

My Favorite Cheesecake with Chocolate and Strawberries

After many early attempts at this cheesecake I started looking for alternatives to the standard graham cracker crust because it often became soggy. I discovered the secret over my breakfast bowl of Grapenuts! Now, no more soggy crusts. No one ever guesses what the crust is made from and it has a pleasantly nutty flavor! Makes 1 10-inch cheesecake to serve 8 to 12.



Recipe picture

Ingredients:

Crust

1 ¼ cups Post Grapenuts
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
Pinch salt
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon melted butter
Optional: 4 ounces semisweet chocolate

Filling

1 ½ pounds cream cheese, at room temperature
4 large eggs, at room temperature
1 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
½ pint (8 ounces) sour cream

Sauce

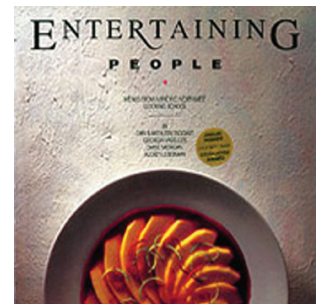
2 cups crushed strawberries, fresh or frozen and thawed
2 tablespoons Framboise (raspberry liqueur)
3 tablespoons powdered sugar

Preheat the oven to 375°. In the workbowl of a food processor, or in a blender, grind the Grapenuts until fine crumbs are formed. Allow the machine to run for 2 minutes. Add the sugar, cinnamon and salt and process to combine. Pour in the butter and run just until it is incorporated.

Press the crumbs into a 10-inch springform pan, bringing the crust one inch up the sides of the pan. (I use a 1 cup stainless measuring cup to do this since it helps prevent the corners from being thicker than the sides.)

Bake the crust 10 to 12 minutes until lightly browned and crisp. Cool on a rack. Reduce the oven to 350°.

If you are using the chocolate, melt it and use a rubber spatula to spread it over the bottom of the crust. Put the crust in the freezer to firm the chocolate.



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Using a clean food processor workbowl, or with a mixer, process the cream cheese until completely smooth, scraping down the sides once or twice. With the machine stopped, add in, all at once, the eggs, sugar and vanilla. Process until smooth. Add the sour cream to the workbowl and pulse just until incorporated and smooth. The filling must be free of lumps or you will have lumps in the baked filling. Remove the pan from the freezer and gently pour the filling into the pan. The filling will likely come up slightly higher than the crust, which is not a problem.

Place the pan in the center of the oven (now at 350°) and bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the sides are slightly puffed. The center third of the filling will still be very soft and not set when you shake the pan gently. Turn off the oven and leave the cheesecake in the oven, undisturbed, for 1 hour, then remove and cool on a rack before refrigerating. Leave the cheesecake in the pan during refrigeration. If cracks appear on the surface you baked it a little too long. It will not affect the flavor and you can hide the evidence with a little fresh fruit or whipped cream.

To make the sauce, purée the berries and combine with the Framboise and powdered sugar. Sieve if you wish to remove the seeds. Refrigerated until needed.

To serve, place 2 tablespoons of the sauce on each dessert plate and top with a slice of cheesecake (wipe the knife clean after each cut). If you like, add a slice or half of a strawberry on top of each piece at the crust end for garnish!