

THE
**CHEESECAKE
COLLECTION**

Ten Original Recipes,
From Classic to Coffeehouse

10
IRRESISTIBLE
CHEESECAKES



A HOMEMADE RECIPE BOOK

Made with Love, Shared with Joy



CLASSIC
FAVORITES



STEP-BY-STEP
INSTRUCTIONS



TIPS FOR PERFECT
CHEESECAKES



FROM CLASSIC
TO COFFEEHOUSE

— AUTHOR: ESSENCE CHEESE —

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Strawberry Cheesecake

A classic baked cheesecake crowned with a glossy, barely-cooked strawberry topping that keeps the fruit tasting fresh rather than jammy.

Prep Time: 30 min **Bake Time:** 55 min **Chill Time:** 6 hr (or overnight) **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs (about 16 full crackers)
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 3 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp fine salt

For the Filling

- 32 oz (four 8 oz blocks) full-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup sour cream, room temperature
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

For the Strawberry Topping

- 1 lb fresh strawberries, hulled and halved (quartered if large)
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp cold water

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 325°F (163°C). Wrap the outside of a 9-inch springform pan tightly in two layers of foil.
2. Stir the graham crumbs, melted butter, sugar, and salt together until the mixture looks like wet sand. Press firmly and evenly into the bottom of the pan. Bake for 10 minutes, then set aside to cool while you make the filling.
3. Beat the cream cheese on medium speed until completely smooth, scraping the bowl often, about 2 minutes. Add the sugar and beat until combined, another minute.
4. Mix in the sour cream and vanilla. Add the eggs one at a time, beating on low speed and mixing just until each is incorporated — do not overbeat once the eggs go in, as extra air causes cracking. Sift in the flour and fold it through by hand.
5. Pour the filling over the cooled crust. Place the wrapped springform pan into a larger roasting pan and add hot water until it reaches halfway up the sides of the springform (a water bath).
6. Bake for 55–65 minutes, until the edges are set but the center still jiggles slightly when nudged. Turn off the oven, crack the door open, and let the cheesecake sit inside for 1 hour.
7. Remove from the water bath, run a thin knife around the edge to release the pan sides, and refrigerate uncovered until fully chilled, at least 6 hours or overnight.

8. For the topping, combine the strawberries, sugar, and lemon juice in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook for 5 minutes until the strawberries soften and release juice. Stir in the cornstarch slurry and simmer 1-2 minutes more until glossy and thickened. Cool completely before spooning over the chilled cheesecake.

Baker's Tip: Room-temperature cream cheese is non-negotiable — cold lumps won't smooth out and will leave streaks in the finished slice. Set it out at least 2 hours ahead, or cube it and microwave in 10-second bursts.

Storage: Covered, in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. The topping is best added the day of serving.

Creamy Cheesecake (Classic Vanilla)

This is the everyday, no-frills version of the recipe above — pure vanilla-bean cream cheese filling with nothing to distract from the texture, which comes out silky rather than dense.

Prep Time: 20 min **Bake Time:** 50 min **Chill Time:** 6 hr **Servings:** 10 slices

For the Crust

- 1 3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 5 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tbsp brown sugar

For the Filling

- 24 oz cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 tbsp vanilla bean paste (or 2 tsp vanilla extract)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Pinch of salt

Instructions

9. Preheat the oven to 325°F (163°C) and butter a 9-inch springform pan.
10. Mix crumbs, melted butter, and brown sugar; press into the base of the pan and partway up the sides. Bake 8 minutes, then cool.
11. Beat the cream cheese until smooth. Add sugar and beat 1-2 minutes until fluffy and light.
12. With the mixer on low, add the eggs one at a time. Stir in the heavy cream, vanilla bean paste, lemon juice, and salt just until combined.
13. Pour into the crust and smooth the top. Tap the pan on the counter a few times to pop any large air bubbles.
14. Bake 48-55 minutes until the center has a gentle wobble. Cool in the oven with the door ajar for 45 minutes, then chill uncovered for at least 6 hours.

Baker's Tip: For a crack-free top without a water bath, bake low and slow at 325°F and never open the oven door in the first 40 minutes — temperature swings are the main cause of surface splitting.

Storage: Keeps well covered in the fridge for 5 days, or freeze whole slices wrapped in plastic for up to 2 months.

Philadelphia Classic Cheesecake

A dense, tangy New York-style cheesecake built the way delis have made it for decades — heavy on cream cheese, light on add-ins, finished with a simple sour cream layer for shine.

Prep Time: 25 min **Bake Time:** 1 hr **Chill Time:** 8 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the Filling

- 4 (8 oz) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 5 large eggs, room temperature
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon

For the Sour Cream Topping

- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions

15. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Press the crumb-sugar-butter mixture into a 9-inch springform pan and bake for 10 minutes; reduce oven to 325°F (163°C).
16. Beat cream cheese until smooth, then add sugar and flour and beat until well combined.
17. Add eggs one at a time on low speed. Blend in the heavy cream, vanilla, and lemon zest.
18. Pour over the crust and bake 55–65 minutes, until the outer 2 inches are set and the center still jiggles slightly.
19. Whisk together the sour cream, sugar, and vanilla, then spread gently over the hot cheesecake. Return to the oven for 5 minutes to set the topping.
20. Cool at room temperature for 1 hour, then refrigerate uncovered for at least 8 hours before releasing the pan.

