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# Pumpkins and blackberries

by Trudi Morgan

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## Pumpkin Competitions



For many people growing a prizewinning pumpkin is a passion. The results can be spectacular. The resulting pumpkins can weigh more than a small car or a baby elephant!!

These pumpkins were exhibited at the RHS Harvest Show. They were transported on flatbed trucks to the venue before being winched onto a large wooden pallet. A forklift truck then manoeuvred them into the hall.

# Pumpkin Pie

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Over the river, and through the wood—  
Now grandmother's cap I spy!  
Hurra for the fun!  
Is the pudding done?  
Hurra for the pumpkin pie!



Pumpkin pie is a traditional American dessert, often served at Thanksgiving. It is flavoured with spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. To save time and trouble, many use pumpkin puree from a tin.



# Punky Night

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At Halloween children carve pumpkins and place a candle inside.

In Somerset, a similar tradition is Punky Night. Here they carve turnips or mangelwurzels instead.

A Punky King and a Punky Queen are chosen to lead the parade.



# Autumn's bounty

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When the pumpkins start to ripen and the hedgerows are laden with juicy blackberries, I feel autumn isn't far away..



My thoughts turn to how I can use them in the kitchen. A friend of mine told me how her grandma always gave her a spoon of blackberry vinegar when she had a cold.

I looked for a recipe and found it was very easy to make. Not only did it turn out to be a possible cold cure, but it can also be used as a salad dressing, drizzled onto ice cream or soft goats cheese or used to make a warming hot drink. My little grandsons love it and lick it off their lettuce leaves.

# Blackberry Vinegar

300g ripe blackberries

300ml apple cider vinegar

Approx 450- 475g caster sugar

Plus 2 extra tablespoons



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Put the blackberries in a large bowl. Add the cider vinegar with the 2tbs of sugar, stir and leave the blackberries to steep for 5 to 7 days. The longer it steeps, the stronger the flavour. Stir occasionally.

Strain the juice into a bowl through a muslin bag, leaving it to drain until the fruit has yielded as much juice as possible. Measure the juice and add 225g of sugar for each 300ml of juice.

Bring to the boil and boil for 5 minutes, before pouring into warm sterilised bottles.

It's delicious.

