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How to Make Homemade Pumpkin Pie - from an Ordinary Jack 'O Lantern Pumpkin, Not a Can!

I'll be the first to tell you to use a pie pumpkin.. but so many have asked how to make a pumpkin pie from a regular carving pumpkin, so here it is. A pumpkin pie made from a fresh pumpkin tastes so much better than the commercial canned glop that was processed last year! Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. And it is much easier than you think, using my "patented" tips and tricks! This makes a light, fluffy pumpkin pie with a fresh, traditional pumpkin pie taste. I will still say that you'll make a better [pumpkin pie using a real pie pumpkin: that recipe is here.](#)



If you like this recipe, you'll probably also like my [easy pumpkin cheesecake](#) recipe, [pumpkin soup](#) and complete, easy directions to cook a [Roast Turkey](#) dinner, [easy, tasty, healthy turkey gravy](#), [applesauce](#), [easy apple butter](#), [cranberry sauce](#) and [cran-apple sauce](#).

Directions for Making Pumpkin Pie from Scratch, Using a Jack O Lantern Pumpkin

Yield: It really depends on the size of the pumpkin and the size of your pie plate. You only need 3 cups of cooked puree, so you'll just need to estimate how much of the pumpkin to cook. I'd suggest 1/3 as a guess. 3 cups of puree will fill a full deep dish 9" pie plate 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.

Ingredients and Equipment

Equipment

- A sharp, large serrated knife
- an ice cream scoop
- a large microwaveable bowl or large pot
- 1 large (10 inch) 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 (9 inch) and crusts

Ingredients

- a pumpkin (see step 1)
- 1 cup sugar (see step 10 for alternatives)
- 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)

<http://www.PumpkinPatchesAndMore.org/pumpkinpiejackolantern.htm>

Note: if you do not have cinnamon, cloves, allspice and ginger, you can substitute 3 teaspoons of "pumpkin pie spice". It's not exactly the same, but it will do.

Recipe and Directions

Yield: One 10-inch deep dish pie or two 8 or 9-inch shallow pies

Step 1 - Get your pie pumpkin



Most pumpkins commonly sold are large, grainy squash grown for ornamentation, carving... and feeding farm animals. They're not really intended for human consumption. By contrast, "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! Now that I've tried to convince you to use a pie pumpkin or a butternut squash, and your children are screaming that they want to use their big ordinary pumpkin.. here's how:

Just like selecting any squash, look for one that is firm, no bruises or soft spots, and a good orange color.

Jack O Lantern on the left and a 6 inch pie pumpkin on the right.

Note: Don't EVEN think about recycling a pumpkin that has been carved and sitting at room temperature for more than a few hours as a pie. Not only is that just plain gross, mold and other bacteria have already started rotting it! Yuck.

Step 2 - Clean and scrape the innards

Wash the exterior of the pumpkin in cool or warm water, no soap. remove (and save) 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. If you tell the kids that it is their job to scoop out the pumpkin's "brains", they'll do the work eagerly for you.



Step 3 - Cut up the pumpkin

Cut the pumpkin in to slices, and then into manageable sized pieces to fit your pot. 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.



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.



<http://www.PumpkinPatchesAndMore.org/pumpkinpiejackolantern.htm>

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 both of those methods 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.

Method 1 - 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.



Method 2 - Steam 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

Either way, 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 peel and scrape off the skin with a broad, smooth spoon, (such as a tablespoon). Use the spoon to scrape the peel but scooping just under the surface. 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.



Watery pumpkin?

If your pumpkin puree has standing, 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! Beyond that, I have not found that the water makes a difference - I wouldn't be TOO concerned about it!



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."

Another visitor reported success using coffee filters in a sieve to drain out excess water.

Again, don't go to great lengths to remove water; the recipe accounts for the fact that fresh pumpkin is more watery than canned!

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 a food processor or even just a hand mixer with time and patience.

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

<http://www.PumpkinPatchesAndMore.org/pumpkinpiejackolantern.htm>

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 (but NOT "can" it: [See this page for the safety reasons why.](#))



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.

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 - or 1 cup Splenda, or 3/4 cup honey (honey may make a heavier pie, though)
- 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.

Notes: 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 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!

Other Tips

Making a pie with a Jack O' Lantern: A visitor writes on November 10, 2008:
"I have a suggestion for those who want to use a jack o lantern pumpkin. My son was so happy when he went on his first field trip to the pumpkin patch. He made me promise to make pumpkin pies with his big giant pumpkin. I did just as you said baked it, put it in the frig over night. Then I put the pieces in a pot and cooked it until it was like mush added a big cinnamon stick and and the sugar boiled some of the water out and 4 great pies. Thank you for your recipe it worked wonder full!!!!"

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 Vegetable Shortening (Help - no idea!)

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

A visitor tells me that according to New Zealand's most trusted cookbook, Edmonds:

1 cup of Flour = 175 g (6 oz)

1 cup of Sugar = 225 g (8 oz)

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 (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 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!

Feedback

- **A visitor writes on October 10, 2008:** "Just wanted to say i've been using this recipe for about 3 years now and everyone who tries it loves it. even the ones who claim to dislike pumpkin. My Mom is a chef and has her own recipe that she uses, but people still prefer my pie/your recipe. so just wanted to say to anyone searching the net for an easy to follow, delicious pie, look no further. Thanks."
- **A visitor writes on October 18, 2008:** "Your pumpkin pie recipe is awesome. People who had it last year loved it, and it was absolutely the best pumpkin pie I've ever had. I used a small Jack-O-Lantern last year, and this year I have a pie pumpkins. I'm looking forward to making it again, this time with the recommended produce, too! Simple stuff always tastes better. Thanks for this. It's a great site."
- **A visitor writes on November 01, 2008:** "I'm not sure if this is the right place to leave comments about your recipe, but here it goes. Yesterday for Halloween I tried making a pumpkin pie from a real pumpkin. I had some trouble cooking it and it seemed like I just kept running into problems (of my own fault), but I was determined to make this pie! When I finally got all the ingredients together I thought I had ruined it! I knew you said it would be pretty soupy but I never thought it would be like that. Plus I had TONS of

<http://www.PumpkinPatchesAndMore.org/pumpkinpiejackolantern.htm>

left over filling! Long story short though, when I finally brought the pie out of the oven I knew my hours of labor had been worth it! It was absolutely the BEST PUMPKIN PIE my family ever had. My father, who is quite health conscious by the way, finished off half of the pie by himself! It was totally worth it and I am so excited to make more for Thanksgiving. Plus I took your advice and with the extra pumpkin filling made pumpkin pie bars, which I'm sure will be gone in no time! Thank you so much for this recipe and the step by step instruction made all the difference in the world! Signed, A Very Satisfied First Timer"

- **A visitor writes on November 04, 2008:** "Coming from Argentina, I had never tried pumpkin pies before coming here. i LOVE THEM!!!! I have been using your recipe for two years now and it is the ABSOLUTELY BEST PUMKING PIE EVER. Thanks for sharing it! "

Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing)
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them.
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars and keep the rims clean.

