

# BUTTERNUT PUMPKIN PIE

America's favorite pumpkin puree is actually made from squash, so why not turn to the earthy sweetness of fresh butternut squash? It's dead easy to prepare at home and tastes more vibrantly "pumpkin" than anything from a can. By that same token, homemade condensed milk is rich and creamy like no other. Baked together in a crisp and flaky All-Butter Pastry Crust, these DIY ingredients elevate a traditional pie into something more than the sum of its parts.

**YIELD:** one 9-inch pie; 8 to 12 servings | **ACTIVE TIME:** 45 minutes (only 5 minutes with components prepared in advance) | **DOWNTIME:** 45-minute roast, plus 2-hour rest

## *Butternut Custard:*

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 7 inches long and 4 inches across at the base; at least 24 ounces)
  - 1 recipe (2 cups | 19 ounces) Quick Condensed Milk (page 169), at room temperature
  - ½ cup packed | 4 ounces light brown sugar
  - 1 tablespoon vanilla extract or bourbon
  - 1½ teaspoons ground ginger
  - 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
  - ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg, plus more to garnish if desired
  - ¼ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (half as much if iodized)
  - ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
  - 2 tablespoons | 1 ounce unsalted butter, melted
  - 3 large eggs, straight from the fridge
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- 1 fully baked No-Stress All-Butter Pastry Crust (page 150)
  - ½ recipe (2 cups | 8 ounces) Make-Ahead Whipped Cream (page 89), or any variation (optional)
  - 1 cup | 5 ounces crushed Homemade Heath® Toffee Bits (page 320; optional)

## **Prepare the squash puree:**

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and preheat to 400°F. Split the squash lengthways, scoop out the seeds, and place cut side down on a foil-lined aluminum baking sheet. Roast until fork-tender, about 45 minutes.

When the squash is cool enough to handle, use a large spoon to scrape out the pulp. Pulse in a food processor until smooth, or rub through a double-mesh sieve. Measure out 14 ounces (1¾ cups) squash puree. Use warm, or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

## **Make the pie:**

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and preheat to 375°F. In a medium bowl, whisk the squash puree, Quick Condensed Milk, brown sugar, vanilla, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, cloves, butter, and eggs until smooth. Pour into the baked crust, place on an aluminum baking sheet, and bake until the custard has puffed into a gentle dome, about 25 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and continue baking until the custard is firm around the edges but still wobbly in the very center, about 25 minutes more (200°F; 210°F if the probe touches the crust). Let cool at room temperature until the custard is set, about 2 hours.

Cut the pie with a chef's knife. If you like, serve with dollops of whipped cream and a sprinkling of crushed toffee. Wrapped in plastic, leftovers will keep for up to 4 days at room temperature.

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**MAKE AHEAD**

From the No-Stress All-Butter Pastry Crust, which can be rolled, shaped, and frozen months in advance, to the

Quick Condensed Milk and squash puree, every element of this recipe can be made well ahead, so don't feel as if you need to tackle it all at once.

If you have any leftover squash puree, it can be refrigerated for up to 1 week and used in your next batch of Five-Minute Muffins (page 282).

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→ *Mix it up!*

**SNICKERSTREUSEL CRUMBLE:** The last-minute addition of crunchy toasted nuts and chewy oatmeal via my buttery Snickerstreusel give this creamy pie a wonderful variety of textures. Make and bake the pie as directed, but after reducing the oven temperature to 350°F, sprinkle the semi-baked pie with 3 ounces ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup) cold or frozen Snickerstreusel (page 48). Continue baking as above, allowing an additional 5 minutes for the streusel to crisp.

# Quick Condensed Milk

Homemade sweetened condensed milk traditionally requires ultra-low heat and up to 6 hours of constant stirring, but with a splash of heavy cream added to prevent scorching, I can crank up the heat and be done in 45 minutes. The result is thicker, creamier, and more luscious than anything from a can, with a rich dairy flavor and subtle notes of caramel. If you like chai tea, be sure to try the cinnamon-spiced variation.

**YIELD:** 2 cups (about 19 ounces) | **ACTIVE TIME:** 45 minutes

4 cups | 32 ounces milk (any percentage will do)

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup | 6 ounces heavy cream

1 cup | 7 ounces sugar

$\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (half as much if iodized)



**Key Point:** Even slightly acidic ingredients will cause hot dairy to curdle, including raw cane sugar, brown sugar, coconut sugar, maple syrup, honey, and agave. Take care when experimenting with ingredients not listed in the variations.

