

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Bourbon Pumpkin Cheesecake (crust from Cooks Illustrated, filling adapted from Gourmet via epicurious.com)

To give this cheesecake a swirled top, make the batter as instructed, but do not add the pumpkin. Remove $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of batter, setting it aside, and add the pumpkin to the remaining batter. Transfer the pumpkin cheesecake batter to the crust, smoothing the top, then dollop the reserved plain batter over the pumpkin batter. Use a knife to swirl the dollops into the pumpkin batter. Bake as instructed.

Crust:

5 ounces graham crackers (9 whole crackers), broken into large pieces
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Filling:

3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, at room temperature
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3.5 ounces) packed light brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3.5 ounces) granulated sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups canned solid-pack pumpkin
3 large eggs
2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon bourbon liqueur or bourbon (optional)

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 350F. Spray bottom and sides of 9-inch springform pan evenly with nonstick cooking spray. Pulse crackers, sugar, and spices in food processor until evenly and finely ground, about fifteen 2-second pulses. Transfer crumbs to medium bowl, drizzle melted butter over, and mix with rubber spatula until evenly moistened. Turn crumbs into prepared springform pan and, using hand, spread crumbs into even layer. Using flat-bottomed ramekin or drinking glass, press crumbs evenly into pan bottom, then use a soup spoon to press and smooth

crumbs into edges of pan. Bake until fragrant and browned about the edges, about 12 minutes. Cool on wire rack while making filling.

2. Working with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, or with a hand mixer in a large bowl, beat the cream cheese on medium speed, scraping down the bowl as needed, until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the brown and granulated sugars, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and salt to the cream cheese and beat for another 2 minutes. Mix in the pumpkin, then add the eggs one at a time, mixing until incorporated. Add the cream, vanilla, and bourbon (if using) and mix until just combined.

3. Pour the filling into the crust, smoothing the top. Bake until the center is just set and measures 155 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, 55 to 65 minutes.

4. Cool the cheesecake completely in the pan on a rack, about 3 hours. Chill, covered, until cold, at least 4 hours. Remove the sides of the pan and bring the cheesecake to room temperature before serving.