PUMPKIN

More than Just "Pumpkin Spice"!

Pumpkin is packed with fiber, potassium, and vitamin C, and does not contain any fat or cholesterol. Pumpkin's bright orange color comes from beta-carotene, which is converted to vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A is essential for eye health and helps the retina absorb and process light.

A single cup of pumpkin contains over 200% of most people's recommended daily intake of vitamin A. Current research indicates that a diet rich in foods containing beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offer protection against heart disease.

Pumpkin also contains lutein and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants that are thought to help prevent cataracts and may even slow the development of macular degeneration.

PUMPKIN RICOTTA STUFFED SHELLS

Welcome the flavors of fall with these pumpkin ricotta stuffed shells! Rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, pumpkin adds a nutritious twist to traditional stuffed shells.

Ingredients

- 6 ounces jumbo pasta shells (about 12 jumbo pasta shells)
- 1 1/4 cups ricotta cheese, part skim
- 3/4 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (or 2 cloves garlic, minced)
- 2 tablespoons basil or 1 tsp. dried
- 1/4 teaspoon sage, dried
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 cup spaghetti sauce (low sodium)

Note

Freeze unused pumpkin and add to soup, chili or pancake recipes.

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Cook pasta shells according to package directions. Drain and place each on a baking sheet to cool.
3. In a medium bowl, stir together ricotta, pumpkin, spices, and all but 1 tablespoon of the cheese. Reserve the 1 tablespoon cheese for topping.
4. Spread pasta sauce in the bottom of a baking dish that holds all the shells in a single layer. Fill each shell with about 3 tablespoons of pumpkin mixture and place shells close together on top of the sauce.
5. Cover pan with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil, sprinkle with remaining cheese, and bake for 15 minutes more.

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