

Easy Cheesecakes from A to Z

A Primer of Recipes and Techniques



Recipes, Techniques, and Tips for Great Cheesecakes

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Cheesecakes are such wonderfully scrumptious desserts. What's more, they are easy--in many ways, easier than a pie. If you have trouble with pie crusts, bake a cheesecake. (Crumb crusts are never soggy or tough and you don't have to invest time in making pretty edges.)

Cheesecakes are perfect for holiday entertaining. If you make a cheesecake, you'll always impress your guests.

In this guide, we'll explore the world of cheesecakes. We'll give you guidelines and recipes so that you can create wonderful cheesecakes.

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The Versatile Cheesecake

Cheesecakes are versatile. They consist of three basic parts: the crust, the filling, and the topping. Knowing that, you can mix and match these parts into wonderful combinations. Using a vanilla filling, consider these combinations:

- A cherry vanilla cheesecake with a graham cracker crust
- A raspberry vanilla cheesecake with a chocolate crust
- A blueberry vanilla cheesecake with a gingersnap crust
- A strawberry vanilla cheesecake with a vanilla wafer crust
- An apple cinnamon cheesecake with a walnut crust



Of course, cheesecakes don't have to be made with vanilla filling. Chocolate and pumpkin fillings are favorites and you will find recipes for these in this guide. You will also find recipes for fruit fillings such as orange and strawberry.

And of course, you can top your cheesecake with whatever you please. Consider the following toppings:

- Whipped cream
- Flavored whipped cream such as chocolate or strawberry
- Chocolate ice cream topping
- Caramel ice cream topping
- Fruit syrups made by heating jams or jellies
- Fruit pie filling
- Fresh fruits
- Fruit compotes made with fresh or frozen fruit

We hope that with this guide, you will mix and match fillings, toppings, and crusts to make wonderful cheesecakes.

You can see the possibilities.

How to Bake the Perfect Cheesecake

Cheesecakes have stood the test of time. And well they should—they are wonderfully decadent desserts. In this section, we'll tell you how to make delicious cheesecakes that are picture perfect.

We'll give you principles to help you understand cheesecakes. If you understand the principles, you can create your own recipes. If you understand and practice these principles, chances are you will make wonderful cheesecakes.

Principle #1

A cheesecake is a custard, not a cake. As a custard, the cheesecake should be thick, rich and creamy. As with any custard, a cheesecake relies on the proteins in the eggs to give it structure. The proteins coagulate as the temperature approaches 160 degrees. If it over bakes, the custard becomes dry.

Principle #2

A long, slow bake allows for a more uniform internal temperature. Never bake over 350 degrees. We prefer a dark pan to uniformly absorb heat, not a reflective pan.

Principle #3

Don't over bake your cheesecake. Most cheesecakes are over baked and they tend to be dry, not creamy. An over baked cheesecake tends to crack. The cheesecake is done when it is still jiggle but not soupy. The top of the cheesecake will jiggle as a whole and the center two inches will look softer. If the top is doing anything but just starting to blush a golden color, you have probably over baked the cheesecake. Do not stick a knife or a toothpick in the center. It is not a reliable test and it may start a crack.

Principle #4

Beat the cream cheese until it is soft and smooth. It's easier to make a smooth mixture of the cream cheeses if you start with softened cream cheese. Take the cream cheese from the refrigerator at least an hour before mixing. Beat the cheese with the paddle attachment, not the whip.

Principle #5

Mix the ingredients into the cream cheese; don't whip the ingredients. If too much air is incorporated into the filling, the cheesecake will puff when baked and sink as it cools. With too much air incorporated into the filling, cracks are likely to develop.

Principle #6

Custards tend to be soft and may weep. To give your cheesecake more structure, consider adding one to two tablespoons of cornstarch or flour. For a creamier cheesecake, leave the starch out.

Principle #7

Cheesecakes rely primarily on eggs for the structure. Not only does the egg mixture have to reach 160 to 170 degrees to coagulate, but the filling must have enough eggs. In our experience, one egg per eight-ounce package of cream cheese plus a little milk or cream is about right.

Principle #8

Cheesecakes are easier to remove from a pan after they have cooled slightly. Let the cheesecake cool for ten minutes and then with a spatula or thin-bladed knife, run the blade between the cake and the pan. If you let the cheesecake cool for any longer than that, it may start to contract and, with the cake stuck to the pan, crack. A nonstick pan not only makes the release easier but may help keep the cheesecake from cracking.

Use the Right Pan for the Perfect Cheesecake

Cheesecakes are so much easier and so much more fun with the right springform pans. And the right pan really does make a difference in the quality of the cheesecakes that you bake.



- Don't use light gauge, silver pans. You want a dark, heavy pan that will absorb heat and bake evenly.
- Use a nonstick surface. After baking that perfect cheesecake, you want a pan that will release cleanly and easily.

We absolutely love our [classy, glass-based springform pans](#). Not only are they heavy gauge and dark to absorb heat but they have a nonstick surface. The feature that we like best is the tempered-glass base. You can serve right from the base. With a smooth surface, you can cleanly remove each slice. We have used very sharp knives on our base and are yet to scratch the surface. As tough as we are on kitchen equipment, we think these will last for years.

