

## Pumpkin-Ricotta Cheesecake

Loosely based on the recipe for Eve's Lemon Cheesecake, from Kathy Gunst's *Relax, Company's Coming!* (one of my all-time go-to cookbooks), this fallish, ginger-crustured treat satisfies all manners of cheesecake cravings. Thanks to plenty of eggs and ricotta cheese (and a bit less sugar than usual), it's lighter than your typical doorstep dessert. Use pureed kabocha squash if you have it, or simply substitute canned pumpkin.

TIME: 90 minutes, start to finish

MAKES: 12 servings

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing pan  
1 (5-ounce) package ginger thins, pulverized in a food processor  
1/2 cup sifted confectioners' sugar  
1 pound cream cheese, room temperature  
1 cup sugar  
1 pound whole milk ricotta  
4 large eggs, room temperature  
1 1/4 cups mashed kabocha squash  
1/8 teaspoon each ground ginger, cardamom, nutmeg, and allspice  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
Pinch salt

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Grease an 8" springform pan generously with butter, wrap the bottom with a piece of foil (to catch any butter that drips out while baking) and set aside.

Stir the melted butter, ginger thin crumbs, and confectioners' sugar together in a bowl until well blended. Dump the mixture into the bottom of the springform pan, and use your hands to pat it into an even layer on the bottom of the pan and about 1/2" up the sides. Transfer the pan to the freezer to harden while you make the filling.

Next, in the work bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whip the cream cheese and sugar on medium speed until light, about 3 minutes. Add the ricotta, and whip another minute or two. Add the eggs one at a time, whipping on low and scraping the sides of the work bowl between additions. Stir the squash, spices, vanilla, and salt together in a separate bowl, then add the squash mixture to the batter, and mix on medium speed until uniform in color, scraping any stray cream cheese off the very bottom of the bowl.

Place the chilled pan on the prepared baking sheet, and transfer the batter to the pan. Bake on the middle rack for about 1 hour 15 minutes, or until the cake is puffed and just beginning to crack. (It may still jiggle a bit, but the cake will move as one piece, rather than just jiggling in the center.) Let cool to room temperature (or chill overnight), then cut and serve.

*Note: If you want a cheesecake with almost no color (besides the obvious pumpkin-orange tinge) on the top, place a baking sheet on the rack directly above it as it bakes.*