

Carol's Best New York Style Cheesecake

Bring 5 - 8 ounce packages of Philadelphia Cream Cheese to room temperature (1 - 2 hours)

Crust

1 cup sifted flour
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest,
1/2 cup cold, unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 slightly beaten egg yolk

Combine first three ingredients. In a food processor with a steel blade - or by hand with a pastry blender, cut in the butter till mixture is crumbly. Do not over mix. There should still be specks of butter.

Add egg yolk and vanilla and pulse the food processor until the mixture forms a very rough ball. Or by hand, stir with a fork until a rough ball forms. Chill the dough for an hour.

Divide the dough, and use 1/3 of the dough for the bottom crust.

Place the rest of the dough back into the refrigerator.

Pat the dough on the bottom of a 9 inch spring form pan. (sides removed).

In a preheated 400 degree oven, bake bottom crust for about 6 - 8 minutes.

Be careful it burns easily. Cool completely.

Attach sides to bottom crust, butter sides evenly, and pat remaining dough on the sides as thinly and evenly as; possible. Set aside in refrigerator.

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Cheese Filling

2 1/2 Pounds of cream cheese (5 – 8oz packages), softened.
2 teaspoons vanilla, or to taste
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest, or to taste
1 3/4 cups sugar
3 Tablespoons flour, carefully measured
1/4 teaspoon salt
5 large eggs (1 liquid cup measure)
2 egg yolks
1/4 cup heavy cream

Place the softened cream cheese into a mixer bowl.
Beat until very creamy, scraping down occasionally, (about 20 minutes)
Add vanilla and lemon zest.

Mix sugar, flour, and salt with a whisk in a small bowl.
Add to cream cheese mixture, slowly. Scrape down sides of bowl.

Add eggs and yolks, one at a time, beat until just blended. Do not over beat.

Gently stir in the cream. Taste for seasoning. Correct if necessary.

Wrap spring form pan with heavy duty foil to prevent leakage.

Turn cream cheese mixture, into crust-lined pan.

Bake at 450 degrees for 15 minutes. Set a timer.

Reduce heat to 325 degrees and bake about 55 ~ 65 minutes or until just the sides are set.

The center 5 inches will still be loose. Do not over bake. Cake will finish cooking as it cools.

Allow to cool on a rack. Loosen sides with a small bent spatula after a 1/2 hour.

Continue to cool for one to two hours at room temperature.

Refrigerate overnight uncovered.

Cheesecake taste better when it sits for one day at least.

Remove the sides of the spring form pan, and serve with sweetened whipped cream seasoned with vanilla extract, if you like.

Note: Cheese cake can be glazed or served with a Fruit Compote.

Serves 12