

Super Creamy Espresso Cheesecake

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Original recipe and notes at www.devamadeo.com



Details:

Yield: a 9" springform pan

Total time: 3 hours, plus overnight time in the fridge

Active time: 10 minutes for preparing the crust, 15 minutes for making the cheesecake filling, 10 minutes for making the meringue, 3 minutes for making the chocolate sauce.

Baking time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Equipment: stand mixer, 9" springform pan, medium baking dish, candy thermometer (if doing the meringue)

My Prep:

Ingredients:

Cocoa Crust:

- Unsalted butter – 12 TBSP, 170g (1 ½ stick)
- Traditional graham crackers – 8 oz, 230g (15 whole rectangular crackers)
- Raw sugar – 5 TBSP
- Dutch processed cocoa powder (you may use natural) - 2 TBSP

Cheesecake filling:

- Cream cheese, at room temperature – 5 (8 oz) packages
- Raw sugar – 1 ¾ cup
- Strong espresso brew - 4 TBSP, 55g

Steps:

Making the crust:

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 9" springform pan with parchment paper. Wrap it almost to the top with several layers of aluminum foil (see notes above). Place over a large baking tray.

In a small saucepan place the 12 tablespoons of butter and heat over medium heat. As soon as the butter begins melting start swirling the saucepan every couple of minutes to make sure butter melts evenly. When it has melted completely, keep swirling the saucepan almost constantly, about 7 to 8 minutes. It will foam and then start turning brown. Remove butter from heat when it looks deep brown and starts smelling nutty. Let it cool down a bit.

- Instant coffee granules (preferably decaf) - 1 Tsp
- Freshly squeezed lemon juice (optional) - 1 Tsp
- Vanilla extract - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 Tsp, 7g to 9g
- Pure full fat coconut milk, (canned) - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, 75g
- Unbleached cake flour (not self-rising) or all purpose flour - 3 TBSP
- Eggs, at room temperature - 5, large
- Egg yolks, at room temperature - 2, from large eggs

Italian Meringue:

- Water - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Raw sugar - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Lemon - $\frac{1}{2}$ Tsp, plus a slice to rub the bowl and attachment
- Egg whites, at room temperature - 2
- Cream of tartar - $\frac{1}{4}$ Tsp

Chocolate sauce:

- Semi-sweet or bitter sweet chocolate chips - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, about 90g

Break the graham crackers over the bowl of the food processor already attached to its base. Add the 5 tablespoons of sugar and the 2 tablespoons cocoa powder. Pulse 2 times to integrate everything and make the crumbs smaller. With the processor running, pour in the melted butter, just until the crumbs are very fine and compact but not oily, about 10 to 15 seconds. If there are still big crumbs of crackers, integrate the crumbs stuck to the wall of the bowl and pulse a couple of seconds more.

Transfer the content to the pan. Press onto the bottom and up to the sides, until the crumbs are evenly distributed and you have reached the edges of the pan with them. You may use a bottom flat small measuring cup or utensil to help yourself press down and distribute the crumbs.

Transfer to oven and bake for 7 minutes, then let it cool down.

As soon as you take the crust out, increase oven temperature to 425°.

Making the cream cheese filling:

Place the 5 cream cheeses in the bowl of a stand mixer with the wire (whisk) attachment attached (if you are using a hand mixer use the beaters). Beat on medium-low speed (#2 in the stand mixer) until cream cheese is smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl with a silicone spatula to make sure there are no big lumps of unbeaten cream cheese. Beat an additional minute. Scrape one more time if necessary.

(Scraping the sides and bottom of the bowl several times throughout the process is key to making the mixture smooth and bubble-free.) Slow down to minimum speed and gradually add the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar. Mix 1 minute. Add the 4 tablespoons of espresso, the teaspoon of instant coffee, and the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of vanilla (if using) and mix until incorporated. Add the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of

My recipe highlights:

Extra notes:

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coconut milk. Stop mixer and scrape the walls and bottom of the bowl once more to make sure there are no big chunks of cream cheese. Mix in the flour just until incorporated. Add the eggs and egg yolks, one at a time. Stop beating as soon as the last yolk is incorporated. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl once more. Beat on minimum speed for an additional 30 seconds to one minute.

Place the pan with the crust on a baking tray. Pour in the cream cheese filling. Fill baking tray with water half way thru and carefully transfer everything to your oven already in 425° (you can do it vice versa if you prefer; transfer the tray to the oven and fill it halfway with water, but you need to act fast so the oven temperature doesn't drop much). Bake for 7 minutes. Lower the temperature to 275° and bake for 1 hour and 10 to 15 minutes, until the filling is firm but the center is wobbly when shaken.

Turn off the oven and leave the cheesecake with the oven door half open for 5 to 8 minutes, then take it out and let it cool completely. Cover the pan with plastic seal or aluminum foil (not touching the cheesecake). Chill in the fridge for 8 to 10 hours, preferably overnight.

When ready to serve, release springform pan and turn cheesecake upside down over a plate or large tray with a cling plastic paper in between. Carefully remove the bottom of the pan and the parchment paper. Place your serving plate on top and turn cheesecake once more.

Top your cheesecake with Italian meringue if you want and the chocolate sauce. Sprinkle chopped pistachios or any other nuts on top.

Making the Italian meringue:

Make sure that the mixer bowl and the wire accessory are very clean and free of any grease residue. Any fat will prevent the egg whites from rising. Move the mixer as close to the stove area as possible.

In a small saucepan pour the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water. Add the sugar in the middle to prevent granules sticking on the saucepan walls.

Rub the bottom, the sides of the bowl and the wires of the whisk with a lemon cut in half. Drop the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of lemon juice. Add the 2 egg whites and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the cream of tartar. Beat on low speed for 30 seconds to distribute everything. Increase speed to medium (#4 in the stand mixer) and beat until soft peaks form.

Immediately start heating the sugar and water on high heat until a candy thermometer reaches 240°. Be stand by as soon as it goes beyond 225°.

As soon as it reaches 240°, remove from heat and in a thin but continuous stream add the syrup to the whites while the mixer is still running (try to prevent pouring sugar too near to the edge). Beat for 2 minutes then increase speed to medium-high (#6 in the stand mixer). Beat for an additional 2 to 3 minutes, until the bowl feels at room temperature on the outside.

Decorate creating soft peaks or waves with a silicone spatula or upside-down spoon. You have to work the meringue relatively quick, it will look a bit broken if smeared when it's already too cooled down, even if it's completely safe to eat.

Drizzle chocolate sauce on top.

Making the chocolate sauce:

Place chocolate chips in the microwave and heat for 10 seconds. Move them with a stirring motion, they will loose the heat and start melting. Heat 1 or 2 more times, repeating the stirring in between. Drizzle over cheesecake when serving or over the single piece to be served.

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