

Phillis Carey's

LEMON CHEESECAKE WITH HAZELNUT CRUST

Serves 8 to 10.

Crust:

3/4 cup hazelnuts, toasted
3/4 cup graham cracker crumbs
3 T. powdered sugar
5 T. unsalted butter, melted

Filling:

3-8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
3 large eggs
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 T. lemon zest

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. For crust, finely grind nuts, cracker crumbs and powdered sugar in the food processor. Add melted butter and pulse until combined. Press crumbs onto bottom and 1/2 inch up sides of a 9 inch springform pan. Chill while making filling.

2. For filling, using electric mixer beat cream cheese until fluffy. slowly add sugar and beat until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, beating 30 seconds after each. Mix in lemon juice and zest.

3. Pour filling into crust. Bake until outer 2 inch portion of top is set and center looks slightly flossy and is barely set, about 45 to 55 minutes. Run a knife around sides of pan to loosen. Cool on a rack to room temperature. Cover; chill overnight. If desired, spread top with 1/2 to 3/4 cup Lemon Curd and chill again for at least 1 hour. Remove from refrigerator 45 minutes before serving.

Optional LEMON CURD TOPPING:

Makes about 1 1/2 cups—more than you need for the topping.

1 cup sugar
3 large eggs
1 egg yolk
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces
6 T. fresh lemon juice
1 T. lemon zest

Whisk sugar, eggs, yolk, butter, lemon juice and zest in a medium saucepan over medium low heat until butter melts and sugar dissolves. Continue to cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens to the consistency of lightly whipped cream, about 5 minutes. Mixture should reach 160 degrees on an instant thermometer at this point. Pour through a strainer into a bowl; cover with plastic wrap set right on the surface of the curd and chill for several hours until cold. Keeps about 1 week in the refrigerator.