

Vanilla Bean Cheesecake

cookie crust

1 1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup sugar
2 Tablespoons lemon zest
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 egg yolks
1 1/2 sticks butter cut in 1/4 inch bits

sour cream whipped cream

1/2 cup sour cream
3/4 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
* combine all ingredients in a metal bowl that's been chilled in the freezer. whip on high until soft peaks form.

cheesecake filling

4 (8 oz) packages cream cheese - room temp
3 Tablespoons lemon juice
1 1/2 Tablespoons flour
1 1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
scraped beans from 1 vanilla pod
2 Tablespoons heavy cream
2 Tablespoons sour cream
3 eggs + 1 egg yolk

strawberry sauce

3 cups fresh strawberries
2-3 Tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
*blend together all ingredients

directions...

COOKIE CRUST: prepare cookie crust first. combine all ingredients in a large bowl. using your fingers, work together the dough until well mixed and can be combined into a ball. dust with additional flour, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

butter and flour the bottom of a cheesecake spring-form pan. roll out dough in a circle (1/4 inch thickness). gently lay the bottom on top of dough and trace the pan with a knife. place cookie on top of pan and bake in a preheated 350 degree oven to a light golden brown (approx. 10 minutes). cool pan and bottom. butter and flour the sides of the pan. roll and line more cookie dough on the sides of the pan. gently press dough against the sides as well as the already baked bottom. trim excess dough from edges.

CHEESE FILLING: using a wooden spoon, vigorously beat the cream cheese until smooth and creamy. beat in the sugar (gently and gradually). once combined gently beat in flour, pre-whisked eggs, vanilla + beans, lemon juice, heavy cream, and sour cream. make sure there are no lumps but don't overbeat or texture can become dense when baked.

pour cheese filling into cookie lined pan. bake in a preheated 475 oven for 12-15 minutes. you should notice the cake begin to rise slightly on the sides and middle. carefully remove cake and place on a wire rack. cool for 30 minutes. reduce oven temp to 350. return cake back to the oven and bake for an additional 25-35 minutes. when the cake is bouncy in the center and slightly risen on the sides and middle, it's finished! *if cheesecake cracks, it's over baked and too firm. if under baked, the center will be too soft.

remove from oven and slightly run your knife around the outside of the crust to help loosen when cooling. cool at room temp for several hours. remove the sides of pan, cover cheesecake in plastic wrap, and refrigerate over night.

SERVING: for best flavor and texture, cheesecake should be served at nearly room temp (just slightly cooler than room temp). before serving, top with fresh sour cream whipped cream, freshly sliced strawberries, and fresh strawberry sauce.