

# Baked Squash, stuffed with Leeks

Eli & I eat quite a bit of squash as she's a bit of a squash fiend, and this time of year is perfect with all the different types of squash available to cook with. Like most folk, we tend to cook with butternut squash, making soups and pastas mostly but this recipe is something new we've tried this week and we absolutely love it, so we thought we'd share. It's a great winter warmer and is surprisingly filling.

## Baked Squash, stuffed with leeks

What you need;

- 2 squash (we have used Harlequin Squash but you can use whatever you like)
- 2 Large leeks, thinly sliced
- 40g Butter
- 90 grams of Gruyere cheese – grated
- 3 tblsp Crème fraiche
- 2tsp English mustard

Cook Time 45 mins – 1 hour

Servings Serves 2

- Pre heat your oven to 185 degrees – we're going to bake the squashes for 45mins to an hour.

- First thing you need to do is to cut the tops off the squash, these make your little lids to cover the squash and it's filling while you bake them in the oven. You might also need to cut a small piece off the bottom as you want the squash to be able to stand up a bit like a large bowl.
- Once you've cut the tops off and saved them for later, take a spoon and begin scraping out the seeds and fibres parts on the inside. You aren't trying to hollow the squash out, just remove the seeds and less edible part. All that lovely squash flesh is going to roast in the oven and will taste great so don't take too much out.
- Now put them onto a baking tray ready to go into the oven.
- For the filling, finely chop the leeks and gently soften them in the butter, you want them softened but not coloured as you want to keep the sweet flavour. When they are ready, transfer them to a bowl and allow them to cool a little before adding the mustard, crème fraiche and cheese and mixing it all together. This is the point to add your salt and pepper and check how it tastes. Add the filling to the squashes evenly and then replace the little tops you cut off earlier.
- Put the squashes into the oven and let them bake for between 45 mins and an hour until they are soft on the inside and the skin is crispy on the outside.
- Serve these piping hot with some nice bread and butter.

A perfect winter warmer inspired by a River Cottage cook book.

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# Snickerdoodling

Snickerdoodles are soft, sugar cookies which are crispy on the outside and soft and chewy on the inside and dusted with cinnamon.

No one is sure where the name snicker doodle came from, some saying it's German, some saying Dutch. Others say it's just a whimsical name from the New England region but what is certain is that you can't say snicker doodle without smiling. What a fantastic name for a treat.

If you have never made biscuits or cookies before, these are a great way to start as the recipe and method is very simple, but if you have, it's good to remember that the dough/batter for snicker doodles is wetter than with other biscuits so don't panic.

This recipe makes around 20 cookies.

## Ingredients:

- 250 g butter (room temperature)
- 300 g sugar
- 2 medium eggs
- 300 g flour
- 3 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

## For the sugar and cinnamon mixture to dust:

- 100 g sugar
- 10 g cinnamon

## Method

Combine room temperature butter, sugar, and eggs in a bowl and mix well. Stir in flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt and mix together, although do not overwork the mixture.

Refrigerate dough for an hour to chill and let the baking powder do its job.

Meanwhile mix together cinnamon and sugar in a bowl and set aside.

The mix is quite wet, so you will need to use a spoon to drop small amounts into the cinnamon and sugar mixture and move it around to make sure it's well covered.

Place on a greased baking sheet and bake for 10 to 12 minutes. (keep an eye on these as they can go from uncooked to cooked in less than a minute.)

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# The nights are fair drawing in.

It's that time of year when the daylight hours are getting shorter, the wind is getting chilly and the leaves on the trees are beginning to turn their Autumn shades. Gone are the thoughts of crisp summer salads and ice cream sundaes to be replaced with soups and hearty meals.

It's this time when we start thinking of the holidays associated with the dark, cold nights of winter and the food that goes with them. For today I'm thinking about Halloween and pumpkin and specifically one of my favourites, Pumpkin Bread.

Now Pumpkin bread can be quite high in calories, and I have been doing rather well recently at reducing my figure. So the pumpkin bread I have been making has been a reduced fat and calorie version, but with all that lovely, warming spice, you wouldn't notice.

## **Pumpkin And Halloween**

If you are reading this blog from the States, then you probably recognise pumpkins as the Jack O' Lanterns seen outside houses on Halloween, however when the Jack O' Lanterns were originally brought from Scotland and Ireland to the States, they were not made of pumpkin – rather a hollowed out turnip. Have a read at [the story](#) that brought the tradition of Jack O'Lanterns.

## **Ribbon Pumpkin Bread**

OK so lets have a look at making Ribbon Pumpkin Bread... (for those outside the States – you will have to convert the measures as they are in American cups, a bit finicky, but worth it).



