

Authentic New York Cheesecake

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 1 hour | Total Time: 6 hours

Chef's Notes

1 – The cream cheese should be at room temperature before you begin mixing, or you'll end up with lumps in your cheesecake. If you're in a hurry you can put all 4 packages of cream cheese in a microwavable bowl and put it inside the microwave for 15 seconds to soften it.

2 – If you end up with lumps in your batter, run the mixture through a sieve or give it a quick spin in the food processor and you'll have silky smooth results.

3 – The most effective way to bake the cheesecake is in a water bath. Since water evaporates at the boiling point, the water bath will never get hotter than 212 degrees F (100 degrees C), no matter what the oven temperature. This means that the outer edge of your cheesecake won't bake faster than the center, which can cause it to soufflé, sink, and crack.

4 – While baking, avoid opening the oven before at least one hour has passed, that can cause the cake to crack.

5 – Remember: any imperfections (such as cracks) can be covered by chocolate ganache, a fruit sauce, or a layer of lightly sweetened sour cream.

Step 1: Making the Crust

- 15 graham crackers, crushed
- 2 tablespoons of butter, melted

To begin the cheesecake, pick a cover 9-inch spring form pan and spray the inside with non-stick spray. Cover the sides of the pan with parchment paper, that helps you to achieve that perfect round-shaped format. The paper doesn't have to be cut in the exact same size as the pan, it can hang over by about an inch or two. After that, cover the outer part of the spring form pan with foil. You'll be baking it in a water bath, so foil will prevent water from getting inside the pan. Set it aside.

Next, in a medium bowl, mix graham cracker crumbs with melted butter. Press onto bottom of spring form pan until even.

Step 2: Making the Filling

- 4 (8 ounce) packages of cream cheese
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup of sour cream
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

The cream cheese must be softened at room temperature. Beat the cream cheese by itself until it's smooth and light. Next add the sugar and the teaspoon of vanilla extract and beat it until it's all blended. Add one cup of sour cream and mix well again. After that you can add the eggs – one at the time – beating in low speed just until blended. Don't overbeat the batter; otherwise the cake will crack once inside the oven.

Pour the batter into the pan and put the pan inside a larger roasting pan with water inside of it. Fill with hot water until it reaches half way up the side of the cheesecake. You'll bake the cheesecake in bain-marie to avoid cracks and to make sure it cooks evenly. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. To know if your cheesecake is ready, pinch a fork in the middle of the cake. If the fork comes out SLIGHTLY wobbly, turn the oven off and let the cake cool in the oven with the door closed for 5 to 6 hours; this prevents cracking and finishes the cooking process of the cake.

Step 3: Decorating the Cheesecake

Once completely cooled, unclip the clasp at the side of the pan and carefully remove the parchment paper, watching for any areas that stick. You can decorate the cheesecake with slices of fresh fruit (such as strawberries, raspberries etc), fruit sauce, chocolate ganache or any other topping you like!

The authentic NY Cheesecake topping consists of a mix of sour cream (1 cup), sugar (1 teaspoon) and vanilla extract (1 teaspoon). You mix those 3 ingredients together until blended and when the cake is cooking for approximately 50 minutes you put the mixture on top of the cake (fine layer) and let it cook for another 20 or 30 minutes (or until it is no longer wobbly). Then you proceed with the already mentioned steps (letting the cake cool off completely, removing the parchment paper etc.)