

Secret to Crack-Free Cheesecake



After much debate and discussion, trial and error, as well as a few tears shed, I believe, with the suggestions received from very helpful readers, I have found the answer to baking a [crack-free cheesecake](#). I've tried the [hot water bath](#) method with mixed results and quite frankly I don't think it's worth the extra effort. One of the suggestions sent to me worked quite well and I feel it is the answer to avoiding cracking during the cooling period in the oven:

1. Once the cheesecake is fully cooked (toothpick inserted in center comes out clean), turn off the oven
2. Slide the oven rack out so you can easily reach the cake
3. With a spatula carefully slide around rim of pan to loosen the cake from rim
4. Slide the rack back in oven, close the oven door, and let the cake cool for one hour before removing

By releasing the edges of the cake from the inside of the springform pan, the cake is then free to contract and is much less likely to crack in the process.

Fluffy Cheesecake Using a Water Bath



“To water bath or not to water bath, that is the question”

Some of my readers who baked my fluffy cheesecake using all the helpful suggestions have written to tell me that they had some problems while baking. The problem was usually the same one for all; they encountered cracking at the end of baking and during the cool down cycle. Well, I have also experienced that problem with either a small crack in the middle or several around the edges but never cracking completely through the cake.

When Aunt Mary passed down this family recipe to me, she did tell me that cracking can happen and it's something that never concerned her. Being the Martha Stewart of her day, she would say, “Just top it with powdered sugar or make a nice fruit glaze to cover the top”. Thus, that is what I have done. The cracking doesn't happen all the time but it can occur and I have tried to see how we bakers can avoid this problem. There are some helpful suggestions posted at the end of the original post on Fluffy Cheesecake so make sure to always read those before starting:

[Cheesecake Post Comments](#)

I have also done some research on water baths for baking methods and many chefs use a water bath when baking cheesecakes. However, none of their recipes were similar to mine so I was leery of trying the water bath method especially after one of my young cooks (age 10-13 competition) baked my cheesecake recipe and won first place in a baking contest. And she didn't use a water bath but just followed my instructions carefully!

Today I was determined to try the water bath method on my original recipe. I did not want to fuss with the foil method, so I devised an easier technique than the one in the link below:

[Cheesecake Baking Steps](#)

My Cheesecake Water Bath Method:

After preheating to a 320 degree oven, I placed a 9x6 loaf pan on the same rack I would use to bake the cheesecake. I boiled 4 cups of water and after placing the prepared cheesecake in the oven; I carefully filled the loaf pan with the hot water, closed the oven door and set the timer for 1 hour. It was completely cooked after 1 hour and I turned off the oven for another 1 hour, and remember **DON'T OPEN THE OVEN DOOR**. Follow the directions for cooling down in the original recipe.

PERFECTION, NO CRACKS!!

Aunt Mary would be very pleased with the final results and my using a water bath. Thanks again Aunt Mary for a fabulous recipe and good baking to all of you and enjoy a marvelous, fluffy cheesecake!

[Pumpkin Cheesecake Recipe](#)



November has arrived, which means the holidays are just around the corner! If you are like me, you probably are planning menus for those special dinners and are looking for some classic recipes. One classic recipe for the holidays is Pumpkin

Pie, a tradition in many families.

However, coming from an Italian-American family we were not familiar with pumpkin pie for dessert. More likely we would serve pastries, cheesecake or cannoli. So when many of my readers asked for a pumpkin cheesecake recipe using my original Aunt Mary cheesecake formula, I was stuck.

When George and I moved to Texas, we became familiar with pumpkin pie (George's favorite) and learned from native Houstonians how to make a perfect pie. Not until a few years ago has pumpkin been introduced into cheesecake.

I have tried a few pumpkin cheesecakes in various restaurants and bakeries, but never would compare them to the light, fluffy type that I make. But the requests for using my recipe with pumpkin added was something I felt I needed to answer. Using suggestions I have received from others and with a few other changes, I was able to incorporate pumpkin into my family recipe while retaining the consistency, flavor, and texture of the original. I think the following recipe I have developed meets that standard.

For those that are not familiar with my original [fluffy cheesecake recipe](#), give it a look – it offers a printable recipe plus a video on preparation. Also, be sure to read the Helpful Suggestions posted at the end of the recipe for help in baking the perfect cheesecake.

Ingredients:

Have all ingredients at room temperature.

Crust:

- 9" springform pan
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups graham cracker crumbs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter
- 2 TBS. granulated sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 320 degrees

In springform pan, with fork stir graham cracker crumbs with melted butter and sugar until blended and moistened. With hand, press mixture onto bottom of pan. Set aside.



