

Pumpkin Cookie Bars

16 bars • Bake 25-32 minutes + cooling • 350°F • 8 × 8-inch pan

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup canned pumpkin purée - not pumpkin pie filling
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
- 1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt

Cinnamon-sugar topping

- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Line an 8 × 8-inch metal baking pan with parchment, leaving an overhang to lift out the bars.
2. Spread the measured pumpkin on several layers of paper towels. Gently press another towel over it to absorb excess moisture. Scrape the thickened pumpkin into a bowl. Don't add more pumpkin to replace the moisture removed - this helps keep the bars chewy instead of cakey.
3. Whisk the melted butter and both sugars together. Whisk in the blotted pumpkin, egg yolk, and vanilla.
4. In another bowl, stir together the flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking powder, and salt. Fold into the wet mixture just until no dry flour remains. The dough will be thick and sticky.
5. Press the dough evenly into the prepared pan. Mix 1 tablespoon granulated sugar with ½ teaspoon cinnamon and sprinkle over the surface.
6. Bake for 25-32 minutes, checking at 25 minutes. The edges should be set and lightly browned. A toothpick inserted in the center should come out with moist crumbs, but no wet batter.
7. Cool completely in the pan, at least 1 hour, so the bars can firm up. Lift out with the parchment and cut into 16 squares.

BABA'S TIP

Don't skip blotting the pumpkin or cooling the bars completely. Both help the bars hold their shape.

Inspired by Grammy's fall baking, rather than her original recipe. This recipe has not been kitchen-tested; use the doneness cues along with the baking time.