

Fresh From the Kitchen

Recipes excerpted from ***The Cheesecake bible*** by George Geary. Published by Robert Rose Inc., Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Copyright 2008. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Blue Ribbon Cheesecake

Serves 10 to 12

I have won numerous awards with this recipe, also affectionately called "Patty's Favorite Cheesecake" after my mom, my biggest fan.

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)
9-inch (23 cm) cheesecake pan, ungreased, or springform pan with 3-inch (7.5 cm) sides, greased

CRUST:

1-1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs	300 ml
1/4 cup unsalted butter	50 ml

FILLING:

4 packages cream cheese (8 oz/250g each)	4
1-1/4 cups granulated sugar	300 ml
4 eggs	4
3 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice	45 ml
1 tsp vanilla extract	5 ml

TOPPING:

1/2 cup sour cream	125 ml
1/4 cup granulated sugar	50 ml
1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice	15 ml
1/2 tsp vanilla extract	2 ml

DECORATION:

2 cups fresh strawberries, sliced	500 ml
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1. **Crust:** In a bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and butter. Press into bottom of cheesecake pan and freeze.

2. **Filling:** In a mixer bowl fitted with paddle attachment, beat cream cheese and sugar on medium-high speed until very smooth, for 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Mix in lemon juice and vanilla.

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Blue Ribbon Cheesecake, (continued)

3. Pour over frozen crust, smoothing out to sides of pan. Bake in preheated oven until top is light brown and center has a slight jiggle to it, 45 to 55 minutes. Let cool on the counter for 10 minutes (do not turn the oven off). The cake will sink slightly.

4. **Topping:** In a small bowl, combine sour cream, sugar, lemon juice and vanilla. Pour into center of cooled cake and spread out to edges. Bake for 5 minutes more. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 2 hours. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours before decorating or serving.

5. **Decoration:** Top with sliced strawberries when completely chilled.

Tips:

Zest lemons and limes before juicing and freeze the zest for another recipe.

This cheesecake freezes well for up to 4 months before decorating. Defrost in the refrigerator the day before use and then decorate.

Variation:

If fresh berries are not available, spread 1 cup (250 ml) strawberry preserves on top.