

Deepest Darkest Chocolate Cheesecake

Prep: 30 min . Inactive: 12 hr. . Cook: 1 hr 30 min. . Yield: One 9-inch cheesecake



Ingredients

Crust:

Cooking spray, for greasing
One 9-ounce package chocolate wafer cookies
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon fine salt
1 stick butter, melted

Filling:

12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/3 cup unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa powder
Four 8-ounce packages cream cheese, at room temperature
1/2 tablespoon orange zest **or** 1/2 tablespoon prepared coffee **or** 2 teaspoons espresso powder, optional
4 eggs

Glaze:

3/4 cup heavy cream
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
2 teaspoons honey
1 tablespoon prepared coffee

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to **350** degrees F. Spray a 9-inch-diameter springform pan with cooking spray.
 2. For the crust: In a food processor, grind the cookies until finely ground. Blend in the sugar and salt.
 3. Add the melted butter and process until well blended; it should be the consistency of wet sand.
 4. Press the crumbs evenly onto the bottom (not the sides) of the prepared pan. (Or just place the cookie crumb-sugar mixture in the pan, pour the melted butter in and combine.)
 5. Press the mixture into the bottom of the pan and bake just until set, about 7 minutes. Allow it to cool while preparing the filling.
 6. For the filling: Place the chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl and heat until melted, 2 to 3 minutes, stirring every minute until the chocolate is completely melted.
 7. In a medium bowl, whisk the sugar and cocoa powder together, smoothing out any lumps of cocoa powder.
 8. In a stand mixer, beat the cream cheese until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes, and then add the sugar-cocoa powder mixture.
 9. Add the orange zest, prepared coffee or espresso powder at this time, if using. Beat until fully incorporated, scraping down the sides and bottom with a rubber scraper when necessary.
 10. Blend in the eggs, 1 at a time.
 11. Mix in the lukewarm chocolate and stir until combined.
 12. Pour the filling over the cooled crust, tap the pan on the table top to remove any air pockets, and then smooth the top to even out.
 13. Bake until the center is just set (jiggles like set gelatin) and looks just dry, about 1 hour 10 minutes, rotating halfway.
 14. Cool 5 minutes. Run a knife around sides of the cake to loosen, but do not remove from the springform pan. Chill the cake in the refrigerator overnight.
 15. For the glaze: Stir the heavy cream, chopped chocolate, honey and prepared coffee in a heavy, medium saucepan over low heat until smooth. Cool slightly.
 16. Pour over the center of the cheesecake, spreading to within 1/2-inch of the cheesecake's edge and filling any cracks. Chill until topping is set, about 1 hour.
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17. Transfer the cheesecake to a platter and release from the springform pan. Serve cold, or allow to come to room temperature, about 2 hours.

Cook's Note

Make it minty by adding a few starlight mints or leftover candy cane to the food processor when crushing the cookies for the crust. Alternately, turn it into a turtle cheesecake by adding a handful of toasted pecans and a few soft caramel candies to the food processor when crushing the cookies.