Pumpkin Pie

When I was in university, I worked as a waitress at a low-end (but good!) breakfast/brunch restaurant in Atlanta. It wasn’t in the best part of town. One evening – evenings are slow at breakfast restaurants – I told the cook that I had to make a pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. Willie, the cook, wrote down this recipe. Willie was really nice to me – made sure I was ok getting to my car, teaching me to make pancakes, giving me advice – and he was barely literate. We made an odd team; I was a waitress going to a high end university and he was ex-convict just barely able to read and making just enough money to scrape by. I had to adapt the recipe a bit, but Willie’s additions make it the best pumpkin pie I have ever tasted! Unfortunately Willie was arrested a few weeks later.

Method

Leave pie crust out to defrost, if necessary. Poke a few holes in the bottom and on the sides. Preheat oven to 425° F

Mix sugar, honey, cinnamon, salt, ginger and cloves in small bowl.

Beat eggs in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture.

Gradually stir in evaporated milk. Pour into pie shell.

Bake in preheated 425° F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° F; bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Depending on the oven, I usually have to put foil around the edges of the pie to protect the pie crust from burning.

Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve immediately or refrigerate. Top with whipped cream before serving.

Shopping list (for 8 servings):

- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 large eggs
- 1 can (15 oz.) Pure Pumpkin
- 1 can (12 fl. oz.) Evaporated Milk
- 1 unbaked 9-inch (4-cup volume) deep-dish pie shell

Whipped cream, flavored with a little vanilla or rum (optional)

Contributed by
Aimee Ansari
Executive Director, Translators without Borders,
with help from my mother (recipe) and cousin (photos)