Baker's Tip: This style relies on flour, not cornstarch, to give the deli-style dense crumb — don't substitute one for the other or the texture will shift toward the lighter 'creamy' style above.

Storage: Refrigerate covered up to 6 days; this version freezes exceptionally well for up to 3 months.

Easy Pumpkin Cheesecake

A streamlined, one-bowl pumpkin cheesecake with warm spice and a gingersnap crust — built for fall baking without sacrificing texture.

Prep Time: 20 min **Bake Time:** 55 min **Chill Time:** 6 hr **Servings:** 10 slices

For the Crust

- 1 3/4 cups crushed gingersnap cookies
- 5 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the Filling

- 24 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup canned pumpkin purée (not pie filling)
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp salt

Instructions

21. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Press gingersnap crumbs and butter into a 9-inch springform pan; bake 8 minutes and cool.
22. Beat cream cheese and brown sugar until smooth. Mix in the pumpkin purée until fully blended.
23. Add eggs one at a time on low speed, then stir in cornstarch, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, salt, and nutmeg just until combined.
24. Pour into the crust and bake 50-58 minutes, until the edges are set and the center jiggles slightly.
25. Cool at room temperature 1 hour, then chill uncovered at least 6 hours before slicing.

Baker's Tip: Blot excess moisture from canned pumpkin with a paper towel before mixing — too much liquid softens the crust and slows the bake, which can leave the center underdone.

Storage: Refrigerate covered up to 5 days.

Eggnog Cheesecake

A holiday-table centerpiece that channels eggnog's nutmeg-and-rum warmth into a baked cheesecake without tasting like a novelty — it reads as a rich, spiced classic.

Prep Time: 25 min **Bake Time:** 55 min **Chill Time:** 8 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 1 3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the Filling

- 32 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup prepared eggnog
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp nutmeg, plus more for garnish
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp rum extract (or 2 tbsp dark rum)

Instructions

26. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Combine crumbs, nutmeg, and butter; press into a 9-inch springform pan and bake 8 minutes.
27. Beat cream cheese until smooth, then beat in sugar until fluffy.
28. Mix in the eggnog, then add eggs one at a time on low speed. Fold in flour, nutmeg, vanilla, and rum extract.
29. Pour over the crust and bake in a water bath for 55–65 minutes, until the edges are set and the center wobbles gently.
30. Cool in the turned-off oven with the door cracked for 1 hour, then chill uncovered at least 8 hours.
31. Dust the top with fresh nutmeg just before serving.

Baker's Tip: Use a good store-bought eggnog rather than thinning it out — the filling depends on eggnog's natural thickness to set properly alongside the eggs.

Storage: Refrigerate covered up to 5 days; this one is popular made a day ahead since the spice deepens overnight.

Lemon Meringue Cheesecake

Tart lemon cheesecake filling under a torched Italian meringue — it borrows the flavor profile of the pie without the fussy lattice of a curd-and-crust build.

Prep Time: 35 min **Bake Time:** 55 min **Chill Time:** 6 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 1 3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar

For the Lemon Filling

- 32 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

For the Meringue

- 3 large egg whites
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp cream of tartar
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions

32. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Press crumb mixture into a 9-inch springform pan and bake 8 minutes.
33. Beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, then mix in sour cream, lemon juice, and zest. Fold in flour.
34. Pour into the crust and bake 50–58 minutes, until set at the edges with a slight center jiggle. Cool, then chill at least 6 hours.
35. Before serving, make the meringue: whisk egg whites and cream of tartar to soft peaks, then gradually add sugar and beat to glossy stiff peaks. Mix in vanilla.
36. Spread or pipe the meringue over the chilled cheesecake and caramelize with a kitchen torch (or under a broiler for 30–60 seconds, watched closely).

Baker's Tip: Make the meringue no more than an hour before serving — unlike the cheesecake itself, it doesn't hold well overnight and will start to weep.

Storage: Refrigerate the un-meringued cheesecake up to 5 days; add meringue fresh the day of serving.

Oreo Cheesecake

A crowd-pleaser built on a whole-cookie crust, studded with crushed Oreos throughout the filling, and finished with a ring of whole cookies on top.

Prep Time: 25 min **Bake Time:** 55 min **Chill Time:** 6 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 24 Oreo cookies, finely crushed (cream included)
- 5 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the Filling

- 32 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 20 Oreo cookies, roughly chopped, divided

Instructions

37. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Press the crushed-cookie-and-butter mixture into a 9-inch springform pan; bake 8 minutes.
38. Beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Mix in sour cream, then add eggs one at a time on low speed. Stir in vanilla and flour.
39. Fold in two-thirds of the chopped Oreos by hand. Pour the filling over the crust and scatter the remaining chopped cookies on top.
40. Bake 50–58 minutes, until the edges are set and the center jiggles slightly.
41. Cool at room temperature 1 hour, then chill uncovered at least 6 hours before slicing.

