

Maple Brown Sugar Cheesecakes

By Chef Susan Reid

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Based loosely on the New York style cheesecake I grew up on, this one reflects where I am now, nestled happily in the mountains of Vermont. You can make any cheesecake recipe into smaller ones if a 10" cake is too much to face at once; cheesecake freezes exceptionally well.

Base

1 1/2 cups (180g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour

1/2 cup (106g) light brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup (113g) unsalted butter, softened

1 large egg, at room temperature

1/4 teaspoon maple flavor or 1/2 teaspoon maple extract

Filling

Four 8-ounce packages (908g) cream cheese, at room temperature

1 cup (213g) light brown sugar

3/4 cup (117g) maple sugar

3 tablespoons (43g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

5 large eggs, at room temperature

1/2 teaspoon maple flavor or 1 teaspoon maple extract

1/4 cup (78g) maple syrup

1/4 cup (57g) sour cream or full fat Greek yogurt

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Lightly grease a 10" springform pan.

For the crust: In a mixing bowl with a paddle, combine the flour, sugar, salt, and butter. Mix until the mixture is crumbly, then add the egg and continue to mix until a soft dough forms.

Press the dough on the bottom and an inch up the sides of the prepared pan; prick it all over with a fork, and bake for 15 minutes, until light golden brown. Remove from the oven and cool to room temperature. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F.

For the filling: Place the cream cheese in a large mixing bowl with a paddle. Add the sugars and flour and mix at low speed until there are no lumps. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl at least twice during this process, to be sure no cheese is sticking.

Add the salt and maple flavor; mix to combine. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing each egg is absorbed before adding the next. Scrape the sides and bottom of the mixing bowl after the third and last eggs. Mix in the syrup and sour cream.

Pour the filling over the crust, smooth the top, place on a baking sheet (no water bath) and bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until the edges of the cake are set one inch in from the edge. The middle should still jiggle when you nudge the pan; in fact, the cake will look underbaked. Measure the temperature of the cake an inch from the edge: when it reaches 175°F, turn off the oven.

Prop open the door, and let the cheesecake cool slowly in the oven for 1 hour. During this time the center will finish setting. Cooling the cake slowly will keep the top from cracking and ensure a smooth, even texture inside. Chill for 2 hours or overnight before slicing; serve with maple shortbread cookies and/or a drizzle of good maple syrup.

For smaller cakes: This recipe will make two tall 6" or 7" cakes, a nice size for giving. 6" cakes will need 40 to 50 minutes in the oven; the jiggle spot in the center should be no bigger than an inch before taking out of the oven. Individual cakes (using 3/4 cup of batter each) bake in 25 to 28 minutes. No need for the slow oven cooldown for those; especially if baked in ramekins. Just take them out and let them cool on the counter.

