



New York Style Cheesecake

This firm and dense cheesecake does not require the water bath usually used to evenly cook cheesecakes. The initial burst of high heat causes the eggs to puff, then the quick reduction to 200°F prevents the eggs from over cooking and allows the cake to slowly dehydrate, creating the dense yet creamy texture expected from a New York Style cheesecake.

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
5 tablespoons graham cracker crumbs
2 pounds cream cheese
1 1/4 cups sugar
4 large eggs, room temperature
1 lemon, zest of
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup sour cream

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat oven to 500°F.
2. Brush the bottom and sides of a 9-inch spring form pan with butter. Sprinkle graham cracker crumbs over bottom. Tilt pan in all directions to coat evenly with crumbs. Set aside.
3. Beat cream cheese in the bowl of an electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add sugar and beat on medium speed until sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until just incorporated and scraping down after each addition. (If you don't scrape down the bowl after each egg, you will cream cheese lumps). Add zest and vanilla and beat until just incorporated. Remove bowl from mixer and stir in cream and sour cream by hand.
4. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake cake at 500° for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 200° (leave oven door open until oven temp reduces). Bake until cheesecake perimeter is set but center jiggles like Jell-o when pan is tapped, about 1 hour. Turn off heat and leave oven door ajar, using a long-handled wooden spoon to hold it open for 1 hour longer. This gradual cooling will prevent the top from cracking. Remove cheesecake from oven and set on a wire rack; cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 4 hours. (Can be refrigerated up to 4 days.)