



BISTRO 301'S AWARD WINNING "DULCE DE LICIOUS" CHEESECAKE

This recipe makes one 9-inch cheesecake.

Serves 8 to 12 people.

Start to finish: 2 days.

Crust Ingredients

2 boxes of Dulce de Leche Girl Scout Cookies

¼ pound butter

Cake Batter Ingredients

2 vanilla beans (2 tablespoons of vanilla extract will substitute for vanilla beans)

24 ounces cream cheese (at room temperature)

4 large eggs (at room temperature)

1 cup sugar

Caramel Ingredients

½ pound butter

2 cups sugar

1 cup heavy cream

Sea Salt Garnish

Bourbon Smoked Sea Salt or plain coarse sea salt

(Bourbon smoked sea salt is available at Creation Gardens and other local specialty stores throughout the Louisville area.)

Crust Procedure

- Crumble cookies (food processor works well).
- Melt butter (microwave or stovetop).
- Combine cookie crumbles and butter until uniform.
- Spread mixture evenly into bottom of 9-inch non-stick spring-form pan and chill for 15-20 minutes.

Cake Batter Procedure

- It is important that you allow the eggs and cream cheese to reach room temperature before you begin combining ingredients.
- In stand-up mixer, using the paddle attachment beat the cream cheese on medium-high speed until "fluffy".
- Reduce mixer speed and add sugar until well incorporated.
- Add eggs, one at a time, until incorporated.
- Split vanilla beans with paring (or other small) knife and carefully scrape insides into mixture (or add vanilla extract if using that).
- Pour mixture into spring-form pan until level, approximately ¼ inch below top.
- Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
- Place uncooked cheesecake (in spring-form) into a larger, deep baking pan.
- Add water to baking pan until it's half way up the spring-form.
- Bake cheesecake for approximately 1- 1 ½ hours (ovens vary).
- The cheesecake is finished when the center wiggles only slightly.
- Allow to cool (approximately 6 to 8 hours) before removing from spring-form and transfer to a serving tray.
- Put cheesecake in the freezer over night.

Caramel Procedure (Make caramel after the cheesecake is frozen)

- Melt butter in medium saucepot over low heat.
- Slowly stir in sugar until well incorporated.
- Increase heat to medium, stirring constantly. DO NOT LEAVE UNATTENDED.
- Allow sugar and butter to cook for approximately 15-20 minutes.
- Reduce heat to low and slowly stir in heavy cream. !CAUTION!: Watch for backsplash. The cream is very cold and the sugar/butter mixture is extremely hot. The cream will boil instantly and can cause severe burns if proper precautions are not taken. Use an oven mitt or towel to cover exposed skin.
- Allow mixture to cook for approximately 45 minutes, stirring continuously. The time needed may be more or less. In order to know if the caramel has cooked long enough, follow this test. Drop a small amount of caramel into a bowl of ice-cold water. Caramel should stay in small beads, rather than spreading throughout the water. The test indicated that the caramel has a soft, somewhat “chewy” consistency.
- Allow caramel to cool to approximately 170-200 degrees.
- Remove cheesecake from the freezer.
- Slowly pour cooling caramel over cheesecake, starting in the center and slowly spreading outwards.
- Refrigerate for approximately 15 minutes, allowing the caramel to ‘set’.
- Remove from the refrigerator and sprinkle with your hand the Bourbon Smoked Sea Salt over the cake until the desired flavor and aesthetic is achieved.
- Cover the cheesecake and store in the refrigerator (use a cover that doesn’t touch the cheesecake).
- When ready to serve, cut the cheesecake with a hot, wet knife, rinsing the knife after each cut.
- You can also store the cheesecake in the freezer for up to 2 months.