

PumpkinPatchesAndMore.org

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How to Make Homemade Pumpkin Pie - from a Real Pumpkin, Not a Can!

Yield: It really depends on the size of the pumpkin and the size of your pie plate. If you use a 6" to 8" pie pumpkin and a full deep dish 9" pie plate, then it should fill that pie to the brim and maybe have enough extra for either a small (4 inch) shallow pie (or a crustless pie - see step 11).



Some people manage to make 2 full pies, especially if they use shallow pie plates and/or 8 inch pie plates.

Equipment

- A sharp, large serrated knife
- an ice cream scoop
- a large microwaveable bowl or large pot
- 1 large deep-dish pie plate and pie crust ([Click here for illustrated pie crust instructions!](#) they will open in a new window) - or two small pie plates and crusts

Ingredients

- a pie pumpkin (see step 1)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1.5 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- one half teaspoon ground ginger
- one half teaspoon salt (optional, I don't use any)
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups pumpkin glop (ok... "sieved, cooked pumpkin")
- 1.5 cans (12oz each) of evaporated milk (I use the nonfat version)

Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Get your pie pumpkin



"Pie pumpkins" are smaller, sweeter, less grainy textured pumpkins than the usual jack-o-lantern types. Grocery stores usually carry them in late September through December in the U.S. Note: the Libby's can of cooked pumpkin is just there for reference - it is the small can, so that gives you an idea of the size of a typical pie pumpkin. They're only about 6 to 8 inches in diameter (about 20 to 24 inches in circumference). If

you're in a pinch and can't find a pie pumpkin, here's a tip: butternut squash taste almost the same! Commercial canned pumpkin is from a variety of butternut, not true pumpkins! If you DO use a regular Jack O' Lantern type pumpkin, you may need to add about 25% more sugar and run the cooked pumpkin through a blender or food processor to help smooth it out.

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Just like selecting any squash, look for one that is firm, no bruises or soft spots, and a good orange color. One 8" pie pumpkin usually makes one 9 inch pie!

Step 2 - Prepare the pumpkin for cooking

Wash the exterior of the pumpkin in cool or warm water, no soap.

Cut the pumpkin in half. A serrated knife and a sawing motion works best - a smooth knife is more likely to slip and hurt you! A visitor suggests using a hand saw.



Step 3 - Scoop out the seeds...



And scrape the insides. You want to get out that stringy, dangly stuff that coats the inside surface. I find a heavy ice cream scoop works great for this.

Note: SAVE THE SEEDS:

The seeds can be used either to plant pumpkins next year, or roasted to eat this year! Place them in a bowl of water and rub them between your hands. then pick out the orange butts (throw that away) and drain off the water. Spread them out on a clean towel or paper towel to dry and they're ready to save for next year's planting or roast.

[Click here for roasting instructions!](#) (opens in a new window)

Step 4 - Cooking the pumpkin

There are several ways to cook the pumpkin; just choose use your preferred method. Most people have microwaves and a stove, so I'll describe those here. But others make good arguments in favor of using a pressure cooker or baking in the oven. At the end of this document, I've included alternative instructions to replace step 4, if you'd rather use a different method.

Put it in a microwaveable bowl

Remove the stem, and put the pumpkin into a microwaveable. You may need to cut the pumpkin further to make it fit. The fewer the number of pieces, the easier it will to scoop out the cooked pumpkin afterwards.

Put a couple of inches of water in the bowl, cover it, and put in the microwave.



Or steam it on the stovetop: You can also cook it on the stovetop; it takes about the same length of time in a steamer (20 to 30 minutes). I use a double pot steamer, but you could use an ordinary large pot with a steamer basket inside it!



Step 5 - Cook the pumpkin until soft



Cook for 15 minutes on high, check to see if it is soft, then repeat in smaller increments of time until it is soft enough to scoop the innards out. Normally it takes 20 or 30 minutes in total.

Step 6 - Scoop out the cooked pumpkin

Whether you cook the pumpkin on the stove, microwave, or even the oven, once it is cooked until it is soft, it is easy to scoop out the guts with a broad, smooth spoon, (such as a tablespoon). Use the spoon to gently lift and scoop the cooked pumpkin out of the skin. It should separate easily in fairly large chunks, if the pumpkin is cooked enough.



Many times, the skin or rind will simply lift off with your fingers (see the photo at left). I'll bet you didn't realize making your own pumpkin glop... err, "puree" was this easy!

Note: there are many varieties of pumpkin and some make better pies than other (due to sugar content, flavor, texture and water content. Drier, sweeter, fine-grained pies; the small (8" across) ones called "pie pumpkins" are best. If your pumpkin is more watery than the puree in the photo at right (there should not be any free water), you may want to let it sit for 30 minutes and then pour off any free water. That will help prevent your pie from being too watery!