Tips for Using Springform Pans

- Don't let them leak. If your batter is especially thin or there is a great deal of sugar in your recipe, your pan may leak through the seam along the base of the pan. (Only once have we had a minor leak with one of our pans—and we've used them with lots of the recipes.) To protect against a leak, wrap the base of the pan with aluminum foil. Please note that with aluminum foil shielding the heat, it may take just a little longer to bake.
- Tinned, aluminum, or stainless springform pans may taint your cake with a metallic taste if it is stored on the pan base. It is okay to store the cake on a glass base or enameled base.
- If you are baking in a tinned, aluminum, or stainless pan or would like to remove the cake from the base, cut a sheet of parchment paper and fit it to the base.
- If you would like to give your cake away, line the pan as above.
- Let the cake sit in the pan for about five minutes before removing the ring. In a good nonstick springform pan or with a well-greased pan, the ring should fall away without needing to free it with a knife or spatula. To protect a nonstick finish, avoid using a metal edge against the finish.
- If you do need to free the cake from the ring, use a cake or frosting spatula without a sharp edge.
- Wash your pans with warm, soapy water and a soft cloth. While most pans are dishwasher safe, they take up a lot of room and in our experience, tend not to come clean.

Most springform pans are made of lighter gauge metal. Store them carefully where they will not get knocked around and possibly bent.

How to Store Your Cheesecake

Cheesecakes are so good but so rich. Unless you have a big party, there's likely to be some left over. Here's what you can do with that too-good-to-waste cheesecake.

To refrigerate your cheesecake:

Wrapped in plastic, your cheesecake will last three days in the refrigerator. If you have an airtight container that you can put it in, it'll last five days.

To freeze your cheesecake:

Freeze individual slices and then wrap them in foil or plastic and place them in heavy freezer-type plastic bags. Slices will last for three weeks. You can freeze an entire cheesecake and it will last four to six weeks. Always store your frozen cheesecake in the freezer, not in the freezing compartment of your refrigerator where it is not as cold.

To unthaw your cheesecake:

Thaw your cheesecake overnight in the refrigerator. In a rush, individual slices can be thawed on the counter in thirty minutes.



Suggestions for Less Fat in Your Cheesecake

Instead of an occasional indulgence, most of us would enjoy cheesecakes more often if we could reduce the fat. Here are some suggestions for doing so.

Use Neufchatel Cheese with 1/3 less fat. Your cheesecake may be little lighter and less dense but we doubt that your guests will be able to tell the difference.

If your recipe calls for whipped cream, use half and half in its place.

If your recipe calls for sour cream, use reduced fat sour cream. In our experience, fat-free sour cream does not bake well.

Reduce the amount of butter in the crust to as little as two tablespoons.

Use only a crust for the bottom of the cheesecake, not the sides. You can reduce the amount of the crust by half.

Questions and Answers about Your Cheesecake

How do I stop my cheesecake from cracking?

A cheesecake top without a crack seems to be the ultimate measure of success. It shouldn't be. A crack doesn't affect the taste. Many cheesecakes are topped and the topping covers any cracks.



There may be a number of reasons for cracks:

- Too much air incorporated into the filling may cause cracks.
- Too much baking time will over bake the filling and is a common cause of cracks.
- Uneven baking may be a cause. If you are using light gauge, reflective pans, consider switching to heavier gauge, dark pans.
- Too high of heat may cause cracking. Consider baking at 325 degrees instead of at 350 degrees.
- If your cheesecake cools too rapidly, it may develop cracks. Don't let your cheesecake cool in a draft.

Cheesecakes with starch in the filling are less prone to cracking.

What's the best way to cut a cheesecake?

Use the right knife, a sharp, thin-bladed knife. Don't use a serrated knife as filling and crumbs tend to stick to the serrations.

Cut with downward pressure, dragging the knife as little as possible. After each cut, wash and dry the knife so that you have a clean blade slicing through the cheesecake.

What's the easiest way to make crumbs for my crust?

Lots of folks use a food processor; we don't bother. We use a heavy-duty zipper-type plastic bag and crush the graham crackers or cookies with a rolling pin a few at a time. We save the plastic bag for the next crust.

Is there an easy way to form the crust?

Yes. Use a straight-sided glass with a smooth or nearly smooth base. By pressing the base of the glass into the crumbs, you can make a nice uniform bottom crust. By pressing the side of the glass against the wall of the pan with a slight rolling action, you can make a wonderful side crust.

How do I tell when my cheesecake is done?

There are two ways to tell if your cheesecake is done. The most foolproof is with a knife or spatula. Slip it into the center of the cheesecake. If it is done, the knife will come out clean.

Sticking a knife in the cake mars the top surface with a cut. With experience, you can tell when the cheesecake is baked with the “jiggle test”. The cheesecake will be almost set when you try to jiggle it. Wee suggest using the knife test for your first few cheesecakes and jiggle the cake. By observing how a baked cheesecake jiggles, you’ll soon be able to tell without the knife.

What is the best way to remove the pan so that it does not stick?

Immediately after removing the cheesecake form the oven, place it on a wire rack to cool. Let the cheesecake set in the pan for about ten minutes then loosen the crust from the pan with the edges of a thin-bladed metal spatula. After about forty-five minutes, remove the ring. It should fall away easily form the cheesecake. Allow the cheesecake to finish cooling. Chill thoroughly before cutting.

