

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

It's Pumpkin Spice Time
October 2025

It's that time of year when pumpkin spice starts showing up in all kinds of treats. What started as an easy way to make pumpkin pie, was catapulted into a cultural icon by introducing it to coffee and now there is pumpkin spice everything.

Pumpkin pie spice is a mixture of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, and allspice which is used to flavor pumpkin pie. These warming spices evoke a feeling of coziness and autumn and make the house smell welcoming. Not just for pumpkin pie though, the mixture can be used in many baked items. The convenience of a mixture makes baking simpler and less expensive than having to buy each of the spices individually. You can add pumpkin pie spice to cakes, sugar cookies, baked apples, breads and more. Generally anything that uses cinnamon can be substituted with pumpkin pie spice for a more rounded and interesting flavor than the cinnamon alone.



Another convenience item for fall is canned pure pumpkin puree. This is a powerhouse of flavor and is much easier than roasting a sugar pumpkin and mashing it. Just be sure to distinguish between pure pumpkin puree and pumpkin pie mixture, which is sweetened and spiced and is not interchangeable with the pure pumpkin.

The recipe below is a take on cinnamon rolls that uses pumpkin in the yeast dough as well as pumpkin pie spice in the dough and in the filling. They rise in the refrigerator overnight so make a great breakfast for weekend mornings and company. The icing is cream cheese and powdered sugar flavored with browned butter and maple extract to complete the full-on fall flavor of these delicious rolls. If you don't have maple extract, use a couple of tablespoons of maple syrup.

Convenience items make fall baking easy and full of autumnal flavors. Whip up some fall treats for your family this weekend. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Pumpkin Spice Swirl Rolls with Maple Icing

1/4 cup warm milk

1 1/2 teaspoons yeast

1/4 cup sugar, divided

2 1/2 - 2 3/4 cups flour, divided

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

1/4 cup butter, cubed

1/2 cup canned pure pumpkin

1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
1/4 cup butter, melted

2 tablespoons butter
2 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon maple extract

In small bowl, mix warm milk, yeast and 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Set aside until yeast becomes foamy. In a large bowl, mix 2 1/2 cups of the flour, salt, 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice and remaining 3 tablespoons sugar. Cut in cubed butter until sandy in texture. In the mixer bowl of a stand mixer combine the pumpkin, egg and vanilla. Using the dough hook, add the yeast mixture and then the flour mixture. Beat with dough hook for 10 minutes on medium speed, until dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl and becomes elastic. If dough is still very wet and stringy, add remaining 1/4 cup flour. Shape into a ball and place into oiled bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and set in warm place for 1-2 hours or until double in size.

For filling, stir together 3/4 cup sugar and 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice. Place dough on floured surface. Roll with a rolling pin into a 15" x 12" rectangle. Spread melted butter over dough, leaving about 1" unbuttered on the long sides. Sprinkle with sugar and spice mixture. Starting with one long edge, roll it up into a log and pinch the seam together. Cut the dough into 4 pieces and then cut each piece into 3 for a total of 12 rolls. Arrange evenly in a 9" x 13" greased pan, with cut sides down. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator overnight.

In the morning, remove pan from refrigerator and let set for 30 minutes. Place on top of oven while it preheats, covered with a towel, to rise for another 30 minutes or until doubled. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Cool slightly.

For icing, heat 1/4 cup butter over medium heat and cook until solids become deep, toffee brown. Set aside. In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese until soft and creamy. Add powdered sugar, maple extract and browned butter. Beat to combine and spread over warm rolls.