



Hazelnut Vanilla Cheesecake

Servings: 0

Ingredients

Hazelnut Crust:

- 1 cup flour
- 3/4 cup toasted, skinned hazelnuts
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch chunks, softened

Hazelnut Vanilla Filling:

- 1 1/2 pounds cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup praline paste
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs

Praline Paste:

- 1/2 cup blanched whole or slivered almonds
- 1/2 cup blanched hazelnuts
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon hazelnut or vegetable oil

Directions

Make the Crust: Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease bottom and sides of a 9 x 3-inch springform pan. Cut an 18-inch square of heavy-duty aluminum foil and wrap the foil around the outside of the pan.

Place the flour, hazelnuts, powdered sugar, salt, and baking soda in the bowl of a food processor and process until the hazelnuts are finely ground. Add the butter pieces and process until the dough begins to come together. Press the dough into an even layer in the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake the crust for 25 to 30 minutes, until it is just beginning to brown.

Place the pan on a wire rack and cool completely. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Make the Filling: In the bowl of an electric mixer, using the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese at medium-low speed until creamy and lump-free, about 2 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary. Gradually add the sugar and beat until blended. Add the praline paste and mix at low speed until well blended and no lumps remain. Add the heavy cream and vanilla and mix just until combined. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary.

Scrape the batter into the cooled crust. Place the pan in a roasting pan or large baking pan. Pour enough hot water into the roasting pan to come 1 inch up the sides of the springform pan. Bake the cheesecake in the water bath for 60 to 70 minutes, until the center of the cake is set but slightly wobbly (the cake will set completely as it cools).

Remove the cake pan from the water and immediately run the tip of a paring knife around the sides of the pan, to prevent top from cracking. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and cool the cake completely.

Refrigerate the cheesecake for at least 4 hours before serving.

To serve, slice the cake with a thin-bladed sharp knife, wiping the knife clean between each cut.

Store in the refrigerator, loosely covered, for up to 5 days.

To Make the Praline Paste: Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Spread the almonds and hazelnuts on a baking sheet and toast in the oven for 8 to 12 minutes, shaking the pan once or twice, until golden and fragrant. Let the nuts cool completely on the baking sheet.

Brush another baking sheet lightly with vegetable oil; set aside. Combine the sugar and water in a medium heavy saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar and occasionally brushing down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush. Continue to cook, without stirring, until the mixture turns a light caramel,

3 to 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the toasted almonds and hazelnuts. Return the pan to the heat and cook, stirring, until the nuts are completely coated with the caramel and it deepens to an amber color. Immediately pour the caramelized nut mixture onto the oiled baking sheet, spreading it out. Allow the praline to cool for 30 minutes, or until hard.

Using a large knife, coarsely chop the praline. Place in a food processor and process for about a minute, until it is the consistency of sand. Add the hazelnut or vegetable oil and process for another 30 seconds, or until it becomes a paste.

Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

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