My slices seem to stick to the base and it’s hard to remove them. Is there an easy way to neatly remove my slices?

Yes. Take a wet dish towel and heat it in the microwave. Set the base with the cheesecake on the hot towel. The hot towel will soften the butter in the crust and allow the slices to slide off without sticking.

It helps to have a springform pan with a smooth base.

How to Make a Fruit-Filled and Fruit-Topped Cheesecake

A vanilla cheesecake paired with cherries, strawberries, or other fruit is the classic combination. But cheesecakes are so rich that we like plenty of fruit with our cheesecakes. Rather than pile the cheesecake high with fruit, consider putting part of the fruit in the filling. In the following recipe, we'll show you how.



Strawberry Vanilla Cheesecake

The following recipe uses fresh strawberries but frozen strawberries work well. We made this cheesecake with graham cracker crumbs; a nut crumb crust and a crust made from crushed vanilla wafers would pair well also. And of course, you can use raspberries, blueberries, peaches, mangoes, or other fruit for the topping. You will need a nine- or ten-inch springform pan for this recipe. The cheesecake pictured was baked and served in a nine-inch glass-base springform pan.

For the crust

- 2 cups crushed graham crackers
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted

For the filling

- 3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, softened
- 3 large eggs
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup whipping cream

For the topping

- 3 cups fresh or frozen strawberries
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 cup sugar (omit if using sweetened, frozen berries)
- 1 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2-3 drops of red food coloring
- 1 cup of fresh or individually frozen berries, cleaned and hulled (use whole or if preferred, cut into smaller pieces)

Directions

1. Crush the graham crackers. Mix the crumbs with the cinnamon, sugar, and melted butter in a nine or ten-inch springform pan. Press the mixture into a crust across the bottom of the pan and up the sides. Put the crust in the refrigerator to set up while you prepare the filling and the topping.
2. Make the topping. Puree the strawberries in a blender with the lemon juice. You should have about 1 1/2 cups of purée. If you would like to remove the seeds, run the puree through a sieve. Place the puree in a small saucepan. Add the sugar, food coloring, and cornstarch. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until thickened and bubbly. Set aside to cool.
3. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.
4. Make the filling by mixing the cream cheese with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer set at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about five minutes. Add the eggs, granulated sugar, flour, salt, vanilla, and whipping cream, and gently cream together until smooth. Do not over beat. Too much air in the filling will cause the cake to sink and crack.
5. Pour one half of the cream cheese filling into the crust. Spoon about 2/3's of the strawberry sauce onto the filling then spoon the remaining cream cheese mixture over the strawberry sauce. Refrigerate the remaining sauce.
6. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until the top just starts to turn golden and the center of the cake is just barely jiggly.
7. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for ten minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen. Remove the ring and let the cheesecake cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours.
8. To serve, stir the berries into the remaining sauce and spoon over the cheesecake.

Pumpkin Cheesecake in a Gingersnap Crust

Looking for something different for the holidays? This pumpkin cheesecake is absolutely phenomenal. It has a pumpkin cheesecake filling with a vanilla cheesecake top layer. The crust is made with gingersnaps which complement the spicy pumpkin filling perfectly. If you are not in love with gingersnaps, substitute vanilla wafers for the crumbs.



Pumpkin Cheesecake in a Gingersnap Crust

This scrumptious cheesecake is best made the night before so that it can thoroughly chill in the refrigerator. (Of course, that is one less thing you have to do on the day of the dinner.)

You will need a nine- or ten-inch springform pan for this recipe. (The nine-inch size is perfect.) The cake pictured was baked and served in a nine-inch glass-base springform pan.

For the crust

1 1/2 cups crushed gingersnaps
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts
1/4 cup brown sugar
4 tablespoons butter, melted

For the filling

3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese
3 large eggs
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla

1 1/3 cup pumpkin puree
1/4 cup whipping cream or yogurt
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/2 tablespoon cinnamon

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Crush the gingersnaps. Mix the crumbs with the nuts, brown sugar, and melted butter in a nine or ten-inch springform pan. Press the mixture into a crust across

- the bottom of the pan and up the sides. Put the crust in the refrigerator to set up while you prepare the filling.
2. Mix the cream cheese, eggs, granulated sugar, salt, and vanilla together with your stand-type mixer using the whisk attachment. Beat until smooth and fluffy, six to eight minutes. Set about 1 1/2 cups of the mixture aside for the topping.
 3. To the remaining filling, add the pumpkin, whipping cream or yogurt, and spices. Beat until well-mixed. Pour the filling into the prepared crust. Carefully spoon the topping which was set-aside over the top of the pumpkin-cheesecake filling.
 4. Bake for 70 to 80 minutes or until the top starts to brown and the center of the cake is just barely jiggly.
 5. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for ten minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen. Remove the ring and let the cheesecake cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours before serving.

Chocolate Ribbon Cheesecake Recipe

A chocolate cheesecake is an impressive alternative to a vanilla cheesecake. This recipe calls for a walnut and graham cracker crust but you could use chocolate cookies if you prefer and leave out the nuts. Fresh berries are delightful with chocolate cheesecake but we chose to drizzle this cheesecake with chocolate syrup as we did with our Turtle Cheesecake.



You will need a nine or ten-inch springform pan for this recipe. The cheesecake pictured was baked and served in a nine-inch glass-base springform pan.

