

Pumpkin Mousse

Serves 4

2	tsp.	powdered gelatin (1 packet) or more for firmer mousse
4	lg.	egg yolks
6	Tbl.	grade-A (light) maple syrup (or honey)
1 ½	Tbl.	light or dark rum or brandy
½	tsp.	ground ginger
¼	tsp.	ground allspice
¼	tsp.	ground cinnamon
⅛	tsp.	ground cloves
Pinch		freshly grated nutmeg
¼	tsp.	salt
Pinch		freshly ground white pepper
½	c.	plus 2 Tbsp. canned solid-pack pumpkin
¾	c.	heavy cream
1	tsp.	pure vanilla
2	lg.	egg whites
⅛	tsp.	cream of tartar
2	Tbl.	granulated sugar

Put gelatin in a small bowl and add ¼ cup cold water. Stir to dissolve (use more gelatin if you wish a firmer mousse that you can scoop with an ice cream scoop if that is your preference for serving).

Pour 2 inches or so of water into a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan and set over medium heat. Meanwhile, whisk egg yolks and maple syrup (or honey) in a stainless steel bowl that will fit over the boiling water, functioning as a double boiler. Whisk in rum, spices, salt, and white pepper, and place bowl over the saucepan. Whisk briskly until mixture thickens, triples in volume, and holds whisk lines for 10 seconds (5 to 10 minutes). Remove bowl from heat. Add gelatin mixture and whisk until it melts into mousse base. Whisk in pumpkin.

In a medium bowl and using a hand held electric mixer, whip egg whites on medium-high speed until they are frothy and no longer liquid. Add cream of tartar to egg whites, whip for another minute and then begin adding granulated sugar, 1 teaspoon at a time. After each addition of sugar, whip for 30 seconds. When all has been added, whip until the whites are shiny, smooth, voluminous, and hold firm but not dry peaks. Clean beaters. In another medium bowl, use the electric mixer to whip heavy cream on medium speed, adding vanilla just as the cream becomes thick. Continue to whip until it holds soft peaks.

Scrape whipped cream over pumpkin mixture and fold together with a rubber spatula or bowl scraper. Be sure to place spatula in center of bowl, scrape the bottom, and bring bottom over the top. Rotate bowl 45 degrees and repeat motion. Continue folding mixture together until all cream is incorporated. Add whipped egg whites and repeat folding technique until fully incorporated. Divide mousse evenly among 4 martini or wine glasses, cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight. You can also pour mixture into a large, clean bowl, cover and refrigerate. Use an ice cream scoop to divide into servings and place in glasses or tulle cups. Garnish with caramel sauce and/or chopped pecans or shards of nut praline.