

#16 Speedy Pumpkin Bars



These speedy pumpkin bars are exactly what it says on the tin. To make the cake batter takes about 10-15 minutes from the moment you take your ingredients out of the cupboard. Yes, it's that quick! What's more, you'll be pleased to hear it's a two bowls and a spatula affair where dry ingredients are added to the wet ones. A few stirs later it's ready to go into the oven. Delicious, moist and full of autumn flavours such as cinnamon, ginger and cloves, the pumpkin bars won't let you down.

METHOD

1. Grease or line the baking tin. Preheat your oven to 175°C / gas mark 4. In a medium bowl place the **flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, salt** and all of the **spices** and mix together until well combined.

2. Put the **sugar, eggs, vegetable oil, pumpkin and orange zest** in another bowl and mix until most of lumps are gone. It won't look too appetising at this stage! Fold in the dry ingredients and stir until you no longer see white floury bits.

3. Transfer the batter into the tin and smooth it out with a spatula. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Ovens vary so check your cake after 25 minutes by inserting a skewer or a toothpick in the middle. If it comes out clean, it's ready.

4. While the cake is in the oven, make the **frosting**. Into a medium bowl sift the **icing sugar** to remove any lumps. Add the **vanilla bean paste** or **vanilla extract**. Next, add the **COLD mascarpone cheese** and pour in the **COLD double cream**. Stir gently a few times, then whisk with a balloon whisk for a couple of minutes. The frosting will look runny and lumpy to start with but it'll suddenly thicken up towards the end and you'll be rewarded with that perfectly creamy consistency.

5. Once the cake is cool, spread the frosting on

INGREDIENTS

Rectangular baking tin
10 in x 15 in / about 24 ½cm x 35cm

Makes 20 bars

- 250g plain flour
- 1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg (Or substitute all of the spices with about 4 teaspoons of ground mixed spice.)
- 300g caster sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 250ml vegetable oil
- 425g canned pumpkin puree (1 can)
- Grated rind of one orange

For the frosting:

- 50g icing sugar
- 120g mascarpone cheese
- 160ml double cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

top and decorate with the little triangles cut out of the orange you zested earlier, or chopped pistachio nuts, or walnuts, or toasted almond flakes, or any other sprinkles of your choice. Happy baking!



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