

PickYourOwn.org

Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

Click on the printer icon that looks like this:  (at the top left, to the right of "save a copy") to print!

See www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm for many other canning directions and recipes

How to Make Homemade Pumpkin Pie - from a Real Pumpkin, Not a Can!

You probably take canned pumpkin for granted. You're there, the can is there, there's a pumpkin on the label... open it and mix it up with spices to make a pie, right? Ah, but a pumpkin pie made from a fresh pumpkin tastes so much better than the glop that was processed last year! Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. And it is much easier than you think, using my "patented" tips and tricks!



Ingredients and Equipment

Equipment

- A sharp, large serrated knife
- an ice cream scoop
- a large microwaveable bowl or large pot
- 1 large (10 inch) deep-dish pie plate and pie crust ([Click here for illustrated pie crust instructions!](#) they will open in a new window) - or two small pie plates (9 inch) and crusts (Metric: a 10 inch pie plate is a pie plate with a diameter of 25 cm, and a depth of almost 5 cm)

Ingredients

- a pie pumpkin (see step 1; you can use different types of pumpkin or even a butternut squash)
- 1 cup sugar (see step 10 for alternatives) (metric: 200 grams)
- 1.5 teaspoon ground cinnamon (metric: 3.8 grams)
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves (metric: 2 grams)
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice (metric: 2 grams)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger (metric: 1.25 grams)
- Optional: 1/2 teaspoon mace (which you'll find in the very old pumpkin pie recipes)
- 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract (optional) (metric: 20 grams)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional, I don't use any)
- 4 large eggs - to reduce fat and cholesterol, you may use egg whites (like "Egg Beaters) instead, and vegans may want to use Ener-G ([see this page for more information about egg substitutes](#))
- 3 cups pumpkin glop (ok... "sieved, cooked pumpkin") (metric: 0.7 litre)
- 1.5 cans (12oz each) of evaporated milk (I use the nonfat version) for best results. (metric: each can is about .35 liter, or about a half liter total))

Note for the UK and Europe: Nestle Carnation has two sizes of cans in England: 170g and 410g - the large 410g can is 14 fl. oz. and the small 170g can is 5 fl. oz. (the same as the small can in the US). Use one of each (19 fl. oz. total) in your pie.

Other notes:

If you can't get canned evaporated milk, make your own from nonfat dried milk and make it twice as concentrated as the directions on the box call for!

If you can't get nonfat dried milk, just use milk.

If you are lactose-intolerant, use lactose-free milk or soy milk.

One visitor tried fresh whipping cream (unwhipped) and reported the pie "turned out wonderful! "

Another suggests using coconut milk, if you are allergic to dairy.

Note: if you do not have cinnamon, cloves, allspice and ginger, you can substitute 3 teaspoons of "pumpkin pie spice". It's not exactly the same, but it will do.

Note: If you can't get evaporated milk, you can substitute nonfat dried milk - make it twice as concentrated as the directions on the box say to reconstitute it. It won't be the same as evaporated milk, but it ought to come close.

Directions for Making Pumpkin Pie from Scratch

Yield: It really depends on the size of the pumpkin and the size of your pie plate. If you use a 6" pie pumpkin and a full deep dish 9" pie plate, then it should fill that pie to the brim and maybe have enough extra for either a small (4 inch) shallow pie (or a crustless pie - see step 11).

Some people manage to make 2 full pies, especially if they use shallow pie plates and/or 8 inch pie plates.

Recipe and Directions

Yield: One 9-inch deep dish pie or two 8-inch shallow pies

Step 1 - Get your pie pumpkin

"Pie pumpkins" are smaller, sweeter, less grainy textured pumpkins than the usual jack-o-lantern types. Grocery stores usually carry them in late September through December in the U.S. In some parts of the country, they are also called sugar pumpkins or even "cheese pumpkins". Go figure that one. Note: the Libby's can of cooked pumpkin is just there for reference - it is the small can, so that gives you an idea of



the size of a typical pie pumpkin. They're only about 6 to 8 inches in diameter (about 20 to 24 inches in circumference). **TIP:** If you're in a pinch and can't find a pie pumpkin, here's a tip: butternut squash taste almost the same! Commercial canned pumpkin is from a variety of butternut, not true pumpkins! If you insist on using a regular Jack O' Lantern type pumpkin, you may need to add about 25% more sugar and run the cooked pumpkin through a blender or food processor to help smooth it out.

