



Excerpted from the book [*PIE SQUARED: Irresistibly Easy Sweet & Savory Slab Pies*](#) by Cathy Barrow. Copyright © 2018 by Cathy Barrow. Reprinted with permission of Grand Central Life & Style. All rights reserved.

Pumpkin Chiffon Slab Pie with an Amaretti Crust

Serves 12 to 16

I'm going to admit something. I'm not a fan of most pumpkin pies. When faced with a table full of options, it's the last slice I'll put on my plate. However, this chiffon version changed my mind. It's an airy wisp of a fluffy pie, laced with the sultry flavors of fall and a rich almond cookie crust. Gelatin is the key to the cloud-like texture of the filling. There are two critical junctures, so play close attention: First, when beating the egg whites, find the place where they are fluffy and high peaked, but moist, not dry. Dry whites will cause graininess in the finished pie. And next, when cooling the custard, don't let it set up before folding in the egg whites or it will never combine; but don't fold in the egg whites if the filling is still warm or their lift will disappear. It's a tightrope walk. Check the heat of the custard on the inside of your wrist. If it still feels warm, it's too warm.

Make Ahead: Plan for 4 hours or more to chill the pie before serving. The crust may be made a day or two in advance. The entire pie may be made 1 day in advance.

Amaretti Crust

- 29 amaretti cookies (225 g), crushed (about 2 cups)
- 8 tablespoons (113 g) unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Filling

- 1 tablespoon (7 g) (one ¼ ounce packet) powdered unflavored gelatin
- ¼ cup (60 ml) cool water
- 1 (15-ounce) can (425 g) pumpkin puree (1 ¼ cups)
- ½ cup packed (100 g) light brown sugar
- 5 large eggs, separated
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon allspice
- Scant ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar

Topping

- 1 ½ cups (360 ml) heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar



Method

For the crust: Heat the oven to 350F; if you have one, place a baking stone, Baking Steel, or inverted baking sheet on the center rack to heat.

In a large bowl, combine the amaretti crumbs, melted butter, and salt using a firm spatula and pressing the mixture against the side of the bowl until it is cohesive and the crumbs are thoroughly buttered. Dump the wet crumbs into the slab pie pan and press up the sides of the pan before filling in along the bottom. Take your time pressing the crust in, using the side of your hand or a metal measuring cup to form a good edge and a smooth base until the crust feels firm to the touch. Slide the pan into the oven (on top of the steel, stone, or baking sheet if using) and bake until lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool.

For the filling: In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over the cool water and let it absorb the water for about 5 minutes (this step is called blooming). Set up an ice bath with a large bowl filled with ice water. Place a medium saucepan half filled with water on the stove and heat until simmering. In a large heatproof bowl, whisk the pumpkin, brown sugar, egg yolks, cinnamon, vanilla, allspice, cloves, and salt until well combined and no streaks of yellow remain. Place the bowl over the simmering water. Cook the custard to 170 F, stirring with a rubber spatula as it thickens, dries out a bit, and becomes smooth, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the bowl from the heat and stir in the bloomed gelatin until it melts. Place the bowl over the ice bath and whisk as it cools to slightly warmer than room temperature, about 85F. To keep the custard from setting, remove the bowl from the ice bath while whipping the egg whites.

In the work bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whip attachment or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, whip the egg whites on high until frothy. Add the cream of tartar (which makes the egg whites more stable) and continue whipping until the whites are shiny, the beater leaves a trail, and when lifted, forms medium peaks, another 3 or 4 minutes.

Stir one-third of the egg whites into the pumpkin custard until incorporated and the custard is lightened. Add the remaining egg whites and, using a large, flat rubber spatula, gently fold the custard and egg whites together until thoroughly and carefully combined with no large white streaks, while not deflating the egg whites. Gently pour the mixture into the cooled crust, cover, and refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours.

For the topping: In the work bowl of a stand mixer, whip the cream, increasing the speed as soft peaks form, until it begins to thicken, adding the powdered sugar one spoonful at a time. Beat until the whisk leaves a trail in the stiffened cream and forms high peaks. Spoon the cream on top of the completely cooled chiffon. Make peaks with the back of a tablespoon, smooth the whipped cream from edge to edge with an offset spatula, or add a dollop to each serving.

Refrigerate again for at least 2 hours. The pie is even better if it chills overnight and develops an even stronger autumnal flavor.



Note: This pie depends on uncooked egg whites for its lift, so choose the freshest eggs. If serving children, immune-compromised, or elderly guests, use pasteurized eggs instead.

Swaps:

- Trade in an equal amount of strawberry or raspberry purée for the pumpkin and switch white sugar for brown sugar. Cook 3/4 pound (340 g) berries until softened and jammy, then run the mixture through a blender, food mill, or strainer to remove the seeds.



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