

Healthy Cheesecake

Smooth, creamy, cool, and sumptuously sweet—who doesn't love a cheesecake? However tasty it may be, the fact of the matter is that traditional cheesecake is one heart-*unhealthy* treat. Consider the main ingredients: cream cheese, more cream cheese, eggs and sugar, with some sour cream thrown in for good measure and of course, more cream cheese!

Here's a slimmed-down version that the whole family (and anyone else who tries it!) will love. While it has less than half the fat of a typical recipe, and it's loaded with beneficial calcium and protein, it still rivals any traditional cheesecake when it comes to flavor. What could be better than that? Invite your kids to help you with the measuring, the mixing, and the proportions and you'll give them great math and science practice along the way! This Fourth of July, you can even take an extra delicious step by decorating the cake with strawberries and blueberries for a delectable red, white and blue masterpiece!



What You Need:

- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons melted unsalted butter or reduced-cholesterol, heart healthy butter (Smart Balance is a great example)
- Approximately 12 chocolate graham crackers, or about 1 1/2 cups chocolate graham cracker crumbs
- 3 blocks (8 ounces each) of fat-free cream cheese
- 12 ounces of reduced cream cheese, in block form
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 whole eggs
- 3 egg whites
- 1 basket each of strawberries and blueberries
- Optional: 1 small jar of all natural strawberry jelly warmed through so that it is melted (make sure it's jelly and not jam)

What You Do:

1. In a blender or food processor, grind up the graham crackers into fine crumbs. Add the butter and sugar and incorporate it into the graham cracker mixture. Make sure your crumbs aren't too fine. Once combined, press the mixture onto the bottom of a greased, 9" spring-form pan. Bake at 350° for 10-15 minutes, or until the mixture is slightly crispy and firm. Set aside to cool.
2. Make sure your child helps you with all of the mixing and measuring!
3. Use an eggbeater or food processor to blend all of the ingredients until they are completely smooth. Pour the mixture onto your prepared crust in your 9" spring-form pan. Bake approximately 1 hour at 300° or until set. (Temperature varies somewhat by climate and oven, so make sure you keep an eye on it!) Remove the cake from oven when done. Run a knife quickly around the outside edge of the cheesecake, but do not remove from the pan. This is just to separate the cake from sticking to the sides while it is still warm. Allow the cake to cool to room temperature, then refrigerate it, covered, for at least 6-8 hours. Overnight is best.
4. Invite your child to help clean and hull your berries. Then cut each strawberry in half lengthwise, so

that you have flat sides to lay onto your cheesecake. Remove your chilled cheesecake from the spring-form pan, and invite your child to create a large five-point strawberry star in the middle of the cake, using your berry halves laid side by side to create the shape (don't worry if a little white shows through—red, white and blue is the idea here!). Then lay the blueberries on the remainder of the exposed surface outside the edges of the star so that whole top surface of the cake is covered. You will have a giant red, strawberry star in the middle of your cake surrounded by blue berries. To finish the whole thing off in style, brush it with the melted strawberry jelly. Your patriotic cake will be a celebration of our nation and good health!

© Copyright 2006-2012 Education.com All Rights Reserved.