Pumpkin Spiced Everything

Fall has arrived and with it everything pumpkin spiced! With the debut of the Pumpkin Spiced Latte at Starbucks in 2003, pumpkin spice pops up every year earlier and earlier.

In the United States, pumpkins are synonymous with Halloween and Thanksgiving holidays, but how did they get to be that way? First, a little history. According to PBS Food, archaeologists discovered the oldest domesticated pumpkins in the Oaxaca Highlands of Mexico, thought to be over 7,500 years old. These were some of the first crops grown for humans to eat in North America. Originally, these pumpkins were small and hard with a bitter flavor, nothing like the pumpkins we eat and decorate today.

The trend for using pumpkins for pies began in the 1800's and has evolved quite a bit over the last 200 years. A quick google search shows that pumpkin can be in just about every dessert you can imagine. A quick trip to the grocery store will show you that pumpkin flavor is not just for desserts, you can find pumpkin Pringles, pumpkin lasagna noodles, and pumpkin hummus on the shelves.

But what else are pumpkins used for? How about the artistic use of pumpkins for jack-o'-lanterns?

Irish mythology has the answer to that one: Stingy Jack. After several deals with the Devil gone bad, Stingy Jack is doomed to wander the earth with only a hollowed out turnip with a burning coal inside to light his way. Immigrants from Europe eventually switched to pumpkins as their fruit of choice. Pumpkins are a lucrative industry, and farmers have adapted their pumpkin farming to take into account what people are using them for, such as decorating, carving, eating, and smashing(!).

Pumpkin spice culture has permeated everything fall, from social media hashtags and memes to Saturday Night Live skits. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the pumpkin spice ride with a latte and a book (all pumpkin spiced, of course).

For some pumpkin spiced reading, try *Death by Pumpkin Spice* by Alex Erickson or *The Bakeshop at Pumpkin and Spice* by Donna Kauffman, both available at your library.

Pumpkin Spice Latte recipe from Food Network

Ingredients

1 cup milk

2 tablespoons pure pumpkin puree

1 tablespoon sugar

1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice, plus more for sprinkling

1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/4 cup hot espresso or strong brewed coffee

Sweetened whipped cream, for serving

Instructions

1. Combine the milk, pumpkin puree, sugar, pumpkin pie spice and vanilla in a medium microwave safe bowl, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and vent with a small hole. Microwave until the milk is hot, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk vigorously until the milk mixture is foamy, about 30 seconds.
2. Pour the espresso or coffee into a large mug and add the foamed milk. Top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of pumpkin pie spice.

https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/pumpkin-spice-latte-3363265

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