

Shortbread Pumpkin Bars with Pecan Streusel Topping



October 27, 2022

These pumpkin bars are a great option for dessert or a snack, and no one would hate it if they replaced the Thanksgiving pie! They are good straight out of the fridge but even better with the chill off. Store in the refrigerator and take out a couple of hours before you want to eat them for maximum flavor and a softer crust.

Makes about 24 small bars

Ingredients:

Shortbread Crust:

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, cold
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- Pinch of cinnamon

Pumpkin Filling:

- 1 can (15 oz) 100% pure pumpkin—not pumpkin pie filling
- 1 can (12 fl. oz) Evaporated Milk
- ¾ cup granulated white sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

Streusel Topping:

- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup regular or quick-cooking oatmeal (not instant)
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 1.4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened, cut into small pieces

WHAT'S 4 DINNER?

#RECIPESTHATDISH

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and position racks in the center of the oven.
2. Make the Shortbread: Cut butter into ½ -inch pieces. Using a hand-held pastry cutter or [gloved] hands, mix all ingredients until mixture begins to form small lumps. If using your fingers to mash the butter, work fast so that the butter stays cold. You don't want the heat of your hands to melt the butter.
3. Use a silicone baking pan or make a parchment sling for a glass or ceramic pan:
4. [take 2 pieces of Parchment paper that is cut for a 1/2 sheet pan. Fold each one in half lengthwise and place them opposite ways in the 9 x 13 pan so they form a cross. I clip the sides so they don't slide around. Once you have the shortbread dough in the pan, and pat the crust into place, you can remove the clips. This way when the pumpkin bars have cooled, you can take the entire slab out and cut them with a bench scraper, knife or dough cutter.]
5. Sprinkle dough evenly into a rectangular 13 by 9 by 2-inch baking pan and using your fingers or a metal spatula, press firmly and evenly onto bottom and up the sides of the pan to form an even layer of shortbread.
6. Prick all over with a fork. Bake shortbread in middle of oven until golden, about 25 minutes. While shortbread is baking, prepare the filling and the topping.
7. Make the Filling: Combine pumpkin, evaporated milk, granulated sugar, eggs, pumpkin pie spice and salt in medium bowl; mix well.
8. Make the streusel: Mix all the ingredients except the butter and pecans. Work in the butter with a blending fork until the mixture resembles large, coarse bread crumbs. Add pecans and mix well. Set aside.
9. Reduce heat in the oven to 350°F
10. Bake shortbread for 20-25 minutes or until lightly brown. Let cool on a wire rack. Pour pumpkin filling into cooled shortbread and bake for 30 minutes or until set.
11. Remove from oven and top with streusel topping. Place back into the oven and bake for 20 to 40 more minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean—*my pumpkin bars took 70 minutes to bake.*
12. Cool on wire rack and refrigerate once cool.
13. To cut into squares, remove the whole slab of pumpkin bars and cut into desired size.

Pumpkin Pie Spice

Make this and keep it on hand for pies, breads even oatmeal!

- 2 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cloves

Mix all spices together and store in a sealed jar.