



Pumpkin Cream Pie with Grand Marnier

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Anna's Gourmet Goodies



I received an honorable mention for this recipe in the Humble Pie contest sponsored by the News and Observer a couple of years ago. This original twist on the classic holiday favorite will delight pumpkin lovers and even attracts those who are not fond of traditional pumpkin pie.

It takes a few extra steps to create, but the results are worth the effort. After all, cooking for your friends and family should

be a labor of love – this pie gives you the opportunity to demonstrate just how much you care.

Although you could use canned pumpkin and a piecrust from the frozen foods section of your local supermarket, I'd like to encourage you to try making both from scratch. Cooking pumpkin is not that difficult and the difference in taste is amazing. And if you have avoided making your own crust, have no fear. It can be done and it only takes a few extra minutes. The taste is worth the wait.

Finally, try purchasing whole spices and grinding them up fresh. Even if you don't have a spice grinder (don't use your coffee mill – you'll never get the flavor out – unless of course you like spiced coffee), you can use a knife to crush and chop the allspice and a regular fine metal grater for the cinnamon. Freshly ground spices release more flavor into the pie and you can really taste the difference.

Pumpkin Cream Pie with Grand Marnier

Pie crust (makes 2 crusts for a 9" deep dish pie plate):

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 stick + 2 tbsp cold butter
- 1/3 cup cold water

Cream layer

- 2 egg yolks
- ½ can of sweetened condensed milk (7 oz.)
- 1 tbsp Grand Marnier

Pumpkin layer

- 2 whole eggs
- 1 cup fresh cooked pumpkin
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 tsp allspice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Pinch of salt

The Crust

Sift together flour and salt in a bowl. Slice the butter into small pieces and use a pastry blender cut the butter into the flour until the chunks disappear and it resembles a coarse meal. If you don't have a pastry blender, use a fork or a couple of butter knives. Add the water slowly and stir with a fork until dough forms. Knead just until smooth, divide in half, and form two dough balls. Wrap in clear plastic and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let sit for 15 minutes or so. Knead a couple of times and lay on a floured surface. Sprinkle the top with flour and roll the dough into a circle approximately 11" in diameter. Gently flour the top of the dough again, lay the roller along the edge, and roll the dough up on the roller. Lay the roller on the top edge of the pie dish, and un-roll dough into the pan. Lift the edges of the dough gently and let it fall down into the sides of the pan. Never stretch dough by pressing it down to make it fit or it will shrink when baked.

Fold over the excess dough towards the middle around the top edge and use your fingers to pinch together. Go ahead and be creative here – use a knife or plastic utensil to create a regular pattern around the pie. Place in oven and bake for 7 minutes. Remove and cool.

Some people prick the bottom with a fork before baking to let steam escape, or use a pie chain or beads to keep the crust from rising up from the bottom. I simply keep an eye on it, pull it out if it begins to rise, and gently press it back down into the pan to push the air out.

The Pie

You can cook with most any pumpkin you'll find at your grocery, roadside stand or the farmer's market during the fall harvest season. Even after Halloween is over, you should be able to find pie pumpkins in the grocery thru the holidays. I prefer the lighter skinned variety; the ones that have a milky look to their color.

Cut the pumpkin in half and scrape out the interior with a spoon or ice cream scoop to remove the seeds and the stringy part of the flesh. Cut into smaller pieces and peel off the outer skin. Cut into 1/2" cubes.

Melt a tablespoon of butter in a stockpot and add the pumpkin. Cover, cook over medium to high heat until the pumpkin begins to release its moisture, then turn down to low to medium heat. Pumpkin is hard, but will quickly soften and release moisture, so you should not have to add any water. Keep covered and simmer until tender, approximately 30-45 minutes.

Remove from the heat and use a potato masher or hand held blender to crush the cubes. Don't feel like you have to turn it into the smooth paste you get from a can, a little texture works just fine. You'll have more than enough for one pie, so plan on freezing the balance for use later. Remove from the heat and cool.

Mix together two egg yolks and the sweetened condensed milk. Add one tbsp of Grand Marnier and mix thoroughly. Pour into the pie shell and bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Remove when the filling begins to firm up. It may still be a little soft and wiggly in the middle, but it should not be liquid. Place on a rack and let it cool for about 20 minutes or until it begins to firm up.

Beat together two whole eggs, and then add the pumpkin, sugar, spices and cream. Mix well after each addition. Pour the batter into the pie shell on top of the cream layer and bake at 450 degrees for 12 minutes. Lower the temperature to 375 degrees and bake for an additional 30 minutes, or until a knife inserted into the pumpkin comes out clean. You may find that you need to put some aluminum foil around the edges of the crust to keep it from getting too done – just keep an eye on it. Place on a rack and let it cool.

Serve with vanilla ice cream, or if you really want to put them over the edge, whip up some fresh heavy cream with a touch of Grand Marnier. Add 1 tsp. of Grand Marnier and 1 tbsp of sugar to each ½ pint of heavy whipping cream and mix it to a stiff consistency. Yum!

Bon Appetit!