For the crust

2 cups crushed graham crackers
1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts
2 tablespoons sugar
5 tablespoons butter, melted

For the filling

3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, softened
3 large eggs
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup whipping cream
4 ounces semi-sweet baking chocolate, melted

For the topping

Chocolate ice cream syrup

Directions

1. Make the crust: Crush the graham crackers. Mix the crumbs and chopped walnuts with the sugar and melted butter in a nine or ten-inch springform pan. Press the mixture into a crust across the bottom of the pan and up the sides. Put the crust in the refrigerator to set up while you prepare the filling.
2. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

3. Make the filling: Mix the cream cheese with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer set at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about five minutes. Add the eggs, granulated sugar, flour, salt, vanilla, and whipping cream and gently cream together until smooth. Do not over beat. Too much air in the filling will cause the cake to sink and crack.
4. With your mixer on the low setting, drizzle in the melted chocolate and mix until combined. (If your filling is too cold, some of the chocolate may set up leaving chocolate flecks in the filling. That's okay; the cheesecake will not be compromised and the flecks are actually quite attractive.)
 4. Pour the cream cheese filling into the crust. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until the top starts to turn golden and the center of the cake is just barely jiggly. Because it is not as thick, a ten-inch cheesecake will bake more quickly than a nine.
5. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for ten minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen. Remove the ring and let the cheesecake cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours.
6. Prior to serving, drizzle the cheesecake with chocolate syrup.

German Chocolate Cheesecake Recipe

Everyone loves cheesecake and chocolate and cheesecake seems like the perfect combination.

This is an easy recipe to put together and the German chocolate and caramel makes for a scrumptious and very attractive cheesecake dessert. You can make the caramel topping from melted caramels but caramel ice cream topping works just as well and saves a little time. This recipe can be made a day or two in advance of the dinner.



Ingredients

For the crust:

2 cups chocolate graham cracker crumbs (about two inner packages of graham crackers).
Chocolate cookie crumbs may be substituted.
6 tablespoons butter, melted.

For the filling:

2 1/2 eight-ounce packages of cream cheese
1 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 tablespoons milk

For the toppings:

1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts

For the chocolate topping, combine four ounces of sweet German chocolate with two tablespoons whipping cream and one tablespoon butter. Melt in a small saucepan and stir until smooth.

For the caramel topping, melt 12 caramels with 1/3 cup cream in a small saucepan, stirring until smooth. Or use ice cream topping.

Directions

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

1. In a nine-inch spring form pan, mix the cracker crumbs and the melted butter. Press the crumb mixture into a crust across the bottom and about one inch up the sides. Bake the crust for eight minutes.
2. In a large bowl, cream the cream cheese with the sugar. Add the flour and salt. Add the eggs, vanilla, and milk all at once. Mix until just combined, scraping down the sides of the bowl. Pour the filling mix into the crust.
3. Bake for ten minutes at 450 degrees. Lower the temperature to 200 degrees and bake for an additional 35 to 40 minutes or until the cheesecake filling is set.
4. After the cheesecake has cooled for ten minutes, with a sharp knife, loosen the edges of the cheesecake from the pan so that the cake will pull away from the pan as it cools. Remove the rim of the pan after it has cooled for about forty-five minutes.
5. Drizzle the cheesecake with caramel and then with chocolate. Sprinkle nuts on the cake. Refrigerate until completely cool before serving.

Orange Cream Cheesecake

When we were kids, we had these orange and vanilla ice cream treats on a stick. The combination was divine. Why not do the same with a cheesecake?

The following recipe uses orange juice concentrate for the orange and a smooth vanilla filling. It is easy to make.



For the crust

2 cups crushed graham crackers
4 tablespoons sugar
5 tablespoons butter, melted

For the filling

3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, softened
3 large eggs
1 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate
orange extract or liqueur
a drop or two of both yellow and red food coloring to make an orange color
2 tablespoons whipping cream
whipped cream for garnish

Directions

1. Crush the graham crackers. Mix the crumbs with the sugar and melted butter in a nine or ten-inch springform pan. Press the mixture into a crust across the bottom of the pan and up the sides. Put the crust in the refrigerator to set up while you prepare the filling.
2. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Mix the cream cheese with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer set at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about five minutes. Add the eggs, granulated sugar, flour, salt, vanilla, and gently cream together until smooth. Do not over beat. Too much air in the filling will cause the cake to sink and crack.
3. Remove two cups of the filling and add the orange juice concentrate, extract, and coloring to the removed filling. Set aside.

4. Add the whipping cream to the remaining vanilla filling. Spread the vanilla filling in the on the crust. Carefully spoon the orange filling around the edge of the cheesecake letting the orange filling flow to the center. Smooth if necessary.
5. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until the top starts to turn golden and the center of the cake is just slightly jiggly. Because it is not as thick, a ten-inch cheesecake will bake more quickly than a nine.
6. Let the cheesecake cool in the pan on a wire rack for ten minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen. Remove the ring and let the cheesecake cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours. Garnish with whipped cream.

Strawberry Cream Cheesecake Recipe

We often put strawberries on top of our cheesecakes. With this recipe, we blend the strawberries into the filling, put strawberries on the cheesecake, and then top it all with whipped cream—sort of like a decadent strawberry shortcake. Maybe because it reminds of us a strawberry shortcake, we think of this as a springtime dessert but it is great for any season.