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Tip from a visitor: "I make my own pumpkin pies from scratch all the time. To eliminate watery pumpkin I strain my pureed pumpkin through a cloth overnight. If I use frozen pumpkin I do the same again as it thaws out. It works great and my pies cook beautifully."

Step 7 - Puree the pumpkin



To get a nice, smooth consistency, I use a Pillsbury hand blender. By blending it, you give the pie a smooth, satiny texture; rather than the rough graininess that is typical of cooked squashes.

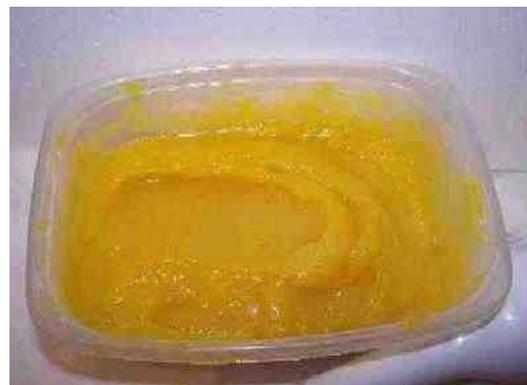
A regular blender works, too (unless you made a few frozen daiquiris and drank them first..). Or even just a hand mixer with time and patience.

With the hand blender, it just takes 2 or 3 minutes!

Another visitor says using a food mill, like a Foley Food Mill, with a fine screen, accomplishes the blending/pureeing very well, too!

Step 8 - Done with the pumpkin!

The pumpkin is now cooked and ready for the pie recipe. Get the frozen daiquiris out from step 7 and take a break! :) You may freeze the pie filling (not NOT can it: [See this page for the safety reasons why canning is not recommended.](#))



Step 9 - Make the pie crust

Yes, I know there are ready-made pie crusts in the frozen section at the store, but they really are bland and doughy. A flaky crust is easy to make! Again, note that unless you use large, deep dish pie plates, you may have enough for 2 pies.

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It is also time to start preheating the oven. Turn it on and set it to 425 F (210 C, for those in Europe)

[Click here for illustrated pie crust instructions!](#)

(it will open in a new window)

Step 10 - Mix the pie contents

All the hard work is behind you! Here's where it gets really easy. If you start with a fresh 8" pie pumpkin, you will get about 3 cups of cooked, mashed pumpkin. The right amount of ingredients for this is as follows:



- 1 cup sugar
- 1.5 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- one half teaspoon ground ginger
- one half teaspoon salt (optional, I don't use any)
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups pumpkin glop (ok... "sieved, cooked pumpkin")
- 1.5 cans (12oz each) of evaporated milk (I use the nonfat version)

Mix well using a hand blender or mixer.

Note: The vast majority of people tell me this is the best pumpkin pie they've ever had. It's light and fluffy - however... if you want a heavy, more dense pie, use 3 eggs instead of 4 and 1 can of evaporated milk instead of 1.5)

Step 11 - Pour into the pie crust

I like a deep, full pie, so I fill it right up to about one quarter to one half inch from the very top.



Don't be surprised if the mixture is very

runny! It may start as a soupy liquid, but it will firm up nicely in the oven! Note: the pie crust is brown because I used whole wheat flour! Tastes the same but is healthier.

TIP: What do you do if you end up with more filling than will fit in your pie crust(s)? Easy! Of course, you can make another, smaller pie crust and fill a small pie pan... or just grease any baking dish, of a size that the extra filling will fill to a depth of about 2 inches (see the photo at right), and pour the extra filling in.. then bake it. It will be a crustless pumpkin pie that kids especially love!

Step 12 - Bake the pie

Bake at 425 F (210 C) for the first 15 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 350 F (175 C) and bake another 45 to 60 minutes, until a clean knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

Here is the finished pie, right out of the oven:



I use a blunt table knife to test the pie. The one at left has already been stuck in the pie, and you see it comes out pretty clean, when the pie is done.



Step 13 - Cool the pie



And enjoy! Warm or chilled, with whipped cream, ice cream or nothing at all - it's great!

Alternative Cooking methods for step 4

If you don't have a microwave, or prefer another method, try these:

Stovetop steaming - Place your steaming basket or grid in the bottom of a large pot. Put enough water so it won't boil dry in 20 minutes, and yet is not so high that the pumpkin is touching the water level. You may need to add more water during the cooking. Add the pumpkin prepared in step 3, and get the steamer going. The cooking time is only between 8 and 12 minutes, depending on the range (gas or electric), and the pumpkin literally falls off the skin.

