

# Pumpkin Cheesecake Muffins

## For the cheesecake filling:

6 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 egg yolk  
1 tablespoon sour cream or plain yogurt  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla  
pinch salt

Beat the cream cheese and sugar together until smooth. Add yolk, sour cream, lemon juice, vanilla and salt to combine thoroughly. Put in fridge while you get on with the muffins.

## Pumpkin Muffins:

1 stick (4 oz.) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly  
3/4 cup squash puree, or canned pumpkin  
1/4 cup buttermilk  
3/4 cup packed brown or unrefined sugar  
2 tablespoons molasses  
2 eggs  
2 cups flour (I use equal parts whole and white spelt)  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1/4 teaspoon allspice  
1/8 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a standard 12-cup muffin pan with muffin liners (does that sound a bit dirty, or is it just me?) In a medium bowl, whisk together the melted butter, squash puree, buttermilk, sugar, molasses and eggs to combine. In a large bowl, sift together the dry ingredients. Make a well, and gently fold in the wets until just combined. Divide the batter evenly between the cups.

Now comes the fun part, and there are two possible ways to go about it. You can either use the back of a spoon to make a small well in the center of each muffin, and spoon the cheesecake filling in. Or use a piping bag fitted with a smallish, plain tip (or a plastic baggie which you will snip the corner off of) and fill with the cream cheese mixture. Plunge the tip into the center of the muffin, and gently squeeze out a couple tablespoons. The muffin will puff up. Repeat with the remaining muffins until you have used up all the filling.

Bake the muffins on the center rack until puffed and golden, about 30 minutes.

