

CARAMEL FLAN CHEESECAKE

WITH CAJETA DRIZZLE



By Katie Beck
Photography by Marty Snortum Studio

Forks everywhere are waiting to be dipped into a decadent slice of delicious cheesecake. This dessert can do no wrong, and with variations abounding, there is a flavor for every palate. Here are a few hints to help achieve a creamy cake with ease. Allow your cream cheese to fully reach room temperature before mixing. Scrape down your bowl like its going out of style (the mixture should have no lumps). Don't scald yourself—place the cheesecake into an empty pan in the oven, and then fill it with hot water. After baking, remove the cheesecake, but leave the water bath in the oven and allow it to cool before removing. These hints and a classic cheesecake recipe are all that is needed to create a great dessert.

Caramel Flan Cheesecake Serves 10 to 12

CARAMEL:
1 ½ cups sugar
½ cup water
1 tbsp lemon juice

CHEESECAKE:
1 lb, 8 oz cream cheese, room temperature
1 ¼ cups sugar
1 tbsp lemon zest
6 eggs
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped
1 cup heavy cream
½ jar cajeta

Caramel:
In a heavy metal saucepot, combine sugar, water and lemon juice. Over high heat, cook the sugar without stirring until it becomes amber in color, then pour into a round 9-inch cake pan. Hold the cake pan with an oven mitt and begin tilting and turning to completely coat the bottom and sides. Set aside to cool while preparing the cheesecake.

Cheesecake:

Pre-heat the oven to 325 degrees. In a mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat room temperature cream cheese with sugar and lemon zest until smooth and creamy. Add the eggs one at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl after each addition. Scrape the contents of the vanilla bean into the heavy cream, and then slowly pour the cream into the mixer until well combined.

Pour the smooth mixture into the cooled caramel pan. Bake in a hot water bath for 1 hour. Remove the cake from the oven, let it cool down and place it in the refrigerator. Allow the cake to cool for at least 4 hours before flipping over. To serve, place a large plate on top of the cake pan, place one hand firmly on top of plate and the other under the bottom of the cake pan and quickly flip. Let the cake pan sit on the plate for a moment, then remove. Garnish with a cajeta drizzle. Cajeta is caramelized goat milk that can be heated in the microwave without the lid on to make drizzling easier. Add fresh fruit and enjoy.

New York Cheesecake*
Serves 8

- 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup melted, unsalted butter
- 1 ½ lbs cream cheese, at room temperature
- 4 eggs
- 3 tsp vanilla
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 2 cups sour cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix the graham cracker with ¼ cup of sugar and the melted butter and press into bottom and sides of a 9-inch spring form pan (wrap the bottom of the pan with foil to keep water bath out). Chill while preparing filling. Beat the cream cheese, ½ cup sugar, eggs, vanilla and lemon zest until smooth. Pour into chilled crust and bake for 50 minutes to an hour. Remove from oven (leave oven on) and cool for about 15 minutes. Stir together the sour cream and remaining ¼ cup of sugar and spread evenly over cooled cake. Return to oven for 12 minutes until glossy and set. Cool completely, cover, and chill at least 8 hours.

*This version of New York Cheesecake can be found in Ruth Reichl's book, *Garlic and Sapphires*. See page 11 for more information.



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