

Creamy Cheesecake

This cheesecake is one of the most requested when I offer to bring something to a party. It is the perfect combination of a rich, creamy filling and nutty crunchy crust. And, in the summer months is really pretty decorated with berries. It won a blue ribbon at a neighborhood baking competition, but it is actually pretty simple to make.

Makes How Much: a 10" cake

List of ingredients, crust:

2 ½ cups graham crackers, crushed (2 of the 3 packages that come in a 14.5 oz box)
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) of butter, melted
½ cup macadamia nuts, finely chopped
½ teaspoon cinnamon
pinch of salt

List of ingredients, filling:

16 oz cream cheese (2, 8 oz packages)
1 cup granulated sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon almond extract
¼ teaspoon salt
24 oz sour cream
fresh strawberries
fresh blueberries



To make the crust:

Put the crackers in a zip lock bag and crush using a rolling pin.

Chop the macadamia nuts.

Melt the butter. I use a Pyrex measuring cup and melt the butter in the microwave.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the crushed crackers, nuts, melted butter, cinnamon and salt.

Pour mixture into a 10" spring form pan press into the pan all around.

Prebake at 350 degrees for 6 – 7 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes.

To make the filling:

Using a mixer, whip the cream cheese until fluffy and add the sugar.
Add the vanilla, almond extract and salt to the cream cheese mixture and mix well.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs then slowly add them to the cheese mixture.

Add the sour cream and mix well.

Pour the filling into the pre-made crust.

To bake:

Bake in a 375 degree oven for 30 minutes. Trust the baking time, it should be jiggly in the middle when you pull it out.

Let cool, then refrigerate to let it set up (at least 8 hours).

Notes:

I use Trader Joe's macadamia nuts, you can use raw or roasted (unsalted) for this recipe. If you don't have macadamia nuts, you can substitute slivered almonds or walnuts .

If you prefer not to use nuts because of allergies, just leave them out.