

Pumpkin Cornbread Pudding with Cinnamon Caramel & Popcorn

Yield: 6 large servings or 12 smaller servings



Ingredients

Cornbread:

- 1 ½ cups cornmeal
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 6 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 ¼ teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs
- 1 ½ cups buttermilk
- ¾ cup milk
- 6 tablespoons melted butter (plus more for greasing the pan)

Pumpkin Custard Base:

- 3 eggs
- 15 oz pumpkin puree
- 1 ¼ cups brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar

Cinnamon Caramel:

- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1/3 cup water

2/3 cup heavy cream
4 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt

½ cup popped white popcorn
Cinnamon
Salt

Directions

Cornbread:

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Grease a 9x13 baking dish with butter. Combine the cornmeal, flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a mixing bowl. Whisk until evenly distributed. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs. Stir in the buttermilk, milk, and melted butter. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Using a wooden spoon, mix well (there will still be some small lumps in the batter). Pour the batter into the prepared baking dish. Bake for 18-20 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out dry. Cool in the pan before cutting into cubes. Remove the cubes from the pan using a spatula.

Pumpkin custard base:

Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl, beat the 3 eggs. Add the pumpkin puree and whisk until smooth. Add the brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg, mixing well. Lastly, stir in the whipping cream and vanilla until incorporated. Refrigerate until cornbread has cooled.

Assembly:

Drop the oven temperature to 375°F. Grease 6 deep ramekins with butter (see Kayla's notes). Using 2/3 of the cornbread cubes, divide them among the ramekins. Pour the pumpkin custard into each ramekin, filling each to the top. Let sit for 10 minutes. Bake for about 40 minutes, covering the ramekins with aluminum foil 25 minutes into the baking. Toss the remaining cubes of cornbread with the melted butter and 3 tablespoons of brown sugar. When the puddings have 3 minutes left in the oven, top each ramekin with a few cubes of cornbread and finish baking. Remove the ramekins from the oven and make sure a toothpick comes out dry.

Cinnamon Caramel:

While the pumpkin cornbread puddings are baking, combine the sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar has dissolved. Use a wet pastry brush to wash down the sides of the pan, and let the mixture boil for about 6 minutes, undisturbed, until the syrup is an amber color. Turn off the heat and stir in the heavy cream and butter (it will bubble and crystalize the sugar). Bring the mixture back to a boil over medium-high heat, and stir until the hardened caramel dissolves and the caramel is smooth. Add the cinnamon and salt. Remove from the heat and serve warm.

To serve:

Serve the pumpkin cornbread puddings with a generous amount of cinnamon caramel on top of each. Toss the popcorn with cinnamon and salt, just a pinch of each. Use the popcorn as a garnish.

Kayla's Notes

I used some deep ramekins that are essentially made for soup. If you only have shallow ramekins, just divide the cornbread up into small portions. Or, you can even make the entire cornbread pudding in a baking dish and just spoon portions out after it has baked.

If you want to, you can make two batches of cornbread, one the day before and one the day of. Dry the first batch out in cubes overnight and use these pieces for tossing with the brown sugar and butter for the top of the puddings (they'll be firmer and crumble less). You will just have some extra cornbread to eat! Use the fresh batch for the base of the pudding.

For the caramel, you can refrigerate it once it has cooled, but it will harden. To use again, reheat in the microwave so that it melts down into a sauce.