

Pumped-up Pumpkins

A classic pumpkin pie recipe, and how to make the most of your Halloween leftovers.

Ingredients

Serves four

- 750g/1lb 10oz pumpkin or butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into chunks
- 350g sweet shortcrust pastry
- plain flour, for dusting
- 140g caster sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp fresh nutmeg, grated
- 2tsp cinnamon
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 25g butter, melted
- 175ml milk
- 1 tbsp icing sugar

Top Tips

- Don't concern yourself with continuing to cook your pumpkin pie if the middle seems less firm. This will only burn the outsides. Instead, allow the middle to firm up naturally during the cooling process when you remove it from the oven.
- To check when your pie is cooked, use the knife test. Insert the knife in the middle during the baking process – if it comes out clean, it's cooked.

Method

1. Place the pumpkin in a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Cover with a lid and simmer for 15mins or until it's tender. Drain and allow to cool.
2. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Now roll your pastry on a lightly floured surface and place in a 22cm loose-bottomed tart tin. Line the pastry with baking parchment and baking beans, then bake for 15mins. Remove the beans and paper and cook for a further 10mins until the base is pale, golden and biscuity. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly.
3. Increase heat in the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7 before pushing the cooled pumpkin through a sieve into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the sugar, salt, nutmeg and half the cinnamon. Mix in the beaten eggs, melted butter and milk, then add to the pumpkin purée and stir to combine.
4. Pour into the tart shell and cook for 10 mins, then reduce the temperature to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Continue to bake for 35-40 mins until the filling has just set.
5. Leave to cool, then remove the pie from the tin. Mix the remaining cinnamon with the icing sugar and dust over the pie. Serve chilled.

Your Pumpkin Pie Leftovers

Roasted seeds

When carving your jack-o'-lantern this year, don't discard that mound of seeds that sit snugly inside, as they are packed with nutrients and can make a delicious snack. Simply scoop out your seeds and separate them from the stringy flesh before rinsing thoroughly in a sieve.

Now they still won't look quite like the seeds you buy in a supermarket, but that's because they need to be roasted, so preheat your oven and toss them into a bowl with either a sweet mix (cinnamon and sugar) or savoury (chilli powder, soy sauce and garlic powder), melted butter and a little salt before roasting in the oven. Just be sure to check they're not burning and toss regularly.

Curry

You don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy a pumpkin and chickpea curry, the ideal dish to warm up 'trick or treaters' on a chilly Halloween night.

Start by frying yellow curry paste with onion and lemongrass, then add chunks of pumpkin flesh followed by vegetable stock and coconut milk. Bring to a simmer before adding a tin of drained chickpeas, cook for 10 minutes more, then serve over rice. It's spookily good grub.

Living

MAGAZINES

TRING • BERKHAMSTED