Exploration Sheet

Explore the outside:

- 1) Touch – How does it feel?
- 2) Color – What color is your squash?
- 3) Shape – Describe its shape.
- 4) Smell – How does it smell?

Explore the inside:

What do you notice about the inside of your squash?

NAME YOUR SQUASH (based on adjectives above):

“Pumpkin and Their Kin”: Exploration Sheet

Explore the outside:

- 1) Touch – How does it feel?
- 2) Color – What color is your squash?
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- 4) Smell – How does it smell?

Explore the inside:

What do you notice about the inside of your squash?

NAME YOUR SQUASH (based on adjectives above):

Cranberry Pumpkin Muffins

Ingredients

Flour	2 cups
Sugar	3/4 cup
Baking powder	3 teaspoons
Salt	1/2 teaspoon
Cinnamon	1/2 teaspoon
Allspice	3/4 teaspoon
Vegetable oil	1/3 cup
Eggs, large	2 each
Pumpkin, canned	3/4 cup
Cranberries, fresh or frozen, chopped	2 cups

Equipment

Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Mixing bowls
Mixing spoons
Muffin cups or tins
Oven
Oven mitts

Servings: 12
200 calories and 7 grams of fat per serving

Recipe Source: USDA Recipe Finder: University of Massachusetts Extension Nutrition Education Program

Recipe provided by:

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To Prepare:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Sift together dry ingredients (flour through allspice) and set aside.
3. Beat oil, eggs and pumpkin together until well blended.
4. Add the wet ingredients (pumpkin mixture) to the dry ingredients all at once. Stir until moistened.
5. Fold in chopped cranberries.
6. Spoon into paper lined muffin cups.
7. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 30 minutes, until a toothpick can be inserted and removed dry.

