

Celebrate Fall With Pumpkin Cheesecake

During the autumn, pumpkins are everywhere. As much a fall staple as jewel-toned foliage, and cozy sweaters, this season is pumpkin's time to shine. You can find many beverage and food items made with pumpkins, such as pumpkin beer, pumpkin bread, pumpkin coffee, pumpkin cookies, pumpkin muffins, pumpkin ice cream, pumpkin pancakes, pumpkin soup, pumpkin waffles, and a personal favorite pumpkin cheesecake. Each year on October 21st, National Pumpkin Cheesecake Day ushers in the flavors of fall.

Predating the invention of pumpkin pie, forms of cheesecake have been recorded since as early as the Greeks in 2000 BC! Cultures around the globe enjoy their own version of cheesecake, with varying consistencies and toppings, each of course claiming that theirs is the best. Cheesecake is one of America's favorite desserts and by adding pumpkin, we celebrate the essential flavoring of the season.

The cheesecake filling is a combination of ingredients such as a soft, fresh cheese (typically cottage cheese, cream cheese, or ricotta), eggs, and sugar. Next comes the pumpkin, which is added in various forms. It may be mixed with the ingredients, layered, or it can be swirled throughout the filling. The crust is typically made with crushed cookies, crushed graham crackers, or sponge cake. There are many flavorful creative crust variations. Cheesecakes are often topped with chocolate, crushed candy or cookies, fresh fruit, nuts, pie filling, sauces, sour cream, syrup, or whipped cream.

These cheesecake baking tips will help you avoid disasters and make a perfect cheesecake.

- The quality of cheesecake depends highly on the cream cheese that you're using. Choose full-fat cream cheese and sour cream for a rich, smooth texture.
- Room temperature ingredients blend up smoothly, so you don't have a lumpy cheesecake.
- An electric mixer on low will produce a smooth, creamy cheesecake batter. However, don't overmix the filling.
- Bake the cheesecake in a water bath. It helps the cheesecake bake gently and evenly, plus the steam from the hot water creates a humid environment for baking. Humidity will help prevent dreaded cracks.
- Set a timer to the minimum recommended baking time, and check for doneness when the timer goes off. To check for doneness, look to see if the edges are slightly puffed and the center should slightly wobble when the side of the pan is tapped with a spoon or given a gentle shake using an oven mitt. The center of the cheesecake will continue to cook while it cools.
- Cool slowly. Many recipes state to let the cheesecake sit in the turned-off oven with the door cracked for about an hour, then let it cool completely on the counter. This is done to avoid sudden changes in temperature that often cause cracking.

- To prevent cracks during cooling, loosen the cheesecake from the sides of the pan after baking. However, don't remove the sides of the springform pan.
- Refrigerate cheesecake and when completely cool, cover with foil or plastic wrap.
- Slice cheesecake while it's cold for less mess. Dip a long, thin knife in very hot water, wipe the blade with a paper towel, then slice the cheesecake. Be sure to clean and rewarm the knife after each cut.

You can observe and celebrate National Pumpkin Cheesecake Day by making a fabulous, tasty pumpkin cheesecake. There are countless recipes on the Internet, which you can use to easily create a cheesecake. In addition, you can always buy it from a nearby bakery, restaurant, or store.

(Sources: <https://bromabakery.com>; <https://www.preparedpantry.com>;
<https://www.tasteofhome.com>; <https://www.thespruceeats.com>)