

Carol's Italian Ricotta Cheesecake

Serves 10 - 12

Preheat oven to 425 degrees

3 pounds, whole milk ricotta

Weigh ricotta, place in a strainer lined with wet cheesecloth, over a bowl.

(Cover with a heavy plate and refrigerate overnight.)

1 3/4 cup sugar, strained

6 large egg yolks at room temperature

1/2 cup sifted all purpose flour (sift before measuring)

Grated zest of three lemons

4 teaspoons pure vanilla or to taste

6 egg whites at room temperature

1/2 cup sugar, strained

1/2 cup cold heavy cream

Graham Crackers

Unsalted butter at room temperature to grease pan generously

Make enough Graham cracker crumbs to coat a 12 inch spring form pan, or two 8 inch spring form pans on bottom and sides. Bang out excess crumbs.

There should be no spots that are not buttered and crumbed.

Chill crust in refrigerator while making cheesecake.

Note: Cooking time will be less for two 8 inch pans. 10 minutes & 45 minutes, is the estimation. Times vary in different ovens. Check for doneness.

Beat drained ricotta until smooth, about 10 minutes on medium speed.

Gradually add 1 3/4 cups sugar, scraping down occasionally, about 10 minutes.

Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating after each addition until incorporated.

Beat in flour, scraping down the side of the bowl, until flour is incorporated.

Add lemon zest and vanilla.

Whip egg whites until soft peak forms gradually add 1/2 cup of sugar until stiff but moist peaks form.

Whip cream to soft peaks. Fold egg whites into ricotta mixture. Fold whipped cream into ricotta mixture. Do not over fold. Taste, and adjust if necessary.

Turn into spring form pan or pans.

Bake in preheated 425 degree oven for Ten minutes, lower temperature to 325 degrees, and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Turn off heat and allow to cool in the oven before removing. Then cool at room temperature on a cooling rack until cool.

Refrigerate overnight before removing from spring form pan.

Serve cold, sprinkled with confectioners' sugar.

A rosette of whipped cream on the side and a strawberry cut into a fan is a pretty touch.