

# **Pumpkin Cheesecake w/Chocolate Ganache & Caramelized Pecans**

*by: Katie Pizzuto*

## **INGREDIENTS**

### ***Crust***

1/4 cup crushed ginger snaps  
1/4 cup crushed graham crackers  
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans  
2 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1/3 c. melted butter

### ***Filling***

4 (8 oz) packages cream cheese, softened  
1 cup light brown sugar  
1 (15 oz) can pure pumpkin puree  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
6 eggs  
1/2 cup all purpose flour  
pinch of salt  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
1/4 tsp. allspice  
2 Tbsp. bourbon (OR 2 tsp. vanilla)

### ***Ganache***

8 oz. semi-sweet dark chocolate (50-60%)  
3/4 cup heavy cream

### ***Pecans***

1 Tbsp. butter  
1 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1/2 cup pecan halves

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### ***For the Cheesecake:***

Preheat oven to 350°F. Put cookies and nuts in a food processor and chop to a fine crumb. Add the melted butter and mix. Press into bottom of a 12" spring-form pan. Bake crust for 10 min. and let cool. Meanwhile, blend the cream cheese in a large mixing bowl. Add the sugar and blend. Then add the eggs, one at a time, until well incorporated. Add the cream and blend. Add the flour, salt, spices and bourbon (or vanilla) and mix well. Lastly, add in the pumpkin puree and combine. Pour into pan and bake for about 75 min. or until center is set. Turn off oven and let stand for 2 hrs. Remove, run knife around edge and let cool completely before covering and refrigerating.....

***For the Ganache:***

Break chocolate into small bits and place in heat-resistant bowl. Heat cream in saucepan but DON'T LET IT BOIL. Pour heavy cream over chocolate and stir gently to dissolve. Make sure there are no lumps left and chocolate is smooth. Let cool at room temp. until it begins to thicken a bit and then pour over chilled cheesecake. Cover loosely and refrigerate so that the ganache finishes setting and thickening.

***For the Pecans:***

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the sugar and nuts. Cook for 2-3 min., stirring constantly, until the mixture begins to caramelize. Spread out pieces on wax paper, separate with a fork, and let cool. Can be stored in air-tight container.

***For the Spiked Whipped Cream:***

I have never in my life measured the ingredients I put into making whipped cream. Place cold heavy cream in mixing bowl, add confectioner's sugar and a few drops of vanilla. If you want it "spiked" simply add a little bourbon to taste.

***To Complete:***

Serve a slice of the cheesecake with a dollop of the whipped cream and nestle a couple of pecans into the cream.