

♦ Pumpkin Pie ♦

Pumpkin pie goes back to early Colonial days and for good reason—it's wonderful, and it is such a mistake to relegate it to a once-a-year serving on Thanksgiving day. Rich, smooth and creamy, delicately spiced with cinnamon and ginger and cloves and nutmeg and allspice, it is a treasure house of flavor. When made outside of the Thanksgiving holiday, it invariably gets, first, a look of surprise, and then, a smile of anticipation. In other words, keep this recipe handy.

INGREDIENTS

1 prebaked 9-inch pie crust (see page 108)

For the Filling

- 2 cups (one 16-ounce can) pumpkin puree (solid-pack pumpkin, not pumpkin-pie mix)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups half-and-half (or 1 cup milk plus $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream, or one 12-ounce can of evaporated milk)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice
- 2 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks

PREHEAT THE OVEN

Set the oven to 350 degrees. Position the rack in the center of the oven. Place a cookie sheet on the rack.

PREPARING THE FILLING

1. Thoroughly stir the pumpkin and sugar together in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups of the half-and-half or milk and cream and stir the mixture together. To the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, add the salt and all the spices. Stir everything together and add it to the large bowl.
3. Beat the eggs and yolks together for a few seconds and add this to the mixture.
4. Using a large whisk or a heavy spoon, stir the mixture until it is smooth and uniform in appearance.
5. Pour the filling into the prebaked pie crust. Don't fill it so close to the top of the crust that it spills over the top when you move it. You can fill it three-quarters full and pour some more filling in after you have placed it in the oven and don't have to move it again.

BAKING THE PIE

Bake the pie anywhere from 45 to 60 minutes (depending on the oven) until the pie looks set except possibly for the very center (about 1 inch in diameter), which could shimmy ever so slightly when you move the pan. You should take it out then, as the very center will set up after the pie is removed from the oven. If the very center is already set and doesn't quiver at the time you check it, that's all right. Just remove it at once. Keep a close watch at the end of the baking cycle as you don't want to overbake the pie.

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SERVING THE

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COOLING THE PIE

Cool the pie completely on a wire rack. Or if you want to serve it much later or the next day, store it in the refrigerator.

SERVING THE PIE

Serve slightly warmed or at room temperature. You can serve it with a bowl of lightly sweetened whipped cream. Refrigerate any left over.

NOTE

Because the crust is already prebaked and the edges lightly browned, you can cover the pie with a tent of aluminum foil if it looks like it might be overbrowning while baking. To make the tent, fold a large enough piece of aluminum foil in half and place it over the pie. Make sure the foil doesn't touch the pumpkin filling.

