



Pumpkin! Pumpkin! Pumpkin!

BY LYDIA E. HARRIS
PHOTOS BY TARA BECKER

Autumn—the season of golden leaves, pumpkins and counting our blessings. It’s also a time for friends, family and fall foods. Enjoy preparing and sharing these tasty pumpkin treats.



FROST ON THE PUMPKIN MUG CAKE & WHIPPED CREAM “FROST”

SERVINGS: 1

FROST ON THE PUMPKIN MUG CAKE

Invite a friend over, and each of you can make your own mug cake. In a few minutes, you'll have a yummy dessert to enjoy.

GATHER (FOR EACH MUG CAKE):

- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin puree
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons mini chocolate chips, divided

PREPARE

- Spray a microwave-safe mug with non-stick cooking spray. A short mug with a wide opening works well.
- In a small bowl, combine the flour, brown sugar, baking powder and spice.
- Add the oil, pumpkin puree and vanilla. Mix well.
- Stir in 1 tablespoon chocolate chips. Spoon the batter into the prepared mug. Sprinkle the rest of the chocolate chips on top.
- Microwave on high for one minute or until batter is cooked. If needed, microwave the cake another 10 to 20 seconds. Do not overcook.
- Carefully remove the mug using a pot-holder. Cool for several minutes.
- Serve with Whipped Cream “Frost” (directions to the right) and a sprinkle of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice.

VARIATIONS: If desired, add more toppings on the whipped cream such as coconut, chopped nuts or candy corn.

WHIPPED CREAM “FROST”

Prepare this topping for the mug cakes before your friends arrive.

GATHER

- ½ cup whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

PREPARE

- Beat the whipping cream until stiff peaks form. (Do not overbeat.)
- Fold in sugar and vanilla.
- Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

VARIATION: For whipped maple cream, substitute 1 tablespoon maple syrup for sugar and vanilla.





PUMPKIN COOKIE POPS

MAKES ABOUT 20.

PUMPKIN COOKIE POPS

Fun to make, and yummy to eat. You'll want to pop them into your mouth!

GATHER

- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup pumpkin puree
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 20 cookie sticks
- 20 candy corns
- Green gumdrops, to snip for leaves (optional)

CINNAMON-SUGAR MIXTURE

- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

GLAZE

- 3 drops orange food coloring (or mix red and yellow food coloring)
- 1½ cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon water, plus additional water for consistency

PREPARE

- Mix together flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, salt and nutmeg. Set aside.
- In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugars.
- Add pumpkin, egg and vanilla. Mix well.
- Stir in dry ingredient mixture. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.
- While dough chills, mix together the cinnamon and sugar, and prepare the glaze. Also, snip the gumdrops for leaves.

GLAZE: Combine the food coloring with 1 tablespoon water. Add powdered sugar and vanilla. Mix well. Add more water as needed, a teaspoon at a time, to make a runny glaze. Set aside.

- After the dough has chilled, preheat the oven to 350° F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Shape the dough into balls about the size of a walnut. Roll each ball in the cinnamon-sugar mixture.
- Push a cookie stick into each ball from the side and slightly past the middle of the cookie. Place the cookie on the prepared sheet and lightly flatten it with the palm of your hand.
- Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until cookies are firm to touch. Do not overbake.
- Slide parchment paper with cookies onto a cooling rack or counter.
- Spread a thin layer of glaze on each cookie while warm. Use the edge of a table knife to make three lines in the frosting on each cookie for pumpkin grooves.
- Use a candy corn for a stem on each cookie. If desired, add snipped pieces of green gumdrops for leaves.
- When the glaze is firm and the cookies are cool, place the pops in a covered container until ready to serve.

VARIATION: Omit the cookie sticks and make pumpkin cookies.

GIFT IDEA: Place individual cookies or cookie pops in clear bags, and tie them shut with green curling ribbon.



GREAT WHITE PUMPKIN CHEESEBALL

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS.
SERVES 8 OR MORE.

GREAT WHITE PUMPKIN CHEESEBALL

Serve this dessert cheeseball at a party with sweet and salty snacks, veggies and fresh fruit.

GATHER

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons peach preserves
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1½ cups finely grated colby jack cheese, divided
- ¼ cup white chocolate chips (optional)
- Celery stick or pretzel rod for stem
- Celery leaves for garnish
- A variety of dipping snacks to serve with the cheeseball, such as:
 - > **Fruit:** sliced apples, pears, strawberries, grapes
 - > **Sweet and salty snacks:** pretzels, assorted crackers, graham crackers, gingersnaps, vanilla wafers
 - > **Veggies:** celery, carrots

PREPARE

- Combine the cream cheese, peach preserves, sugar and vanilla. Mix well.
- Stir in ½ cup grated cheese.
- Chill in the freezer for 10 minutes.
- Place two layers plastic wrap, one on top of the other, on a clean surface. Scrape the cheeseball mixture into the center.
- Use the plastic wrap to help shape the cheese mixture into a ball. Roll ball in the remaining cup of cheese to cover the outside.
- If desired, push white chocolate chips into the outside.
- Wrap the ball in the two layers of plastic wrap. Refrigerate to chill until firm.
- When the cheeseball is firm, place three large rubber bands around the plastic wrap covering the cheeseball, overlapping at the top and bottom, to form indentations like pumpkin grooves. Refrigerate.
- When ready to serve, remove the bands and plastic wrap. Place the cheeseball on a serving plate. Add a pretzel or celery stick for a stem. Garnish with celery leaves.

TO MAKE A CHARCUTERIE BOARD, place the cheeseball on a tray. Group fruit, veggies, and sweet and salty snacks around the cheeseball. Add a small cheese knife.

TIP: Buy the colby jack cheese in a block, and grate it yourself. (Pre-shredded cheese often has a coating to keep shreds from sticking together.)

VARIATIONS: Replace colby jack cheese with sharp white cheddar cheese. Instead of rolling the cheeseball in cheese, roll it in chopped pecans or coconut.

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