

PUMPKIN

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ROASTED PUMPKIN LOAVES WITH SALTY SPICED BREAD CRUMBS

1 hour 15 minutes. Makes 2 loaves.

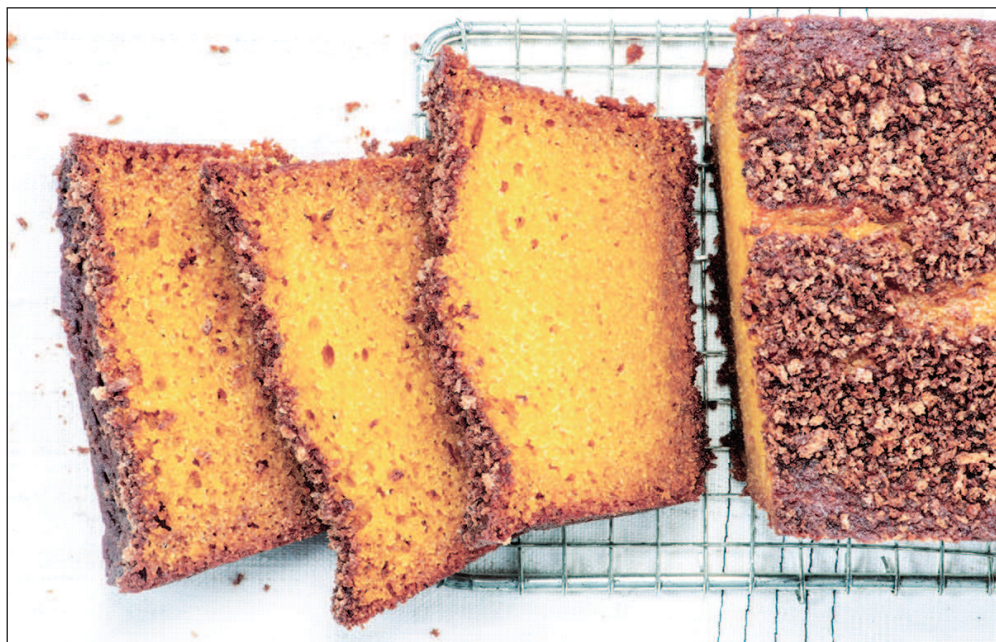
Why such a strange amount of pureed pumpkin? Because it's the same amount as one can of pumpkin puree, and if you insist on using canned, I want you to be able to swap it for the homemade version here.

In that same vein, you can swap all the spices used in the bread crumbs here for 1½ tablespoons premixed pumpkin pie spice if you don't have all those called for.

Don't want to mess with the bread crumbs at all? Omit them and the olive oil, and add the spices directly to the batter by whisking them with the flour in Step 3.

Because this is a loaf in which I want the flavor of pumpkin to shine through most, I opt for using neutral-flavored vegetable oil in the cake, since olive oil would overwhelm it (and there's already enough background flavor of it in the pumpkin puree and bread crumbs).

Lastly, this loaf is a flatsy-tatsy on purpose. High-domed loaves are beautiful but to achieve them, the texture always suffers for me. I prefer these flat-top loaves,



Mariah Tauger / Los Angeles Times/TNS

Roasted pumpkin loaves with salted bread crumbs

which have a very tender, moist crumb more akin to cake than bread.

1 tablespoon everyday olive oil, plus more for greasing the pans
2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting pans
½ cup panko or plain bread crumbs
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground allspice
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1¼ teaspoons kosher salt
1½ teaspoons baking soda
2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup vegetable oil (see note)
2/3 cup buttermilk
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1¾ cups pureed Roasted Pumpkin (see recipe

below) or one 15-ounce can pureed pumpkin Flaky sea salt (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease two 9-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pans with some olive oil and dust with flour, tapping out any excess.

2. Make the bread crumbs: Heat the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the bread crumbs and cook, stirring often, until lightly toasted, one to one and a half minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, allspice, cloves and three-quarters teaspoon salt.

3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda and remaining one teaspoon salt. In another bowl, whisk together the sugar, vegetable oil, buttermilk, vanilla and

eggs until smooth. Whisk in the pumpkin. Pour the wet ingredients over the dry ingredients and stir until just combined.

4. Divide the batter between the prepared pans, then sprinkle each with half the spiced bread crumbs; if you like, sprinkle each with a pinch of flaky salt. Bake the loaves side by side until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the middle of each loaf comes out clean, 55 to 60 minutes.

