

No-Bake Cheesecake Parfaits

Young Chefs, 2015
Makes 4 to 6 dessert servings

No time for baking and chilling to prepare a classic cheesecake? Wow your friends and family with this perfectly refreshing dessert featuring the traditional flavor profile and satisfaction of cheesecake in a very attractive parfait-style presentation that requires no oven. What's not to love?



INGREDIENTS

CRUMB MIXTURE

- 3 graham crackers (1.6 ounces/to make a little less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup graham cracker crumbs)
- 2 tablespoons (0.95 ounce) packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon each cinnamon and freshly grated nutmeg (be generous with both measurements)
- Generous pinch salt
- 2 tablespoons (1 ounce) butter, melted OR refrigerator cold (see directions)

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the crumbs: Place the **graham crackers** in a heavy-quality quart or gallon zipclose bag. Using a rolling pin, roll over the bag to crush the **graham crackers**. Combine the **graham crumbs, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt** and **melted butter** in a bowl; stir with a spatula to combine. Set in the refrigerator until ready to assemble the parfaits.

Alternate method to prepare the crumbs: Place the **graham crackers, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg** and **salt** in the work bowl of a food processor, OR mini-prep food processor, fit with the metal knife blade. Process briefly with long on/off pulses until the **crackers** are reduced to crumbs. Stop the processor; scrape the sides. Cut the **refrigerator cold butter** into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices; evenly distribute around the work bowl of the food processor over the **crumb mixture**. Process with long on/off pulses to incorporate the cold **butter**; stop mixing just before the mixture begins to form small clumps. Transfer the crumb mixture to a mixing bowl; set in the refrigerator until ready to assemble the parfaits.

CHEESECAKE CREAM

- 1 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Generous pinch orange zest, finely grated
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons (2.65 ounces) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ pint/8 ounces) heavy whipping cream, refrigerator cold

Prepare the cheesecake cream: Combine the **cream cheese, lemon juice, orange zest, salt, sugar** and **vanilla** in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer OR a large mixing bowl. If preparing with a stand mixer, use the **paddle blade** OR use a hand-held electric mixer; beat the **ingredients** on medium-high to high speed until smooth and light in texture, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping once or twice to scrape the bottom and sides with a flexible spatula. Add the **whipping cream**; begin beating on low speed (the cream may splash around the bowl at first). As the **cream** begins to thicken, raise the mixer speed to medium speed; beat until the mixture thickens to a creamy, light, silky smooth texture. **Do not beat until stiff** OR until the mixture begins to have a slightly grainy texture. ➡

FRUIT

1 pound fresh or frozen fruit, such as:
Strawberries, sliced
Blueberries
Raspberries
Bananas, peeled and sliced
Oranges, peeled and sliced
Mangoes, peeled and sliced
OR a combination of any of the above fruits

Clean the fruit: Rinse the **fruit** under cool running **water**; pat dry.

If using **berries**, do not rinse berries under running water; the pressure of the **water** can damage the delicate **berries**. Clean/rinse **berries** by placing them in a colander, set the colander of **berries** in a bowl of cool water; gently swish the **berries** around to allow the sand and dirt to fall to the bottom of the bowl. Remove the **berries**; place on a towel-lined counter OR towel-lined tray in a single layer to drain. Place a towel over the **berries** to pick up surface moisture, very gently pat dry.

Prepare the fruit: Peel (if applicable) and slice/cut the **fruits** into bit-sized pieces, as desired. If using **frozen fruit**, defrost the **fruit** at room temperature for about 1 hour before preparing the **parfaits**.

Assemble the parfaits: Have ready 4 large parfait glasses, 6 9-ounce stem glasses OR 6 9-ounce plastic highball cups plus one or two trays to set the **finished parfaits** on. Assemble the **ingredients** for the **parfaits** in one location:

- bowl of seasoned **graham cracker crumb mixture**,
- bowl of **cheesecake cream**, and
- bowl(s) of prepared **fruit**.

Assemble a parfait in the following order:

1. Place a tablespoonful of **graham cracker mixture** in the bottom;
2. Next, add a dollop of about 2 tablespoons **cheesecake cream**;
3. Top with several pieces of the fresh or frozen sliced **fruit**.

Repeat these layers one more time to complete the **parfait** - the **fruit layer** becomes the **decorative garnish** on the top of the **parfait**.

Complete assembly; serve: Continue this assembly line process until all of the **parfaits** are assembled. If there is any **graham cracker crumb mixture** left, sprinkle evenly over the tops of the **parfaits** as **additional garnish**. Serve immediately OR chill until ready to serve.
