

Dedication

Menucha Raitza Bas Shlomo Halevy grew up in Detroit, MI, raised by parents who imbued in her a strong connection to her Jewish heritage and community. When she was a teenager, she decided to be mekabel Torah and Mitzvos. Her pursuit of Torah knowledge and observance took her to the classroom of Nehama Leibowitz at Hebrew University, Shabbos tables at Chabad families like the Shemtovs in Philadelphia, and friendships with Torah scholars the world over – sometimes in person, but often through their books and seforim. Eventually, she shared that knowledge either by hosting shiurim in her home or by teaching shiurim to her communities in Detroit and Philadelphia.

She raised two sons, informed by her life experiences and Torah learning, to develop their relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu by learning and living His Torah. They, in turn, are raising her grandchildren in that same vein.

In the spirit of generational continuity, we present a recipe shared by four generations of the family, beginning with Menucha Raitza's mother. This recipe for cheesecake was selected as it is customary amongst many families to make Kiddush on Shavuos morning followed by a milchig/dairy snack before transitioning to a regular fleishig/meat meal.¹

Here is the recipe in her own words:

Cheesecake, Lower Fat²

serves 8

This is based on my mother's recipe. My changes are in parentheses. This cake has spoiled me for others. When my mother made this, she had to put signs not to touch after one she made never cooled. She barely salvaged a piece for my father for dessert that evening.

Crust:

1 ½ packs graham crackers (*about half the box; or ½ lb plain cookies*), crushed
1/3 cup margarine

Filling:

2 lbs regular cottage cheese (*or low or non-fat*)
1 cup sugar
3-4 eggs (*we never used it, but I guess you could use an egg substitute*)

¹ Many reasons exist for this practice, though few Halachik sources require the eating of dairy on Shavuos. Some reasons noted include 1) the gematria of chalav is 40, corresponding to the forty days that Moshe was on Har Sinai and 2) Moshe Rabeinu was rescued as a baby from the Nile river on Shavuos, but refused to nurse from the milk of non-Jewish women

² This particular cheesecake recipe includes instructions for a prominently tasting crust that satisfies Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l's requirement for k'dei achilas pras, "the time it takes to eat a piece of bread" (under 3 minutes, see Igros Moshe 4:41)

½ small can evaporated milk OR 1/3 cup sour cream (*OR 1/3 cup low fat plain yogurt OR 1/3 cup skim milk*)

1 tbsp melted margarine

1 tsp vanilla

Crust:

Blend well; pat into a 9"x13" baking pan, reserving a bit for the topping.

Filling:

Blend this all together and pour into the prepared crust. Sprinkle with reserved crumbs. Bake at 350F for about 40 minutes. Test by inserting knife in the center. It should be dry.