Pressure cooker - Place your grid in the bottom of the pressure cooker. If your pressure cooker came with directions, follow those for pumpkin and/or winter squash, like butternut squash. If, like most people, you've long since lost the directions, try this: Add enough water to just touch the bottom of the grid or shelf that you will place the pumpkin on. Add the pumpkin prepared in step 3, put the lid with the gasket, the weight and anything else your cooker requires in place, and turn the heat on high. Once it starts hissing, turn it to medium or medium high. The cooking time should only be about 10 minutes, and the pumpkin should literally fall out of its skin.

Oven - You can also bake the prepared pumpkin in the oven, just like a butternut squash. This method takes the longest. Just put the prepared pumpkin in an

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ovenproof container (with a lid), add about 3 cups of water to help prevent it from drying out and pop it in an 350 F (200 C) oven. It normally takes about 45 minutes to an hour; just test it periodically by sticking it with a fork to see if it is soft!

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I would like to make your pumpkin pie from scratch for my family for Thanksgiving. What would be the best way to do this? Can I make a pie now and freeze it? Can I buy the small pumpkins now and hold on to them until the week before Thanksgiving and make the pie?

Yes, the cooked pumpkin pies freeze pretty well, but of course, everything's a little better fresh. Pie pumpkins keep very well in a cool basement or garage (between 40 F and 60F), and they'd certainly keep until Thanksgiving if they are in good shape now (no bruises or soft spots).

Q. I live in Europe, so I do not have all of the U.S. ingredients over here. I'm also not that clear on the measurement conversions for Example: 1 Cup = how many oz or grams (better for me) dry goods-flour and from oz to grams or liters for wet goods-cream? I was wondering if you would also possibly know substitutes for the following items: Allspice (cinnamon?), Evaporated milk (Lowfat Cream? But then not sweetened! Add more sugar?), Crisco Vegatable Shortening (Help - no ideal)

No problem! I lived and worked in Europe for 7 years, so I found a lot of good substitutions.

1 cup = 1/4 liter - about 250 ml - But I can't give you a conversion to grams because volumes don't correlate to weight due to the variability in density of ingredients. But it is easy enough to measure flour in milliliters!

Evaporated milk is unsweetened milk that has the volume reduced by removing some of the water - it is sort of like concentrated milk - about 50% reduced, still quite watery. You could make your own by adding 100 ml

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(by volume) of instant dried milk to each 100 ml of regular lowfat (or skim or nonfat) milk.

Allspice is it's own spice! It is the dried, unripened fruit of a small evergreen tree, the Pimenta Dioica (typically grown in Jamaica). The fruit is a pea-sized berry which is sundried to a reddish-brown color. Pimento is called Allspice because its flavor suggests a blend of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg. So you could make a blend of equal parts of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg instead.

Crisco shortening is a vegetable substitute for lard, and adds no flavor. You could use butter, margarine, or even (ugh!) lard, in place of it. If you are the UK, there is something called Trex vegetable fat in the refrigerated section of the supermarket near the butter. I'm told it a good substitute for Crisco.

Q. My 8 year old son grew some pumpkins this year, so I tried your pumpkin pie recipe. I following all the instructions and the only thing I didn't do was make my own pastry I used the frozen variety. Unfortunately the pie only partially set and was full of clear liquid at the bottom making the pastry base soggy. I don't know what I did wrong?

Most likely it was the variety of pumpkin you grew - some are more watery. The small (8 inches across) "pie" pumpkins like they sell in Kroger are best. Next year choose a variety to grow that says it is good for pies, such as "Connecticut Field" or "pie pumpkin". Generally, these varieties are also more sweet, finer grained and less watery than Jack O Lantern pumpkins.

Easy solutions, if you must use a Jack O' Lantern type pumpkin are to let the pumpkin pulp sit in the fridge for a few hours. The water will separate and can be poured off. Another solution is to add 2 more eggs to the recipe and also cook another 20 minutes longer to get a firmer set.

Q. Hi, I tried making a pumpkin pie yesterday with some fresh pumpkin. I was mostly successful at it. Then I went out today, and bought another pumpkin to puree and freeze for a later time. The second one, although it

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was also a sugar pumpkin was much harder to work with, and was extremely watery. I pureed it anyway, and figured I could strain it in a colander, but the holes were too big. Then tried sieving it, and it only took out some of the water. The consistency was still pretty thick, but for the future, how is the best way to extract the water? Why are some more watery than others?

It's easier than you'd imagine! Just pour the cooked pumpkin, before pureeing, into a strainer or colander with a bowl underneath it, then set the bowl in the fridge overnight. Normally, quite a bit of water comes out.

There are many conditions that affect the water content of a given pumpkin: weather (rainfall, temperatures), soil conditions, the specific variety of pumpkin all affect it!
