

pumpkin seeds

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Pumpkin Seeds

Two products go by this name and they are not the same thing:

- **Pepitas** — flat, dark green, hull-less. They come from specific naked-seeded squash cultivars, mostly *Cucurbita pepo* var. *styriaca*, bred in Styria in the 19th century. This is what recipes mean.
- **Whole pumpkin seeds** — the white-hulled seeds scooped out of a jack-o'-lantern. Edible hull and all, but chewier and much less useful in a salad.

Buy **pepitas** for cold food.

Why they earn a place

They are the best **nut-free** crunch in [Cold Meals](#) — useful given how common tree-nut allergies are — and cheaper per gram than any nut. High in magnesium, zinc and iron, and about 30 % protein by weight.

Toasting

Dry pan, medium heat, 3–5 minutes. **They pop and jump**, audibly, which is the timer — when the popping slows they are done. They puff slightly and darken. Salt them the moment they come off the heat, while the

surface is still hot enough to hold it.

Cool completely before they go into a dressed bowl.

Variations worth the minute

- **Salt and lime** — tossed while hot, for anything with [avocado](#) in it.
- **Smoked paprika and salt** — for [hummus vegetable sandwich](#).
- **Soy and sesame** — a teaspoon of [soy sauce](#) in the hot pan, tossed until dry, for East Asian bowls.

Keeping

Sealed and cool, 3 months; frozen, a year. Like all seeds high in unsaturated fat, they go rancid rather than stale — smell them before use.

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