Just like selecting any squash, look for one that is firm, no bruises or soft spots, and a good orange color. One 6" pie pumpkin usually makes one 10 inch deep dish pie *and a bit extra*; or two 9 inch shallow pies! If you have extra goop, you can always pour it into greased baking pans and make a crustless mini pie with the excess (and the cooked pies do freeze well!)

If you live in the Far East (Thailand, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, etc.) and cannot get a pumpkin or a butternut squash, I'm told that Japanese pumpkins make a great substitute. Just cube the meat into small cubes and steam them for 35 minutes. The rest of the preparation is the same and I'm told the taste is great.

Step 2 - Prepare the pumpkin for cooking

Wash the exterior of the pumpkin in cool or warm water, no soap.

Cut the pumpkin in half. A serrated knife and a sawing motion works best - a smooth knife is more likely to slip and hurt you! A visitor suggests using a hand saw.



Step 3 - Scoop out the seeds...

And scrape the insides. You want to get out that stringy, dangly stuff that coats the inside surface. I find a heavy ice cream scoop works great for this.

Note: SAVE THE SEEDS:

The seeds can be used either to plant pumpkins next year, or roasted to eat this year! Place them in a bowl of water and rub them between your hands. then pick out the orange butts (throw that away) and drain off



the water. Spread them out on a clean towel or paper towel to dry and they're ready to save for next year's planting or roast. [Click here for roasting instructions!](#) (opens in a new window)

Step 4 - Cooking the pumpkin

There are several ways to cook the pumpkin; just choose use your preferred method. Most people have microwaves and a stove, so I'll describe both of those methods here. But others make good arguments in favor of using a pressure cooker or baking in the oven. At the end of this document, I've included alternative instructions to replace step 4, if you'd rather use a different method.

Method 1 - Bake in the oven

You can also bake the prepared pumpkin in the oven, just like a butternut squash. This method takes the longest. Basically, you cut and scoop out the pumpkin as for the other methods, place it cut side down into a covered oven container. Cover the ovenproof container (with a lid), and pop it in an 350 F (165 C) oven. It normally takes about 45 minutes to 90 minutes (it can vary a lot!); just test it periodically by sticking it with a fork to see if it is soft!



Method 2 - Steam on the stovetop

You can also cook it on the stovetop; it takes about the same length of time in a steamer (20 to 30 minutes). I use a double pot steamer,

but you could use an ordinary large pot with a steamer basket inside it!:



Method 3 - Put it in a microwaveable bowl

Remove the stem, and put the pumpkin into a microwaveable. You may need to cut the pumpkin further to make it fit. The fewer the number of pieces, the easier it will to scoop out the cooked pumpkin afterwards.

Put a couple of inches of water in the bowl, cover it, and put in the microwave. I cook it on high until it is soft. That may take 20 minutes or more, so like anything else, try 15 minutes, see how much it is softened, then do 5 minute increments until it is soft

Cook the pumpkin until it is soft

Whichever method you use, cook the pumpkin until it is soft and will separate from the skin.



Step 5 - Scoop out the cooked pumpkin

Whether you cook the pumpkin on the stove, microwave, or even the oven, once it is cooked until it is soft, it is easy to scoop out the guts with a broad, smooth spoon, (such as a tablespoon). Use the spoon to gently lift and scoop the cooked pumpkin out of the skin. It should separate easily in fairly large chunks, if the pumpkin is cooked enough.



