



# FORKS OVER KNIVES®

## **Pumpkin Pie Squares | by Cathy Fisher**

*Makes 9 to 16 squares (depending on how small you cut them)*



**10 medjool dates, pitted and diced  
(about 1 cup diced)**

**$\frac{3}{4}$  cup water**

**1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups rolled oats, ground into flour (see notes)**

**2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice (or see notes below)**

**1 15 ounce can cooked pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix), (or one and a half cups cooked, pureed pumpkin; see notes below)**

**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

**$\frac{1}{2}$  cup non-dairy milk of your choice**

### ***Instructions:***

Place the 10 pitted and diced dates into a small bowl with the  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water and soak for at least 15 minutes.

Place the flour and Pumpkin Pie spice in a large bowl. In a blender, blend the soaked dates, the date soak water, the vanilla, and the non-dairy milk until smooth (1-2 minutes). Pour this into the bowl of flour/spices, and also add the pumpkin, and mix with a wooden spoon until all the dry ingredients are incorporated.

Scrape batter into an 8×8-inch baking pan that is lined with parchment paper (or use a non-stick silicone baking pan). Cook for 25-30 minutes at 375°F. (If you see a light browning and some cracks on the top, these are good indications that it's done.) Let cool at least 10-15 minutes before cutting and serving. Optional: Finish with Macadamia-Vanilla Frosting (recipe below) just before serving, or top with a light dusting of grated macadamia or other nuts (using a rotary cheese grater). Storing in the refrigerator overnight will firm up these squares, then you can pack them in a lunch or as a snack.

**Preparation:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

# Macadamia-Vanilla Frosting

*Makes about 1 cup*

**1/2 cup Macadamia nuts soaked in 1/2 cup of water for 15-30 minutes**  
**6 Medjool dates, pitted and diced, soaked in 1/2 cup of water for 15-30 minutes**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

## **Instructions:**

Drain the soak water off of the nuts and discard it. In a blender, blend all of the ingredients (nuts, dates with their soak water, and vanilla) until smooth and even in color. Add a little more water as needed to keep the blender moving if it gets too thick.

## **Chef's Notes:**

**Using fresh pumpkin:** If you want to use fresh pumpkin instead of canned, cut the pumpkin in half lengthwise, remove all the seeds and stringy fibers, and then place cut-side down in a baking pan. Bake at 350°F for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour (depending on size) or until easily pierced with a knife. Scoop out the pumpkin flesh, and puree in a food processor until smooth. If you want to extract the excess liquid (this will result in a firmer dessert), line a regular kitchen strainer with cheesecloth and strain the liquid off the pumpkin puree. I have also scooped the pureed pumpkin into the center of a large piece of cheesecloth, tied it off at the top, and hung it up to drain over a bowl for a couple hours. Cool the puree before using.

**Pumpkin pie spice substitution:** If you do not have pumpkin pie spice on hand, you can substitute with 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, 1/8 teaspoon clove; or a close approximation.

**Oat flour:** You can easily grind rolled oats into flour by using any blender; high-speed blenders produce the finest flour, but any blender will do. (A food processor is least effective.)

**Pans:** I use an 8×8-inch Pyrex pan here, but you can also use a lined pie or cake pan, and then cut the pieces to look like pumpkin pie slices.

**Texture:** For a firmer texture without refrigerating overnight, only use 1/2 cup of the date soak water (instead of 3/4 cup).