For the crust

2 cups crushed graham crackers
4 tablespoons sugar
5 tablespoons butter, melted

For the filling

3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, softened
4 large eggs
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 tablespoons flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup strawberry puree, strained to remove the seeds
2 drops red food coloring
1/2 teaspoon strawberry flavor
whipping cream for topping
fresh strawberries

Directions

1. Crush the graham crackers. Mix the crumbs with the sugar and melted butter in a nine or ten-inch springform pan. Press the mixture into a crust across the bottom of the pan and up the sides. Put the crust in the refrigerator to set up while you prepare the filling.
2. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Mix the cream cheese with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer set at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about five minutes. Add the eggs, granulated sugar, flour, salt, and vanilla, and gently cream together until smooth. Do not over beat. Too much air in the filling will cause the cake to sink and crack.
3. Fold the strawberry puree, coloring, and flavor into the filling. Spread the filling on the crust.

4. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until the top starts to turn golden and the center of the cake is just slightly jiggly. Because it is not as thick, a ten-inch cheesecake will bake more quickly than a nine.
5. Let the cheesecake cool in the pan on a wire rack for ten minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen. Remove the ring and let the cheesecake cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours.
6. Top with whipped cream and fresh strawberries to serve.

How to Make Caramel Apple Cheesecake

This is another easy cheesecake recipe. The caramelized apples are steamed in the microwave and made with butter and brown sugar. It's very simple.

You will need a ten-inch springform pan. Our [glass-base springform pans](#) are perfect.

Ingredients

For the crust:

- 1 1/3 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup walnuts pieces, finely chopped
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

For the filling:

- 2 8-ounce packages of cream cheese
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup frozen condensed apple juice

- Apples, cored and thinly sliced
- 2-3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Caramel ice cream topping

Directions

Preheat the oven 350 degrees.

1. In a [9-inch springform pan](#), mix the graham cracker crumbs, nuts, melted butter, cinnamon, and sugar together. Press the mixture across the bottom of the pan and up the sides to form the crust. Put the crust in refrigerator while you mix the filling.
2. With the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer, beat the cream cheese until soft and smooth. Add the sweetened condensed milk and beat until smooth. Add the eggs and apple juice concentrate and beat until just smooth. Pour into the crust. Bake for 50 minutes or until the cake is done. Let cool on a wire rack. After ten minutes, loosen the sides with a spatula and remove the ring. Refrigerate the cheesecake to cool completely.
3. Place the apple slices in a shallow bowl or baking pan and cover with plastic. Microwave until they are soft. Add the brown sugar and butter and stir until the sugar is dissolved and the apple slices coated. Place the apple slices in the refrigerator to cool.



4. To serve, arrange the apple slices on the cheesecake. Drizzle with caramel ice cream topping.

Baker's notes: *The easiest way to form a nice, firm, uniform crumb crust is with a smooth-bottomed glass or cup. Move and press the cup across the bottom and use the sides of the cup to press the sides of the crust. If one side of the crust sticks up too high, cut it down with a knife and use the crumbs in an area where the sides may not be high enough.*

Use as many apple slices as you like—either an apple or two for decorations or several apples to pile high on the cheesecake. The apples will be more tender without the skin but the slices are more decorative with the skin on.

Cherry Chocolate Cheesecake Bar Recipe

For the crust:

1/2 cup butter
3/4 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
3 large egg yolks
1 large egg
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup cocoa

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. With the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer, beat the butter until it begins to soften. Add the powdered sugar and the extracts. Beat in the egg yolks and egg. Add the flour and cocoa and continue beating until combined.
2. Press the dough into 9x13 inch baking pan with your hand until it is of uniform depth across the bottom of the pan.
3. Bake for 20 minutes.



For the filling:

Make the filling while the crust is baking.

2 8-ounce packages of cream cheese
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 large eggs

1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling

1. Beat the cream cheese, sugar, and extracts together until smooth, scraping down the sides of the bowl at least once. Add the eggs and beat at low speed until just combined.
2. Spread the filling over the hot crust. Bake for another 30 minutes or until the center of the filling is just firm.
3. Cool in the pan on a wire rack. Spread the pie filling over the cream cheese filling after it has cooled.

Cream Cheese Swirl Brownies

We took our Fudgy Walnut Brownies, omitted the nuts, and swirled cream cheese through the batter. The result is another fudgy brownie made even more decadent with cream cheese.

If you are looking for a dark, rich, fudgy brownie that is different, this is it. If you like more cream cheese, try the variation.

This fancy-looking brownie is easy to make. It is a simple two-step recipe. Mix the batter for the brownies in one bowl and the cream cheese mixture in another. Pour the brownie batter and the cream cheese mixture into the pan in stages then swirl it with a spatula.

Ingredients

For the brownies:

5 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 1/4 cup butter
1 1/4 cups brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose or bread flour

For the cream cheese filling:

1 8-ounce package of cream cheese
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large egg yolks

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Dust with flour or line with parchment paper.