Many times the skin or rind will simply lift off with your fingers (see the photo at left) . I'll bet you didn't realize making your own pumpkin glop... err, "puree" was this easy!

Note: there are many varieties of pumpkin and some make better pies than other (due to sugar content, flavor, texture and water content. Drier, sweeter, fine-grained pies; the small (8" across) ones called "pie pumpkins" are best.

Watery pumpkin?

If your pumpkin puree has standing, free water, you may want to let it sit for 30 minutes and then pour off any free water. That will help prevent your pie from being too watery! Beyond that, I have not found that the water makes a difference - I wouldn't be TOO concerned about it! The recipe accounts for the liquid!

Tip on using the liquid: A visitor writes on November 26, 2009: "Any suggestions or use for the pumpkin juice left over after draining the cooked pumpkin? I keep thinking there must be some good use - maybe soup or in cookies or something?"

Yes! You can use the liquid as a replacement for water, and in some cases, milk, in recipes, like soups, cookies, breads, muffins and even pancakes and waffles, where it adds a very nice flavor!

Tip from a visitor: "I make my own pumpkin pies from scratch all the time. To eliminate watery pumpkin I strain my pureed pumpkin through a cloth overnight. If I use frozen pumpkin I do the same again as it thaws out. It works great and my pies cook beautifully."

Another visitor reported success using coffee filters in a sieve to drain out excess water.

Again, don't go to great lengths to remove water; the recipe accounts for the fact that fresh pumpkin is more watery than canned!

Step 6 - Puree the pumpkin

To get a nice, smooth consistency, I use a Pillsbury hand blender. By blending it, you give the pie a smooth, satiny texture; rather than the rough graininess that is typical of cooked squashes.



A regular blender works, too (unless you made a few frozen daiquiris and drank them first..). Or a food processor or even just a hand mixer with time and patience.

With the hand blender, it just takes 2 or 3 minutes!

Another visitor says using a food mill, like a Foley Food Mill, with a fine screen, accomplishes the blending/pureeing very well, too!



Step 7 - Done with the pumpkin!

The pumpkin is now cooked and ready for the pie recipe. Get the frozen daiquiris out from step 6 and take a break! :)

Note: **You may freeze the puree or pie filling to use it later!** Just use a freezer bag or other container to exclude as much air as possible. It should last a year or more in a deep freezer On the other hand, you may NOT "can" it: [See this page for the safety reasons why you shouldn't can it.](#))

Step 8 - Make the pie crust

Yes, I know there are ready-made pie crusts in the frozen section at the store, but they really are bland and doughy. A flaky crust is easy to make! Again, note that unless you use large, deep dish pie plates, you may have enough for 2 pies.

It is also time to start preheating the oven. Turn it on and set it to 425 F (210 C, for those in Europe)

[Click here for illustrated pie crust instructions!](#)
(it will open in a new window)

Step 9 - Mix the pie contents

All the hard work is behind you! Here's where it gets really easy. If you start with a fresh 8" pie pumpkin, you will get about 3 cups of cooked, mashed pumpkin. The right amount of ingredients for this is as follows:

- 1 cup sugar - or 1 cup Stevia, my preference (or if you prefer, Splenda), or 3/4 cup honey (honey may make a heavier pie, though)
- 1.5 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- one half teaspoon ground ginger
- one half teaspoon salt (optional,



I don't use any)

- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups pumpkin glop (ok... "sieved, cooked pumpkin")
- 1.5 cans (12oz each) of evaporated milk (I use the nonfat version) (note for those in France: evaporated milk in France is called "lait concentre"; "lait evapore" is powder)
- 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract (**optional**) (metric: 20 grams)

Mix well using a hand blender or mixer.

Note: You may substitute 4 teaspoons of "pumpkin pie spice" instead of the cinnamon, cloves, allspice and ginger. But I think you get better results with the separate spices.