### **Batter:**

1 cup pumpkin  
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce  
1 egg  
1 egg white  
1 tbsp oil  
1-2/3 cups plain flour  
1-1/4 cups sugar  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp ground cloves

### **Filling:**

6 oz. reduced fat cream cheese  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 tbsp plain flour  
2 egg whites

If you are using fresh pumpkin, cut this and boil it until soft – drain and then puree. The cup measure is of pureed pumpkin.

1. For filling, combine the cream cheese, sugar, flour, and egg whites in a bowl; set aside. In a mixing bowl, beat the pumpkin, applesauce, egg, egg whites, and oil. Combine the

flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and cloves.

2. Divide half of the batter between two 8-in. x 4-in. x 2-in. loaf pans coated with cooking spray. Spread each with filling; top with remaining batter.

3. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the centre comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Refrigerate leftovers.

**Keep checking back as I'll be doing some more winter recipes soon.**

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## Panna Cotta Pleasures

Panna cotta (from Italian for cooked cream) is an Italian dessert made by simmering together cream, milk, vanilla and sugar, mixing this with gelatine, and letting it cool until set.

Panna cotta is one of those things I order in a restaurant and savour, feeling like it's one of those cheffy, difficult dishes that I couldn't hope to cook. Well that's all changed. On Friday I gave it a try and it will be something I do again, definitely.

You will be shocked at just how easy it is, the hardest part is getting the dessert to set, but once you have the right

amount of gelatine, it all comes together.

When it has set, it should be a bit like a jelly. A bit “jiggly” and it should have a lovely silky texture.

## Recipe & ingredients

- gelatine leaves
- 250ml milk
- 250ml double cream
- 1 vanilla pod, split lengthways, seeds scraped out
- 25g sugar

## How To

- Soak the gelatine leaves in a little cold water until soft.
  - Place the milk, cream, vanilla pod and seeds and sugar into a pan and bring to a simmer. Remove the vanilla pod and discard.
  - Squeeze the water out of the gelatine leaves, then add to the pan and take off the heat. Stir until the gelatine has dissolved.
  - Divide the mixture among four ramekins and leave to cool. Place into the fridge for at least an hour, until set.
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# Brownies For The Birthday Boy

Today is our friend Luke's birthday and as a treat, we're baking him a batch of Brownies to remind him what he's missing from the states.

Brownies are one of those things which scream USA along with cookies and pumpkin pie and the one thing us poor Brits need to know about Brownies is that they are not like sponge cake, Brownies are still gooey in the middle and cooked on the outsides.

When you first make them it's a bit scary cause you want to put them back in until your knife comes out clean, but trust me on this – YOU WANT THE GOOEYNESS! (The recipe we used is from an excellent baker from Eli's work. Thanks Elori.)

Here's the details.

- 375 g soft unsalted butter
- 275 g best quality dark chocolate
- 100g milk chocolate
- 6 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 500 g caster sugar
- 225 g plain flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C – switch this on before you start getting everything else ready, then line your baking tray with baking paper to make sure your brownies come out easily.
- Melt the butter and chocolate together in a bowl over some boiling water but make sure the bottom of the bowl isn't touching the water. Once this is done, take the bowl out of the water and leave the mixture to cool slightly while you prepare the other ingredients.
- I have to say – we cheat slightly as there are two of us, so usually Eli melts the chocolate and I sort the other ingredients. However if you are doing this alone, just be organised. :0)
- In a bowl beat the eggs with the sugar and vanilla and then in another bowl, measure the flour and add the salt.
- Beat the chocolate mixture into the eggs and sugar, and then the flour.
- Beat to combine and then scrape out of the saucepan into the lined baking tray.
- Bake for about 25 minutes. This will depend on your oven, but when it's ready, the top should be dried to a paler brown speckle, but the middle still dark and dense and gooey. This is important, brownies should be gooey.

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## About us



Kate



Eli – photo by L.P. Donald ©2018

We are Kate and Eli and we love gardening, growing veggies and cooking. A great combination. We live on the East Coast of Scotland and tend an average sized household garden.

Our house is called Ar Bruadair, which is Scottish Gaelic for “our dream”, the house and garden very much are, our dream. So we thought what better name for our blog. Since then, of course, the blog has grown and now incorporates a youtube channel too. Pop along if you like videos of garden and food nonsense. <https://www.youtube.com/user/elidonalduk/>

We hope you’ll enjoy tagging along on our adventures, and please feel free to drop a comment or two if you want to get in touch. We want this space to feel very much like a community, sharing ideas, lessons and thoughts.

much love,  
Eli & Kate