

Gluten/Dairy-free pumpkin pie with a coconut-pecan crust

The key to this version of vegan pumpkin pie is the cashew cream. It thickens the pumpkin custard filling without eggs. I kid you not. This is one beautiful pie. You'll love it. And so will your guests.

Prepare a 9-inch Springform pan by lining the bottom with a piece of parchment paper. First, make the crust.

Crust ingredients:

1 cup flaked unsweetened organic coconut
1 cup pecan pieces
1/2 cup all purpose gluten-free flour blend
1/2 cup organic light brown sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
5 tablespoons vegan butter

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Place all of the dry ingredients into a food processor bowl and pulse until the mixture looks like coarse sand.
- Add in the vegan butter and pulse several times in short bursts until the crumbs are moist and begin to fall away from the sides of the bowl.
- Dump the crumbs into the cake pan and spread them evenly. Using your fingers gently press the crumbs across the bottom and up the sides- about 2/3 of the way up. (back of metal spoon also works)
- Bake in the center of the oven for about 7 minutes- to set.
- Remove the pan and set aside.

Meanwhile... make your filling.

Ingredients:

2 14-oz. cans organic pumpkin puree
1 1/4 cups thick cashew cream- see below for instructions
1 1/4 cups organic light brown sugar
1/2 cup coconut milk
3 tablespoons molasses
1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice or orange juice
2 teaspoons bourbon vanilla
2 tablespoons tapioca starch
2 teaspoons xanthan gum
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Instructions:

Combine all of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Using a whisk attachment (if you have one- if not, use standard beaters) beat the ingredients on medium high until you have a smooth, creamy custard texture.

Pour the pumpkin custard into the Springform pan and smooth it out evenly. Your pan should be quite full- about 1-2 inches from the top. Place the pan into the center of the preheated 350 F degree oven. Bake for about one hour, till set, and up to 70 minutes or so, if necessary. If the cashew cream was very cold, for instance, you'll need to bake it longer. If the cashew cream was room temperature, the pie will set/bake sooner.

Check the pie at about 50 minutes, to make sure the top is not over-browning (some ovens may run hotter, etc). If the top gets too brown too soon, tent it with a piece of foil.

The pie should look set and slightly firm- though it will still shimmy a little if you shake the pan slightly. You want the center firmness to match the firmness near the outer edges. Every oven is slightly different. Start with an hour in mind- and be willing to bake up to 70 minutes, if it the pie looks "loose".

That said- know that this pie firms up when chilled. It is the chilling of the cashew cream that replaces the eggs in this recipe.

Cool the pie on a wire rack until it is cool enough to handle. Place a piece of parchment paper across the top, and a dinner plate to keep it in place. Chill in the fridge for at least six hours- but preferably, overnight. It will slice best when thoroughly chilled.

Before serving, remove the outer ring of the Springform pan. Top the pie with Pecan-Pumpkin Seed Praline (recipe follows).

pumpkin-pecan praline

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons vegan butter
A couple of shakes of cinnamon
A pinch of sea salt
1/3 cup chopped pecans
1/4 cup raw pumpkin seeds
2 tablespoons organic light brown sugar
2 tablespoons gluten-free brown rice syrup or maple syrup

Instructions:

Grease a baking sheet and set aside. Heat a well seasoned, lightly oiled iron skillet over medium heat and add the vegan butter, cinnamon, sea salt, pecans, pumpkin seeds and brown sugar. Stir for a minute or a two to toast the seeds and pecans. Add the brown rice syrup and stir till bubbling and sticky.

Remove from heat; spoon and spread the praline onto a greased baking sheet to cool. Break the praline into pieces for garnishing the top of the pie. I added the praline as a garnish to slices just before serving, but if you need to make this entirely ahead of time, you could top the whole chilled pie with cooled praline pieces.

how to make cashew cream

Cashew cream is super easy to make, and keeps for several days in the fridge, stored in an airtight container, covered.

You'll need:

2 cups organic raw cashews
Fresh filtered water

Rinse the cashews in a colander and place them in a glass or ceramic bowl. Cover them with fresh filtered water. Cover the bowl with a clean tea towel and let them soak for two hours.

Drain the cashews and pour them into a Vita-Mix or blender.

Add:

A small pinch of sea salt

A small splash of coconut milk- maybe 2 tablespoons

Process the cashews for a minute or two until they form a paste, adding a tiny bit of coconut milk, if necessary, to create a thick, rich cream. Don't thin it too much- you want it really thick for the pie filling.

Use immediately or store, covered, in the fridge until using.

Yields roughly two cups of cashew cream.

Tips and Twists

(Note: This recipe really needs a 9-inch pan. Don't use a smaller pan, It might overflow.)

If you would like to use real butter instead of vegan butter, that would work.

If you must avoid coconut milk, you could use your usual non-dairy substitution- if the milk is rich- like a vanilla almond milk or soy milk. I wouldn't use rice milk. Too thin. If I *had* to use rice milk as the only alternative, I would choose a vanilla rice yogurt instead.