Note: The vast majority of people tell me this is the best pumpkin pie they've ever had. It's light and fluffy - however... if you want a heavy, more dense pie, use 3 eggs instead of 4 and 1 can of evaporated milk instead of 1.5)

Step 10 - Pour into the pie crust

Some people like to bake the pie crust in the oven for 3 minutes before filling it. I don't and the pies turn out great! I like a deep, full pie, so I fill it right up to about one quarter to one half inch from the very top.

Don't be surprised if the mixture is very runny! It may start as a soupy liquid, but it will firm up nicely in the oven! Note: the pie crust is brown because I used whole wheat flour! Tastes the same, but is healthier.

TIP: If you put the empty pie crust on your oven rack, with the rack slid partially out, you can fill it there and avoid making a mess while carrying the pie to the oven!



TIP: What do you do if you end up with more filling than will fit in your pie crust(s)? Easy! Of course, you can make another, smaller pie crust and fill a small pie pan... or just grease any baking dish, of a size that the extra filling will fill to a depth of about 2 inches (see the photo at right), and pour the extra filling in.. then bake it. It will be a crustless pumpkin pie that kids especially love! You can also use it in making [pumpkin muffins](#) or [pumpkin bread](#)!

TIP: You may want to cover the exposed edges of the crust with strips of aluminum foil to prevent them from burning! Some people make their own crust cover by cutting the rim off of a disposable aluminum pie pan!

Step 11 - Bake the pie

Bake at 425 F (210 C) for the first 15 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 350 F (175 C) and bake another 45 to 60 minutes, until a clean knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

Here is the finished pie, right out of the oven:



I use a blunt table knife to test the pie. The one at left has already been stuck in the pie, and you see it comes



out pretty clean, when the pie is done.

Step 12 - Cool the pie

And enjoy! Warm or chilled, with whipped cream , ice cream or nothing at all - it's great!

You can even freeze the pie after cooking it. I just lay a piece of plastic wrap (cling film) tight on the pie, after it cools down, then pop it in the freezer.



Later, I take the frozen pie out of the freezer, put it in the fridge for about 24 hours, and then either heat it in the oven (350 F for about 15 minutes; just to warm it up) or the microwave for a few minutes.

Alternative Cooking methods for step 4

If you don't have a microwave, or prefer another method, try these:

Stovetop steaming - Place your steaming basket or grid in the bottom of a large pot. Put enough water so it won't boil dry in 20 minutes, and yet is not so high that the pumpkin is touching the water level. You may need to add more water during the cooking. Add the pumpkin prepared in step 3, and get the steamer going. The cooking time is only between 8 and 12 minutes, depending on the range (gas or electric), and the pumpkin literally falls off the skin.

Pressure cooker - Place your grid in the bottom of the pressure cooker. If your pressure cooker came with directions, follow those for pumpkin and/or winter squash, like butternut squash. If, like most people, you've long since lost the directions, try this: Add enough water to just touch the bottom of the grid or shelf that you will place the pumpkin on. Add the pumpkin prepared in step 3, put the lid with the gasket, the weight and anything else your cooker requires in place, and turn the heat on high. Once it starts hissing, turn it to medium or medium high. The cooking time should only be about 10 minutes, and the pumpkin should literally fall out of its skin.

Crockpot - Clean and slice the pumpkin and set the temperature to either high or low (depending on how soon you are able to get back to the kitchen). The crockpot is forgiving enough that the pumpkin can be left in it for a time even after it is tender, at least on the low setting. Turn off the crockpot and let the pumpkin sit in it awhile. A lot of liquid will be released as the pumpkin cools. Once the pumpkin is cool enough to handle, scrape out the flesh, place in a wire strainer, and mash with a spoon to release additional liquid. Leave the pumpkin in the strainer and place in the refrigerator for several hours to drain off any remaining liquid.

