

Title:

A Brief History Of Cheesecake

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453

Summary:

What's your favorite birthday cake? For me, nothing beats cheesecake. In fact, I can't imagine what the world was like before cheesecake was created!

Turns out, you'd have to search back pretty far to find a time when the Earth was cheesecake free. In fact, way back in 776 BC, long before the first Cheesecake Factory opened, the Greeks are said to have served cheesecake to the athletes at the first Olympic games. The Romans soon caught on and spread the divine taste of che...

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Article Body:

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Turns out, you'd have to search back pretty far to find a time when the Earth was cheesecake free. In fact, way back in 776 BC, long before the first Cheesecake Factory opened, the Greeks are said to have served cheesecake to the athletes at the first Olympic games. The Romans soon caught on and spread the divine taste of cheesecake throughout Europe. From there it was only a matter of time before European immigrants brought their cherished cheesecake recipes to America.

It seems that every region of the globe has embraced cheesecake in one form or another, adapting the recipe to local tastes and adding local flavors. In America, cheesecakes are typically made with a cream cheese base, but even here we vary the recipe by region. New York cheesecake is famous for its ultra-smooth texture and decadently rich flavor- achieved by adding extra egg yolks and a hint of lemon - and you'll find other regional variations from Chicago-style to Pennsylvania Dutch. Many American bakers add sour cream for a creamy cheesecake that can be frozen without compromising taste or texture.

Italian cheesecakes generally use ricotta cheese, which makes them drier than

their American cousins. The French prefer Neufchatel cheese and often add gelatin for a light and airy consistency. The Greeks might use ricotta, mizithra, farmers, feta, Swiss, or a combination of cheeses, while the Germans typically rely on cottage cheese or quark. The Japanese incorporate cornstarch and whipped egg whites into their cheesecakes for a more custard-like effect, and I've even heard you can find cheesecake in vending machines in Japan. Now why didn't I think of that?

You'd be hard pressed to find a culture that doesn't - or didn't - enjoy a good cheesecake. Culinary historians cite cheesecake recipes dating back to the first century AD, with additional recipes floating around from the centuries that followed. You'll find every imaginable flavor and topping in today's cheesecake recipes, but the basic premise, baking creamy cheese with wheat and sweetener, has stood the test of time.

And let's not forget savory cheesecakes featuring blue cheese, garlic, seafood, chiles, and other tasty cheese-friendly flavors, or vegan versions of cheesecake-like desserts made with tofu. With so many varieties, you'd need a lot more than a "Cheesecake of the Month" club to sample them all!

Clearly, cheesecake has lived long and continues to prosper. Whether it's a birthday cake, anniversary treat, or just a "Make-Everyday-Special" indulgence, cheesecake is an ancient delight that will never go out of style!