Limoncello-Ricotta Cheesecake

Food and Wine

Limoncello — the sweet, potent Italian lemon liqueur made by steeping lemon peel in grain alcohol or vodka — is the star of this silky, creamy dessert. The filling is lightened by the addition of ricotta cheese and boasts citrusy flavors from both the fresh lemon juice and limoncello. Mixing the filling with the paddle attachment of a stand mixer creates less air, resulting in a creamier cheesecake with no air bubbles. Make sure you wrap the cheesecake well with foil so there are no leaks. To make the water bath without having to juggle a large pan full of water, place the cheesecake in the roasting pan in the oven, then add the water. The basil garnish balances the lemon nicely, but feel free to swap in berries or mint if you prefer.

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Active Time:
20 Minutes

Chill Time:
3 Hours

Total Time:
5 Hours 20 Minutes

Servings
12

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 9 ounces spiced butter cookies (such as Biscoff), broken into pieces
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
- ½ cup limoncello
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
• 5 large eggs
• Lemon peel strips (optional)
• Small basil leaves (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place a 12-inch parchment paper round on bottom of a 10-inch round springform pan; secure springform pan ring around bottom. Coat inside of springform pan with cooking spray and wrap the outside and bottom of pan with aluminum foil.

2. Process cookies and salt in a food processor until ground into crumbs, about 30 seconds. Pour melted butter through food chute, and process until crumbs are moistened, about 30 seconds. Press crumb mixture into bottom and about 1 inch up sides of prepared springform pan using the back of a large spoon until packed and smooth.

3. Bake crust in preheated oven until set and firm, about 10 minutes. Remove springform pan from oven, and let cool completely, about 30 minutes. Do not turn oven off.

4. While crust cools, beat cream cheese and sugar on medium-low speed in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides and bottom of bowl as needed. Add ricotta, and beat on low speed until combined, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add limoncello, lemon juice, and vanilla, beating until combined, about 1 minute. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until incorporated, about 1 minute. Stop and scrape down sides of bowl, and beat on low speed until batter is smooth, about 1 minute. Set aside at room temperature until ready to use.

5. Place springform pan with crust in a large roasting pan. Pour batter into crust in springform pan. Place roasting pan in oven, and carefully pour hot water into roasting pan until water level reaches halfway up sides of springform pan.

6. Bake at 350°F until center is almost set (it will still wobble slightly), 50 to 55 minutes. Turn off oven. Leave cheesecake in oven until water in roasting pan has cooled to just warm, about 30 minutes. Remove foil from springform pan, and transfer springform pan to refrigerator; chill until set and firm to the touch, at least 3 hours or up to 12 hours.

7. Run a knife around edges of cheesecake in springform pan. Remove springform pan ring from cheesecake; remove parchment paper and bottom of springform pan. If desired, garnish with lemon peel strips and basil leaves. Wrap cheesecake with plastic wrap, or place in an airtight container; store in refrigerator for up to 4 days or in freezer for up to 1 month.