

Cinnamon Swirl Cheesecake

Rich, velvety cheesecake layered with a buttery cinnamon–brown sugar crumble, baked on a thick graham cracker crust and finished with brown sugar whipped cream for a just-right balance of sweet, warm spice, and creamy tang.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups (180g) graham cracker crumbs (from about 12 full-sheet graham crackers)
- 1/4 cup (50g) granulated sugar
- 5 tablespoons (71g) unsalted butter (melted)
- 32 ounces (904g) cream cheese (full-fat brick; softened to room temperature)
- 1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup (180g) sour cream (full-fat; at room temperature)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
- 3 large eggs (at room temperature)
- 3/4 cup (150g) brown sugar (packed; light or dark)
- 1/2 cup (60g) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 5 tablespoons (71g) unsalted butter (melted)
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream (cold)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar (light or dark)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- to taste ground cinnamon (for garnish (optional))

Instructions

1. Adjust the oven rack to the lower-middle position and preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C).
2. Make the crust: If starting with full graham crackers, grind into fine crumbs using a food processor or blender. In a medium bowl, stir crumbs with granulated sugar, then stir in melted butter until the mixture is sandy and evenly moistened, breaking up any large clumps.
3. Press the mixture into an ungreased 9- or 10-inch springform pan, compacting it into the bottom and partway up the sides with medium pressure (use the flat bottom of a measuring cup to smooth; do not pack too firmly).
4. Pre-bake the crust for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and place the hot pan on a large piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil (use a double layer for extra protection if desired). Let the crust cool slightly while you prepare the filling.
5. Make the cheesecake batter: Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese and granulated sugar on medium-high speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes.
6. Add sour cream and vanilla; beat until fully combined, scraping down the bowl as needed.

7. Add the eggs one at a time, beating on medium speed after each addition just until incorporated. After the final egg is mixed in, stop mixing to avoid incorporating excess air.
8. Make the cinnamon swirl filling: In a medium bowl, mix the brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon with a fork until combined. Add melted butter and mix until the mixture is sandy and crumbly.
9. Wrap the aluminum foil securely up the sides of the springform pan to prevent water from seeping in during the water bath.
10. Assemble: Pour about one-third of the cheesecake batter into the crust. Sprinkle about one-third of the cinnamon swirl mixture evenly over the batter. Repeat with another third of the batter, another third of the cinnamon mixture, then the remaining batter, and finish with the remaining cinnamon mixture on top.
11. Use a knife to gently swirl the top layer so the cinnamon mixture marbles into the cheesecake without fully combining.
12. Prepare the water bath: Place the foil-wrapped springform pan into a large roasting pan. Pour hot water into the roasting pan until it reaches about halfway up the sides of the springform pan.
13. Bake until the edges are set and the center is still slightly jiggly. Turn off the oven, crack the door, and leave the cheesecake in the oven (still in the water bath) for at least 1 hour to cool gradually.
14. Remove the pan from the water bath, unwrap the foil, and let the cheesecake cool to room temperature. Then refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight to set.
15. Make the whipped cream topping: Beat the cold heavy cream with brown sugar and vanilla until softly thickened to soft-medium peaks. Spread or pipe over the chilled cheesecake and optionally sprinkle with ground cinnamon to garnish.
16. Slice and serve.

Tags: Cheesecake, Dessert, Cinnamon, Baking, Graham Cracker Crust, Whipped Cream
