

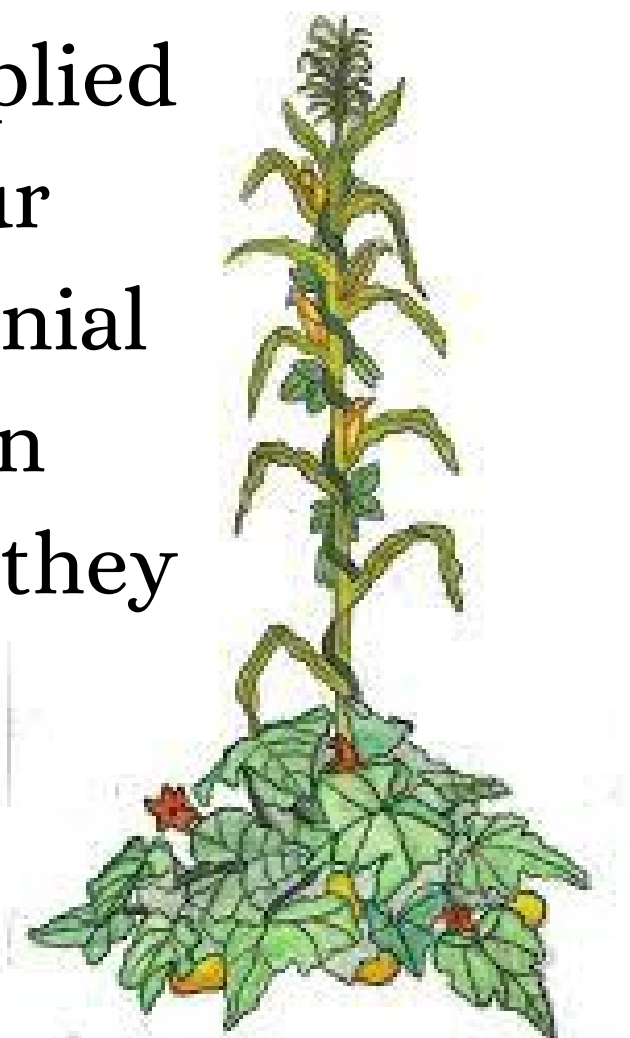
Pumpkin Spice



Pumpkin spice is a blend of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves and for us ginger. It was originally called pumpkin pie spice, and as the name implies, was meant specifically for flavoring pumpkin pies. These flavors didn't come together officially as "pumpkin spice" until McCormick put it on supermarket shelves in the 1950s and then it found its way into coffee in the 1990s. And then came Starbucks' Pumpkin Spice Latte in 2003—the PSL, which is the chain's most popular seasonal drink. One of the reasons PSL and other pumpkin spice products are so popular is because this particular flavor combination is rooted in the ethos of fall.

Fall brings a season of harvests. It's a time when we stay inside where it's warm and when the colonists would have built stores for the coming winter. That meant preserving and baking and their homes would have been filled with the smells of the spices that have come to constitute pumpkin-spice flavoring. Cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and cloves — all imported from the West Indies. In our own way, we prepare for the change in seasons and the holiday season and these spices—either singularly or in their pre-blended form—triggers a sense of home and warmth and comfort, deeply rooted in this tenuous connection to our agricultural history.

The first colonists had little with them, no familiar meats or grains. While they may have longed for these things, what they got was pumpkins and squashes (and beans and corn and venison) as supplied by the local natives they befriended. Pumpkins grew readily in our region with very high yields, making it a prime candidate for colonial porridges and stews. And because it was so readily available, when people had no apples for pies, barley for beer, or meat for dinner, they ate pumpkin.



The influx of immigrants in the mid-1600s created a market for tobacco, timber, fur, and barley, yet the market for the pumpkin never quite took off. It was hampered by its history as a food for dire circumstances. It was no longer a food of necessity for the now thriving homesteads. The Puritans were labeled as having “pumpkin-blasted” brains for having left England for the unknown Americas, and pumpkin-eating was cast as backwoods behavior. Thankfully not everyone felt this way about pumpkins. The poet Benjamin Thompson romanticized the early colonial relationship with the fruit, writing of a time when the pumpkin was held in high esteem and was present in most foods. This sort of nostalgia took and a symbol of survival was born: The pumpkin took its place as the mascot of the harvest.



The narrative of the pumpkin as a poor-man’s dinner option moved people away from everyday consumption, creating a further cultural divide. Pumpkin spice lets us maintain this nostalgia without committing to the fruit. Because we share the meaning of pumpkin spice, the widespread consumption of pumpkin spice items reaffirms our sense of community and solidarity.



Pumpkin Spice - In Solidarity - Recipe

- **3 tablespoons ground cinnamon**
- **2 teaspoons ground nutmeg**
- **2 teaspoons ground ginger**
- **¾ teaspoon ground cloves**



Cinnamon is a spice obtained from the inner bark of the genus *Cinnamomum*. The aroma and flavour of cinnamon derive from its essential oil and principal component, cinnamaldehyde, as well as numerous other constituents including eugenol.

Only a few *Cinnamomum* species are grown commercially for spice. In 2018, Indonesia and China produced 70% of the world's supply of cinnamon, Indonesia producing nearly 40% and China 30%.