Baker's Tip: Toss the chopped Oreo pieces in a teaspoon of flour before folding them in — it keeps them suspended in the batter instead of sinking to the crust during baking.

Storage: Refrigerate covered up to 5 days; the crust softens slightly by day 3 but stays fully edible.

Caramel Apple Cheesecake

Spiced sautéed apples and a salted caramel drizzle turn this into a cheesecake-pie hybrid — best made a day ahead so the caramel has time to soak in slightly.

Prep Time: 40 min **Bake Time:** 1 hr **Chill Time:** 8 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 1 3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the Filling

- 32 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

For the Spiced Apple Topping

- 3 medium apples (Granny Smith or Honeycrisp), peeled and diced small
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg

For the Caramel Drizzle

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, cubed
- 1/2 cup heavy cream, warmed
- 1/2 tsp flaky sea salt

Instructions

42. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Press crumbs, cinnamon, and butter into a 9-inch springform pan; bake 8 minutes.
43. Beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, then mix in sour cream, vanilla, and flour.
44. Pour into the crust and bake 55–65 minutes until set at the edges with a gentle center wobble. Cool, then chill at least 8 hours.
45. For the apples, melt butter in a skillet over medium heat, add apples, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and cook 8–10 minutes until tender. Cool completely.
46. For the caramel, melt sugar in a dry saucepan over medium heat, swirling (not stirring) until amber. Off heat, whisk in the butter until melted, then slowly whisk in the warm cream. Stir in the salt and cool to room temperature.

47. Top the chilled cheesecake with the cooled apples and drizzle generously with caramel just before serving.

Baker's Tip: Cool the apple topping fully before adding it — warm fruit will start to melt the chilled filling's surface and make clean slices harder to cut.

Storage: Refrigerate the plain cheesecake up to 5 days; add apples and caramel the day of serving for the best texture.

Chocolate Chip Cheesecake

Inspired by chocolate chip cookie dough, this one folds mini chocolate chips through a vanilla-brown-butter filling on an Oreo-and-graham crust.

Prep Time: 25 min **Bake Time:** 55 min **Chill Time:** 6 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the Filling

- 32 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups mini semisweet chocolate chips, divided

Instructions

48. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Press crumbs, sugar, and butter into a 9-inch springform pan; bake 8 minutes.
49. Beat cream cheese with both sugars until smooth and light. Add eggs one at a time on low speed, then mix in sour cream, vanilla, and flour.
50. Toss 1 cup of the chocolate chips with a teaspoon of flour and fold into the batter by hand. Pour into the crust and scatter the remaining chips on top.
51. Bake 50–58 minutes until the edges are set and the center jiggles slightly.
52. Cool at room temperature 1 hour, then chill uncovered at least 6 hours before slicing.

Baker's Tip: Mini chocolate chips distribute more evenly than standard-size chips and are less likely to sink — if all you have are regular chips, chop them coarsely first.

Storage: Refrigerate covered up to 5 days.

Caramel Macchiato Cheesecake

A coffeehouse-inspired cheesecake with espresso built into the filling, a caramel swirl running through the middle, and whipped cream and caramel to finish — dessert and after-dinner coffee in one slice.

Prep Time: 35 min **Bake Time:** 1 hr **Chill Time:** 8 hr **Servings:** 12 slices

For the Crust

- 1 3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar

For the Filling

- 32 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp instant espresso powder dissolved in 1 tbsp hot water
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

For the Caramel Swirl and Topping

- 3/4 cup store-bought or homemade caramel sauce, divided
- 1 cup heavy cream, whipped to soft peaks (for topping)
- 1 tbsp granulated sugar (for whipped cream)

Instructions

53. Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Press crumbs, butter, and sugar into a 9-inch springform pan; bake 8 minutes.
54. Beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Mix in the dissolved espresso. Add eggs one at a time on low speed, then mix in sour cream, vanilla, and flour.
55. Pour half the filling into the crust, drizzle with 1/4 cup caramel sauce, and swirl gently with a knife. Add the remaining filling and repeat with another 1/4 cup caramel, swirling again.
56. Bake in a water bath for 55–65 minutes, until the edges are set and the center wobbles slightly.
57. Cool in the turned-off oven with the door cracked for 1 hour, then chill uncovered at least 8 hours.
58. Before serving, whip the cream with sugar to soft peaks, dollop or pipe over the cheesecake, and finish with the remaining caramel sauce drizzled on top.

Baker's Tip: Dissolve the espresso powder in the smallest amount of hot water that will fully dissolve it — too much liquid thins the batter and extends the bake time.

Storage: Refrigerate the plain baked cheesecake up to 5 days; add whipped cream and final caramel drizzle just before serving.