Tips from Visitors

Making a pie with a Jack O' Lantern: A visitor writes on November 10, 2008: "I have a suggestion for those who want to use a jack o lantern pumpkin. My son was so happy when he went on his first field trip to the pumpkin patch. He made me promise to make pumpkin pies with his big giant pumpkin. I did just as you said baked it, put it in the frig over night. Then I put the pieces in a pot and cooked it until it was like mush added a big cinnamon stick and and the sugar boiled some of the water out and 4 great pies. Thank you for your recipe it worked wonder full!!!"

Excess pumpkin goop? A visitor writes on November 30, 2009: "I love your pumpkin pie recipe! I've used it for two years now and the recipe is so dependable and thorough. One great way to use up the leftover pie filling is using it to make Pumpkin French Toast - it already had the eggs, milk, and spice. Just dip the bread in the filling and throw on the skillet. The toast goes great with a bit of melted butter, powdered sugar and some maple sugar! "

Covering the edges of the crust: A visitor writes on November 19, 2008: "After having lost my old beloved recipe, I tried this one and have to say this one is top notch! One tip that might help to pass on (especially to new pie makers) is to cover the edges with aluminum foil to prevent the crust from burning. It really works and makes those yummy pie crusts as delicious as the rest of the pie!"

Mashing the cooked pumpkin: A visitor writes on November 26, 2008: "Hello, great site here. I tried your pumpkin pie recipe and it came out great. Just wanted to add my two cents on pumpkin pie making. After cooking the pumpkin and scooping it out, you can use a potato ricer to mash it. When you first put the pumpkin in ricer and squeeze the handles together you get a decent amount of water squeezed out first. Then I put the ricer over bowl and squeeze the pumpkin out. The ricer mashes and gets water out at same time. Plus, another good thing is that a lot of the fibrous strings in pumpkin gets trapped at

bottom of the ricer cup and not in the pumpkin puree. I bought my potato ricer at bed bath and beyond for fifteen bucks, so its cheap too. Hope this helps."

Maple syrup instead of sugar: A visitor writes on December 08, 2009:
"Really like your site wanted to comment on the sugar alternatives , we use maple syrup 1 cup boiled down for thickness adds great flavor. Thanks "

Baking tips:

A visitor writes on November 19, 2008: "I learned a trick about baking large squashes and pumpkins many years ago. I just poke a few holes in it, put it on a baking sheet whole, and bake it at around 325 degrees until the squash/pumpkin is tender. When it's cool, it's easy to cut in half, scoop out the seeds, and peel. It is also much less watery this way. This has always worked well for me. You do have to start a little earlier, though. Baking it this way and then letting it get cool enough to handle

A visitor writes on November 20, 2008: "I have made pumpkin pies from pumpkins for years and the best, most flavorful method is to cut in half, oil and roast, face down on high heat -- it carmelizes a bit, then I do drain it and boil down the water til it is thick and medium caramel color and add it to the puree -- adds a lot of flavor. yum :)"

Oven prep method: A visitor writes on November 26, 2008: "Another way to prep pumpkin that seems to get a consistent non-stringy finish regardless of pumpkin species: 1. Halve pumpkin and remove innards. 2. Place halves face-down on a greased cookie sheet. 3. Roast at 400 long enough for skins to visibly darken. 4. All species will come out firm, golden, and generally already separated from the shell. 5. Puree can be accomplished with a potato masher if desired. More watery pumpkins will drain and cook like pie pumpkins. Though messier in your oven, I have the best luck using a flat cookie sheet that allows the water to drain off and burn in the oven."

Starting with a frozen pumpkin: A visitor writes on November 27, 2008:
"Just wanted to add to your ideas about making pumpkin pies out of fresh pumpkins. I was preparing to make my pies for Thanksgiving and

realized I had forgot to buy pumpkin. I read your site about the different ways to make pumpkin pies from fresh pumpkin ~ and, having pumpkins on my front porch for fall decorations, I went and grabbed one to use only to discover it had been frozen solid! (Our temps had dropped to 7° a few days before.) I had no choice but to give it a try. As it started to thaw it became soft. Here's what I did: Cut out the stem, cut the whole thing in half, scooped out the seeds, peeled the halves - I actually cut those in half to make peeling easier - and cubed the remaining into little bitty pieces. I put it all in a large covered sauce pan and slowly cooked it. Once they got soft enough I took a potato masher to it and cooked some more. Worked GREAT! I'll put it in a blender before using, but it was easy! Just cook real slow so as not to burn or scorch. But the frozen pumpkin started the break-down process and made cooking them much quicker and simpler. Just thought it a good alternative if anyone was interested. Thanks for the great site!!"