Filling:

- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese – softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk
- 1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin (not pumpkin-pie mix)-preferably Libby's
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
- 6 eggs *separated* (whites in mixing bowl, set aside)
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light or dark brown sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 TBS. pure vanilla extract

1. In large bowl, with mixer at medium speed beat cream cheese with milk until smooth; slowly beat in sugar and brown sugar until blended, scraping bowl often with rubber spatula. Beat in pumpkin, sour cream, egg yolks, pumpkin pie spice and vanilla.



2. In separate bowl beat egg whites until stiff and stand in peaks. Carefully fold whites into mixture until well blended.



3. Pour mixture into prepared crust and bake for 1 hr 10 minutes or until center barely jiggles.



4. Turn off oven and let cheesecake sit for 1hr in oven. **Do not open oven door!**
5. Remove cheesecake from oven and set on wire rack. With thin knife, loosen cheesecake from side of pan. Cool cheesecake completely.



6. Do not remove rim and cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
7. Remove side of pan to serve. Garnish with powdered sugar.

Happy Holidays to all! – Mary

Light as Air, Fluffy Cheesecake Recipe



I very fondly remember my Aunt Mary who was my Mother's youngest sister. She was so loving and caring and a wonderful Mother to her three children.

In fact, she was like my second Mother and I spent many a day visiting her and also spent summer vacations with her.

She loved to laugh and make others laugh and she was a mentor to me on being a good Mother and wife.

Aunt Mary was also a great cook and I learned many a dish from her.

Everyone loved her cheesecake recipe and she was very proud to let us all know it was very special and when we had children we were to pass on the recipe.

Aunt Mary's cheesecake recipe is truly unique, but I've had a difficult time putting my finger on exactly what it is about it that's so special. I asked a few others in my family and the consensus is just how light and fluffy Aunt Mary's cheesecake was. Some even have described its consistency like that of a souffle.

Aunt Mary is no longer with us but she is still in our hearts and thoughts and we all have shared her recipe with our children and their children. I would like to pass this delicious recipe on to all of you out there.

Crust:

$\frac{3}{4}$ c plain bread crumbs

3 Tbsp melted margarine

$\frac{1}{4}$ c sugar

Melt margarine in saucepan and stir in bread crumbs and sugar just to moisten crumbs. Spread crumbs along bottom of an ungreased 9 inch spring form pan.



Filling:

$\frac{1}{4}$ c milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp lemon juice

1 lb. Kraft Philadelphia cream cheese (let soften at room temperature)

1 pint Daisy sour cream

6 eggs, separated

$1 \frac{1}{4}$ c sugar

1 Tbsp pure vanilla extract

Blend together in large bowl milk, lemon juice and cream cheese. Add to blended ingredients sour cream, egg yolks, sugar and vanilla. Beat egg whites till stiff and fold into mixture.

Pour over crumbs and bake **320-325 degree** oven for one hour or until center comes out clean on a toothpick. Turn off heat and keep in oven one more hour. Remove sides of pan and chill. (May develop cracks on top which can be covered with sifted powdered sugar when serving).



Enjoy! And please be sure stop back and leave a comment about how you liked it. I'd love to hear what you think and please be sure to follow the tips below to insure a successful cheesecake:

Helpful suggestions for baking a perfect fluffy cheesecake:

- Use only **large** size eggs (not jumbo!)
- Use **Kraft Philadelphia Cream cheese** and best brands of sour cream (Daisy, Friendship, or Breakstone). I **do not** recommend a store brand for this recipe.
- I advise you to **calibrate your oven temperature**; if the oven fails to meet its automatic setting, it may be too hot or too cold. Therefore, compensate by using either a lower or higher temperature setting than the recommended (320-325 degrees) range.
- If you use a **silver springform pan**, bake at 325° for 1 hour or more. For a **dark, non-stick springform pan**, bake at 300° for at least 1 hour, 15 min. (Thanks to Tony for the tip!)
- Use a springform pan that measures **no less than 9"** in diameter.
- Fill the springform pan approximately **one inch below** the rim.
- **Do not** beat egg whites ahead of time. They should be **stiff but not dry**. When egg whites can **stand up in peaks** after beating then that is the time to stop beating. Watch the video below for how to properly beat egg

whites:

- Carefully **fold whites into batter** to **avoid deflating** the egg whites.

Recommended Appliances and Utensils:

I love my Kitchen Aid mixer and it makes mixing the ingredients for the cheesecake filling a breeze.

