



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Tall and Creamy Cheesecake (from Dorie Greenspan's *Baking: From my Home to Yours*)

I prefer using sour cream instead of heavy cream.

Makes 16 servings

For the crust:

1¾ cups graham cracker crumbs
3 tablespoons sugar
pinch of salt
½ stick (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted

For the cheesecake:

2 pounds (four 8-ounce boxes) cream cheese, at room temperature
1⅓ cups (9.67 ounces) sugar
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
4 large eggs, at room temperature
1⅓ cups sour cream or heavy cream, or a combination of the two

To make the crust:

Butter a 9-inch springform pan—choose one that has sides that are 2¾ inches high (if the sides are lower, you will have cheesecake batter leftover) — and wrap the bottom of the pan in a double layer of aluminum foil; put the pan on a baking sheet.

Stir the crumbs, sugar and salt together in a medium bowl. Pour over the melted butter and stir until all of the dry ingredients are uniformly moist. (I do this with my fingers.) Turn the ingredients into the buttered springform pan and use your fingers to pat an even layer of crumbs along the bottom of the pan and about halfway up the sides. Don't worry if the sides are not perfectly even or if the crumbs reach above or below the midway mark on the sides—this doesn't have to be a precision job. Put the pan in the freezer while you preheat the oven.

Center a rack in the oven, preheat the oven to 350°F and place the springform on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Set the crust aside to cool on a rack while you make the cheesecake.

Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F.

To make the cheesecake:

Put a kettle of water on to boil.

Working in a stand mixer, preferably fitted with a paddle attachment, or with a hand mixer in a large bowl, beat the cream cheese at medium speed until it is soft and lives up to the creamy part of its name, about 4 minutes. With the mixer running, add the sugar and salt and continue to beat another 4 minutes or so, until the cream cheese is light. Beat in the vanilla. Add the eggs one by one, beating for a full minute after each addition—you want a well-aerated batter. Reduce the mixer speed to low and stir in the sour cream and/or heavy cream.

Put the foil-wrapped springform pan in the roaster pan.

Give the batter a few stirs with a rubber spatula, just to make sure that nothing has been left unmixed at the bottom of the bowl, and scrape the batter into the springform pan. The batter will reach the brim of the pan. (If you have a pan with lower sides and have leftover batter, you can bake the batter in a buttered ramekin or small soufflé mold.) Put the roasting pan in the oven and pour enough boiling water into the roaster to come halfway up the sides of the springform pan.

Bake the cheesecake for 1 hour and 30 minutes, at which point the top will be browned (and perhaps cracked) and may have risen just a little above the rim of the pan. Turn off the oven's heat and prop the oven door open with a wooden spoon. Allow the cheesecake to luxuriate in its water bath for another hour.

After 1 hour, carefully pull the setup out of the oven, lift the springform pan out of the roaster—be careful, there may be some hot water in the aluminum foil—remove the foil. Let the cheesecake come to room temperature on a cooling rack.

When the cake is cool, cover the top lightly and chill the cake for at least 4 hours, although overnight would be better.

Serving:

Remove the sides of the springform pan— I use a hairdryer to do this (use the dryer to warm the sides of the pan and ever so slightly melt the edges of the cake)—and set the cake, still on the pan's base, on a serving platter. The easiest way to cut cheesecake is to use a long, thin knife that has been run under hot water and lightly wiped. Keep warming the knife as you cut slices of the cake.

Storing:

Wrapped well, the cake will keep for up to 1 week in the refrigerator or for up to 2 months in the freezer. It's best to defrost the still-wrapped cheesecake overnight in the refrigerator.