

An American People's Pumpkin Cheesecake



A note from Certified Executive Chef, Martin CJ Mongiello, MBA, CEC, MCFE, CHM, CPFM: *As a former Executive Chef to the President of the United States, I was scared of making cheesecakes. I didn't really know how it all worked with the cheese cooking in an oven, you know? Funny, huh?! It's okay to be intimidated and it's okay to admit it. I had never made them and they were*

very intimidating to me. Gosh knows, I loved eating them! I didn't really understand how they worked or cooked but I loved them! I finally got up the nerve and tried it one day and since then I have amazed myself! I swear to God – this is completely true. Now it's time for you to do that also.

I picked up a few tricks along the way and applied a few of my own trademark secrets as well. My cheesecakes are known for being massive and sometimes weighing up to 15 pounds. Others, are like tarts (pictured right) with hand rolled marzipan pumpkins and vines. People swarm over them and plead for my recipes of them.



Hey, here is the recipe for free so lets have some fun! I am available at www.mongiello.org, if you have a question. I'm right here with you.

CRUST: Now let's make a special crust. Anybody can make the old, plain graham cracker crust, but this is an awesome crust:

-2/3 cup (160 ml) butter, melted

-3 tablespoons sugar

-2 cups (500 ml) Ginger Snap crumbs (pulse them in a Cuisinart or food processor to make a coarse grind). If you don't own either, then use a rolling pin to pulverize the cookies into dust crumbs. Of course, don't forget, that chocolate cookies, shortbread, vanilla wafers, oreo cookies and oatmeal cookies also make for great crusts! Try using all types of cookies and have a ball. Don't limit your mind or thoughts to what tradition has told you to think.

-1/2 teaspoon Pumpkin Pie Spice (McCormick makes a little one pre-mixed and it's called Pumpkin Pie Spice). If you don't have this or



can't find it or don't feel like buying another spice that will sit around

till next year - then just mix up some Nutmeg, Allspice and Cinnamon in a small dish. Presto!

Save any excess crumbs for later or make another pie or small cups of pie.

THE FILLING: I make a massive amount of uncontrolled filling that would overflow the largest bowl you own! If you find you have extra left over, then make up a few small bowls or tart pan (use any excess crust) and cook them off in the oven also. However, be careful, smaller bowls cook much faster than the huge, loaded spring form pan.

- 4 packages (8 oz. or 224 grams each package) Cream Cheese, softened to room temperature for easy whipping
- 3/4 cup (180 ml) regular White Sugar
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) white, plain, Flour
- 2 large Eggs (see secret below)
- 2 cups (500 ml) canned Pumpkin (a single 15 oz can - NOT the huge, massive can)
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon Nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon Allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon Mace

Directions:

CRUST: Combine all crust ingredients. Press into the bottom and up sides of a 8" or larger spring form (that's the French style opening pan with hinge) pan. The bigger the pan and deeper it is, the heavier and more massive the cake will be! That could make the cooking time longer, though, so just keep testing the center with your handy little, DRY, toothpick.

FILLING: In a large mixer bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in flour and add eggs one at a time while beating. Stir in pumpkin, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice. Pour over crust.

US Navy Chefs Secret: As a Navy chef running five kitchens at Camp David, we continued this safety practice, first taught to all Navy chefs, in Basic Cooks School - when adding eggs to a recipe always crack them into a separate bowl. That lets you see if they are bad, black or brown. Don't ever add them directly into your recipe. You might find out, TOO LATE, that "oh man, that one was green and now it ruined my whole bowl filled with ingredients."

BAKE: Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit (180 Celsius or setting #4 for European ovens) for about 1 hour and 20 minutes, until the center is raised and set. Let cool to room temperature. Don't worry if it drops down a bit or is cracked up all over the top. One of the destructive natures of cooking with cheese in such massive quantities is cracking.

ULTRA SMOOTH TOPPING: You will fix that and make it look beautiful by mixing up a large container of Sour Cream with a few spoonfuls of sugar. Mix that up in a bowl with a fork or whip. Taste it to your liking. When it is stirred (not whipped) and mixed well it will be pour able. Pour it into the top of the cheesecake and spoon some more just up to the top (don't cover the crust and allow some of the cheesecake edge to remain visible).

That trick fixes and fills any cracks, problems or crevices!
Moreover,
people love this
Sour Cream
Sugar topping to
death! Oh, it's
so good and
creamy and
adds color
variations when
you slice the
cake. Even
better! Once
you do this, go
on ahead and
bake it for about
ten minutes at



400 degrees. This shock cooks the Sour Cream Sugar filling and dries it up a wee little bit. Perfecto! Pull that sucker out at the ten-minute mark!

REFRIGERATE: Refrigerate over night. The colder the better. Have fun, love life and your world of friends and family!

HEART HEALTHIER SECRETS: You can also use fake Butter or Margarine (no cholesterol that way), Aspartame (follow equivalency table on back of package), Fat free Cream Cheese, Egg Whites with no yolks (2 egg whites equals one egg - did you know that there are 200mg of cholesterol in a single egg yolk?) and Fat Free Sour Cream.