

## STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE IN 4 EASY STEPS



### Ingredients:

250g digestive biscuits  
100g butter, melted  
1 vanilla pod  
600g soft cheese  
100g icing sugar  
284ml pot double cream

### Method:

**EQUIPMENT:** 23cm loose-bottomed tin, baking parchment, plastic food bag, rolling pin, large bowl, dessert spoon, chopping board, kitchen knife, electric mixer, spatula, serving plate, blender or food processor, sieve



Make the base: Butter and line a 23cm loose-bottomed tin with baking parchment. Put the biscuits in a plastic food bag and crush to crumbs using a rolling pin. Transfer the crumbs to a bowl, and then pour over the melted butter. Mix thoroughly until the crumbs are completely coated. Tip them into the prepared tin and press firmly down into the base to create an even layer. Chill in the fridge for 1 hr to set firmly.



Remove the vanilla seeds: Slice the vanilla pod in half lengthways, leaving the tip intact, so that the two halves are still joined. Holding onto the tip of the pod, scrape out the seeds using the back of a kitchen knife.



Make the filling: Place the soft cheese, icing sugar and vanilla seeds in a bowl, then beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Tip in the cream and continue beating until the mixture is completely combined. Now spoon the cream mixture onto the biscuit base, working from the edges inwards and making sure that there are no air bubbles. Smooth the top of the cheesecake down with the back of a dessert spoon or spatula. Leave to set in the fridge overnight.



Un-moulding and topping: Bring the cheesecake to room temperature, about 30 mins before serving. To un-mould, place the base on top of a can, and then gradually pull the sides of the tin down. Slip the cake onto a serving plate, removing the lining paper and base. Purée half the strawberries in a blender or food processor with 25g icing sugar and 1 tsp water, then sieve. Pile the remaining strawberries onto the cake, and then pour over purée.

### **Can't get it out of the tin?**

If you find the cake difficult to un-mould, then either let it sit for a little longer, or wipe the outside of the tin with a warm cloth. This heats the edges and should allow you to remove the tin easily.

### **Filling hasn't set?**

The cheesecake may have needed more time in the fridge. The mixture should be quite firm to begin with, but a long chilling time (preferably overnight) is essential to ensure the filling sets well.

### **Base hasn't set?**

To ensure the base sets properly, the melted butter must be thoroughly mixed through the biscuit crumbs. Make sure you also leave it in the fridge to firm up for at least 1 hr before adding the filling so that the crumbs do not mix into the soft cheese mixture.

### Try a different flavour

**Lemon:** Beat the finely grated zest & juice 2 lemons with the soft cheese & icing sugar instead of the vanilla seeds. Top with lemon curd & leave to chill.

**Raspberry:** Replace strawberries with fresh raspberries.

**Passion fruit & mango:** Make a delicious passion fruit sauce by sieving the pulp of 4 passion fruit and sweetening to taste with a little icing sugar. Top the cheesecake with chopped mango, then pour over the sauce, dotting the top with a few of the passion fruit seeds.

### *And now for something different...*

Basil & white chocolate creams with sticky balsamic strawberries



A subtle and delicious combination - your guests will be left guessing what those familiar flavours are!

Ready in 25 minutes plus 1-2 hours in the fridge (or longer)

### Ingredients

284ml pot single cream  
1 bunch basil leaves and stalks torn, plus extra leaves to serve  
300g good-quality white chocolate, chopped  
50g golden caster sugar  
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
250g strawberries, hulled and halved

- Pour the cream into a saucepan, and then add the torn basil leaves and stalks. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat, then remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 5 mins. Discard the basil and re-heat the cream to a simmer.
- Remove the cream from the heat and immediately tip in the chocolate. Leave for a few mins to melt, then stir until smooth. Pour the mixture into four serving glasses and chill for at least 1 hour until firm. (This can be done up to a day ahead.)
- In a small saucepan, mix the caster sugar and balsamic vinegar with 2 tbsp water and cook over a medium heat, stirring continuously, until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture has reduced by half to a sticky syrup (about 5 mins). Cool before pouring over the strawberries and allow to soak for at least 1 hr.
- Spoon the balsamic strawberries over the creams and decorate with basil.  
***(Some friends have found this too sweet and prefer to serve it in smaller portions in a shot glass with a small teaspoon.)***