

## **2023 Heritage Cooking Contest**

*For the past 47 years the Women's Leadership Division of the Alabama Farmers Federation has spotlighted Alabama commodities and agricultural products through the Annual Heritage Cooking Contest.*

*This year the annual event was hosted on Thursday, September 7 at the Alfa Home Office in Montgomery. The category of "Baked Cheesecakes" proved to be a fan favorite with 24 of the most talented cooks from across Alabama coming together with their creative and individual confections. The recipes from the Heritage Cooking Contest have been compiled in this booklet for your pleasure and convenience.*

*We hope you enjoy trying all of them as much as the judges and all attendees did!*

*Happy Baking and Eating!*

*Kim Earwood*

*Women's Leadership Division Director*

# 2023 Heritage Cooking Contest

## Cheesecake Recipes

### Caramel Pecan Cheesecake

#### Crust:

50 Vanilla Wafers, Crushed

¼ c sugar

¼ c butter, softened

Combine all ingredients and press into the bottom of a springform pan. If desired, press additional wafers around wall of pan.

#### Filling:

3 8 oz packages cream cheese, softened

½ c sour cream

1 c sugar

3 eggs

1 t vanilla

Beat cream cheese, sour cream and sugar. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add vanilla. Pour over crust and bake at 325 degrees for 50 minutes. Cool and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight.

#### Topping:

8 oz Marzetti Classic Caramel Dip

1 c chopped pecans, lightly toasted

Heat caramel dip in microwave to spreading consistency. Spread on cake. Sprinkle with pecans.

**Wanda Stinson**

**Butler County**

## **Snickers Cheesecake**

### **Crust:**

2 c Oreo cookie crumbs

4 T melted butter

### **Filling:**

3- 8 oz packages cream cheese, room temperature

1 c sugar/ 2 T all purpose flour

3 T Snickers seasoning blend

4 eggs, room temperature

1 c sour cream

1 ½ t vanilla extract

30-35 mini snickers bars, chopped

¼ c chocolate sauce

¼ c caramel sauce

### **Topping:**

Whipped cream

Additional chocolate sauce

Additional caramel sauce

Additional chopped Snickers

### **Crust:**

Heat oven to 325 degrees. In small bowl combine crust ingredients, mix well. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of 9-inch springform pan lined with parchment paper on the bottom. Bake crust for 10 minutes and remove. Cover outside of pan with aluminum foil so water from water bath can't get in. Set aside.

### **Cheesecake Filling:**

Reduce oven to 300 degrees. In a large bowl, blend cream cheese, sugar, flour and Snickers. Blend with an electric mixer until combined. (Use low speed to keep less air from getting into batter, which can cause cracks). Scrape down sides of bowl. Add eggs one at a time, beating slowly and scraping sides of bowl after each addition. Add the sour cream and vanilla extract. Beat on low speed until well combined. Gently stir in chopped Snickers. Add about half of the filling to the spring form pan. Pour the Chocolate Sauce and the Caramel on top of the filling and use a spatula to swirl the sauces. Pour remaining filling in pan and repeat with sauces. Place spring form pan in another pan and fill outside pan with enough water to go halfway up sides of springform pan. Water should not go above the edge of the aluminum foil on the springform pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour and 35-40 minutes. Turn oven off and leave cheesecake in oven for 20 minutes. Crack oven door and leave cheesecake in oven for additional 20 minutes or until set. This cooling process helps the cheesecake cool slowly and prevent cracks. Remove cheesecake from oven and chill. Remove springform pan sides from cheesecake and decorate with whipped cream, additional chopped Snickers and sauces.

**Linda Loveless**  
**Calhoun County**

## **Blueberry Lemon Cheesecake**

### **Base:**

2 ½ c finely crushed graham crackers  
1 stick butter, melted

### **Blueberry-Lemon Cheesecake Filling:**

3 c cream cheese, room temperature  
½ c plain or Greek yogurt, room temperature  
Zest of 1 large lemon  
¾ c sugar  
2 T cornstarch  
3 large eggs, room temperature  
1 T lemon juice  
1 t vanilla extract  
2 c fresh blueberries

### **Blueberry Sauce:**

2 c fresh blueberries  
¼ c sugar  
2 t lemon juice

### **Instructions:**

#### **For Base:**

Adjust oven rack to middle position. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line 9-inch springform pan with parchment paper. Mix crushed graham crackers and melted butter together. Press mixture evenly into bottom of springform pan with flat bottom of glass or measuring cup. Bake for 10 minutes then remove from oven and cool until warm.

#### **Blueberry -Lemon Cheesecake Filling:**

Reduce oven temperature to 285 degrees. Recommendation: If your springform pan isn't 100% leakproof, place the pan on a baking sheet before putting in oven. In large bowl, using a spoon, mix cream cheese, lemon zest and yogurt together until smooth. (Make sure to mix rather than whisk or aerate). Mix sugar and cornstarch then add to cream cheese mixture until combined and smooth. Add eggs one at a time mixing well after each addition until smooth. Add lemon juice and vanilla, mix well until smooth. Fold in blueberries until evenly distributed. Transfer cheesecake filling to slightly cooled cheesecake base and smooth out the top. Bake at 285 degrees for 50-60 minutes or until filling is light golden brown, edges are fully set and middle is still wobbly when pan is shaken, gently. Turn oven off and allow cheesecake to cool at room temperature in oven with oven door ajar. Once cooled to room

temperature, transfer to refrigerator for at least 4 hours. Before moving from baking pan to serving plate. Cooling overnight is preferred.

