

All About

Pumpkins

Name: _____

Date: _____

Most people love the aroma of pumpkin pie, pumpkin seeds, and pumpkin $\pi \square \mu \omega \epsilon$, warm and moist straight from the oven. Mmm! When summer ends and fall begins, it seems as though everyone gets excited about these round, colorful pieces of fruit.

That's right: a pumpkin is an example of a fruit, and not a $\forall \mu \gamma \mu \blacklozenge \omega \epsilon \bullet \mu$. They are members of the gourd family, which also includes cucumbers, cantaloupe, watermelons, and zucchini. Interestingly, pumpkins are grown on all $\mu \square \blacklozenge \times \blacksquare \mu \blacklozenge \blacklozenge$ except for Antarctica. In fact, the oldest known pumpkin seeds originate from Mexico in 7000 BC. In the United States, pumpkins continue to be one of the most popular crops. 1.5 billion pounds of pumpkins are grown by $\times \omega \square \circ \mu \square \blacklozenge$ across the United States. Morton, Illinois is known as the pumpkin capital of the world because over 100,000 tons of pumpkins are processed there every year! It is the home of the Libby pumpkin plant and they proclaim themselves the $\square \blacklozenge \circ \square \& \times \blacksquare$ capital of the world.

Did you know that almost all parts of the pumpkin are edible? The parts are used in all sorts of food, such as soups, desserts, meals, and juices. Even the flowers and leaves are used in salads and desserts. The $\bullet \omega \square \gamma \mu \blacklozenge \blacklozenge$ pumpkin pie ever made weighed in at 3,699 pounds and had a diameter of 20 feet! Pumpkins are $\forall \mu \square \boxtimes$ nutritious, as they are high in vitamin A, vitamin B, protein, iron, and potassium.

Native Americans used to use the pumpkin seeds for food and medicine. They would also use strips of dried pumpkin to weave into mats. The pilgrims would hollow out pumpkins, add milk, spices, and honey, and then $\omega \omega \& \mu$ them in hot ashes. These became known as the first pumpkin $\square \times \mu \blacklozenge$! Today, people worldwide prepare pumpkins by baking, roasting, steaming, and boiling them. And while pumpkins can grow to be very large and heavy, pumpkins are made up of 90% $\blacklozenge \omega \blacklozenge \mu \square$.

So get out there and try a pumpkin. They are used for far more things than just carving into jack-o-lanterns for $\wp \omega \bullet \bullet \square \blacklozenge \mu \mu \blacksquare$!

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Directions: Using the passage, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Why would pumpkins have become a staple, or important part, of the Native American diet?

2. How have pumpkins been used throughout time? How have their uses changed?

3. Why would pumpkins not grow well in Antarctica? What conditions do pumpkins need to grow?

4. Think of your family. How do pumpkins play a role in your holidays or traditions?
