

Basic Crumb Crust

YIELDS:
ONE 9-INCH CRUST

| Butter | Crust |
|--------|-------|
| 4 Tbl | |

This is one of the most popular crusts for cheesecakes because it is quick and easy. Nearly any kind of cracker or biscuit can be made into crumbs, and it is the type of crumbs you choose that also determines any additional flavorings you may want to add.

You can buy unflavored bread crumbs or graham cracker crumbs readymade in any supermarket, but if you decide to use any other type, then you will have to make the crumbs yourself. There are as many ways of making crumbs as there are crumbers crushing. The easiest way is to place the crackers, cookies, or whatever you are using, a few pieces at a time, into the container of a blender or food processor. Run the motor briefly until the crumbs are small and uniform.

Another way is to place the crackers in a sturdy plastic bag and roll the bag on a bread board with a rolling pin. This works well and also satisfies certain atavistic urges that might otherwise be expressed in less socially acceptable ways. In any event, remember that you want crumbs, not flour.

Prebaked crusts are crisper than chilled ones; this is important if the crumbs are a bit soggy.

INGREDIENTS:

1½ CUPS GRAHAM CRACKER
CRUMBS
6 TABLESPOONS BUTTER,
MELTED
¼ CUP GRANULATED SUGAR

- 1 If you are prebaking the shell, preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- 2 Place the crumbs in a mixing bowl and add the butter and sugar. Blend well.

3 Press the crumb mixture onto the bottom and partly up the sides of a greased 9-inch baking dish, pie pan, or springform mold. Smooth the crumb mixture along the bottom to an even thickness.

4 Chill the crust for 5 to 10 minutes in the freezer until it is set, or bake for 10 minutes in a 350-degree oven. Cool before filling.

VARIATIONS:

The easiest way to vary the recipe is to change the type of crumbs used. Let your imagination soar: graham crackers are standard, but also consider the following possibilities: digestive biscuits, vanilla wafers, ginger snaps, zweiback, matzo, pumpernickle bread, melba toast, stale angel food cake, or leftover spice cake.

Low-calorie Crumb Crust: Although this recipe calls for butter, margarine can be substituted if cholesterol is a worry. If you are concerned about calories, consider the following combination for a low-calorie crust.

3 TABLESPOONS DIET MARGARINE, SOFTENED
¼ CUP GRAHAM CRACKER CRUMBS

In general, use as little margarine as you can and still be able to get the crumbs to press together easily.

Flavored Crumb Crust: Some additional flavorings will enhance your crust further. We suggest adding the following, especially if you are using a bland cracker for your crumbs.

1 TEASPOON GROUND CINNAMON
1 TEASPOON GRATED NUTMEG
1 TEASPOON GRATED LEMON RIND





Add the seasonings after you have blended the butter and sugar with the crumbs, then press the mixture into the baking pan as directed.

Crumb-nut Crust: If you want a little variety in texture, add chopped nuts to the crumb mixture, subtracting the equivalent quantity of crumbs from the final measurements.

Chocolate Crumb Crust: Add 2 tablespoons of unsweetened cocoa to your crumb mixture.

Mocha Crumb Crust: Another way to achieve a different result is to try the following recipe for a coffee and chocolate taste treat.

2 CUPS VANILLA COOKIE CRUMBS
3 TABLESPOONS UNSWEETENED COCOA
1 TEASPOON INSTANT COFFEE POWDER
4 TABLESPOONS BUTTER, MELTED

Mix the ingredients thoroughly, then press the crumbs into the baking pan. Chill until the crumbs are set.

New York Cheesecake

RECOMMENDATIONS:

BASIC CRUMB CRUST (PAGE 46),
MADE FROM MATZO
9-INCH SPRINGFORM PAN

INGREDIENTS:

2 POUNDS CREAM CHEESE
 $\frac{3}{4}$ CUP GRANULATED SUGAR
2 LARGE EGGS, LIGHTLY BEATEN
1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
2 TABLESPOONS CORNSTARCH
1 CUP SOUR CREAM.

This is it; the genuine article. Although simple to make, this classic cheesecake has a complex character. It stands tall, with a slightly cakelike texture.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
- 2 In a large mixing bowl, beat together the cream cheese and sugar until smooth and light.
- 3 Beat in the eggs, vanilla, and cornstarch, only until thoroughly mixed.
- 4 Stir in the sour cream until the mixture is well blended.
- 5 Pour the mixture into the prepared crust and bake for 45 minutes. Allow the cake to cool in the oven, with the door propped slightly open, for 3 hours. Chill.

The Heavy One

This is the richest of cheesecakes and naturally it is the most expensive to make. Well worth every penny, this ten-inch New York-style cheesecake can easily satisfy sixteen people.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 475 degrees.
- 2 In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until it is light and fluffy.
- 3 Mix in the sugar and flour, and continue beating until smooth.
- 4 Add the grated rinds, then the yolks and whole eggs, one at a time, beating after each until the mixture is thoroughly blended.
- 5 Stir in the heavy cream and mix only briefly.
- 6 Pour the mixture into the prepared crust and bake for 15 minutes at 475 degrees, then reduce the oven temperature to 200 degrees and continue to bake for another hour.
- 7 When the cake is done, turn off the oven and allow the cake to cool slowly for an additional hour. Remove the cake from the oven and cool to room temperature. Chill before serving.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
SHORTBREAD CRUST (PAGE 50)
10-INCH SPRINGFORM PAN

INGREDIENTS:
2½ POUNDS CREAM CHEESE
1¾ CUPS GRANULATED SUGAR
3 TABLESPOONS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
½ TEASPOON GRATED LEMON RIND
½ TEASPOON GRATED ORANGE RIND
2 EGG YOLKS
5 LARGE EGGS
¼ CUP HEAVY CREAM

Hazelnut Cheesecake

A wonderful, truly excessive cheesecake that must be tasted to be believed. You can vary the quantity of nuts to suit your taste and pocketbook, since even one-third cup of nuts is enough to give the cake a hint of that wonderful flavor. Toasting the nuts is important, however. Untoasted nuts just won't have nearly as much flavor, and they will tend to soften during baking as well.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.
- 2 In a large mixing bowl, beat together the cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla until smooth.
- 3 Add the eggs, beating until the mixture is fluffy.
- 4 Beat in the heavy cream, then stir in the nuts.
- 5 Pour the mixture into the prepared crust and bake for 2 hours. Cool the cake in the oven for 1 hour, then cool to room temperature. Serve at room temperature.

WORDS TO THE WISE:

To toast the hazelnuts, preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Place the nuts on a cookie sheet and bake them until they are evenly browned, about 10 minutes. Stir the nuts occasionally as they brown. If the nuts still have their paperlike skins on, sift the skins out before chopping the nuts for the recipe. Don't use the skins because they will give the cake a bitter burnt flavor. Chop the nuts fine to maximize flavor and smoothness in the cake, or coarse if you prefer a crunchier cake.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

BASIC CRUMB CRUST (PAGE 46),
MADE FROM GRAHAM
CRACKERS
9-INCH SPRINGFORM PAN

INGREDIENTS:

2 POUNDS CREAM CHEESE
1½ CUPS GRANULATED SUGAR
1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
4 LARGE EGGS, LIGHTLY BEATEN
¼ CUP HEAVY CREAM
1 CUP FINELY CHOPPED
TOASTED HAZELNUTS (SEE
NOTE)