1. Cut the chocolate into pieces. Melt the butter in the microwave or a double boiler. Add the chocolate. Let it sit for a minute and then stir. If the chocolate is not completely melted and mixture smooth, return it to the microwave or double boiler and heat until melted and smooth. Stir in the sugar and salt.
2. In a bowl, whisk the eggs together. Add the eggs and vanilla to the chocolate mixture. Stir until combined.
3. Add the flour. Stir until combined again. Set aside.



4. For the cream cheese filling, beat the cream cheese until fluffy. Add the sugar and vanilla and beat in. Add the egg yolks and beat until smooth. Set aside.
5. Pour half of the chocolate batter into the prepared pan. Spoon half of the cream cheese filling onto the batter in pools. Pour the rest of the chocolate batter over the cream cheese pools. Spread smooth. Spoon the remaining cream cheese filling in pools over the top of the brownie batter.
6. Hold a table knife or spatula vertically and cut through the batters just until the two batters are swirled together. Do not over mix.
7. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until the brownies test done by sticking a toothpick or knife into the center of the pan. The brownies will be done when moist crumbs cling to the toothpick or knife. Let the brownies cool completely before removing them from the pan.

Baker's note: *If you are in a hurry to get to your brownies—and who isn't—stick the pan of brownies in the refrigerator to cool.*

Variation

Cream Cheese Brownies. Make twice as much cream cheese filling by doubling that portion of the recipe. Instead of swirling the cream cheese through the brownie batter, spoon all of the cream cheese filling on top. The result will be a double-decker brownie: chocolate on the bottom and cream cheese on top.

Cream Cheese and Fruit Coffeecake

If fruit in a coffeecake is good then fruit and cream cheese should be even better, right? We decided to find out. We took our coffeecake recipe with fruit pie filling and added a layer of cream cheese filling. The results were scrumptious. A little on the rich side, maybe even more of a dessert than a coffeecake—but you decide.



Ingredients

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup butter

1 1/2 packages (12 ounces) cream cheese
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 large egg
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons sour cream

1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup buttermilk
1 large egg, whisked
1 teaspoon vanilla or 1/2 teaspoon almond extract

1 21 oz can fruit pie filling

Optional icing

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla or 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1-2 tablespoons milk

For the optional icing, mix the confectioners' sugar, extract and enough milk to form an icing of drizzling consistency. Drizzle over the coffeecake.

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Prepare a ten- to twelve-inch baking or tart pan by greasing well and flouring the inside of the pan. (A springform pan works wonderfully well and if you are using a springform pan, you will not need to flour it.) For the coffeecake in this picture, we used a ten-inch glass-based springform pan.

1. Mix the flour and brown sugar together. With a pastry knife, cut in the butter until the mixture is granular in appearance. Measure and set aside 3/4 cup of the crumb mixture.
2. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese until it is soft. Add the vanilla, egg, sour cream, and sugar and beat until well-combined.
3. Stir the baking soda, baking powder, spices and salt into the remaining crumb mixture. Form a well in the center of this dry mixture. Add the buttermilk to the egg and add the extract. Pour the buttermilk mixture into the well in the dry mixture. Stir with a fork until combined. Do not over mix. Some lumps will remain. Set aside just over one cup of this batter.
4. Place the batter (not the cup set aside) in the prepared pan. Spread it evenly across the bottom and slightly up the sides with a rubber spatula. Spread the cream cheese filling over the batter. Spread the pie filling over the cream cheese. Spoon the set aside batter on the pie filling in drops—it will not cover the filling but will spread while baking. Sprinkle the remaining 3/4 cup crumb mixture over the batter. (You will have five layers: batter on the bottom, then cream cheese, then fruit filling, then batter, and finally the crumb topping.)
5. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes or until golden and the cake portion tests done with a toothpick. Baking times will vary with different pans. Let the cake cool for ten minutes in the pan on the rack. If you are using a springform pan, loosen the edges and remove the ring after ten minutes.
6. Mix the confectioners' sugar, extract and enough milk to form an icing of drizzling consistency. Drizzle over the coffeecake.

Baker's Notes: *Unlike most coffeecakes, this one needs to be chilled to set the cream cheese filling. We felt like the coffeecake was sweet enough without icing. For a sweeter dessert, the icing may be desirable.*

Chocolate Lover's Cheesecake Recipe

If you love chocolate, this is a great cheesecake recipe. It has a chocolate crumb crust, a creamy filling studded with chocolate chips, and a chocolate ganache topping. And decadent can be easy.

If you like dark, rich chocolate use quality semi-sweet chocolate chips like our [pure dark chocolate chips](#). If you prefer milk chocolate, try our [imported milk chocolate chips](#).



Ingredients

2 1/2 cups chocolate cookie crumbs
1/3 cup butter, melted
3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups semi-sweet or milk chocolate chips

1/2 cup semi-sweet or milk chocolate chips
2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Mix the cookie crumbs and the melted butter in a 9-inch springform pan. We prefer a [glass-base springform pan](#). Press the crumbs across the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Set the pan in the refrigerator to help set the crust while you mix the filling.
2. Beat the cream cheese and sugar together with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer or use an electric egg beater. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat at medium speed until smooth. Fold in the chocolate chips. Scrape the filling into the prepared crust.
3. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees and then turn the temperature down to 250 degrees and bake for another 35 to 40 minutes or until the cheesecake is barely set. Let the cheesecake cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 15 minutes.
4. While the cheesecake is cooling, place the remaining 1/2 cups chocolate chips in a small bowl. Add the cream. Heat in the microwave for about 30 seconds or until the chips begin to melt. Stir. Heat again if necessary. Stir until smooth and spread over the top of the cheesecake as frosting. Let the cheesecake cool in the refrigerator both to set the topping and to chill the dessert. Store any leftovers in the refrigerator.

