

The Fall Baking Planner

A printable companion to Easy Fall Desserts, Made Foolproof

Print this planner and keep it in your baking binder. It gives you the shopping list, the crumb ratio, the apple and spice cards, exact pan sizes and bake times, custard doneness temperatures, a do-ahead timeline and a storage tracker — everything you need to bake autumn desserts all season without scrolling back through the article.

Shopping List

Section	Item	On hand?
Produce	Baking apples — 3 lb (about 8 medium), see the variety card	
Produce	Lemons (1, for the browning brine)	
Produce	Fresh cranberries or dried cranberries (1 cup)	
Produce	Pumpkin puree — 2 cans (15 oz each) or 3 1/2 cups homemade	
Pantry	All-purpose flour (5 cups total)	
Pantry	Rolled oats, old-fashioned (1 1/2 cups)	
Pantry	Granulated sugar (2 cups)	
Pantry	Light brown sugar (2 cups, packed)	
Pantry	Pecan halves (2 cups)	
Pantry	Pure maple syrup (1 cup)	
Pantry	Baking soda and baking powder	
Pantry	Fine salt and flaky sea salt	
Pantry	Ground cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, allspice	
Pantry	Semi-sweet chocolate chips (2 cups)	
Pantry	Cornstarch	
Fridge	Unsalted butter (1 lb / 4 sticks)	
Fridge	Eggs (6 large, room temperature)	
Fridge	Cream cheese (8 oz) and heavy cream (1 cup)	
Fridge	Vanilla extract (2 tbsp)	
Fridge	Neutral oil (1 cup)	

The Crumb Ratio Card

This is the ratio that makes a crisp or crumble topping shatter instead of turning to paste. Scale it by the number of cups of fruit you actually have.

Component	For 6 cups of fruit	Batch for two crisps
All-purpose flour	1 cup	2 cups
Rolled oats	3/4 cup	1 1/2 cups
Granulated sugar	1/3 cup	2/3 cup
Brown sugar, packed	1/3 cup	2/3 cup
Unsalted butter, cold	1/2 cup (1 stick)	1 cup (2 sticks)
Ground cinnamon	1 tsp	2 tsp
Fine salt	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp
Fruit sweetener	1/4 cup sugar + 2 tbsp cornstarch	double it

Cold butter, cut into cubes, worked in with the fingertips or a pastry cutter. Stop when you have clumps the size of large peas and dry flour still visible in patches — that is what gives you shatter.

Apple Variety Card

Apple	How it bakes	Best for
Granny Smith	Very firm, very tart, keeps its edge	Pies, crisps, anything with a lot of sugar
Honeycrisp	Firm, very juicy, honey-sweet	Crisps and cobblers, cobblers thickened well
Golden Delicious	Softens but holds shape, low acid	Pies and cakes where you want sweetness
Braeburn	Firm, balanced sweet-tart	All-purpose — the safest single choice
Pink Lady	Firm, consistent sweet-tart	Pies and tarts, eaters alongside
Jonagold	Softens, holds shape, aromatic	Crisps, cakes, applesauce blends
Fuji	Medium-firm, very sweet, mild	Bars and muffins; skip where tartness matters
McIntosh	Falls apart, strong cider flavour	Sauces and as a flavour booster, never alone
Northern Spy	Very firm, excellent balance	Pies and crisps if you can find it
Winesap	Firm, tart, wine-like, very juicy	Pies; thicken the filling slightly more

The blend that always works: two parts firm-tart, one part sweet-aromatic. For 3 lb of fruit that is about 2 lb Granny Smith or Pink Lady plus 1 lb Honeycrisp or Golden Delicious.

Spice Blend and Bloom Card

Spice	One batch	Jar to keep
Ground cinnamon	2 tsp	4 tbsp
Ground ginger	3/4 tsp	1 1/2 tbsp
Ground nutmeg	1/2 tsp	1 tbsp
Ground allspice	1/4 tsp	1 1/2 tsp
Ground cloves	1/8 tsp	3/4 tsp

Bloom the spices: warm the butter or oil in a small pan, add the measured spices, and stir for thirty to forty-five seconds until the pan smells sweet and toasty. Take it off the heat before it darkens. Stir that bloomed fat into the batter.

