

## OCTOBER 2016 IT'S PUMPKIN TIME

Living in Florida, it is difficult to tell when the seasons change, particularly in the fall. Sure we have back- to- school sales, Labor Day and shorter days, but we are still in the throes of the heat and humidity that accompany our hurricane season. Fortunately, we have the annual launch of Starbucks' Pumpkin Spice Latte to let us know that autumn is here.



The Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte is 13 years old this year. It is Starbucks' most popular seasonal beverage with estimated sales of \$100 million in 2015, despite its 380 calories. It is credited with inspiring a host of novel pumpkin products. *People* magazine published its annual comprehensive guide to pumpkin spice flavored foods earlier this month. The usual suspects-- cookies, bars, cereals, coffee and beer are joined this year by a few novelties including:

- Tortilla Chips
- Salsa
- Peeps\*
- Pretzels
- Potato Chips\*
- Popcorn\*
- Hummus\*
- Milk
- Vodka
- Wine
- Moonshine
- Kahlua
- Seltzer Water



\*Included on the list of foods that should never have gone pumpkin, although there is some debate at BKS about the potato chips.

The popular press immediately responded with a lash of pumpkin spice memes and a list of "foods that should never have gone pumpkin".

I have to agree with the popular press – a large part of this list should never have gone pumpkin. It is an example of what the Center for Science in the Public Interest calls "food porn." In this sense, the word porn refers not to risqué images, but more broadly to the commodification, simplification and simulation of an experience, person or thing—in this case--pumpkin. The majestic pumpkin is one of the very few indigenous American crops. It is rich in Vitamins A and C, loaded with antioxidants and fiber and helps to regulate blood sugar. Americans ate 6 ½ pounds of it annually until recently when, despite the rash of pumpkin-flavored products, our annual consumption decreased to a mere five pounds per year.



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The decrease can be attributed to the fact that most of these pumpkin-flavored products don't contain any pumpkin at all. They are flavored with a blend of spices that the McCormick Company combined into one mixture in the 1950's. The mixture, Pumpkin Pie Spice, contains cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, allspice and clove. Eventually through common usage, Pumpkin Pie Spice was abbreviated to "pumpkin spice" and now simply to "pumpkin". Despite its many nutrients and health benefits, pumpkin without the spice is fairly bland. The good news is that when you add the spice mixture it becomes a nutritional powerhouse.

## THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF PUMPKIN PIE SPICE

SPICE	HEALTH BENEFITS
ALLSPICE	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anesthetic, antiseptic. Aids digestion.
CINNAMON	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anesthetic, antiseptic, anti-diabetic, anti-coagulant, stimulant. Aids digestion.
CLOVE	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anesthetic, antiseptic. Supports immunity.
GINGER	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic. Relieves nausea and common cold symptoms. Aids digestion. Boosts circulation, respiration and nervous system function.
NUTMEG	Antioxidant, anti-fungal, anti-depressant. Relieves cough. Reduces pain.

Another health benefit that all of these spices share is they are all warming. They all stimulate the metabolism and raise body temperature. Hence their popularity in traditional comfort or warming foods. It also explains why some appeared on the "foods that should never have gone pumpkin" list. I've never heard of anyone reporting pumpkin spice hummus among their comfort foods.

The popularity of the Pumpkin Spice Latte is understandable. It is sweet, warming and packs the caffeine kick of two shots of espresso. It will scratch just about any itch you may have. Most importantly for Floridians, it lets us know that autumn is here.



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 18 years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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