

Pumpkin Chiffon Cheesecake Bars



Level: Medium

Prep Time: 60 minutes

Serves: about 24

Cooking & Chill Time: 8 hours

Crust:

14 honey graham cracker boards
6 Tbsp. (or $\frac{3}{4}$ stick) unsalted butter, melted
2 Tbsp. white granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon



Spiced Cheesecake Filling:

1 pound cream cheese, softened
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup half-and-half
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup white granulated sugar
2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground allspice

Pumpkin Chiffon Topping:

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups canned solid-pack pumpkin (not pie filling)
 $1\frac{1}{8}$ cup white granulated sugar
2 egg yolks
 $\frac{3}{8}$ tsp. table salt
 $\frac{3}{8}$ tsp. ground allspice
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ envelopes unflavored gelatin (Knox)
3 Tbsp. water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup half-and-half
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. Wilton meringue powder
 $4\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. warm water

For Crust: Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 9x13 pan with parchment paper that extends 2 inches beyond the pan. Set aside. In a food processor, pulse the graham crackers, melted butter, sugar, and cinnamon until all are combined. Pour into the parchment lined pan and firmly press the crust mixture on the bottom of the pan with your fingers until even. Set aside.

For Spiced Cheesecake Filling: In a large bowl, beat the softened cream cheese with a handheld mixer until fluffy. Add the sugar and mix. Add eggs, half-and-half, flour, and allspice. Mix until combined. Pour over crust and bake for 35 minutes. Cool on a wire rack to room temperature. Refrigerate while making pumpkin chiffon topping.

For Pumpkin Chiffon Topping: In a medium bowl, mix together the pumpkin, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the sugar, egg yolks, salt and allspice. Set aside. In a large saucepan, sprinkle gelatin over 3 Tbsp. water. Let bloom for 5 minutes. Heat over medium heat and stir until gelatin is dissolved. Add half-and-half and mix. Stir a small amount of the warm half-and-half mixture into the pumpkin mixture to temper the egg yolks. Now stir the pumpkin mixture into the half-and-half mixture in the saucepan. Place over medium heat; cook, stirring constantly for about 10 minutes until mixture reaches 160°F on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat and place saucepan in an ice bath for about 10 minutes. While the pumpkin mixture is cooling, in a medium bowl, sprinkle the powdered egg whites over $4\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. warm water. Let stand 3 minutes. Beat with a handheld mixer until foamy. Gradually beat in remaining $\frac{3}{8}$ cup sugar until stiff peaks form. Fold egg white mixture into the cooled pumpkin mixture. Pour onto cheesecake filling and smooth the top with an offset spatula. Cover and refrigerate overnight to firm chiffon. To serve, lift the entire dessert out of the pan with the extended piece of parchment and cut with a sharp knife into bars. To keep the cheesecake layer white and clean, wipe the knife blade after each cut.

***Recipe adapted from Family Circle magazine, Pumpkin Chiffon Cheesecake