

Introduction

Strawberry cheesecake is a dessert that resonates with many; it combines the rich, creamy texture of classic cheesecake with the sweet and tart flavor of fresh strawberries. This delicious treat is a perfect addition to any spring or summer dessert table, offering a beautiful balance of flavors and colors. With its velvety filling and delightful strawberry topping, this easy-to-make strawberry cheesecake is not only a feast for the eyes but also a tantalizing treat for your taste buds. The creamy New York-style cheesecake serves as the perfect base, complemented by a luscious homemade strawberry sauce that elevates it to heavenly heights.

Detailed Ingredients

For the Crust:

Graham cracker crumbs
Sugar
Unsalted butter, melted
Salt

For the Filling:

Full-fat cream cheese, softened
Sugar
Salt
Vanilla extract
Fresh lemon juice
Cornstarch
Eggs, at room temperature
Sour cream, at room temperature

Strawberry Topping:

Fresh strawberries, diced
Sugar
Fresh lemon juice
Vanilla extract

Prep Time

Preparation: 30 minutes

Chilling: 5 hours (or overnight)

Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

Cook time: 1 hour 40-50 minutes

Total time: 6 hours (including cooling and chilling)

Yield: 12 servings

Detailed Directions and Instructions

1. Preheat the Oven

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and position the rack in the lower third. This step is crucial for achieving even baking.

2. Prepare the Pan

Wrap a double layer of extra-large aluminum foil tightly around the bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan to prevent water from seeping in during the water bath. This method helps keep your cheesecake moist while it bakes.

3. Make the Crust

In a bowl, mix together the graham cracker crumbs, sugar, melted butter, and salt until well combined. Press the mixture firmly into the bottom and slightly up the sides of the springform pan. This will form a sturdy base for your cheesecake. Bake in the preheated oven for 10-12 minutes, then set aside to cool. After removing the crust, lower the oven temperature to 325°F (163°C).

4. Prepare the Filling

In a large bowl, beat the softened cream cheese using an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth and creamy. Gradually add the sugar while beating, continuing until the mixture is light and fluffy. Then, mix in salt, vanilla extract, fresh lemon juice, and cornstarch to enhance the flavor and texture of your cheesecake.

5. Add the Eggs

Carefully beat in the eggs one at a time on low speed. It's important to ensure that each egg is fully incorporated before adding the next one. Lastly, mix in the sour cream until the batter is silky and smooth. This ingredient is key for creating that creamy, decadent filling.

6. Bake the Cheesecake

Pour the cheesecake batter into the pre-cooled crust, smoothing out the top with a spatula. Place the springform pan into a larger roasting pan. Pour boiling water into the roasting pan, filling it halfway up the sides of the springform pan, creating a water bath. This step helps to evenly cook the cheesecake. Bake at 325°F for 1 hour 40-50 minutes, or until the edges are set and the center remains slightly jiggly.

7. Cool the Cheesecake

After baking, turn off the oven and leave the door slightly ajar. Allow the cheesecake to sit in the oven for an additional hour. This gradual cooling process minimizes the risk of cracks forming on the surface of your cheesecake. Once cooled, remove the cheesecake from the water bath, dry the bottom of the pan, and run a knife around the edges to loosen it. Let the cheesecake cool to room temperature.

8. Chill the Cheesecake

Once the cheesecake has cooled to room temperature, cover it securely with plastic wrap or aluminum foil. Refrigerate for at least 5 hours, though overnight chilling is recommended for optimal flavor and texture.

9. Make the Strawberry Topping

In a saucepan, combine half of the diced fresh strawberries, sugar, and fresh lemon juice. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens, which should take about 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in the vanilla extract, and fold in the remaining diced strawberries. Let the strawberry topping cool to room temperature before serving.

10. Serve

Carefully remove the sides of the springform pan from the chilled cheesecake. Spread the strawberry topping over the top of the cheesecake, allowing it to create a beautiful cascade of color. Slice into desired pieces and enjoy this delectable treat!

Notes

- Ensure that all dairy ingredients are at room temperature before starting to ensure a smooth and creamy batter.
- You can substitute half of the strawberries with a different type of berry, such as blueberries or raspberries, for a mixed berry topping.
- For a gluten-free version, opt for gluten-free graham cracker crumbs for the crust.

Cook techniques

- A water bath is crucial for creating a creamy texture and preventing cracks during baking. If you are not familiar with this technique, it involves placing the cheesecake pan into a larger pan filled with hot water.
- Beating the cream cheese until smooth and fluffy helps to incorporate air, resulting in a lighter cheesecake.
- Gradually adding eggs helps avoid overmixing, which can lead to a dense texture.

FAQ

Can I use low-fat cream cheese?

Using low-fat cream cheese may result in a less creamy texture, so it's recommended to stick with full-fat for a rich and decadent cheesecake.

How do I prevent cracks on my cheesecake?

To prevent cracks, ensure you bake your cheesecake in a water bath, allow it to cool gradually in the oven, and don't overbeat the mixture to incorporate too much air.

How long will the cheesecake last in the fridge?

The cheesecake will last in the refrigerator for about 5-7 days if covered well. You can also freeze portions for longer storage.

Can I add more flavor to my cheesecake?

Absolutely! Consider adding a tablespoon of cocoa powder for a chocolate twist, or incorporate different flavored extracts like almond or coconut for a unique touch.

Conclusion

This strawberry cheesecake recipe is the perfect fusion of flavors and textures, making it a quintessential dessert for warm weather gatherings or special occasions. Its creamy, dreamy filling meets the juicy and vibrant strawberry topping, creating a symphony of taste that is hard to resist. Whether you're serving it at a festive dinner or simply indulging yourself, this easy-to-follow recipe enables anyone to craft a scrumptious strawberry cheesecake.

More recipes suggestions and combinations

Chocolate Cheesecake

Indulge in a rich chocolate cheesecake with a chocolate graham cracker crust and a silky chocolate ganache topping. A decadent delight for chocolate lovers!

Lemon Cheesecake with Berry Compote

For a tangy twist, try a lemon cheesecake topped with a mixed berry compote to brighten every bite with fruitiness and citrus zest.

Maple Pecan Cheesecake

Combine bold maple flavor with crunchy pecans for a unique autumn-inspired cheesecake that's perfect for Thanksgiving or cozy gatherings.

No-Bake Cheesecake

For a quicker option, prepare a no-bake cheesecake that requires no oven. A simple, cold treat that is as delicious as it is easy to make!