

PUMPKIN PRALINE BREAD

This is always a big hit in the Fall and during the holidays. Be sure to read the “**TIPS**” section below.

There are 3 ways to make this:

- Plain, no nuts
- With nuts mixed into batter
- Pecan praline center filling variation

INGREDIENTS:

3 1/3 cups all-purpose flour + 2 Tablespoons
4 cups sugar (yes, that's correct, 4 cups)
2 2/3 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/3 teaspoons cinnamon
1/3 teaspoons nutmeg
2 teaspoons salt
2 2/3 cup pumpkin (Be sure to get solid pack/pure pumpkin and not pumpkin pie filling - it's too runny.)
5 large eggs
1 1/3 cup vegetable or canola oil
1 scant cup water

Optional: 1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts (can use more, if desired)

Optional: Pecan Praline filling (see below)

Optional: Turbinado or demerara sugar for tops (see “TIPS”) below

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

1. Combine dry ingredients and sift together or stir together well with whisk. Whisking works very well; no real need to sift if you don't want to.
2. Combine wet ingredients and mix well. Keep the blender on low speeds as the pumpkin will splatter!
3. Combine wet and dry ingredients together and mix well.
4. OPTIONAL: Stir in nuts.
5. Grease and flour, or spray with Baker's Joy non-stick spray, your choice of pan (see below). If your pan is non-stick, just vegetable spray should work fine.
6. Fill pan(s) and bake accordingly - see below.

Optional Pecan Praline Filling Variation:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
3 Tbsp REAL butter, NOT margarine
3/4 cup chopped pecans (medium chop)

Directions:

- a. *Line a baking sheet with Reynold's Release Non-Stick aluminum foil or just use a silicone sheet such as a Silpat.*
 - b. *In a medium heavy sauce pan, stir sugar and butter until sugar melts and mixture comes to a boil. Boil 1 minute without stirring.*
 - c. *Mix in pecans. Quickly spread mixture onto the prepared baking sheet.*
 - d. *Bake in oven until sugar syrup bubbles vigorously, about 8-10 minutes. Cool praline completely. Break into small pieces. Store in airtight container, if necessary.*
 - e. *Fill the pan 1/2 full. Sprinkle batter with pecan pralines, cover with remaining batter.*
 - f. *Sprinkle batter with turbinado or demerara sugar.*
7. Remember to use the toothpick or bamboo skewer test to check for doneness.
 8. For all pan sizes, preheat the oven to 300 degrees.
 9. For a Bundt pan bake for 2 hours.
 10. -For small loaf pans bake 1 hour & 15 minutes.
- For mini-loaf pans (4" x 2" x 1 1/2"), fill them half full and bake for 25-28 minutes, probably closer to 28, but keep an eye on them to make sure they don't burn.
- For mini-muffin pans, fill about half full and bake about 24 minutes and keep an eye on them to make sure they don't burn.

TIPS:

I got this recipe from my good friend, Judy, and have added to it - I have only baked this using the mini-loaf pans, so I can't guarantee the accuracy of the baking times for the other pans.

You can substitute 4 - 5 teaspoons of Penzey's Pumpkin Pie Spice for the spices above. <http://www.penzeys.com>. This is what I usually do. You can also get pumpkin pie spice at most grocery stores, but for the freshest spices at very reasonable prices, you'll love Penzey's. And if you know a cook or chef, they have some great gift sets.

Toast the walnuts for additional flavor - if whole walnuts, toast about 6-8 minutes, stirring at 3-4 minutes. Allow to cool then chop. Keep a close watch on them as nuts can burn quickly if left in the oven too long. Toast at 300 degrees.

I don't toast pecans; they burn too easily and are too expensive.

The batter will seem runny, but that is the way it should be. Any pan you use, you probably shouldn't fill it much more than over 1/2 full because the batter will more than double in volume when baking.

For mini-loafs, fill the well about 1/3 - 1/2 full and then sprinkle tops as directed below. Bake as directed or until you see the tops start to "crack." Run a butter knife or non-stick spatula around the edges and allow to sit in the pan for just a few minutes and then carefully remove and place on a cooling rack. If you are not going to eat them right away, after they have cooled, seal in an air-tight container or wrap each individually with plastic wrap and refrigerate, which is what I do. Makes about 18-24 mini-loafs. Be sure to spray the loaf wells with non-stick spray before you initially fill them and before each baking cycle. There may be some crumbs left over in the wells - no need to scrape them out before re-filling with more batter.

Sprinkle turbinado or demerara sugar on the top of the batter right before baking - it's like the "sugar in the raw" (coarse) sugar you get in brown packets at some restaurants. You can get it at Walmart in clear plastic containers or brown boxes. I've tried it on the mini-loafs and it didn't burn after 25 minutes, but I have no idea if it will burn after longer baking times, so keep an eye on the full-sized loafs if you use it for them. If necessary, "tent" a piece of aluminum foil over the pan and increase the baking time accordingly - use the bamboo skewer test if unsure of doneness. Again, generously sprinkle the sugar on the tops - it really makes a huge difference. I use this trick on most of the different dessert breads I bake.

Resist the urge to stir the pralines in with the batter - this will cause the sugar coating to partially dissolve and make the bread difficult to remove from the pan and it will break apart easily.

I usually make a double recipe of the pralines - they're great to sprinkle on ice cream, breakfast cereal or just to snack on.

Best served warm with a big glass of COLD milk.

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