

NEW YORK CHEESECAKE

Harney Destinations: New York

Ingredients:

For the crust:

1 ½ C graham cracker crumbs, from 12 whole crackers

5 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

2 tbsp sugar

¼ tsp salt

For the filling:

32 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature

2 C sugar

3 tbsp all-purpose flour

4 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp packed lemon zest, from 1 lemon

2 tsp fresh lemon juice, from 1 lemon

¼ tsp salt

6 large eggs

½ C sour cream

9- or 10-inch springform pan

18-inch heavy-duty aluminum foil

Berry sauce for topping

(optional, see instructions)

For the berry sauce:

1 lb. fresh strawberries, hulled and thinly sliced

6 oz. (1 half pint) fresh raspberries

6 oz. (1 half pint) fresh blueberries

6 oz (1 half pint) fresh blackberries

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

¾ C sugar

Directions:

For the cheesecake:

1. Set an oven rack in the lower middle position and preheat the oven to 375°F. Wrap a 9- or 10-inch springform pan with one large piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil, covering the underside and extending all the way to the top so there are no seams on the bottom or sides of the pan. Repeat with another sheet of foil for insurance. Spray the inside of the pan with nonstick cooking spray.

2. Make the crust: In a medium bowl, combine the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, sugar and salt. Stir until well combined. Press the crumbs into an even layer on the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake the crust for 10 minutes, until set. Remove the pan from the oven and set aside.

3. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. Set a kettle of water to boil.

4. Make the batter: In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or beaters, beat the cream cheese, sugar and flour together on medium speed until just smooth, about 1 minute. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl to be sure the mixture is evenly combined. Add the vanilla, lemon zest, lemon juice and salt; beat on low speed until just combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing on low speed until incorporated, scraping the bowl as necessary. Mix in the sour cream. Make sure the batter is uniform but do not over-mix.

5. Check to make sure your oven has cooled to 325°F, then set the cheesecake pan in a large roasting pan. Pour the batter on top of the crust. Pour the boiling water into the large roasting pan to come about 1 inch up the side of the cake pan. Bake until the cake is just set, 1 hour and 30 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes (the cake should not look liquidy at all but will wobble just a bit when the pan is nudged; it will continue to cook as it cools). Carefully remove the roasting pan from the oven and set it on a wire rack. Cool the cheesecake in the water bath until the water is just warm, about 45 minutes. Remove the springform pan from the water bath and discard the foil. If necessary, run a thin-bladed knife around the edge of the cake to make sure it's not sticking to the sides (which can cause cracks as it cools), then cover with plastic wrap and transfer to the refrigerator to cool for at least 8 hours or overnight.

6. For serving: Remove the sides of the springform pan. Serve the cheesecake right from the base of the pan or, to transfer it to a serving platter, run a long, thin spatula between the crust and the pan bottom, and then use two large spatulas to carefully transfer the cheesecake to a serving dish. Slice with a sharp knife, wiping the knife clean between slices. Serve with berry sauce, if you like.

For the berry sauce:

1. Combine all the berries in a large bowl and stir gently to combine. Spoon about ⅓ of the mixed berries into a medium saucepan; transfer the remaining berries to a small bowl and refrigerate until ready to serve.

2. Add the lemon juice and sugar to the berries in the sauce pan. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat and cook until the fruit is syrupy, about 5 minutes.

3. Transfer the hot berry mixture to a blender and purée until smooth. Set a fine mesh strainer over a bowl. Pour the sauce into the strainer and use the back of a soup ladle and circular motions to force the sauce through the strainer. Discard the seeds that remain in the strainer. Refrigerate the berry sauce until cold or ready to serve.

4. Before serving, add the reserved berries to the sauce and stir to combine. If the sauce seems too thick, add a few tablespoons of water, a little at a time, until the desired consistency is reached.