

PUMPKIN "COUNTRY CLASSICS"

When the days turn cooler and golden pumpkins dot the fields, desserts with a real homespun taste will nudge nostalgia. Perhaps you'll remember such back-home favorites as fragrant pumpkin pies, fresh warm doughnuts and jewel-toned fruitcakes, deliciously signaling the approach of the holiday season.

Capture the flavors of these old time treats, and create a few surprises, with a beautiful bevy of new pumpkin recipes they're bound to win praises as long as a country mile.

Pumpkin's natural rich endowment of Vitamin A, plus iron and other nutrients, has long been appreciated. But extra good-for-you ingredients have been added to this fine pumpkin fare. Milk, ricotta cheese, yogurt, bran, fruit and nuts enhance the flavor of these new pumpkin specialties and bring your family a nutritional boost.

Start your creation of back-home treats with smooth and flavorful canned solid pack pumpkin from your grocer's shelf. You'll find the 16 oz. size perfect for a 9 inch pie and other delectable pumpkin-eating pleasures. For two pumpkin pies choose the 29 oz. can size. "Easy as pie," another convenient pumpkin product is canned pumpkin pie mix, already sweetened and spiced.

Pumpkin and pastry, like horse and carriage, make a natural pair. Our updated version of old-fashioned pumpkin pie is lightly sweet and extra creamy with the addition of ricotta cheese and brown sugar in the gently spiced filling. New as tomorrow, Pumpkin Ricotta Pie flaunts a flower-shaped garnish of vanilla yogurt and crisp pumpkin seeds.

Pumpkin-Eater Doughnuts are a welcome snack for the keen-edged appetites cool weather brings. Pumpkin and bran make these savory nut-brown doughnuts superb in flavor and extra hearty. Served warm and unadorned, with a mug of milk, or sparkled with cinnamon-sugar and tucked in a lunch box, they're a sure-fire success.

As the holidays near, a deliciously home-style, portable dessert fills many a need. Sever a richly fruited Health-Nut Cake and plan a few extras as thoughtful gifts. Amber gold pumpkin adds to its hearty, wholesome texture and flavor. Honey, whole wheat flour, oats, walnuts and fruits, embellished with a hint of orange and cardamom, make this a healthy loaf that could well become a "specialty of your house."

Though the gingerbread man in the old nursery rhyme wanted a cake "baked fast as you can" we think you'll agree our Pumpkin Gingerbread is well worth a bit of extra time. Again you will find a nutritional bonus in the recipe made with wheat germ, honey, yogurt and a nicely balanced blending of pumpkin 'n' spices. Simple but elegant, this moist fluted cake is easily glazed, adding a sweet flavor finish that absorbs as it cools.

Pumpkin Nog is a cool festive beverage to give your home-for-the-holidays hospitality a delicious new twist. Flavorful pumpkin pie mix, conveniently pre-sweetened and spiced, makes for easy mixing with the dairy fresh flavors of ice cream and milk. To serve a group including children divide the recipe in half and consider a spirited addition of light rum to the adult portion of this smooth and delightful nutmeg-sprinkled nog.

Brimming with honest-to-goodness flavor, you'll find pumpkin's just perfect for desserts that delight and bring a robust bonanza of good nutrition to your table.

