

new york cheesecake

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New York Cheesecake

Dense, tall, and made almost entirely of cream cheese — the New York style distinguishes itself from every other cheesecake by using no sour cream in the body, a very high proportion of cheese to egg, and a baked, browned top. Lindy's and Junior's are the two restaurants usually credited with fixing the form in the 1940s and 1950s.

A cheesecake is a baked custard, and it fails the way custards fail.

What makes it work

- **Everything at room temperature, or it will lump.** Cold cream cheese never beats smooth, and the lumps do not disappear in the oven. Two hours out of the fridge.
- **Beat on low, and stop when smooth.** Air beaten into the batter expands in the oven and then collapses — that is what cracks a cheesecake. Nearly every crack is an aeration problem, not a temperature one.
- **A water bath, and a foil jacket.** The bath holds the outside at 100 °C so the edge does not overcook while the centre sets. Two layers of heavy foil up the sides of the springform, or a roasting bag, keeps water out.
- **Take it out wobbly.** The centre 8 cm should still shimmy. It is done at an internal 65 °C and it will carry over.
- **Cool in stages.** Oven off, door ajar, one hour. Counter, two hours. Fridge, overnight. Sudden cooling contracts the surface and cracks it.

Ingredients

One 23 cm springform. Serves 14.

Base:

- 250 g [digestive biscuits](#) or graham crackers, crushed
- 100 g unsalted butter, melted
- 30 g granulated sugar
- 2 g fine salt

Filling:

- 1 kg full-fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 300 g granulated sugar
- 30 g [cornstarch](#)
- 4 [eggs](#) plus 2 yolks, room temperature
- 120 ml double cream
- 2 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)
- zest of 1 [lemon](#) and 1 tbsp juice
- 4 g fine salt

Method

Heat the oven to **175 °C / 350 °F**. Mix the base ingredients, press firmly into the bottom and 3 cm up the sides of the tin, and bake 10 minutes. Cool.

Wrap the outside of the tin in two layers of heavy foil.

Beat the cream cheese alone on low for two minutes until perfectly smooth, scraping twice. Add the sugar and cornstarch and beat one minute. Add the eggs and yolks one at a time on the lowest speed. Mix in the cream, vanilla, zest, juice and salt.

Pour into the tin. Set it in a roasting pan and pour in boiling water to come halfway up.

Bake **60–70 minutes** at **160 °C / 325 °F**, until the edges are set and the centre wobbles as one mass.

Turn the oven off, prop the door, and leave one hour. Cool on the counter two hours, then refrigerate overnight.

Notes

- **Cracks are cosmetic.** Sour cream topping — 300 g sour cream, 40 g sugar, spread over the warm cake and baked five minutes — hides them and is what most New York delis do anyway.
- **Cut with a hot, dry, thin knife**, wiped between every slice.
- **Keeps five days refrigerated**, freezes for two months.
- The lighter, softer relatives are worth knowing: [basque burnt cheesecake](#) and [japanese cotton cheesecake](#).

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