1887 White House-Inspired

PUMPKIN PIE

Number One

Adapted from Pumpkin Pie No. 1 in The White House Cook Book (1887), by F. L. Gillette and Hugo Ziemann. This is a modern interpretation, not a verbatim historical recipe. The final flavor and baking time still need testing.

Complete Shopping List

- 1 can (15 oz) plain pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1 package refrigerated pie crust (or homemade crust for one 9-inch pie)
- 1 pint heavy whipping cream (for pie and topping)
- 1 small carton whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 package light brown sugar
- 1 small jar unsulphured molasses
- Ground cinnamon, ground ginger, ground nutmeg, salt
- 1 lemon; vanilla extract
- Optional: bourbon (1 tablespoon)



Pumpkin Filling

- 1 1/2 cups plain pumpkin puree
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsulphured molasses
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon bourbon (optional)
- 1 unbaked 9-inch pie crust

Method

1. Heat oven to 375 F. Fit the crust into a regular-depth 9-inch glass pie dish, crimp, and chill for about 20 minutes.
2. Partially blind-bake: line the crust with parchment and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake about 15 minutes. Remove weights and parchment; bake about 5 minutes more, until the bottom looks dry and is just beginning to color.

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The Method

1. Prepare the crust.
Heat oven to 375°F. Fit the crust into a regular-depth 9-inch glass pie dish, crimp, and chill for about 20 minutes.

2. Partially blind-bake.
Line the crust with parchment and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake about 15 minutes. Remove the weights and parchment; bake about 5 minutes more, until the bottom looks dry and just begins to color. Let cool slightly. Avoid sudden temperature changes with glass.

3. Mix the pumpkin.
Whisk pumpkin, brown sugar, molasses, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, salt, and lemon zest in a bowl.

4. Make the custard.
In another bowl, whisk eggs, cream, milk, and optional bourbon. Gradually whisk into the pumpkin mixture until smooth.

5. Fill the shell.
Pour into the partially baked crust, leaving a little space at the rim. Do not overfill.

6. Bake until set.
Bake at 375°F, checking after 35–40 minutes; estimated filling bake is 40–55 minutes. Shield crust edges with foil if needed. The outer custard should be set; the center should wobble slightly, not slosh. Aim for at least 160°F at the center.

7. Cool and chill.
Cool on a rack; refrigerate within 2 hours of leaving the oven. Chill at least 3 hours before slicing.

Brown-Sugar Whipped Cream

1 cup cold heavy whipping cream; 2 tablespoons light brown sugar; 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract; optional tiny pinch of cinnamon.

Beat together until soft peaks form. Spoon over chilled slices just before serving.

A Note from the Old Cookbook

Adapted from Pumpkin Pie No. 1 in The White House Cook Book (1887), by F. L. Gillette and Hugo Ziemann. A modern interpretation; not yet kitchen-tested. Bourbon may be omitted without replacement.