

Pumpkin Mini Pies in a Whole Wheat Ginger Crust

If you love pumpkin pie but are looking for something a little daintier, with a more tender crust and more elegant presentation, this is it. Just be warned that removing the tarts from the muffin tins requires a sharp knife, a small spoon, and a steady but determined hand. My thanks to [Bittersweet](#) for inspiring the crust, [Tartine](#) for inspiring the filling, and Lisa for her (almost) unwavering conviction that I could actually pull these off.

Makes 8 individual desserts

4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
1/4 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup minced crystallized ginger, plus additional for garnish
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 scant cup pumpkin puree (canned is perfectly fine)
1 whole egg
1 egg yolk
scant 1/2 cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon brandy
1/4 cup dark brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon *each* cinnamon and ground ginger
pinch *each* nutmeg and ground cloves

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, stir together the melted butter, sugar, salt, vanilla, crystallized ginger, and flour with a wooden spoon. Dough will be very soft and won't really look like dough. Plop two tablespoons (use an actual measuring spoon, please) of dough in each of 8 muffin cups (in a 12-cup plaque), spacing the 8 among all the rows. (A random 4 cups will remain empty.)

Use your thumb and index finger to press the dough out into the cups and up the sides. Try to make it as even as possible. If it doesn't reach fully up the sides, that's okay, but do the best that you can. Parbake the crusts for 10 minutes, or until golden brown and beginning to set. Cool. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Whisk together the remaining ingredients (pumpkin through cloves) in a large measuring cup or mixing bowl until well-combined. Divide the batter among the crusts, filling each crust almost (but not quite) to the top. You may have a little filling left over. Do not be tempted to overfill the crusts!

Bake the pies for 30 minutes, or until tops look darkened and matte, and a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the tins.

Once cool, slide a sharp, thin knife around each muffin cup to loosen pies, then remove with a thin spoon. Sprinkle with additional minced crystallized ginger.