



ANSON MILLS

Butternut Squash Pie

Yield

One 9-inch pie

Time

About 1½ hours to bake the squash and process it, 10 minutes to make the filling, and about 1 hour to bake the pie

Baking Notes

The long neck of a butternut squash prompted us to reconsider how to cook it. Instead of baking the neck as a single piece, we chose to slice it, skin-on, so the flesh would cook more quickly and dry out in the oven. The skin is easily removed with a paring knife when the squash is finished.

You may cook and purée the squash a day or two in advance of using it in the pie. The squash purée may also be frozen for up to 2 months before using.

We've been in some of our friends' cupboards lately and feel compelled to offer a comment: for the filling to be really first rate, the spices should be fresh—fresher than last Thanksgiving, at the very least.

Time the baking of the crust with the preparation of the filling—it is important to fill the pie shell while it is still hot.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a rimmed baking sheet; parchment paper; a heavy chef's knife; a spoon for scraping out the squash seeds; aluminum foil; a paring knife; a food processor; a rubber spatula; a 1-quart liquid measure or similarly sized pitcher; and a wire cooling rack.

Ingredients

1 (3-pound) butternut squash, scrubbed
2 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
4 ounces (½ cup packed) dark brown sugar
1.75 ounces (¼ cup) granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1½ teaspoons ground ginger
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
Pinch of cayenne pepper
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
10 ounces (1¼ cups) heavy cream
1 recipe Essential All-Butter Pastry, still hot

Directions

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 300 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a heavy, well-balanced chef's knife, slice off the stem end of the squash, then cut the squash horizontally, separating the neck from the bulbous portion. Cut each piece in half lengthwise. Working with one length at a time, lay the neck pieces flat side down and cut them into 1-inch-thick half-moon slices. Arrange pieces close together on the prepared baking sheet. Using a spoon, scrape out and discard the seeds and "cobwebs" from the bulb ends. Cut the bulb ends into 1-inch-thick slices and arrange them on the baking sheet. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake, checking occasionally, until the squash is tender, about 1 hour. Remove the foil and continue baking until the slices dry out some (but don't allow them to brown), 30 to 40 minutes longer, turning the pieces once halfway through baking.

2. Let the squash cool slightly, then trim away the skin with a paring knife. Process the flesh in a food processor until smooth, scraping down the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Measure out 11 ounces of purée, or 1½ cups, packed, and return this amount to the food processor. Add the whole eggs, egg yolks, sugar, vanilla, spices, and salt and process until smooth. With the machine running, pour the cream through the feed tube and process until combined. Scrape the filling into a 1-quart liquid measuring cup or similarly sized pitcher. (The filling can be covered tightly and refrigerated for up to 2 days. Allow it to come to room temperature before using.)

3. After prebaking the pie shell, leave the oven rack with the pizza stone at the lowest position, but reduce the oven temperature to 300 degrees. (If the pie shell is no longer hot, warm it in the oven on the pizza stone for about 5 minutes.) Set the pie shell on the pizza stone if it's not already there, and then pour in the filling. Bake the pie until the filling is set two-thirds in from the perimeter and the center still jiggles, 50 to 60 minutes. Remove from the pie the oven and let cool to room temperature on a wire rack.