

Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars Recipe: A Perfect Fall Treat

If you're looking for a seasonal dessert that combines the creamy richness of cheesecake with the warm flavors of pumpkin spice, then Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars are the perfect choice. This easy-to-follow recipe will help you create delicious, gluten-free pumpkin cheesecake bars that are ideal for sharing with friends and family.

Recipe Overview:

- **Preparation Time:** 20 minutes
- **Cook Time:** 50 minutes
- **Cooling Time:** 2 hours
- **Total Time:** 3 hours 10 minutes
- **Yield:** 12 servings

Ingredients for Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars

For the Crust:

- **1 ½ cups** gluten-free graham cracker crumbs (about 10-12 crackers)
- **¼ cup** granulated sugar
- **½ cup** unsalted butter, melted

For the Pumpkin Cheesecake Filling:

- **8 oz** cream cheese, softened
- **½ cup** granulated sugar
- **½ cup** brown sugar, packed
- **¾ cup** pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- **2 large** eggs
- **1 tsp** vanilla extract
- **1 tsp** ground cinnamon
- **½ tsp** ground nutmeg
- **¼ tsp** ground cloves
- **¼ tsp** salt

Optional Toppings:

- Whipped cream
 - A dash of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice
 - Crushed graham cracker crumbs
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Instructions: How to Make Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars

Step 1: Preheat and Prepare Your Baking Dish

1. Preheat your oven to **350°F (175°C)**.
2. Line a **9x9-inch baking dish** with parchment paper, leaving a bit of overhang on each side for easy removal later. This will make it easier to lift out the bars once they're set.

Step 2: Make the Graham Cracker Crust

1. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the **gluten-free graham cracker crumbs** and **¼ cup granulated sugar**.
2. Pour in the **melted butter** and mix until all the crumbs are evenly coated and the texture is similar to wet sand.
3. Press this mixture firmly into the bottom of the prepared baking dish to create an even layer. Use the back of a spoon or the bottom of a measuring cup to ensure it's compacted.
4. Bake the crust for **10 minutes**, then remove it from the oven and let it cool slightly.

Step 3: Prepare the Cheesecake Filling

1. In a large mixing bowl, beat the **softened cream cheese** until it's smooth and creamy.
2. Add the **½ cup granulated sugar** and **½ cup brown sugar**, beating until fully incorporated.
3. Add the **pumpkin puree**, **eggs**, and **vanilla extract**, and mix on medium speed until smooth.
4. Sprinkle in the **ground cinnamon**, **nutmeg**, **cloves**, and **salt**, mixing just until the spices are evenly distributed.

Step 4: Assemble and Bake

1. Pour the pumpkin cheesecake mixture over the cooled crust, spreading it out into an even layer.
2. Bake in the preheated oven for **40-45 minutes**, or until the edges are set and the center has a slight jiggle. Overbaking can cause cracks, so keep a close eye on it in the last few minutes.
3. Once baked, turn off the oven, crack the door open slightly, and let the cheesecake cool inside for about **15 minutes**. This gradual cooling helps prevent cracking.

Step 5: Cool and Chill

1. After the initial oven cool, transfer the baking dish to a wire rack and let it cool to room temperature.
2. Once cooled, cover the dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for **at least 2 hours** (or overnight if possible) to allow the bars to set completely.

Step 6: Slice and Serve

1. Using the parchment paper overhang, lift the pumpkin cheesecake slab out of the baking dish.
 2. Place it on a cutting board, then cut it into **12 bars** (or smaller, depending on your preference).
 3. For an extra touch, add a dollop of whipped cream on each bar and sprinkle a dash of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice over the top. A few crushed graham cracker crumbs also add a nice texture.
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Tips for the Perfect Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars

- **Cream Cheese Consistency:** Make sure your cream cheese is fully softened before mixing to avoid lumps in the filling.
- **Graham Cracker Options:** If you don't need a gluten-free option, regular graham crackers work perfectly well. You could also try a ginger snap crust for a spicier flavor!
- **Pumpkin Puree:** Be sure to use plain pumpkin puree, not pumpkin pie filling, which has added spices and sweeteners.
- **Chill Time:** Letting the bars chill in the fridge for a few hours is essential to achieve the best texture.

Storing Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars

- **Refrigerator:** Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to **5 days**.
 - **Freezing:** These bars also freeze well! Place them in a single layer in an airtight container and freeze for up to **3 months**. Thaw in the fridge overnight before serving.
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These **Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars** are the ultimate fall dessert, capturing the essence of pumpkin spice in a smooth, creamy cheesecake form. Perfect for Thanksgiving, Christmas, or any cozy evening, they're sure to become a seasonal favorite. Enjoy!