

THE SOURDOUGH FORMULA

Recipe 29 · Pumpkin-Shaped Pumpkin Spice Loaf

Twine, a cinnamon-stick stem, and the whole street wants one.

Recipe 29 · Pumpkin-Shaped Pumpkin Spice Loaf

Why people buy it: it looks exactly like a little pumpkin, it smells like fall, and it is the photo every buyer posts. It sells out the first week the leaves turn.

- **Tier & price:** Seasonal · $15
- **Makes:** one pumpkin-shaped boule
- **Difficulty:** Medium. The twine shaping takes 5 minutes once you have done it once.
- **Timeline:** same as the Master Loaf; tie the twine right before the cold proof

Ingredients

- 500 g bread flour (about 4 cups)
- 150 g pumpkin purée (⅔ cup, plain, not pie filling)
- 250 g water (1 cup + 1 Tbsp) — less water, because the purée is about two-thirds water
- 100 g active starter
- 10 g salt (1¾ tsp)
- 30 g honey or maple syrup (1½ Tbsp)
- 2 tsp pumpkin spice (cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, clove)
- 4 lengths of kitchen twine, about 24 inches (60 cm) each, lightly oiled
- 1 short cinnamon stick for the stem

What changes vs. the Master Loaf

Pumpkin purée replaces part of the water, and the spice goes in with the flour. The real change is the shape.

Steps

1. Give Dolly the morning feed.
2. Whisk flour and spice. Mix with the purée, 230 g of the water and the honey. Autolyse 30 minutes (Master Loaf step 1).
3. Add the starter, then the salt with the remaining 20 g water (step 2).
4. 4 sets of stretch & folds, bulk, pre-shape (Master Loaf steps 3–5). The dough will be orange and slightly slower to rise.
5. **Final shape a tight round boule** (step 6).

6. **Tie the pumpkin:** lay the 4 twine strings across each other on the counter like a star with 8 spokes. Dust the boule with flour and set it in the center, smooth side up. Bring each pair of opposite ends up over the top and tie loosely in a knot in the center. Leave a finger's width of slack: the loaf grows into the twine in the oven, and those lines become the pumpkin's ribs.
7. Lift the tied boule into the banneton, knot side down. Cold proof (step 7).
8. Turn out, knot up. Do not score: the twine does the scoring.
9. Bake as in step 8, lid-off at 425 °F (220 °C) because purée and honey brown faster. Check 205 °F (96 °C).
10. Cool 30 minutes, snip and gently pull the twine out. Press the cinnamon stick into the center as the stem.
11. Cool the full 2 hours before bagging.

Cost & Price

Ingredient	Amount	Cost
Master Loaf base (flour, salt, starter food)	1 loaf	$1.40
Pumpkin purée	150 g	$0.88
Pumpkin spice	2 tsp	$0.15
Honey	30 g	$0.40
Cinnamon stick (stem)	1	$0.15
Extra kitchen twine	4 lengths	$0.05
Total ingredients		**$3.03**
Packaging		$0.35
Sell at		**$15**
You keep		**$11.62**

How to sell it

- **Who buys it:** fall-decor lovers, hosts building a harvest table, teachers' and neighbors' gifts, everyone on Instagram.

- **Menu line to copy:** *Pumpkin Spice sourdough, shaped like a little pumpkin: real pumpkin, warm spices, a hint of honey. As pretty on the table as it is toasted with butter.*
- **Best day/season:** late September through November. Announce it on the first cool weekend; take pre-orders only.

Make two sizes if your oven allows: the regular at $15 and mini pumpkins (250 g dough each) at $6, which sell beautifully as a set of three for place settings.

> ***Sarah's tip: Post the twine-tying in a quick video on your stories. It is the post that brings the most new names to my Friday list every fall.***

If it goes wrong

- **No ribs, just a round loaf:** the twine was too loose. Tie snug with one finger of slack.
- **Twine cut through the loaf:** tied too tight. Leave that finger of slack.
- **Twine burnt:** use plain cotton kitchen twine, oiled; never colored or synthetic string.