What to do with extra pumpkin goop: A visitor writes on November 03, 2009: "I didn't read too carefully and only bought one 9 in pie crust, I had so much left over mixture! I quickly grabbed my muffin pans and those cute little paper inserts- I put approx 5-6 mini marshmallows in each one then filled 16 spots with the mixture. It was exactly the right amount of mixture. Let them sit for just a moment to allow the mellow to rise to the top (always add the mellow first because when pouring the mixture on top of them it coats the mellow to make the top brown in the oven much better) then finished filling them (the levels lower as the mellow rise). Baked at 350 for approx 30 minutes. They were GREAT and so easy to bring to work the following morning! as a side note - i have 2 more pumpkins and look forward to making more goodies in the coming week or so. I LOVE this site, its easy to follow and with all your pictures I know i'm doing things right. I DONT cook or bake on a regular basis. In fact, this was the very first pie i EVER attempted - homemade OR canned. Anyway, i think that the mini-pies are really great addition to those wishing to share the desert with co-workers or family members. no cutting or serving. also, the marshmallows add a little something! mmmmmmmmm mmmmmmmmmmm good! ~J"

A visitor writes on June 10, 2010: "Pumpkin Pie - Another idea for left over pie filling - Turn it into muffins. I had about 2 1/2 cups

of left over filling (all ingredients combined) and thought, what can I do with this? I then I looked at the pumpkin bread recipe and thought, hmmm not too dissimilar. So here's what I did - I made pumpkin muffins!!! I took about 1 1/2 cups of plain flour, 1 tsp baking powder and mixed together, then added 1/3 cup oil and the 2 1/2 cups of my left over mixture. Put it into a muffin tin and baked till done (about 20mins cooking at the same time as the pie) turned out great! The amount of flour used would depend on your leftover but I used same approx ratios as the pumpkin bread recipe."

Using a "Cinderella" pumpkin - Be sure to drain the pumpkin very well before mashing it or putting it through the food processor. These pumpkins are very runny. It should be similar in consistency to canned pumpkin - otherwise the pies may not "set up" and be runny.

Pumpkins roasting over an open fire? A visitor writes on November 08, 2009: "I took another alternative to cooking my pumpkin... I wrapped it in aluminum foil and put it out in a bon fire... cooked it really well. Then let it chill in the night air, the next morning it was so easy to work with. It was great and very energy saving."

Using Japanese Pumpkins: A visitor writes I am in Hokkaido, Japan, and locally grown kabocha (Japanese pumpkins) are easy to come by. I gave your recipe a try and figured out the following things. Yes, they work very well! Kabocha are also naturally VERY sweet; you have to reduce the sugar a bit. One kabocha looks about the same size as one pie pumpkin, but kabocha have very thin shells. (At least, the ones in Hokkaido do.) So out of half a kabocha I got about two cups of "glop". The texture is naturally very smooth. It took me very little effort to get very smooth glop, even without a hand mixer or blender. My husband loved the pie. We hadn't had a good pumpkin pie in a long time.

