

# Pumpkin Praline Pecan Tarts

BY LYDIA E. HARRIS / PHOTO BY CARY BATES

**SERVINGS:** Makes 12 to 15 tarts

**TIME:** 30-40 minutes prep; 20 minutes to bake

## Gather

### FOR CRUST

- 2 cups flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plus 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 3 to 4 tablespoons cold water
- cooking spray
- muffin tin

### FOR FILLING

- 1 cup mashed, cooked or canned pumpkin
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup evaporated milk
- 1 beaten egg
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla (optional)

### FOR PRALINE PECAN MIXTURE

- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup pecan halves (or coarsely chopped)

### FOR HOMEMADE WHIPPED CREAM

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

## Prepare

### HOMEMADE CRUST

1. Combine flour and salt in a large bowl.
2. Cut in shortening with pastry blender until particles are the size of peas.
3. Mix the egg and 3 tablespoons of water in a separate dish. Add to flour mixture, and mix with a fork. If dough is dry, add 1 more tablespoon of water.
4. Gather the dough into a ball and divide into two parts. On a floured surface, roll  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick.
5. Cut dough into 3  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch circles. Use a cookie cutter or the lid (ring) from a wide-mouth quart-sized jar.
6. Gather leftover dough and reroll it to make additional circles so you end up with 12 to 15.
7. Lightly grease a large 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray. Place a dough round into each muffin cup and mold the dough to fit the bottom and sides of the cup.

**Note:** In a hurry? Buy a roll of ready-made pie crust. Unroll and cut into 3  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch circles. Use the rest of the directions above.

### FILLING

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Place all the filling ingredients into a large mixing bowl.
3. Mix together until well blended.
4. Set aside while making praline pecan mixture.

### PRALINE PECAN MIXTURE

1. In a small saucepan over medium heat, stir together butter and sugar. Heat until the mixture bubbles. Do not overcook.
2. Remove from heat. Stir in the pecans to coat them.

### ASSEMBLE AND BAKE TARTS

1. Divide praline pecan mixture, placing about a teaspoonful in each unbaked crust in the muffin tin.
2. Use a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measuring cup to pour pumpkin filling into tart shells.
3. Bake for 20 minutes until crust is brown. Check filling for doneness—a toothpick should come out clean when placed in the center of the tart. If needed, bake for 5 more minutes.
4. Cool in pan for 10 minutes. Run a table knife around the crusts' edges and carefully transfer tarts to a cooling rack. When cool, place in a container and refrigerate until ready to serve.
5. Serve with whipped cream. Garnish with a sprinkle of nutmeg or candy corn.

### HOMEMADE WHIPPED CREAM

1. Whip the cream with a beater until soft peaks form.
2. Add sugar and vanilla; beat until stiff peaks form.
3. Refrigerate until ready to use.

*Lydia E. Harris, known as "Grandma Tea," creates and tests recipes with her grandchildren. Her recipes appear in Focus on the Family Clubhouse and Clubhouse Jr. magazines, her tea column, "A Cup of Tea with Lydia," and her cookbook, In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring up tasty memories together.*

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