

## Bob's *Pumpkin Bread*

### Ingredients

3 cups flour

2 teaspoons baking soda

1 ½ teaspoons salt

Spices:

1 2" stick of cinnamon (should be 2 teaspoons when ground)

1 teaspoon whole cloves

1 teaspoon whole allspice

1 teaspoon fresh ground nutmeg

1 teaspoon ground ginger

or if you must 5 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice (see notes)

3 cups sugar

1 tablespoon unsulphured molasses

or if you must 2 cups white sugar and 1 cup brown sugar

2 cups pumpkin puree (or if you must 1-15 oz can pumpkin puree)

4 eggs

½ cup orange juice

1 cup vegetable oil or shortening

Plus some shortening for the greased and floured loaf pans

1 cup fresh or fresh-frozen cranberries (not dried)

½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)

orange zest (optional)

### Pre-Preparations & Notes

This recipe will make 2-9X5 loaves of pumpkin bread; 4 to 5 in 4X6 loaf pans, or 8 to 9 in 3 1/2X5 loaf pans.

It is best to use fresh **pumpkin** if possible. The small pie pumpkins are better, but jack-'o-lantern pumpkins may be used (or any winter squash for that matter, no don't use spaghetti squash), just make sure they are clean and relatively fresh. (Be sure to clean up jack-'o-lantern pumpkins of any wax, burned pumpkin, etc before using. If they are moldy, throw the whole thing away and use something else.) Before beginning the bread, it is best to prepare the pumpkin puree (maybe the day before). Cut the cleaned pumpkins in half and remove the seeds and surface strings. (You can save and roast the seeds if you wish.) Cut up the pumpkin into manageable peaces and place in a pot. Cover with just enough water to cover and boil covered until soft (at least 30 minutes or more). Let the pot cool, remove pumpkin pieces and scrape the good part from the skin placing the good stuff in a sieve or colander with a bowl underneath to catch the drippings; let stand (1 to 2 hours). This is so we get a good puree which is not too wet. (If you care to, the water from the boil and the drip can be used in soup or another recipe.) The puree should have been cooked enough to be very soft, do a final little press to remove any excess water and save the puree for the bread. If you have a large quantity of pumpkin, save out the 2 cups necessary for the recipe and either freeze the remaining amount in plastic bags in 2 cup quantities;

or can in pint jars. Remember canning pumpkin requires a pressure cooker canner. Be sure to follow canning instructions. Some people can or freeze their pumpkin with the spices already added. I prefer to can the pumpkin without the spices so that when making the bread you have fresh spices.

Now for the **Spices**: I find it best to use whole fresh spices when possible and grind them with a coffee/spice grinder. If you can, do this (nutmeg will need to be hand ground, and the ginger is purchase pre-ground). Next best would be to mix the above with ground spices (as fresh as possible) in the ratios provided. The last would be to use pumpkin spice; it's just that you don't know what spices are in a premixed preparation.

The **Sugar**: This recipe calls for an amount of brown sugar and it tastes much better if you make your own brown sugar (and it's cheaper too). The recipe calls for 3 cups of sugar (one being brown), so take 3 cups granulated white sugar and add one hefty tablespoon of unsulphured molasses. (Don't use blackstrap or light molasses.) Using a mixer or a heavy spoon, mix until a constant light brown is obtained. (If you use a mixer, you may have to finish the job with a spoon.) This will take some work, but it will eventually be consistent without globules of molasses. Set aside for when you are ready to bake your bread.

### **The Baking**

First, using vegetable shortening, coat the sides and bottoms of your loaf pans and add flour over the entire surface. Preheat the oven to 350°.

Grind spices as necessary, zest orange if using, and chop nuts if using.

Sift together the flour, spices, salt, and baking soda.

In a separate bowl large enough to hold all the ingredients add sugar and vegetable shortening or oil and 'cream together'. Then add pumpkin puree, eggs, and orange juice. Mix well.

Add the flour mixture to the liquids and mix just enough to dampen all the flour. The mixture may look lumpy.

Fold in the cranberries. Note: a 12 oz bag of cranberries is about 3 cups. The unused cranberries may be frozen without any preparation other than washing and saving in a plastic freezer bag, ready for another recipe in the future.

Dispense the mixture into the loaf pans, filling about 1/2 to 2/3 full. Then add the walnuts and/or orange zest to the top of each loaf as desired.

Bake testing as needed with a wooden pick or cake pick to check for doneness. You want the cakes just done, not overdone. 9X5 should take about 60-65 minutes. The smaller pans will take considerably less time. Glass will take longer.

Remove when done and place pans on a rack to begin cooling. After about 10 minutes or so, for the 9X5 loaves, remove cakes from pans and continue to cool on the racks. For the smaller aluminum foil loaf pans, remove cake then replace in pan and let them completely cool on the rack.