

Pumpkin Loaves (or Pumpkin Bread)

I love pumpkin and everything you can make from it. This particular recipe is another one which comes from my childhood. It was a staple in our house throughout the year, just for a snack, for trips, and for special occasions. When I left for university, my mom would even send me loaves in the mail, which I promptly consumed. I also liked to eat this with milk for some reason when I was younger. Now, once again, I drink it with tea. I like to make this in the fall when pumpkins are in season. I have never made it at later times of the year.

As with other recipes, the original calls for something that is difficult to find outside the US. Where I come from, you can find canned pumpkin puree in the store and the amount is perfect for this recipe. My parents used to send me some cans in the mail, but that became too expensive and then a bit risky because packages would take months to arrive (or not arrive at all). I went for a couple of years without anything pumpkin, which was quite difficult as I do love it. Then I started cooking with squash (pumpkin is a type of squash) in other recipes, such as baking it with vegetables in the oven and making soup. I realized that it is not too hard to prep a squash and that the process of making the soup is exactly the same as making the puree! I will put those instructions first along with some comments.

Pumpkin Puree

Ingredients:

- 1 squash/pumpkin
- Olive/vegetable/sunflower oil

Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 200 degrees Celsius.
2. Cut the squash/pumpkin into at least four parts (more if it is big).
3. Skin the squash/pumpkin parts. This can take a while. (alternatively, you can skin them later, after they have been baked, but that can be difficult and painful)
4. Cover a baking tray with parchment paper or just grease it with some oil.
5. Place the parts on the baking tray, brush them with oil, and put them into the oven.
6. Bake the squash/pumpkin parts for 30-40 minutes (maybe longer) until they are soft. You should be able to stick a fork into them without any trouble.

7. Remove from oven and let cool so that you can touch them without burning yourself.
8. If you did not skin them before baking, remove the skin now.
9. Cut the pumpkin parts into smaller pieces for blending.
10. Using a blender, food processor, mixer, or other instruments, make the puree. Blend until you have an orange puree. You do not have to add anything to the puree itself while blending!

Note: the consistency of the homemade puree is a bit different from the canned version. It is waterier. Keep this in mind for the recipes and adjust the flour and other dry ingredients if you see that the batter is too liquidy.

Jell-o Cake

I cannot recall exactly when I first had this cake, but it seems to have left an impression on me. It was for a birthday because since then I have had it every year (with a few exceptions) for my birthday. I have even made it for other occasions such as Christmas and there was a Jell-o Cake at my high school graduation party. I love this cake! It is cool and moist, and the whipped cream topping is light and fluffy. It is not a heavy cake and is quite refreshing, especially in the summer. Alas, my birthday is in March, so I do not often enjoy it in the hotter months.

As with the other recipes, the key ingredient (Jell-O) may not be easily found where you are. Jell-O is just gelatin, so you can find a substitute. Make sure you check the amount to ensure that the cake is full of color and flavor. You can choose what flavors to use. I think it is fun to have two different ones, but you could just make a single color too.

Ingredients:

- 2 baked 20 or 23 cm white cake layers, cooled.
- (85 gr) Jell-O/gelatin, any flavor (I like cherry and lime)
- 1 cup boiling water
- ½ cup cold water
- Whipped cream (you can buy it ready or make your own)

Instructions:

1. Place cake layers, top sides up, in two clean layer pans.
2. With a toothpick or fork, make several holes throughout both cakes.
3. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water and add cold water and pour carefully over the cakes.
4. Chill for 3 to 4 hours in the refrigerator.
5. When ready, place pans with cakes in warm water (careful not to let the water into the cake!) and hold them there for 10 seconds, and then turn them out onto a serving plate.
6. Spread the whipped cream over the first cake. Then, repeat with the second cake and finish using the whipped cream on the top and all sides of the two layers.