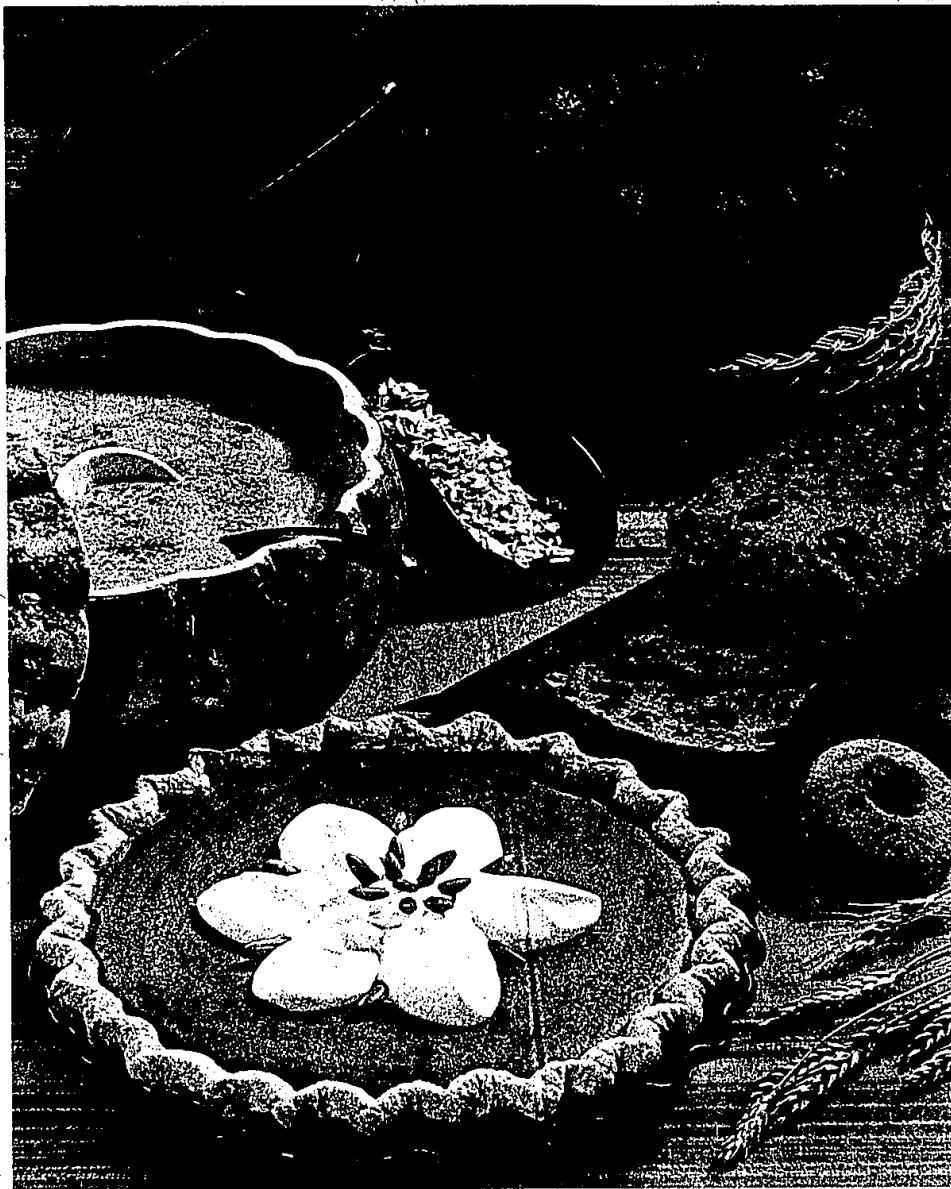


Photo courtesy Libby's

CREAMY PUMPKIN RICOTTA PIE

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 can (10 oz.) solid pack pumpkin
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 small can (5 1/3 oz.) evaporated milk
- 1 nine-inch unbaked pastry shell
- Vanilla yogurt and pumpkin seeds for garnish, optional

Preheat oven to 375°. Beat eggs lightly in a large bowl; beat in cheese until smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients until well-blended. Pour into prepared pastry shell. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes. Cool completely on wire rack. Just before serving, garnish with yogurt and pumpkin seeds if you wish. Yield: one 9-inch pie or 8 servings.

PUMPKIN-EATER DOUGHNUTS

- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup canned solid pack pumpkin
- 1 cup shredded bran cereal
- 2 3/4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Vegetable oil
- Cinnamon-sugar, optional

Beat shortening and sugar together in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Stir in pumpkin, then cereal. Let stand 2 minutes. Sift flour, baking powder, spice and salt together; stir into pumpkin mixture, half at a time. Cover and chill one hour or until stiff enough to handle. Roll out on lightly floured board to 1/2-inch thickness. Cut into rounds and holes with a 3-inch doughnut cutter. In a large pan, heat 2 inches of oil to 375°. Fry doughnuts, a few at a time, until golden brown and cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Drain on paper toweling on a wire rack. Beroll and cut trimmings to use all dough. Dip doughnuts into cinnamon-sugar if desired. Yields 2 dozen doughnuts.

PUMPKIN GINGERBREAD

- 6 eggs
- 1 can (16 oz.) solid pack pumpkin
- 1 1/2 cups honey
- 2/3 cup melted butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup wheat germ
- 3 cups sifted flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- Yogurt Glaze (recipe below)

Preheat oven to 350°. Beat eggs well in a large bowl. Stir in pumpkin, honey, butter, yogurt and wheat germ. Sift flour, baking soda, salt and spices together; stir into pumpkin mixture, half at a time, until well mixed. Pour batter into a greased 12-cup tube pan or angel food cake pan. Bake at 350° for 50 to 60 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool on rack for 10 minutes; remove from pan and cool while making glaze. Place cake on deep plate; spoon hot Yogurt Glaze slowly over cake, letting it soak in. Spoon any glaze that drips onto plate back over cake; continue until all glaze is absorbed.

Note: For a smaller cake, this recipe may be divided in half. Bake in a 13 x 9-inch pan for about forty minutes.

Yogurt Glaze

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine all ingredients in medium saucepan. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture begins to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Spoon over cake while glaze is still hot.

HEALTH-NUT FRUITCAKE

- 1 envelope active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 cup honey, divided
- 1 cup canned solid pack pumpkin
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 3/4 cup snipped pitted dates
- 3/4 cup chopped candied cherries
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange rind

Sprinkle yeast over warm water in a medium bowl; stir until dissolved. Stir in 1 teaspoon honey and let stand until it foams. Meanwhile, combine remaining honey and pumpkin in small saucepan; heat until just warm, not hot. Stir pumpkin mixture and orange juice into yeast. Add flour, oats, salt and cardamom; beat fifty strokes. Stir in fruits, nuts and orange rind. Spoon into greased 8 x 4-inch loaf pan; cover and let stand in warm place for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 300°. Bake for 1 hour and 20 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from loaf pan and cool completely on wire rack. Yields one loaf.

HOLIDAY PUMPKIN NOG

- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 quart milk
- 1 can (20 oz.) pumpkin pie mix
- 1 to 1 1/2 cups light rum, optional
- Ground nutmeg

Beat ice cream in a large bowl until smooth; stir in milk, then pumpkin pie mix and rum. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Just before serving, stir again and sprinkle with nutmeg. Yields about 20 half cup servings.

Note: For a family party, divide punch in half before adding rum. Reserve half plain for the children.