Cloves are the loudest note here. Measure them, never pour from the jar — twice the cloves makes a whole tray taste medicinal.

Pan and Bake Time Card

Dessert	Pan	Oven	Time
Apple crisp	9 x 13 inch glass or ceramic	375 F / 190 C	40 – 45 min
Apple crisp, small batch	8 x 8 inch	375 F / 190 C	35 – 40 min
Apple cobbler	9 x 13 inch, biscuit top	400 F / 205 C	30 – 35 min
Pumpkin spice bars	9 x 13 inch	350 F / 175 C	25 – 30 min
Pumpkin cheesecake bars	9 x 13 inch, water bath optional	325 F / 165 C	40 – 45 min
Pumpkin chocolate chip cookies	two lined sheet pans	350 F / 175 C	12 – 14 min
Maple pecan bars	8 x 8 inch, lined with parchment	350 F / 175 C	30 – 35 min
Apple oatmeal crumble bars	8 x 8 inch, lined	350 F / 175 C	35 – 40 min

Every oven runs hot or cold. Start checking five minutes before the earliest time and trust the cue, not the clock.

Custard Doneness Card

Dessert	Internal temperature	Pull when
Pumpkin pie	175 F / 79 C at the centre	Edge is set, centre wobbles like firm jelly
Pumpkin cheesecake	150 F / 65 C at the centre	Centre still has a 2-inch soft spot
Pumpkin cheesecake bars	150 F / 65 C	Slight jiggle when the pan is nudged
Pumpkin custard pots	170 F / 77 C	Barely set in the middle, set as they chill

An instant-read thermometer beats the toothpick test on every custard. A skewer through the centre of a pumpkin pie tells you nothing useful until the pie is already overbaked.

Do-Ahead Timeline

Up to 1 month ahead	Roast and puree your own pumpkin or squash. Freeze in 1 3/4-cup portions, which is exactly one can. Thaw overnight in the fridge.
Up to 2 weeks ahead	Mix a jar of the spice blend above. Toast the pecans, cool them completely, then store airtight at room temperature.
Up to 3 days ahead	Make the crumb topping and refrigerate it in a bag. Cold, firm crumb topping bakes crisper than room-temperature topping.
Night before	Set out the eggs, butter and cream cheese so they come to room temperature. Cold eggs make a lumpy batter that bakes unevenly.
Morning of	Peel and slice the apples, brine them in salted water for ten minutes, drain and refrigerate. They hold for a day without browning.
Two hours before serving	Bake, then rest the dish on a rack. A crisp needs about forty-five minutes of resting so the juices thicken instead of running.

Cooling and Storage Tracker

Dessert	Cool	Room temp	Freezer
Apple crisp	45 min on a rack before serving	2 days, covered, at room temp	3 months, unbaked or baked
Pumpkin spice bars	Completely, 2 hours, frosted after	3 days airtight	2 months, unfrosted
Pumpkin cheesecake bars	2 hours, then 4 hours chilled	5 days refrigerated	2 months, sliced
Cookies	10 min on the pan, then a rack	5 days in an airtight tin	3 months, dough or baked
Maple pecan bars	Completely before cutting	4 days airtight	2 months
Fruit fillings only	Completely before freezing	3 days refrigerated	6 months

Never wrap a warm bake. Trapped steam is the single most common reason a crisp goes soggy the next day.

Party Scaling Card

Guests	Fruit crisp	Pumpkin bars	Cookies
8	9 x 13 inch pan	1 batch (24 squares)	1 batch (24 cookies)
12	9 x 13 inch pan + 8 x 8 inch	1 1/2 batches	1 1/2 batches
20	two 9 x 13 inch pans	2 batches	3 batches

Guests	Fruit crisp	Pumpkin bars	Cookies
30	three 9 x 13 inch pans	3 batches	4 batches
40	four 9 x 13 inch pans	4 batches	5 batches

Bake pans in the same oven in batches of two, rotating once at the halfway mark. Three pans at once steams the crumb topping and it never crisps.

Gift Tags

Cut along the lines and tie one tag to each wrapped bake with kitchen twine.

Baked for you on _____

Baked for you on _____

Baked for you on _____

Baked for you on _____

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