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How to Make Homemade Pumpkin Butter!



If you have enjoyed pumpkin butter from farms stands, and wanted to make your own, but thought it might be too difficult; guess again! These step-by-step directions will make it so simple, anyone can make better pumpkin butter and at a much lower cost. Now, with a crockpot, it's easy!

Prepared this way, the jars can be stored in the fridge for many months, and require no special attention. A side benefit is that your house will smell wonderful while it is cooking - much better than potpourri!

Ingredients and Equipment

- 7 quarts of Pumpkin Puree (See step 1) Note: The yield is usually about 2 or 3 cups of puree per 6 inch diameter pie pumpkin! That cooks down to about half that volume in making pumpkin butter. So for 6 quarts of pumpkin butter, you'd need 5 or 6 small pie pumpkins! Similarly for 6 pints, you'd need 3 pie pumpkins.
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Allspice
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)

<http://www.Pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkinbutter.php>

- Lid lifter (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at WalMart)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Walmart)
- 1 Crock pot (slow cooker)
- Large spoons and ladles
- 1 Canner (a huge pot to sterilize the jars of pumpkin butter after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, sometimes at WalMart (seasonal item))
- Ball jars (Publix, WalMart carry them - about \$8 per dozen quart jars including the lids and rings)

Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Make unsweetened pumpkin puree!

That's right, pumpkin butter starts with cooked pumpkin! You can use store bought pumpkin puree, but the pumpkin butter won't taste nearly as good. So if you haven't made some pumpkin puree yet start here with [how to make pumpkin puree](http://www.Pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkincooking.php). <http://www.Pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkincooking.php>. Otherwise continue to step 2.



Step 2 - Fill the crock pot

Fill the crock pot to within 2 inches full with pumpkin puree, mine takes about 5 quarts.

Step 3 -Add the spices

Add:

- 2 tablespoons of ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon of allspice
- 4 cups sugar

Step 4 - Cook the Pumpkin butter

Set the crock pot on low or medium heat.

Cover it loosely or use a large pot splatter-guard. It will spatter as it boils slowly, so I also cover nearby surfaces with towels. You don't want to seal it tightly because you want the steam to escape so it can reduce in volume and thicken.

Leave it to cook for 6 - 8 hours. How long depends on the size and power of your crockpot, and how thick you like it, If you want to stir it occasionally, that's fine but not necessary. I let mine go overnight.



It will reduce in volume by about half overnight. As it cooks down (the next morning), add the remaining pumpkin puree (about 2 or 3 quarts) and 2 more cups of sugar. Then let it cook a couple of hours more to mix the flavors.

Step 5 - Wash the jars and lids

Now's a good time to get the jars ready, so you won't be rushed later. The dishwasher is fine for the jars, the water bath processing will sterilize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sterilize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used.



Leave the jars in the dishwasher on "heated dry" until you are ready to use them. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when you fill them with the hot pumpkin butter.

Put the lids into a pan of boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out.

Step 6 - Blend the pumpkin butter (optional)

You want a smooth, creamy texture, right? The easiest way is to use a hand-held drink blender. It does a great job of making it smooth. You can also put it into a regular blender, but if you are going to do that, you might want to blend the pumpkin sauce before you put it in the crock pot (it will be much thicker afterwards and won't move in a regular blender).



Tips:

- **Too thick?** if the pumpkin butter cooks down too much or is too thick for your liking, just add a little bit of apple juice and blend it in.
- **Not thick enough?** Just let it cook some more, with the lid off so the steam can escape!

Now, unless you want to can or freeze the pumpkin butter, you are DONE!!

If you want to freeze or can it, continue to step 7

Step 7 - Fill the jars

Fill them to within 1/4 inch of the top, wipe any spilled pumpkin butter off the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them. Now, since pumpkin is a low acid fruit (technically, it is a fruit, not a vegetable), you must use a pressure canner to reach temperatures high enough to kill the type of bacteria that can grow in it. **Even so, most government food agencies and university researchers do NOT recommend home canning of pumpkin purees. Here's what they say about [home canning Pumpkin butter](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/uga/pumpkin_butter.html): http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/uga/pumpkin_butter.html. I offer these instructions with that understood! I still recommend that you store the jars in your refrigerator. Unopened, they'll keep for many months there!**



I prefer to freeze the puree, for safety's sake. Just pop it in any freezer safe container, like ziploc bags and chuck it in the freezer. If you do that, you can stop here!

However, a number of people have written to say that they have canned pumpkin butter for years. To do this, put them in the pressure canner and follow the canner's directions.

Step 8 - Put the jars in the canner and the lid on the canner (but still vented)

Using the jar tongs, put the jars on the rack in the canner. By now the water level has probably boiled down to 3 inches. If it is lower than that, add more hot tap water to the canner. When all the jars that the canner will hold are in, put on the lid and twist it into place, but leave the weight off (or valve open, if you have that type of pressure canner).

Step 9 - Let the canner vent steam for 10 minutes

Put the heat on high and let the steam escape through the vent for 10 minutes to purge the airspace inside the canner.



Step 10 - Put the weight on and let the pressure build



After 10 minutes of venting, put the weight on and close any openings to allow the pressure to build to 11 to 13 pounds in a dial-type gauge canner - shown in the photos (or at 10 to 15 pounds pressure in a weighted gauge canner).

Step 11 - Process for the required time

Once the gauge hits 11 pounds (or 10 pounds in a weighted gauge type), start your timer going - for 65 minutes for pint jars and quarts for 75 minutes. Adjust the heat, as needed, to maintain 10 pounds of pressure. **Remember - this is an estimated time based on cubed squash; there is no USDA or university food science lab approved canning processing time for pumpkin butter - I still recommend you put the finished jars in the refrigerator afterwards.**

<http://www.Pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/pumpkinbutter.php>

Pressure required depends on the altitude where canning is being done. Note: the chart below will help you determine the right processing time and pressure, if you are above sea level.

It is important to learn how to operate your pressure canner by reading the owner's manual that came with your particular canner. Here are the manuals for [Presto canner manuals](#)

or by contacting the company that made your canner. Give the model number to the manufacturer, and they will send you the right manual. More [notes on pressure canners from Colorado State University](#).

Table 1. Recommended process time for Pumpkin and Winter Squash in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Pints	55 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
	Quarts	90	11	12	13	14

Table 2. Recommended process time for Pumpkin and Winter Squash in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of	
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints	55 min	10 lb	15 lb
	Quarts	90	10	15

Step 12 - Turn off the heat and let it cool down



After 55 minutes for pints, 90 minutes for quart jars, turn off the heat and let the canner cool down. After the pressure drops to zero (usually, you can tell but the "click" sound of the safety release vents opening, as well as but the gauge. Wait 3 more minutes, then open the vent or remove the weight and allow the steam to escape.

Step 13 - Remove the jars

Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool on a wooden cutting board or a towel, without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight), here they won't be bumped. You can then remove the rings if you like. You're done!

Step 8 - Done



Cool the canner and remove the jars without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place until the cool to room temperature (a couple of hours) Then pop them into the back of your fridge!

You can then remove the rings if you like.