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# A spoonful of sugar.....

Teen has passion for cooking, baking desserts

**C**ooking. I love it. When I need an escape from the cruel world and hard times at school, I cook. My dad and I cook dinner together on the nights when I get home before 5:30 or don't have after school activities. I don't really use our grill to cook things like steaks, sausages, hamburgers, or venison because I can't go outside for long periods of time—I'm allergic to mosquitoes. I also really dislike cooking on an open flame. Instead, I use our nonstick kitchen grilling pans inside, and my family doesn't even notice the difference!

Dessert is my favorite type of food to make. I love to bake things like cake pops, cupcakes, scones, muffins and even cakes. My favorite dessert to make is pumpkin spiced cupcakes because they are fun to make and they taste like pumpkin spice lattes without the coffee. I do enjoy cooking other savory things too, like tacos, sloppy Joes, quesadillas and grilled cheese sandwiches. Traditionally, I don't like cooking

fancy food because my uncle is a French chef and we exchange recipes and food ideas, but I usually don't attempt the recipes he sends.

Over Thanksgiving at my church, the youth group makes and boxes meals to give to the homeless. We drive around town and hand them out to the people in need. The boxes have a variety of holiday foods like turkey or ham, vegetables, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and stuffing. Also, during Thanksgiving I make oatmeal and carrot horse treats. There are about 35 horses and miniature horses in my neighborhood. Their owners get spiced pumpkin cupcakes. I usually give them a "family" treat box. In return they give us Christmas cookies.

I enjoy cooking because I have the freedom to change the recipes to my satisfaction. I love spending time with my family and sharing what I make with others so they can enjoy it.

## Pumpkin Spiced Cupcakes

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/4 cup of milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 1/4 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

### Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees
2. Line a cupcake pan with liners
3. In one bowl whisk together the pumpkin, milk, vanilla, brown sugar, and canola oil.
4. In another bowl sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ground ginger, and salt.

5. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ones while whisking.
6. Fill the cupcake cups 2/3 of the way.
7. Bake 22–24 minutes.

## Ginger Cream Cheese Frosting

### Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup cream cheese
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 1/2 cups confectioners sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger

### Instructions:

1. In a bowl add butter, cream cheese, and confectioners sugar. Whisk together slowly.
2. Add the vanilla and ground ginger.
3. Beat on high until the frosting becomes light and fluffy, about 3–7 minutes.