

# Pumpkin Spelunking

*Annotated*

**Spelunkers: explorers of caves; from Latin for cave – spelunk.**

Had it with scaredy-cat, cave-fearing bumpkins?

Chill with spelunkers and dine upon pumpkins!

**Claustrophobic: inducing an extreme or irrational fear of confined spaces.**

The best cave explorers munch pumpkin routinely

And enter each cavern serenely, quite keenly.

**Stalactites hang down, like icicles. Stalagmites rise up from the floor.**

Pitch blackness and damp claustrophobic conditions,

Stalactites, stalagmites, sad Greek musicians,

Fluttering moths and fluttering bats,

Wandering miners with lamps on their hats.

**In coal mining, canaries were once used as an air-quality early warning system.**

Asthmatic canaries, long vertical drops,

Tunnel collapses and hostile Cyclops.

Ghosts out of Hades in underground lairs,

Newly awakened cross grizzly bears...

**Grizzlies go into dens for a deep sleep over the winter. They don't eat, drink, poo or wee, and live off fat reserves.**

All of these hurdles you can surmount

When you eat pumpkin before setting out.

When stuff gets scary, deep in the caverns,

Banish the darkness with jack-o'-lanterns!

**Bumpkin: an unsophisticated or awkward person. Not a very nice name to call people. Best to avoid using in everyday conversation.**

**A reference to Orpheus from ancient Greek myth: musician, poet, and prophet who tried and failed to bring his wife, Eurydice, back from the underworld Hades after her death.**

**Another Greek mythological creature – Cyclops was rumoured to live in caves.**

**You might think this poem exaggerates how great it is to eat pumpkins, but there are many health benefits it doesn't even mention!**

- Pumpkin is a great source of the mineral potassium, and of something called beta-carotene that your body converts into vitamin A.
- Pumpkins also have calcium and magnesium, as well as vitamins E, C and some B vitamins.
- Vitamins C, E, and A can help improve your skin health.
- Vitamin C helps prevent bruising and speeds up wound-healing.
- Vitamin E is an amazing antioxidant – it stops your body from 'rusting'! Together with vitamin C, it protects against sun damage and dry skin.
- Vitamin A is essential for eye health – protecting eyes and preventing eye diseases. If you don't get enough Vitamin A, you will find it even harder to see in the dark when you are spelunking.