Combine milk, cream, sugar, and salt in a 5-quart stainless steel saucier. If using a scale, weigh the pot and ingredients together so you can digitally track the reduction. Place over medium heat, stirring occasionally with a heat resistant spatula, until the milk begins to simmer, about 12 minutes. Continue cooking another 30 minutes more, scraping continuously to prevent a milky buildup from forming around the sides. When the thickened milk-syrup suddenly begins to foam, it's almost done. Keep simmering and stirring until the foam subsides and the dairy has condensed to exactly 2 cups or 19 ounces. If using a scale, the pot will weigh 26 ounces less than when you started.

Pour into an airtight container, seal to prevent evaporation, and refrigerate up to 1 month. To mimic the consistency of canned milk, bring to room temperature before using.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The timing of this recipe may vary considerably depending on the heat output of your stove and the size, shape, and heaviness of your pot. If it takes considerably longer than 12 minutes to bring the milk to a simmer, you can safely increase the heat to medium-high in order to reduce the dairy within the allotted time. Conversely, should the milk begin to simmer much faster, reduce the heat to medium-low to prevent the dairy from cooking too hard.

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# Stella Parks' No-Stress, Super-Flaky Pie Crust

By Genius Recipes

Food52 Editors' Comments: To learn more about Stella's technique, see the original article <https://food52.com/blog/20320-this-genius-super-flaky-pie-crust-changes-everything-in-piedom> **This Genius, Super-Flaky Pie Crust Changes Everything in Piedom**, and check out our <https://food52.com/blog/23402-genius-no-stress-flaky-pie-dough-recipe-tips> **5 tips for success**. Happy pie-baking!

This is the flaky pie dough recipe that stands to make the biggest difference for a budding pie baker—because have you ever thought about what “till the mixture resembles coarse crumbs” means to a first-timer? Not much. This recipe proves an unexpected path that’s easier for us all to understand without prior knowledge or intuition. Recipe adapted from [BraveTart: Iconic American Desserts](#) by Stella Parks (W.W. Norton & Company, 2017).

Makes two 9-inch (23cm) single pie crusts or one double crust **Prep time:** 2 hrs

**Cook time:** 1 hrs

- 1 3/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon (8 ounces/225g) all-purpose flour, preferably Gold Medal bleached flour, plus more for dusting
  - 1 tablespoon sugar
  - 1 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, preferably Diamond Crystal
  - 8 ounces (225g/2 sticks) very cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch (1.3cm) cubes
  - 1/2 cup (120ml) very cold water
1. To make the dough: Before your hands get messy, gather all your ingredients, plus a medium bowl, a whisk, a rubber spatula, a rolling pin, a 9-inch (23cm) pie plate (preferably glass; aluminum or other metal is also fine—heavy ceramic and stoneware are not recommended), and a bench scraper or offset spatula (or other thin spatula-like thing). A ruler and a pair of kitchen shears will help, too.
  2. Whisk the flour, sugar, and salt together in a medium bowl, then add the butter. Toss the butter cubes in the flour, separating any stuck-together cubes with your fingers, then pinch each cube flat with your fingers, to about 1/4-inch (6mm) thick—don’t work the butter in more! Stir in the cold water with a rubber spatula and press and knead together until the dough comes together in a ball. Dump the ball onto a heavily floured work surface, sprinkle the top with more flour, and use a rolling pin to roll out a rectangle that’s roughly 10 x 15 inches (25 x 38cm), with the longer side closest to you, adding as much flour as you need along the way to keep it from sticking. (If your kitchen is very warm or, at any point, the butter gets melty and sticky, gather the dough onto a baking sheet and pop it into the fridge till it firms up a little, 15 minutes or so.)
  3. Slide an offset spatula under the dough to loosen it from the counter, then fold each 10-inch (25cm) side toward the middle so the edges meet, then close the packet like a book. Fold the book in half, top to bottom, then slice the dough in half horizontally, so you have two roughly equal-sized rectangles of dough. (If it’s warmer than 72°F (22°C) in your kitchen, you might want to refrigerate the dough for 15 to 20 minutes before proceeding.)
  4. Wrap one portion of dough in plastic wrap and chill it while you get to work on the other one, or freeze for later if you don’t plan on using it right away. Roll the remaining portion out 1/8-inch (3mm)

thick, into a 14-inch (36cm) round. Feel for sticky patches on top and underneath as you go, smoothing flour over them if needed. Brush off any excess flour, then drape the dough over your 9-inch (23cm) pie pan and lift the edges of the dough to drape the sides down into the corners without stretching the dough. Trim the excess to a 1 1/4-inch (3cm) overhang all around, then fold it under and press to seal it well, creating a 3/4-inch (2cm) border. If making a single-crust pie, crimp with your fingers or a fork into whatever decorative edge you like. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or overnight. Alternatively, the crust can be frozen for up to 3 months and thawed overnight in the fridge before baking.

