



Classic Cheesecake

Yield: 1 9" cake

By Chef Melinda McNeil

Ingredients

1 c graham cracker or Petit Beurre biscuit crumbs	1 c sugar
1 T sugar	Pinch salt
3 T butter, melted	4 eggs, room temperature
4 8-oz packages of Philadelphia cream cheese, softened	1 tsp vanilla extract

Directions

Preheat oven to 375. Make the crust by mixing the sugar and butter into cookie crumbs. Press into the bottom of a 9" springform pan. Use the bottom of a glass measuring cup to pack well. Bake for 10 minutes and let it cool for 10-15 minutes.

Reduce oven to 325 and mix filling: begin to beat cream cheese in a stand mixer with paddle attachment. Gradually add sugar and salt and beat on medium speed for a few minutes, until light. Add eggs one at a time, then stop and scrape the sides of the bowl. Add vanilla and beat again briefly until all is combined.

Wrap the outside of the springform pan with foil, being sure that the foil comes up the sides, then pour batter in the pan on top of the crust. Make a water bath to help ensure gentle baking: place springform pan inside a larger oven-safe baking pan. Once you've placed both pans in the oven on the rack, pour hot water in the larger baking pan, an inch or two deep.

Bake for about 45 minutes at 325. If shaken gently, the cheesecake should jiggle slightly in the center but overall look set. Turn off the oven and crack open the door, allowing the cheesecake to cool in the water bath for 1 hour. Remove from the water bath and cool completely on a wire rack, then transfer to the fridge to chill overnight.