Chocolate Swirled Pumpkin Cheesecake

Again we paired chocolate with pumpkin for a really nifty-looking, scrumptious dessert. This makes a great holiday or seasonal dessert but since canned pumpkin is available anytime, you can indulge year around.

This is an easy cheesecake to make. The chocolate requires an extra step but otherwise, this is as easy as most other cheesecakes.



Ingredients

- 1 2/3 cups graham cracker crumbs
 - 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
 - 6 tablespoons butter, melted
 - 3 8-ounce packages cream cheese
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 16-ounce can pumpkin (about 1 3/4 cups)
 - 4 large eggs
 - 1/2 cup whipping cream
 - 3 tablespoons cornstarch
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1 pinch nutmeg
- 1 cup pure dark (semisweet) chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

1. For the crust, combine graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and butter. Press onto bottom of a ten-inch springform pan.
2. For the cheesecake, in the bowl of your stand-type mixer, beat the cream cheese, salt, and granulated sugar together. Beat in the pumpkin, eggs, cream, cornstarch, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
3. Heat the chocolate chips until melted, either in the microwave or on the stovetop. Add one cup of the pumpkin batter and stir it into the melted chocolate.
4. Pour the pumpkin batter into the prepared crust. Spoon the chocolate batter on top. Use a straightedge spatula and vertically cut through the batters to create a chocolate swirl in the cheesecake.
5. Bake for 60 minutes or until the cheesecake tests done. Cool completely and then chill in the refrigerator before serving.

Creamy No-Bake Strawberry Desserts Recipe

Like the [Creamy No-Bake Chocolate Cheesecakes](#) that follows, these are light, dreamy, and scrumptious. But we prefer these partially frozen so that they are ice-cold and almost like ice cream. They are made with vanilla wafers, a strawberry cheesecake filling, and topped with whipped cream.



Ingredients

1 cup mashed strawberries from fresh berries
1 8-ounce package of light cream cheese
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 1/3 cup heavy whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/3 cup powdered sugar
about 45 vanilla wafer cookies
halved strawberries for decoration

Directions

Makes about 15 desserts. Recipe can be cut in half.

1. Mash the strawberries measure out until you have one cup. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, whip the cream cheese until soft. Add the strawberries and whip until smooth. Add the 1/2 cup powdered sugar and blend.
3. Beat the whipping cream until soft peaks form. Add the vanilla and 1/3 cup powdered sugar and continue beating until medium stiff peaks form.
4. Use foil cupcake liners with the paper cup removed. Place two cookies in the bottom of each cup. Place a large spoonful of strawberry filling in each cup on top of the cookies.
5. Place a third cookie on top of the strawberry filling and press down slightly. Top with whipped cream.
6. Place the muffin tin in the freezer for two hours or until almost frozen.
7. Remove and decorate with strawberry halves if desired.

Baker's note: *Because these deserts are moist, paper liners tend to become soggy. Foil liners hold up better. This dessert does not have to be frozen; it can be served soft. If so, refrigerate for at least two hours to allow the filling to become firmer. (It will still be soft.)*

If you leave the muffin tin in the freezer and the desserts become frozen, that's okay. Let them thaw for fifteen minutes so they are only partially frozen.

Creamy No-Bake Chocolate Cheesecakes

Take these Creamy No-Bake Chocolate Cheesecakes to your next summer party. They're dreamy, scrumptious, little cheesecakes, topped with whipped cream. They use vanilla wafers for a crust and are easy to make. You can make them the day before.



Ingredients

1/2 cup pure dark (semi-sweet) chocolate chips
1 8-ounce package of light cream cheese
1/3 cup powdered sugar

1 cup heavy whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/4 cup powdered sugar
about 45 vanilla wafer cookies
chocolate sprinkles for decoration

Directions

Makes 12 to 15 desserts. Recipe can be cut in half.

1. Melt the chocolate chips in the microwave.
2. In a medium bowl, whip the cream cheese until soft. Spoon several spoons full into the melted chocolate chips and stir. If the mixture is not smooth, reheat it the microwave and stir.
3. Add the chocolate mixture to the cream cheese mixture and whip to blend. Add the 1/3 cup powdered sugar and blend.
4. Beat the whipping cream until soft peaks form. Add the vanilla and 1/4 cup powdered sugar and continue beating until medium stiff peaks form.
5. Add a little less than half of the whipped cream to the chocolate filling and fold together until combined. Set the remaining whipped cream in the refrigerator.
6. Place paper cupcake holders in a muffin tin. Place two cookies in the bottom of each cup. Place a large spoonful of chocolate filling in each cup on top of the cookies. Place a third cookie on top of the chocolate filling and press down slightly. Top with whipped cream. Decorate with chocolate sprinkles. Refrigerate for a least an hour before serving.