Coconut milk: A visitor writes on October 16, 2010: "Hi! Great pumpkin pie recipe! I however used vanilla coconut milk instead of evaporated milk. My son is allergic to milk and soy scares me! The coconut milk is a little thicker than regular milk and added a little more sweetness. I cut the sugar down to 1/3 c. Thanks so much for sharing! "

Vegan pumpkin pie recipe: Hi, Thanks for the great pumpkin pie recipe. I just wanted to suggest another option that you can add for vegans... instead of the 4 eggs you can use 2 mashed bananas. This gives the pie a sweeter, richer flavor and bananas are much easier to find than Ener-G egg replacer. Anyway, I just wanted to suggest that for your recipe. Thanks! (UPDATED: October 31, 2010)

In Japan? "Thank you for the pie recipe and all the great tips for substitutions. I am currently living in Japan with no access to an oven. I was afraid I would have to celebrate Thanksgiving without pumpkin pie, but I didn't want to go down without a fight. I decided to try making your pumpkin pie in my rice cooker - and it worked! It doesn't have a crust, but I figure we can dollop it onto cookies or just eat it like a pudding. I also saw a website that said you could butter the rice cooker and press the crust dough up the sides. Supposedly, if it is thin enough, it will cook through - I haven't tried that yet. Here are the alterations I made for pie filling in a 3 cup rice cooker: 1/2 a kabocha pumpkin (as recommended already) 2 eggs 1 small carton of whipping cream 1/2 cup sugar spices as you suggested I had to run it through the rice cooker cycle twice, but it came out perfect. You made our Thanksgiving. Thank you!"

Trouble mashing or too watery? A visitor writes on September 16, 2011: "On your pumpkin pie page, many comments from other readers have said they've had trouble with mashing and watery pumpkins. I've found a few ways to deal with these issues. A watery pumpkin is a blessing as I toss it into a powerful blender and pulverize it down (you'd burn out a powerful blender otherwise, or you can add a little water/juice to get the thinner consistency). Another option is to use an immersion blender, although that does take some time if you don't have a good blender. To get excess water out, I just toss the puree' into a crock pot and cook it down for a few hours. It's the perfect time to spice it up, and the house smells fantastic during the process, and leftovers (should there be any) can be used for a quick eat pumpkin butter, muffins, breads, or cookies. The only downside is that it makes you hungry! "

Excess water? Give it to your dog! A visitor writes on October 02, 2011: "I was just reading your pumpkin pie "glop" recipe and would

like to contribute a suggestion for what to do with the left over pumpkin water -- give it to your dogs! My little red terror (terrier) and Irish wolfhound both loved to drink it once it is cooled. (Unsweetened and without spices, of course) I'm sure it must have beta-carotene in it (great cancer fighter and good for their heart, as well as any of the water soluble vitamins -- and have hardly any calories. I use your canning recipes often, and make great use of your tips and shortcuts. Thanks for "being there". Carolyn "

Condensed Milk: A visitor writes on November 08, 2011: "I have used your recipe for many years now and last year I forgot to buy the evaporated milk. My neighbor gave me s cans of Nestle Table Cream and I used it with the same measurements as evaporated milk and the pies came out fluffier and a bit sweeter. I will be using table cream for now on."

Mace and more eggs: A visitor writes on November 03, 2011: "I have been making pumpkin pie from scratch for 30 years, and I started off by reading a few 18th century and 19th century cookbooks that had the recipe in them. The only thing that seems to be missing from your page, is the spice "mace." For those who don't know that spice, it is ground up outer fiber strands from around the nutmeg nut. Some people like it, and others apparently don't -- but I can't imagine a pumpkin pie without it. And some trivia for those who really want to taste a truly old fashioned pie, double the spices and use more eggs, up to 8 in a pie."

Cutting the pumpkin open: A visitor writes on November 07, 2011: "Opening pumpkins, hard squash, etc. I find that an inexpensive cleaver (not the thin Chinese cleaver) and a short dowel -2') work very well and very quickly. On your chopping board, lay the squash/pumpkin with the stem end facing away from you. Cradle the squash in a couple of kitchen towels so that it won't roll. Put the edge of the cleaver dead in the middle of the pumpkin, to cut along the axis with the stem. Wack cleaver with dowel. Instant split squash/pumpkin (for the timid / or the tough squash - several wacks may be necessary). A sub \$10.00 hardware store cleaver is perfect for the job."

