

If you're looking to try something different this year for Thanksgiving dinner, or you'd just like to minimize how much time you spend in the kitchen, we have a recipe we've used for years that's quick and easy to prepare and will wow your family or guests. We call the recipe "Piece of Cake Pumpkin Pie", a play on words because of the simplicity in construction as well as the cake mix used for the crust.

As far as we know the original recipe came from Café for all Seasons on Traval Street in San Francisco. When I worked at San Francisco State I always looked forward to the seasonal holiday treats they'd make and they freely shared their recipes.

Imagine an inverted pie made with a crust on top and then flipped over for presentation. The pumpkin is spooned right into the pie dish while the crust is made of cake mix and pecans and is sprinkled right on top before baking. Total prep time for two pies is less than 10 minutes. The end product produces a crisp crust with a cookie like texture enhanced by the pecans which add a nice crunch. Of course there's the creamy pie filling topped with warm caramel sauce and whipped cream making this pie more than just pumpkin and crust.

These are best made a day ahead and refrigerated to help the pie set and free-up the oven for the rest of your Thanksgiving feast.

Recipe follows:



# Piece of Cake Pumpkin Pies

## Ingredients for the pies:

- 1) 29 oz. Can of pumpkin pie filling (with or without spices)
- 1) 5 oz. can of evaporated milk
- 1) cup of sugar
- 3 ) large eggs
- 1) TBSP of cinnamon
- 1) TSP nutmeg
- 1) box White or yellow cake mix WITH PUDDING
- 1) 16 oz. bag of pecan pieces chopped
- 1) stick of butter

## Optional Caramel Sauce:

- 1) stick of butter
  - 1 ½) cup of brown sugar
  - 1) tsp cinnamon
  - ½ ) cup heavy whipping cream
  - 1) tsp vanilla
- Line two 9" pie pans with foil

## **Assembly:**

Mix in a bowl 1 can of pumpkin pie filling with eggs and evaporated milk

If using pre-spiced pumpkin pie filling just add eggs, evaporated milk and mix. If using pure pumpkin pie filling you'll need to add sugar, and spices too.

Line two 9" pie pans with foil by cutting a piece of foil quite larger than the dish, or pan. Then use the other pan to nestle the two together which will flatten out the foil nicely—repeat for the second pie dish. Pour half of the mixture into each of the two foil-lined pie pans. It won't fill the pies to the top.

Top each pie with half of the box of cake mix WITH PUDDING and pat down gently until it is level.

Add chopped pecans on top of each pie. The pecans should completely cover each pie top but not too much as to pile on top of each other. This will form the crust.

Drizzle melted butter over each pie. ½ stick per pie at least.

Bake in oven at 350 for about 45 minutes. Cover with foil if nuts are getting too brown. Pie is done when it is firm to the touch and not runny—nuts will be dark.

Refrigerate. When cool, place a serving plate upside down on top of the pie and invert.

Remove foil.

Top with warm caramel sauce and whipping cream.

## **Optional Caramel Sauce**

You can buy pre-made caramel sauce or whip up this simple recipe.

Simply add the butter, cinnamon and sugar to a non-stick pan and heat slowly. When sugar is melted add cream and vanilla. Can be made ahead of time and refrigerated. Reheat in microwave and serve warm.