5. Transfer the pans to racks and let cool completely. Unmold and slice or wrap in plastic wrap and store at room temperature for up to one week.

ROASTED PUMPKIN

2 hours. Makes about 4 cups.

1 whole sugar pumpkin or kabocha squash (3½ to 4 pounds)
2 tablespoons everyday olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
 2. Split the pumpkin from stem to blossom end. Scoop out and discard all the seeds and fibrous strings. Place the halves cut side up on the baking sheet and drizzle with the olive oil, using your fingers to rub it all over the exposed flesh. Season the pumpkin liberally with salt and pepper. Bake until the pumpkin is very tender and lightly caramelized at the edges, about two hours.

3. Remove the sheet from the oven and let the pumpkin cool. While it is still slightly warm, scoop the pumpkin flesh from the skins and either mash it or puree it in a food

processor. Use immediately or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days or freezer for up to two months; thaw before using.



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PEARS

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1. For the crust: Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Combine almond meal, sugar and melted butter in a medium bowl. Stir to combine. Pat the crust mixture into the bottom and up the sides of a 12-inch tart pan and press into place with the bottom of a drinking glass. Bake the crust until just colored, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove and allow to cool completely before filling.

2. For the filling: Heat 4 cups water and 1 1/2 cups sugar to a boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low. Add the pears; poach until tender, 20-25 minutes. Remove pears from the syrup. Allow to cool, then cut out cores. Cut the pears into fans by slicing into ¼-inch slices that remain attached by about ½ inch at the stem end. Set aside.

3. Combine milk and vanilla in a small saucepan and bring it to just a simmer over medium heat. (Don't let it boil over.) Combine eggs, remaining ½ cup sugar and the flour in a large saucepan. Temper the mixture by slowly whisking in a little of the hot milk. Then gradually whisk in the rest. Cook, whisking continuously, over medium heat. At the first sign of a boil, 3 to 6 minutes, remove pan from the heat while continuing to whisk until mixture begins to thicken. Allow the custard to cool.

4. Spoon cooled custard into the tart shell. Lay the fanned-out pears, stem end inward, in the custard. Scatter the sliced almonds over top. Sprinkle with 1 to 2 tablespoons sugar. Heat



Terrence Antonio James / Chicago Tribune/TNS

A pastry shell of ground almond meal, butter and sugar holds a pastry cream and poached pears. Sliced almonds finish off the dessert.

the broiler in the oven. Place the tart on the middle rack, 4 to 5 inches from the broil. Allow to broil until pears and custard are golden, about 5 minutes, watching carefully.

5. Serve warm with creme fraiche, sweetened sour cream or whipped cream.

VANILLA-CARDAMOM PEAR BUTTER

Prep: 35 minutes
 Cook: 8-10 hours
 Makes: about 7 half-pints

You'll definitely want to use ripe Bartlett pears for this fruit butter because they cook into a silky puree. Making this pear butter in the slow cooker means you don't have to stand over it while it cooks.

We've given directions to both can and freeze this sumptuous delight.

6½ pounds Bartlett pears, peeled, cored and cut into ½-inch cubes
Juice of 1 large lemon
½ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon coarse salt
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1. Tumble all ingredients except butter into a slow cooker. Stir to blend, then cover and cook on low until the pear butter is very thick and mounds on a spoon, 8 to 10 hours. Test its readiness by placing a spoonful on a plate; if no liquid escapes around the edges, the pear butter is ready. If it weeps, continue to cook with the lid crosswise to allow excess liquid

to evaporate.

2. Stir in the butter until it is fully melted. Ladle the hot pear butter into sterile half-pint jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. To can, apply lids and rings just until finger tight; process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. To freeze, allow the pear butter to cool to room temperature, then freeze without lids. Once pear butter is frozen, add lids and freeze for up to six months.

APPLESAUCE:

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APPLE PIE

5 or 6 Granny Smith apples (Jonathan apples also make great pie)
1/2 cup sugar
3T flour
1T tapioca or cornstarch
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 tsp. allspice
2 or 3 pats of butter
2-crust pie shell
dash of salt
Juice of half a lemon (can omit)

Peel, core and slice the apples into a large mixing bowl.



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vents. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown. It's a good idea to put a piece of foil under the pan to save oven from drips.

Cooking apples adds another note to all the evocative fragrances of autumn. If you have garden questions or comments, please write: greengarden@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

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