

When I was in Paris studying and working, my French friends wanted to have a “real” midwestern style Thanksgiving. So, a few of us put our heads together and figured out how to make a feast like we’d have had at home using ingredients we could find at the market. I was assigned the pumpkin pie and here is my recipe to the best of my memory. It is labor intensive but was well worth the effort.

For the crust:

- 1 and 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, chilled and cubed- best if it’s European
- 2-4 tablespoons ice water

For the filling:

- 2 cups pumpkin puree
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream or crème fraiche

Instructions:

1. Prepare the crust:

- In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt.
- Add the chilled, cubed butter to the flour mixture. Using your fingers, work the butter into the flour until the mixture is like oatmeal.
- Gradually add ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time, mixing gently with a fork until the dough comes together. I found it best to not overwork the dough.
- Form the dough into a disk, wrap it in wax paper, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven:

- Preheat your oven to 375°F

3. Roll out the crust:

- On a lightly floured surface, roll out the chilled dough into a circle about 12 inches in diameter.
- Carefully transfer the dough to a 9-inch pie dish. Trim any excess dough hanging over the edges, leaving about a 1-inch overhang. Crimp the edges as desired.

4. Prepare the filling:

To make the pumpkin puree start with a mid-size pumpkin. Cut the top off and then scoop out all the insides- you can separate and lay out the pumpkin seeds which you can roast later for a snack— Then cut the pumpkin into quarters and scrape everything out like you'd do if you were preparing to cook squash. Cut the rind off the pulp and slice into chunks. At this point you have a choice to either roast the chunks like you would squash in a pan with a little water at 350 until tender when you test with a fork, or you can cook them in a pan on the stovetop until they are tender. Once they are tender you can either mash them like you would potatoes or you can put them through a food mill to make a puree. Once you have your puree keep following the recipe.

- In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the pumpkin puree, brown sugar, spices (cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves), and salt until well combined.
- Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition.
- Gradually pour in the heavy cream or crème fraiche, stirring until the mixture is smooth and creamy.

5. Assemble and bake:

- Pour the pumpkin filling into the prepared pie crust.
- Place the pie on a baking sheet to catch any drips.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 50-60 minutes, or until the filling is set and the crust is golden brown.

- If the crust starts to brown too quickly, you can cover the edges with foil
- Once baked, remove the pie from the oven and let it cool completely on a wire rack before serving.

6. Serve and enjoy:

- Serve slices of pumpkin pie with whipped cream