

## **DO AHEAD SIDES AND DESSERTS FOR THANKSGIVING**

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**Here are two wonderful recipes, and the best part is, they can be done ahead, leaving the cook more time to enjoy what we're really celebrating here, being with those we love and thanking the Lord for our abundant blessings. And for more holiday recipes, log onto my website!**

### **Easy and Elegant Pumpkin Squash Soup with Roasted Red Pepper Coulis**

Make this up to 2 days ahead.

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 generous cup chopped onions or leeks
- 1 large garlic clove, smashed
- Curry powder to taste: start with 1 teaspoon – I usually wind up with a couple of teaspoons
- 1/2 teaspoon salt or more to taste
- Pinch or two of ground coriander
- Pinch or two of ground cayenne pepper or use hot sauce (opt)
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 15 oz canned pumpkin
- 1/2 cup whipping cream

Melt butter in pan. Stir in onions, garlic, curry, salt, coriander and cayenne. Saute until onions are translucent. Add broth and pumpkin, whisking well. Bring to a boil and then lower to a gentle boil for 10 minutes. Process until smooth with a hand blender, blender or food processor. Stir in cream and cook a little more. Adjust seasonings. Makes about 6 cups.

Serve with roasted red pepper coulis: and this is optional, but good.

Roast a red bell pepper: cut in half and remove seeds. Place, open side down, under the broiler or, skin side down on the grill. After pepper blisters and blackens somewhat, put in bowl and cover. When it cools, peel off as much skin as you can.

Even easier: Buy a jar of roasted red peppers.

Puree peppers until smooth. Swirl on top of soup.

### **PUMPKIN PIE CAKE**

**You can make this a couple of days ahead, and store, covered, in the frig.**

#### **Bottom Layer:**

1 stick butter or margarine, melted

1 package (approx. 18.24 oz) yellow cake mix (reserve one cup)  
1 egg

**Filling:**

1 large can (29 oz) plain pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie mix)  
3 eggs  
1-1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice  
1/2 cup packed brown sugar

**Topping:**

1 cup reserved cake mix  
1/2 stick butter or margarine  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup or more to taste, walnuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bottom layer: mix butter with cake mix and egg. Press into bottom of sprayed 13x9 pan. Filling: Beat pumpkin, eggs, spice and sugar together and spread over bottom layer. Topping: Mix reserved cake mix with butter, sugar and nuts and crumble over filling. Bake 50-60 minutes . Serves 12-15.

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**Rita's Health Tip:**

**PUMPKIN POWER!**

**Color yourself healthy with this member of the winter squash family. Packed with Beta-carotene, vitamin C, iron and calcium, pumpkin is so good for you! Now with any member of this family, including hubbard, butternut, and acorn, sometimes it's hard to cut through that thick skin. Prick it all over with a fork and place in the microwave a minute or two. Carefully remove, with mitts, and let cool. You won't have to wrestle it to cut in half. To bake, scoop out seeds and place on sprayed cookie sheet, flesh side down. Bake in a 350 degree oven until soft, then remove flesh from skin.**