pumpkin swirl cheesecake bars

Makes 16 bars

RECIPE ADAPTED FROM: Minimalist Baker

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

COOK TIME: 1 hour

FOR THE CRUST

8oz gluten-free ginger snap cookies

1½ Tbsp butter or non-dairy butter, melted

FOR THE FILLING

1 cup raw cashews

1 cup coconut cream

8oz vegan cream cheese (Toffuti is best, or Kite Hill)

1 Tbsp arrowroot or cornstarch

⅔ cup maple syrup

1 cup pumpkin puree, divided

3 tsp pumpkin pie spice, divided

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp pure vanilla extract (optional)

FOR THE CRUST

PREHEAT oven to 400ºF and line an 8x8 baking dish or pie pan with parchment paper.

PLACE ginger snaps in a food processor and pulse 2-3 times or until finely ground.

ADD butter and pulse 8-10 times or until mixture resembles coarse meal.

FIRMLY press mixture into the bottom of the dish.

BAKE for 8-10 minutes (keep an eye on it; don't let it brown too much).

COOL on a wire rack while you prepare the filling.

FOR THE FILLING

LOWER oven temperature to 350ºF (176ºC).

PLACE cashews, coconut cream, cream cheese, arrowroot or cornstarch, ½ cup pumpkin puree, 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice, salt and vanilla to a blender. Blend on high until the mixture is smooth and creamy.

POUR half of the cheesecake batter on top of the slightly cooled crust.

GENTLY tap the dish on the counter a few times to remove air bubbles from the cheesecake layer.

ADD remaining ½ cup pumpkin puree and 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice to blender with the other half of the cheesecake batter. Blend until smooth and creamy.

DOLLOP ~¼ cup-sized scoops of the darker pumpkin cheesecake mixture to the top of the filling.

USE the back of a knife or toothpick to swirl.

BAKE for 50-60 minutes or until the edges are slightly brown and the center is still slightly jiggly.

REMOVE from oven and allow to cool.

COVER the dish loosely with a kitchen towel or parchment paper and place in the refrigerator to chill for 6-8 hours or (preferably) overnight. After chilling, the top should have a glossy texture and the swirls will appear distinct.

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