

Best Cheesecake with Buttery Graham Cracker Crust (Water Bath Method)

A creamy, ultra-smooth classic cheesecake nestled in a crisp, buttery graham cracker crust, perfectly balanced with tang and sweetness. Baked in a gentle water bath for an impeccably even, crack-free finish.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups (180 g) graham cracker crumbs (finely crushed (about 12 full-sheet graham crackers))
- 1/4 cup (50 g) granulated sugar
- 5 Tbsp (70 g) unsalted butter (melted)
- 4 blocks (8 oz/226 g each; 2 lb total) cream cheese (full-fat, brick style) (softened to room temperature)
- 1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
- 1 cup (240 g) sour cream (room temperature)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 3 large eggs (room temperature)

Instructions

1. Prepare the crust: Stir graham cracker crumbs, granulated sugar, and melted butter together until the mixture resembles wet sand.
2. Press the crust firmly and evenly into the bottom (and slightly up the sides) of a 9- or 10-inch springform pan. Pre-bake briefly, then set aside to cool slightly.
3. Make the water bath setup: Place the springform pan inside a large roasting pan. Bring a kettle or pot of water to a simmer for the water bath (do not pour yet).
4. Make the filling: Beat softened brick cream cheese until smooth and creamy. Add granulated sugar and mix until combined and silky.
5. Add sour cream, vanilla extract, and lemon juice; mix until just combined and smooth, scraping down the bowl as needed.
6. Add the eggs one at a time on low speed, mixing just until each egg is incorporated. Do not overmix once the eggs are added.
7. Pour the batter over the pre-baked crust. Place the roasting pan with the cheesecake on the oven rack, then carefully pour hot water into the roasting pan until it reaches about halfway up the sides of the springform pan.
8. Bake until the edges are set and the center wobbles slightly when gently shaken.
9. Turn off the oven, crack the door, and leave the cheesecake inside for 1 hour to begin cooling gradually.

10. Remove the cheesecake from the water bath and cool completely at room temperature.
11. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight until fully chilled and set.
12. Release from the springform pan, slice, and serve plain or with desired toppings (e.g., raspberry sauce, lemon curd, ganache, or whipped cream).

Tags: Cheesecake, Dessert, Classic, Baking, Make Ahead, Crowd Pleaser

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