

Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 45-50 minutes | Chill Time: 4 hours (or overnight) | Total Time: ~5 hours 15 minutes

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Ingredients

For the Crust

- 1½ cups graham cracker crumbs (about 12 full sheets, crushed)
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

For the Cheesecake Filling

- 16 oz (2 blocks) full-fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk, room temperature
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (not pumpkin pie filling)

- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon salt

For the Optional Topping

- Whipped cream, for serving
- Caramel drizzle, for serving

Equipment

- 9×13-inch baking pan

- Parchment paper
 - Food processor or rolling pin (for crumbs)
 - Stand mixer or hand mixer
 - Large mixing bowl
 - Rubber spatula
 - Offset spatula
 - Wire cooling rack
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Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Oven and Pan — 5 minutes | *Low intensity*

Preheat your oven to 325°F (163°C). Line a 9×13-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on the long sides for easy removal. Lightly grease the parchment.

Tip: Do not use a glass pan here — dark metal or ceramic conducts heat more evenly for cheesecake.

Step 2: Make the Crust — 5 minutes | Medium intensity

In a medium bowl, combine the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, granulated sugar, salt, and cinnamon. Stir until the mixture resembles wet sand and holds together when pinched. Press firmly and evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan using the flat bottom of a measuring cup. *Tip: Press hard — a compact crust prevents crumbling when sliced.*

Step 3: Pre-Bake the Crust — 8-10 minutes | Low intensity

Bake the crust for 8-10 minutes, until fragrant and lightly golden at the edges. Remove from the oven and set aside. Reduce the oven temperature to 300°F (150°C). *Tip: A lower baking temperature is the secret to a crack-free cheesecake.*

Step 4: Beat the Cream Cheese and Sugars — 3-4 minutes | Medium intensity

In a large bowl or stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the softened cream cheese on medium speed until completely smooth, about 1 minute. Add the granulated sugar and brown sugar and beat for 2-3 minutes more, scraping down the sides of the bowl, until fluffy and no lumps remain. *Tip: Lumps at this stage cannot be fixed later — beat until silky.*

Step 5: Add Eggs and Pumpkin — 2-3 minutes | Low intensity

Add the eggs and egg yolk one at a time, beating on low speed after each addition just until incorporated. Add the pumpkin purée and vanilla and mix on low until smooth. *Tip: Overbeating after the eggs are added whips in air, which causes the bars to puff and crack.*

Step 6: Add Spices and Finish the Batter — 1 minute | Low intensity

Add the cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and salt. Mix on low just until evenly combined. Scrape the bowl and give the batter a final fold with a spatula to ensure uniformity.

Step 7: Bake — 40-45 minutes | Low intensity (hands-off)

Pour the filling over the pre-baked crust and smooth the top with an offset spatula. Tap the pan gently on the counter twice to release air bubbles. Bake at 300°F (150°C) for 40–45 minutes, until the edges are set and the center still has a slight 2-inch wobble when you gently shake the pan. *Tip: The residual heat will finish setting the center as it cools.*

Step 8: Cool Gradually — 1 hour | Low intensity (hands-off)

Turn off the oven, crack the door open a few inches, and let the bars cool inside the oven for 30 minutes. Then transfer to a wire rack and cool at room temperature for another 30 minutes. *Tip: Gradual cooling prevents sudden temperature shifts that cause cracks.*

Step 9: Chill — 4 hours to overnight | Low intensity (hands-off)

Cover the pan loosely with plastic wrap (don’t let it touch the surface) and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, ideally overnight. This firming step is essential for clean slices.

Step 10: Slice and Serve — 5 minutes | Low intensity

Lift the bars out using the parchment overhang. Dip a sharp knife in hot water, wipe it dry, and slice into 16 bars, cleaning the knife between cuts. Serve chilled or slightly cool, topped with whipped cream and a caramel drizzle if desired. Store leftovers covered in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Time & Intensity Summary

Stage	Time	Intensity
Prep (pan + crust)	10 min	Low-Medium
Pre-bake crust	8–10 min	Low
Make filling	6–8 min	Low-Medium

Stage	Time	Intensity
Bake	40-45 min	Low (hands-off)
Oven cool-down	30 min	Low (hands-off)
Room-temp cool	30 min	Low (hands-off)
Chill	4 hrs-overnight	None
Slice & serve	5 min	Low

Nutrition (per bar, 1 of 16, without toppings)

- Calories: ~265
- Total Fat: 17 g
- Saturated Fat: 10 g
- Cholesterol: 75 mg
- Sodium: 200 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 24 g
- Dietary Fiber: 1 g
- Total Sugars: 19 g

- Protein: 4 g