5. To make a double-crust pie: Roll the remaining dough into a round as before to make your top crust, or, for a lattice-top pie, roll into an 1/8-inch (3mm) thick rectangle that's approximately 9 x 5 inches (23cm x 38cm). Transfer the entire sheet, uncut, to a baking sheet. Wrap both the bottom crust and top crust well in plastic and refrigerate at least 2 hours and up to overnight. Use as directed in your favorite recipe.
6. To blind-bake for a single-crust pie (and have one portion of dough left over): Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C) with a rack positioned in the lower-middle. Line the chilled crust with a 16-inch (40cm) square of foil (not parchment or wax paper), pressing it against the dough and letting the excess hang over the sides. Fill the crust to the brim with sugar, a no-waste alternative to traditional options like rice or dried beans (once cool, the roasted sugar can be stored and used in any recipe in place of granulated sugar).
7. Set the pie pan on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until the crust is cooked through and lightly browned, about 1 hour (using a glass pan makes it easy to check the underside to make sure it's nicely browned). Remove the crust from oven and carefully lift out the foil with both hands and set aside on a plate until the sugar has fully cooled. Cool the crust to room temperature and use within 12 hours. Once cool, store the roasted sugar airtight at room temperature. To use the other half of the dough if frozen, thaw in the fridge overnight first.

# Make-Ahead Whipped Cream

I developed this low-maintenance recipe in my restaurant days, when I needed a big batch of whipped cream to last through the night in a steamy kitchen. The trick is a bit of extra sugar, which helps the cream whip into a stable foam that can be held for up to eight hours. With a hearty pinch of salt, it's not too sweet, making it the ideal accompaniment for everything from Strawberry Shortcake (page 83) to Butternut Pumpkin Pie (page 166).

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**YIELD:** about 3 cups | **ACTIVE TIME:** 5 minutes

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**½ cup | 4 ounces sugar**

**⅛ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (half as much if iodized)**

**1½ cups | 12 ounces heavy cream**

**2 teaspoons vanilla extract or 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise with a paring knife**

Combine sugar, salt, cream, and vanilla extract, if using, in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. If using a vanilla bean, run the flat of the blade down each half to scrape out the seeds and add them to the cream (reserve the pod for another project). Mix on medium-low speed to dissolve the sugar, about a minute, then increase to medium-high and whip

until cream is thick enough to hold firm peaks, about 3 minutes.

Use immediately, or cover and refrigerate until needed, up to 8 hours.

Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to 1 week; before serving, briefly rewhip the cream to restore its light and silky texture.

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## → *Mix it up!*

**BASIL:** This emerald-green variation has an herbal freshness that's perfect with Strawberry Shortcake. Grind the sugar with 2 ounces (2 cups loosely packed) fresh basil leaves in a food processor until the leaves disappear and the sugar looks wet, like pesto. Proceed as directed.

**BROWN SUGAR:** Replace the sugar with light or dark brown sugar.

**CHERRY PIT:** A light cherry-almond flavor that's perfect with a slice of Cherry Pie (page 179). Combine heavy cream with 3¾ ounces (½ cup) cherry pits, cover, and steep overnight in the fridge. Strain and whip as directed.

**COCOA:** Combine the sugar with 1 ounce (⅓ cup) Dutch-process cocoa powder, such as Cacao Barry Extra Brute.

**FREEZE-DRIED FRUIT:** This variation is as colorful as it is tasty. Grind sugar with ⅓ ounce (⅓ cup) freeze-dried fruit such as bananas, blueberries, cherries, or cranberries in a food processor until powdery and fine, then whip as directed. For a thicker consistency, pulse in the food processor bowl until thick, just 90 seconds or so.

**ORANGE:** Combine sugar with 1 tablespoon orange zest and ¼ teaspoon orange flower water.

**STRAWBERRY:** Double Strawberry Shortcake, anyone? Add 2 ounces (¼ cup) chilled strawberry syrup (see Strawberry Ice Cream, page 340) to the cream and proceed as directed.