

sweet potato pie

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Sweet Potato Pie

The Southern counterpart to [pumpkin pie](#), and in much of the American South the older and more common of the two. It is lighter, sweeter and more fragrant, and it is bound up with African American cooking history — sweet potato stood in for the yam of West African cooking, and the pie is a fixture of Thanksgiving, Juneteenth and church tables.

The differences from pumpkin pie are real and worth stating.

What makes it work

- **Roast the sweet potatoes whole, do not boil them.** Roasting at 200 °C for an hour concentrates the sugars and drives off water; boiling adds water and gives a thin, bland filling. This is the largest single difference in the result. See [Sweet potato](#) and [Sweet Potatoes](#).
- **Pass the flesh through a sieve or a ricer.** Sweet potato is fibrous, and a food processor makes it gluey rather than smooth.
- **More butter, less spice than pumpkin.** The filling carries 60 g of butter and leans on nutmeg and vanilla rather than a full spice bill.
- **It bakes slightly higher and firmer** than a pumpkin custard, because the starch content is higher.
- **Blind bake and seal the shell.**

Ingredients

One 23 cm pie. Serves 8.

- 1 blind-baked shell — [all-butter pie crust](#)
- 700 g sweet potatoes, about 3 medium
- 60 g unsalted butter, softened
- 150 g light brown sugar
- 80 g granulated sugar
- 3 [eggs](#)
- 240 ml evaporated [milk](#) or double cream
- 4 g fine salt
- 3 g [nutmeg](#)
- 3 g ground [cinnamon](#)
- 2 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)
- 2 tbsp bourbon, optional
- juice of half a [lemon](#)

Method

Roast the sweet potatoes whole at **200 °C / 400 °F for 50–60 minutes**, until completely soft and leaking syrup. Cool, peel, and push the flesh through a sieve. You want about 450 g.

Blind bake the shell. Reduce the oven to **175 °C / 350 °F**.

Beat the warm purée with the butter until the butter melts in. Add both sugars, then the eggs one at a time, then the evaporated milk, salt, spices, vanilla, bourbon and lemon juice. Beat until completely smooth — a sweet potato filling can take more beating than a pumpkin one.

Pour into the shell and bake **45–55 minutes**, until set at the edge with a slight wobble at the centre.

Cool completely.

Notes

- **It is sweeter than pumpkin pie and should be.** If you find it too sweet, cut the granulated sugar rather

than the brown.

- A meringue top, browned for eight minutes, is a traditional variation in parts of the South.
- **Keeps four days refrigerated**, and is good cold, which pumpkin pie is not.

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