

Cashew Cheesecake

Swick

Makes 12 mini cheesecakes s | Active Time: 45 minutes | Total Time: 2 hours

Step 1: Preparing the Crust

- 2 cups almonds*
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp sea salt
- 1/3 cup finely chopped dates

BEFORE YOU START: If you have not already, be sure to soak the cashews for the filling. If you are fermenting the cashews, you will need to start a couple of days ahead. See the cashew mise en place image above or the chef's notes below, for how to naturally ferment the cashews.

Combine the almonds (or nuts of choice), vanilla, and salt in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Process until the mixture until it is finely ground and meal-like.

Slowly add the dates a bit at a time, pulsing to make a tight mixture that holds together.

Note, the mixture should just hold together when pressed with your fingers. If the mixture seems a bit too dry, add another date or two. If the mixture seems a bit too wet, add a few more nuts.

Once ready, press the mixture into the bottom of whichever pan(s) you are using — a 9 1/2-inch springform, an individual cheesecake pan, etc.

Place the pan(s) into the refrigerator or freezer while you make the filling.

Step 2: Preparing the Filling & Assembling the Cheesecake

- 3 cups soaked and fermented cashews
- 1 1/2 cups Almond Milk
- 1 cup fresh lime juice (or lemon)
- 3/4 cup agave
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp sea salt
- 3/4 to 1 cup coconut oil
- 3 tbsp lecithin
- zest of 2 limes (or lemons), if desired

A Few Notes: For this particular recipe fresh homemade Almond Milk was used, which will produce a creamy, richer finished product than if using store-bought. Also, note that the ratio of nuts for the home-made almond milk was 1 1/4 cups nuts to 3 cups water. Also, note that instead of the almond milk blended fresh fruit can be used instead to create another cheesecake variation.

Lecithin can be found in many health food and some specialty grocery store. Liquid or powder lecithin will work for this recipe. Be sure to buy organic.

Combine the nuts, almond milk, lime juice, agave, vanilla, and salt in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Process until very smooth.

At this point, make sure you have your pan(s) ready to be filled — before adding the coconut oil and lecithin.

Note: Because measuring can sometimes vary, depending on measuring cups used, the person, etc. The amount of coconut oil may need to be increased. Before adding the lecithin and coconut oil, check to see how much filling you have — if there are over 6 cups of filling, you will need to increase the amount of coconut oil to 1 cup (instead of the initial 3/4 cup).

Next, add the lecithin and coconut oil to the cashew mixture and process until very well blended. Add zest at the very end, if using.

Immediately pour the cheesecake mixture into the pan(s) and transfer to the refrigerator or freezer for an hour or two, or until they have fully set and become firm.

If you have made a large cheesecake, slice, and serve individual pieces. If you have made mini- cheesecakes, remove them from the pan, and serve. Serve the cheesecake(s) plain or top with a dollop of coconut whipped cream and garnish with a bit of fresh zest, if desired.

To naturally ferment the cashews for the cheesecake, soak them overnight and rinse them the next day and then cover again with double the amount of water and let sit at room temperature to ferment for another 24 hours. When done, the cashews should have a slight tang to them.