

Development of Instant Food Mixes from Dehydrated Pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata* Duch ex Poir)

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Abstract—The present investigations entitled, “Development of instant food mixes from dehydrated pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata* Duch ex Poir)” were carried out during 2013-14 in the Department of Food Science and Technology, Dr Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan (HP). Instant food mixes like Instant Halwa Mix (IHM), Instant soup mix (ISM) and Instant Porridge Mix (IPM) were developed by using dehydrated pumpkin. It was found that pumpkin powder is a good source of β -carotene (7.77 mg/100 g), fiber (2.91%) and protein (5.04%), whereas, pumpkin seed powder was noticed to be a concentrated source of protein (34.31%). Among all the Instant Halwa Mixes (IHM), T_4 (dehydrated pumpkin shreds + seed powder in the ratio of 2:1) had the maximum protein (13.71%) while T_2 contained higher amount of β -carotene (6.90 mg/100 g). Sensory evaluation revealed that panelists preferred IHM prepared from pumpkin granulated powder (T_1). ISMs prepared by using pumpkin powder with various starch sources, however, did not show much variation in chemical composition but ISM prepared with rice starch (T_1) was most liked by the panelists as compared to corn (T_2) and potato starch (T_3). Maximum value for protein (6.43%), fiber (1.21%) and β -carotene (6.61 mg/100 g) was observed in T_2 (pumpkin powder + corn starch). IPM of T_3 recorded the highest β -carotene (7.37 mg/100 g) and fiber (1.21%) content followed by T_2 and T_1 which clearly showed that increased level of pumpkin powder enhanced the β -carotene and fiber in the product. Among all the formulations, IPM prepared from broken wheat and pumpkin powder in the ratio of 60:40 was rated as the best. Though, sensory scores decreased significantly with the advancement of storage but instant food mixes of all the treatments were well above the acceptable limits. Instant food mixes packed in ALP retained better quality as compared to PEP during storage. The study indicated that instant food mixes can be safely stored up to a period of six months with minimal changes in chemical and sensory attributes. Henceforth, it is concluded that ripe pumpkin which otherwise is processed to limited extent, can be successfully utilized for the production of good quality and nutritionally enriched instant food mixes of remunerative cost.