

CRANBERRY LEMON CHEESECAKE

INGREDIENTS

for the crust

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

3 tablespoons sugar

pinch of salt

1 cup chocolate wafer crumbs

(I use Nabisco Famous Chocolate Wafer; you can also use Oreos, minus the filling)

for the filling

12 oz cream cheese, softened

1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons sour cream

1 egg

1/2 cup sugar

1 teaspoon lemon extract

zest from 1 lemon, very fine

for the cranberry sauce

2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries

1 cup sugar

4 tablespoons lemon juice

2 teaspoons corn starch, mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water

DIRECTIONS

First, make your crust, as it will need to be completely cool before filing. Preheat oven to 350F. Prepare an 8" springform pan with baking spray. In a medium work bowl, combine melted butter, sugar, salt and crumbs in a bowl. Press into the bottom and 1 1/2 inches up the sides of an 8-inch springform pan and bake for 15 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Lower oven temperature to 280F.

In the meantime, make your cranberry sauce. In a medium saucepan, combine cranberries, sugar and lemon juice and let cranberries simmer on low heat for 15 minutes, until most of them pop and fall apart. Strain over a wire sieve, pushing most of the solids through, but catching seeds and skins. You should have a thin liquid. Return to cleaned saucepan and reheat to a simmer. Add corn starch slurry and once to a low boil, it should thicken slightly. Remove from heat and let cool.

To make the filling, using your food processor, process the cream cheese until smooth. Add the sour cream, egg, sugar, lemon extract and lemon zest and process again until smooth and fully combined.

Wrap the outside of the pan with a double layer of foil. (The cake bakes in a water bath, and doing this will help keep water from seeping into the cake as it cooks.) Pour 1/4 cup of the cranberry sauce over the crust and spread evenly with a spoon or offset spatula. Then pour the cream cheese filling over the base until not quite the height of the side crust. Carefully jiggle the pan to even out the top. Fill cranberry sauce into a squeeze bottle with a tiny tip and begin to pipe small circles in a swirl pattern over cheesecake (larger dots on the outside, smaller as you go inward). Take a toothpick or sharp pointy knife and beginning with the center circle, run the toothpick through the center of each heart (don't lift the toothpick out until you finish the last circle).

Create a water bath by placing the cake tin in a slightly larger roasting pan or baking dish. Carefully pour hot water halfway up the sides of the springform. Bake at 280F for a little over an hour, until the edges look set but the center jiggles slightly. Let cool on a rack, then cover and refrigerate for several hours before serving.