Baker's note: *If you add too much cream cheese to the melted chocolate, the chocolate may solidify and you'll have solid chocolate flecks in the mixture. Simply reheat the chocolate mixture until it is above the melting point and whip smooth. Then add the smooth mixture to the rest of the cream cheese.*

Fresh Pineapple Cheesecake

Pineapple and cream cheese go together. There is something about the smooth creamy cheese that accents the sweet-tart taste of fresh, ripe pineapple so well. We have found pineapple and cream cheese in many a church supper salad dish but, a regal pineapple cheesecake—that sounded terrific.

This is simply a very good cheesecake with a fresh pineapple topping. The topping can be made with canned pineapple.



Ingredients

For the crust:

2 cups crushed graham crackers
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons sugar
5 tablespoons butter, melted

For the filling:

3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, softened
3 large eggs
1 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup whipping cream
For the pineapple topping:

About 2/3 of a large ripe pineapple
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch

Directions

1. Crush the graham crackers. Mix the crumbs with the cinnamon, sugar, and melted butter in a ten-inch springform pan. Press the mixture into a crust across the bottom of the pan and up the sides. Put the crust in the refrigerator to set up while you prepare the filling and the topping.
2. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Mix the cream cheese with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer set at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about five minutes. Add the eggs, granulated sugar, flour, salt, vanilla, and cream, and blend together until smooth. Do not over beat. Too much air in the filling will cause the cake to sink and crack.

3. Pour the cream cheese filling into the crust. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes or until the top just starts to turn golden and the center of the cake is just barely jiggle.
4. While the cheesecake is baking, make the topping. Remove the flesh from the pineapple by slicing, peeling, and coring. Crush the pineapple a few chunks at a time in the blender by hitting the “pulse” button for just a moment until you have about 2 1/2 cups of pulp and juice—about 2/3's of a large pineapple.
5. Mix the sugar with the cornstarch and then add the mixture to the pineapple. Stir well. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until thickened and bubbly. Set aside to cool.
6. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for ten minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen. Remove the ring and let the cheesecake cool completely. Spoon the pineapple topping over the cheesecake and refrigerate for several hours.

White Chocolate Cheesecake

This is a great cheesecake recipe. The white chocolate makes this cake particularly rich. Use a good quality [white chocolate](#) with high cocoa butter content.

Serve this cheesecake plain or with a topping. You can use pie filling for a topping or mix one cup fresh strawberries, raspberries, or blackberries with 3/4 cup sugar. Mix the berries and sugar together to let the sugar dissolve in the juice.



You will need a nine-inch springform pan. Our [glass-base springform pans](#) are perfect.

Ingredients

For the crust:

1 2/3 cup graham cracker crumbs
1/2 cup butter, melted
2 tablespoons granulated sugar

For the filling:

4 8-ounce packages of cream cheese
1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/3 cups [white chocolate wafers](#) or 8 ounces of white chocolate baking bars

Directions

Preheat the oven 350 degrees.

1. In a [10-inch springform pan](#), mix the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, and sugar together. Press the mixture across the bottom of the pan and up the sides to form the crust. Put the crust in refrigerator while you mix the filling.
2. With the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer, beat the cream cheese and sugar together. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until smooth. Drizzle in the melted chocolate while the beaters are running. Pour into the crust.
3. Bake for 50 minutes or until the cake is done. Let cool on a wire rack. After ten minutes, loosen the sides with a spatula and remove the ring. Refrigerate the cheesecake to cool completely.

Baker's note: Drizzle in the chocolate while it is still warm. If the chocolate cools too rapidly, you will have clumps in the cheesecake.

Cranberry Nut Cheesecake

This is a great holiday cheesecake made with canned cranberry sauce. The sweet-tart cranberries contrast nicely with the smooth cream cheese. The nuts in the cranberry filling add richness and crunch. If there is a secret ingredient in this cheesecake, it's the orange zest in the cranberry filling. When we tested this cheesecake, it was all "thumbs up"—everyone liked it.



This is an easy cheesecake to make. The cranberry filling is mixed into the cream cheese filling with a spatula. You can use the cranberry filling as a sauce on the finished cheesecake or as a layer within the cheesecake. (See the Baker's Notes at the end of the recipe.)

Ingredients

1 2/3 cups graham cracker crumbs
1/3 cup chopped walnuts
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
6 tablespoons butter, melted

3 8-ounce packages cream cheese
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup granulated sugar

4 large eggs
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 pinch nutmeg

1 16-ounce can whole berry cranberry sauce (about 1 3/4 cups)
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
zest from one orange

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

1. For the crust, combine graham cracker crumbs, walnuts, sugar, and butter. Press mixture into the bottom of a ten-inch springform pan.
2. For the cheesecake, in the bowl of your stand-type mixer, beat the cream cheese, salt, and granulated sugar together. Beat in the eggs, cornstarch, and nutmeg.
3. Chop the cranberry sauce in the blender. Add the 1/2-cup walnuts and zest. Set aside..
4. Pour cream cheese batter into the prepared crust. Spoon the cranberry sauce on top. Use a straightedge spatula and vertically cut through the batters to create a cranberry swirl in the cheesecake.

5. Bake for 60 minutes or until the cheesecake tests done. Cool completely and then chill in the refrigerator before serving.

Baker's notes: *In the picture above, we got a little too aggressive with our swirling. It was still a great cheesecake.*

Try baking it as a layered cheesecake putting half of the cheesecake filling in the crust, spooning the cranberry filing into the shell, and then the second half of the filling.