

Pumpkin Cheesecake



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Tall and creamy pumpkin cheesecake with a graham cracker crust.

- **Yield:** Makes 16 servings

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 1 cup pecans
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs (approximately 4 graham crackers)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 egg yolk

Filling

- 2 15-ounce cans pumpkin puree*
- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract

- 5 large eggs
- 4 8-ounce packages cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 cups (1 pound) brown sugar

Pan

- 1 9-inch diameter, 3-inch tall springform pan

** You can make your own pumpkin purée by cutting a sugar pumpkin in half, scooping out the seeds, placing the pumpkin halves cut-side down in a roasting pan with a 1/4 inch of water in it, and cooking it in a 350°F oven for an hour, until soft. Scoop out the flesh and purée it in a blender or food processor. Strain out excess water.*

METHOD

1 Pulse **pecans, flour, brown sugar**, and **graham cracker crumbs** in a food processor. Add **butter** and **egg yolk**. Pulse until mixture is homogenous. Press into bottom of 9" springform pan and bake for 10 minutes at 375°F. Remove from oven and let cool.

2 Drain or strain any liquid from **pumpkin purée**. Take pumpkin purée and place on several layers of paper towels. Cover with several layers of paper towels and use your hands to gently squeeze out liquid from the purée.

Not that you will probably go through a lot of paper towels (can use tea towels too). Two 15-ounce cans of puréed pumpkin should yield a little more than 2 cups of purée, with the excess moisture removed. You want exactly 2 cups of the purée.

3 Whisk together the **flour, cinnamon**, ground **ginger**, grated **nutmeg**, and **allspice** in a medium bowl. With a wooden spoon (no need for a mixer for this step), mix in the **salt, pumpkin purée**, and **vanilla**. Beat in the **eggs**, one at a time.

4 In a large bowl, (helps to use a mixer for this step) combine the **cream cheese** and the **brown sugar** until fully creamed and smooth (no lumps). Gradually add the pumpkin mixture until fully incorporated. Bring a kettle of water to a boil.

5 Place crust-baked springform pan in the middle of three layers of large sheets of heavy duty aluminum foil (to help prevent water-bath moisture from leaking into the pan). Fold the aluminum foil up the sides of the pan and trim. (You can also use a turkey roasting bag instead of the foil to keep the water out.)

Place the aluminum wrapped pan in a large roasting pan (large enough so that there is room on all sides). Pour the pumpkin cream cheese mixture into the springform pan.

6 Place the roasting pan containing the springform pan in a 325°F oven on the middle rack. Pour boiling water into the pan so that it comes halfway up the side of the springform pan.

Cook for 1 1/2 hours. Turn off the oven heat and prop the oven door open. Let the cheesecake sit in the oven, cooling for another hour. Then remove from oven and let come to room temperature. Once it has cooled down, chill for several hours in the refrigerator, preferably overnight.

7 When ready to serve, gently remove the cake from the springform pan.

To do this well, I recommend a tip by [Dorie Greenspan](#) in her book [Baking: From My Home to Yours](#). To help ensure that the cake doesn't stick to the springform side as you unlock it, first run a blunt knife around the cake and then warm the sides of the pan with a hair dryer. Then carefully unlock the springform and lift off the sides.

Serve cheesecake with [caramel sauce](#), [candied pecans](#), and whipped cream.

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