



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Pumpkin Pie

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Tips and Time Savers

- Using fresh pumpkin might sound like a tempting way to fancy up your pie, but it can be too watery, so I don't recommend it. There's a reason why Libby's famous pumpkin pie recipe tells you to use canned—it makes the best pumpkin filling!
- Some people "blind bake" their crust first, but I've never found it necessary in this recipe.
- Be careful when shopping—sweetened condensed milk is not the same thing as evaporated, so don't grab it by mistake.
- Don't use fat-free evaporated milk. It doesn't taste as good, and you're making a traditional holiday pumpkin pie, after all—the diet can wait!
- I use kosher salt. If you use table salt, reduce the measurement a bit.
- The nutmeg tastes best grated fresh if you can!
- Speaking of freshness, make sure your spices are well within their expected shelf life. If they're approaching their "use by" date, or if the jar is so old the expiration information has rubbed off, it's time to replace it!
- Pinch the pie crust edge between your thumb and the softer part of your pointer finger. Continue pinching around the pie to make an impressive yet simple design.
- If your crust edges hang over the side of your pie plate, place the plate on a cookie sheet before putting it into the oven for easier handling.
- Use your extra crust and some small leaf cookie cutters to make a festive fall leaf garnish around the edge of the pie. Whisk some water and an extra egg yolk in a small bowl, and brush it on the leaves to give them a golden finish as they bake!
- If your crust starts to get too dark before the pie is done baking, cover just the crust loosely with a ring of aluminum foil.
- Your pie will cool more quickly if you set it on a wire rack. This also prevents residual warmth from continuing to cook the center of the pie once you take it out of the oven.

Storage

Wrap the pie tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate. It'll last for three or four days if you don't manage to eat it all by tomorrow's breakfast! Pumpkin pie doesn't freeze well.

FAQs

How do I know when my pumpkin pie is done?

When the center jiggles slightly but doesn't slosh, you're golden. The edges should be set, and the middle should wobble like Uncle George at a bourbon tasting. For precision types, that's about 175°F in the center on an instant-read thermometer.

Can I make pumpkin pie ahead of time?

Absolutely, sugar. Bake it up to three days in advance, wrap it tight, and stash it in the fridge. It actually tastes better the next day once the flavors have settled down and decided to get along.

Can I freeze pumpkin pie?

Technically yes, but you'll lose that silky custard texture that makes it special. If you're desperate, wrap it tight and freeze for up to a month — just don't tell me about it.

Why is my pumpkin pie cracking?

It got a little too much oven love. Pull it out as soon as the center barely trembles. It'll keep cooking as it cools — promise.

Can I use sweetened condensed milk instead of evaporated?

Nope. Sweetened condensed is syrupy sweet and will turn your pie into caramel soup. Evaporated milk keeps it creamy and balanced, like nature (and Libby's) intended.

Do I need to blind bake the crust?

Not for this recipe. The filling's thick enough to bake beautifully without it. Less fuss, fewer dirty dishes, more pie.

What is the difference between sweet potato pie and pumpkin pie?

They are similar and both delicious! Generally, a sweet potato pie is sweeter and heavier, while a pumpkin pie is less sweet but lighter and creamier. Add this [sweet potato pie](#) to your holiday spread and have your family vote which they prefer—or see if they can tell a difference!

What can I use instead of evaporated milk in pumpkin pie?

You can use 1-1/2 cups of heavy cream or half and half for each 12-ounce can of evaporated milk.

Variations

- This homemade pie crust recipe is easy—even if it's your first time!
- Don't let pie dough stop you from enjoying pumpkin perfection. Pop by the grocery store and grab refrigerated or frozen pie crust, instead.
- Or, experiment with a gingersnap crumb crust for extra festive spice!
- To make one 9-inch pie or one 10-inch pie, use a premade deep-dish pie shell or a pan labeled for 4-cup volume.
- On the other hand, you can make two 9-inch shallow pies by using two 2-cup volume 9-inch pans.
- You can use all white sugar, but brown adds a slightly richer depth.
- For a bit of boozy flavor, stir in a tablespoon of bourbon or rum.
- If you like cardamom, add a pinch with the other spices.
- You can get really creative and add your favorite streusel topping!
- Garnish with chopped pecans, drizzle with salted caramel sauce, and, whatever you do, don't forget whipped cream for serving!

Nice to have

As an Amazon Associate, I earn commission from qualifying purchases.

I swear by this Anchor Hocking 9.5-inch deep dish glass pie plate — it bakes evenly, shows off that golden crust, and makes you look like you know what you're doing. It's durable, dishwasher-safe, and the clear glass means no more guessing if the bottom's done. Basically, it's the kitchen sidekick every pie deserves.