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I would like to make your pumpkin pie from scratch for my family for Thanksgiving. What would be the best way to do this? Can I make a pie now and freeze it? Can I buy the small pumpkins now and hold on to them until the week before Thanksgiving and make the pie?

Yes, the cooked pumpkin pies freeze pretty well, but of course, everything's a little better fresh. Pie pumpkins keep very well in a cool basement or garage (between 40 F and 60F), and they'd certainly keep until Thanksgiving if they are in good shape now (no bruises or soft spots).

Q. I live in Europe, so I do not have all of the U.S. ingredients over here. I'm also not that clear on the measurement conversions for Example: 1 Cup = how many oz or grams (better for me) dry goods-flour and from oz to grams or liters for wet goods-cream? I was wondering if you would also possibly know substitutes for the following items: Allspice (cinnamon?), Evaporated milk (Lowfat Cream? But then not sweetened! Add more sugar?), Crisco Vegetable Shortening (Help - no idea!)

No problem! I lived and worked in Europe for 7 years, so I found a lot of good substitutions.

1 cup = 1/4 liter - about 250 ml

A visitor tells me that according to New Zealand's most trusted cookbook, Edmonds:

1 cup of Flour = 175 g (6 oz)

1 cup of Sugar = 225 g (8 oz)

Evaporated milk is unsweetened milk that has the volume reduced by removing some of the water - it is sort of like concentrated milk - about 50% reduced, still quite watery. You could make your own by adding 100 ml (by volume) of instant dried milk to each 100 ml of regular lowfat (or skim or nonfat) milk.

Allspice is its own spice! It is the dried, unripened fruit of a small evergreen tree, the Pimenta Dioica (typically grown in Jamaica). The fruit is a pea-sized berry which is sundried to a reddish-brown color. Pimento is called Allspice because its flavor suggests a blend of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg. So you could make a blend of equal parts of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg instead.

Crisco shortening is a vegetable substitute for lard, and adds no flavor. You could use butter, margarine, or even (ugh!) lard, in place of it. If you are in the UK, there is something called Trex vegetable fat in the refrigerated section of the supermarket near the butter. I'm told it a good substitute for Crisco.

Q. My 8 year old son grew some pumpkins this year, so I tried your pumpkin pie recipe. I following all the instructions and the only thing I didn't do was make my own pastry I used the frozen variety. Unfortunately the pie only partially set and was full of clear liquid at the bottom making the pastry base soggy. I don't know what I did wrong?

Most likely it was the variety of pumpkin you grew - some are more watery. The small (8 inches across) "pie" pumpkins like they sell in Kroger are best. Next year choose a variety to grow that says it is good for pies, such as "Connecticut Field" or "pie pumpkin". Generally, these varieties are also more sweet, finer grained and less watery than Jack O Lantern pumpkins.

Easy solutions, if you must use a Jack O' Lantern type pumpkin are to let the pumpkin pulp sit in the fridge for a few hours. The water will separate and can be poured off. Another solution is to add 2 more eggs to the recipe and also cook another 20 minutes longer to get a firmer set.

Q. Hi, I tried making a pumpkin pie yesterday with some fresh pumpkin. I was mostly successful at it. Then I went out today, and bought another pumpkin to puree and freeze for a later time. The second one, although it was also a sugar pumpkin was much harder to work with, and was extremely watery. I pureed it anyway, and figured I could strain it in a colander, but the holes were too big. Then tried sieving it, and it only took out some of the water. The consistency was still

pretty thick, but for the future, how is the best way to extract the water? Why are some more watery than others?

It's easier than you'd imagine! Just pour the cooked pumpkin, before pureeing, into a strainer or colander with a bowl underneath it, then set the bowl in the fridge overnight. Normally , quite a bit of water comes out.

There are many conditions that affect the water content of a given pumpkin: weather (rainfall, temperatures), soil conditions, the specific variety of pumpkin all affect it!