

New York Cheesecake

Serves 12

For neater slices, clean the knife thoroughly between slices. Serve as is or with Strawberry Topping (recipe below).

CRUST

8 whole graham crackers, broken into 1 inch pieces
7 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
3 tablespoons sugar

FILLING

2 1/2 pounds cream cheese, cut into chunks and softened
1 1/2 cups (10 1/2 ounces) sugar
1/8 teaspoon table salt
1/3 cup sour cream
2 teaspoons juice from 1 lemon
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 large eggs plus 2 large egg yolks, at room temperature

1. FOR THE CRUST: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Process the graham cracker pieces in a food processor to fine, even crumbs, about 30 seconds. Sprinkle 6 tablespoons of the melted butter and the sugar over the crumbs and pulse to incorporate. Sprinkle the mixture into a 9 inch springform pan. Press the crumbs firmly into an even layer using the bottom of a measuring cup. Bake the crust until fragrant and beginning to brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Cool the crust to room temperature, about 30 minutes.
2. FOR THE FILLING: Meanwhile, increase the oven temperature to 500 degrees. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese on medium low speed until smooth, 1 to 3 minutes. Scrape down the bowl and beaters as needed.
3. Beat in 3/4 cup of the sugar and the salt until incorporated 1 to 3 minutes. Beat in the remaining 3/4 cup sugar until incorporated, 1 to 3 minutes. Beat in the sour cream, lemon juice, and vanilla until incorporated, 1 to 3 minutes. Beat in the whole eggs and egg yolks, two at a time, until combined, 1 to 3 minutes.
4. Being careful not to disturb the baked crust, brush the inside of the prepared springform pan with the remaining 1 tablespoon melted butter. Set the pan on a rimmed baking sheet. Carefully pour the filling into the pan. Bake the cheesecake for 10 minutes.
5. Without opening the oven door, reduce the oven temperature to 200 degrees and continue to bake until the center of the cheesecake registers 150 degrees on an instant read thermometer, about 1 1/2 hours.
6. Transfer the cheesecake to a wire rack and run a knife around the edge of the cake. Cool the cheesecake until just barely warm, 2 1/2 to 3 hours, running a knife around the edge of the cake every hour or so. Wrap the pan tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until cold, about 3 hours.

7. To unmold the cheesecake, wrap a wet, hot kitchen towel around the cake pan and let sit for 1 minute. Remove the sides of the pan and carefully slide the cake onto a cake platter. Let the cheesecake sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.

STRAWBERRY TOPPING

Makes about 6 cups

This accompaniment to cheesecake is best served the same day it is made.

2 pounds fresh strawberries, cleaned, hulled, and cut lengthwise into 1/4 to 1/8 inch slices

1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) sugar

Pinch table salt

1 cup strawberry jam

2 tablespoons juice from 1 lemon

1. Toss the berries, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl; let stand until the berries have released their juices and the sugar has dissolved, about 30 minutes, tossing occasionally to combine.

2. Process the jam in a food processor until smooth, about 8 seconds; transfer to a small saucepan. Bring the jam to a simmer over medium high heat; simmer, stirring frequently, until dark and no longer frothy, about 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice; pour the warm liquid over the strawberries and stir to combine. Let cool, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until cold, at least 2 hours or up to 12 hours. To serve, spoon a portion of topping over each slice of cheesecake.