**Blueberry Sauce:**

Add blueberries, sugar and lemon juice to saucepan. Cook over medium heat with frequent stirring until blueberries release their juices and soften slightly. You don't want them to fall apart or become mushy. Just slightly softened. Drain released juices through a colander and transfer back to saucepan. Place blueberries in separate bowl. Return juices to heat and cook until reduced. Once reduced, pour the juices over blueberries and mix together. Then, Pour blueberry sauce over chilled cheesecake and gently spread it out into an even layer. Chill blueberry sauce covered cheesecake in the refrigerator for 30-45 minutes before slicing into individual portions and serving.

**Storage:**

The blueberry lemon cheesecake keeps well in a closed container or tightly wrapped with plastic wrap in the refrigerator for 4-5 days.

**Jane Elliott  
Chambers County**

## **Peach Cobbler Cheesecake**

### **Roasted Peaches:**

4 large fresh peaches  
3 T granulated sugar  
½ t cinnamon

### **Graham Cracker Crust:**

½ c salted butter, melted  
2 c graham cracker crumbs  
2 T granulated sugar

### **Cinnamon Streusel:**

¼ c salted butter, melted  
1/3 c brown sugar  
¼ c oatmeal  
½ c all purpose flour  
¼ t cinnamon  
Pinch of salt

### **Cheesecake Batter:**

24 oz regular block style cream cheese, room temperature  
1 ¼ c granulated sugar  
2 t vanilla extract  
Pinch of Salt  
3 large eggs, room temperature  
Large flat pan of boiling water

### **Directions:**

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Peel 4 peaches and remove seeds. Blend one peach in a blender with one tablespoon sugar and cook on medium heat until thick. Let cool. Slice the other 3 peaches and add 2 Tablespoons sugar and ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Place on parchment and roast in oven 10-15 minutes. Let cool.

Make crust: Mix graham cracker crumbs, melted butter and sugar in medium bowl. Press mixture into bottom of 8-inch springform pan. Cook 10 minutes and let cool. Mix melted butter, brown sugar, flour, oatmeal, cinnamon and salt. Mixture should be crumbly. Bake on parchment lined pan for 10-12 minutes, let cool. Mix cream cheese on medium speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. With mixer on low speed, add sugar slowly. Add salt and vanilla; mix until well combined. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing until just combined. Drop oven temperature to 325 degrees. Pour ½ batter over prepared crust. Place ½ roasted peaches on batter and some streusel. Pour remaining batter over peaches and streusel. Drop spoonfuls of blended peaches on top and swirl with a toothpick. Place boiling water on bottom rack of oven and cheesecake on top rack. Bake 45-50 minutes until slightly wobbly in center. Let set in oven 1 hour. Remove from oven and let cool to room temperature. Top with remaining peaches, puree and streusel if desired.

**Phyllis Jones, Cherokee County**

## **Baked Cheesecake with Fruit Topping**

### **Crust:**

1 ¾ c graham cracker crumbs  
1/3 c melted butter  
¼ c granulated sugar  
½ t salt

### **Cheesecake:**

2 8 oz pkgs cream cheese, softened  
4 large eggs, separated and, room temperature  
10 oz sour cream, room temperature  
1 ½ t vanilla extract  
1 ½ c granulated sugar  
Juice of one lemon  
Sliced fruit of your choice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wrap the exterior of 10 inch springform pan with aluminum foil, then spray the interior with cooking spray.

In large bowl, mix graham cracker crumbs, butter, sugar and salt together evenly. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of pan. Bake crust for 8-10 minutes and set aside.

Cream together egg yolks and sugar in large mixing bowl. Stir in cream cheese, sour cream. Lemon juice and vanilla extract until smooth. In separate mixing bowl, beat egg whites until foamy and continue to beat until soft peaks form. Use rubber spatula to fold 1/3 of egg whites in the cream cheese mixture. Gently run the spatula through the center of the bowl and around the sides, repeating until fully incorporated. Add the remaining egg whites, folding just until incorporated. Pour the batter into the prepared springform pan. Line a roasting pan with a damp kitchen towel. Place springform pan on towel, inside roasting pan and place roasting pan on oven rack. Fill roasting pan with boiling water to reach halfway up the sides of the baking dish.

Bake in preheated oven for 50 minutes. The cheesecake is ready when edges have nicely puffed and surface of cheesecake is firm except for a small spot in the center that jiggles when pan is gently shaken. Turn oven off and allow cheesecake to rest in oven for 1 hour. Remove springform pan side and place cheesecake in refrigerator and cool for 4 hours or overnight. Remove cheesecake from springform bottom and place on serving dish.

When ready to serve cheesecake, arrange sliced fruit on top of cheesecake. I used strawberries, blueberries and kiwi.

**Cheryl Lassiter**  
**Choctaw County**

### **Luscious Baked Chocolate Cheesecake**

1/3 c butter, melted  
1 ¼ c graham cracker crumbs  
¼ c granulated sugar  
3 8 oz pkgs cream cheese, softened  
1 14 oz can sweetened condensed milk  
1 12 oz pkg semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted  
4 eggs  
2 t vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Combine butter, crumbs and sugar; pat firmly on bottom of 9-inch springform pan. In large mixing bowl, beat cheese until fluffy. Add sweetened condensed milk, beat until smooth. Add remaining ingredients, mix well. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 1 hour and 5 minutes or until cake springs back when lightly touched. Cool to room temperature. Chill. Remove outside of pan. Garnish as desired. Refrigerate leftovers. Makes one - inch cheesecake.

**Glenda Cardwell**  
**Coosa County**



## **Butter Pecan Cheesecake**

### **Crust:**

1 ½ c graham cracker crumbs  
3 T granulated sugar  
5 T melted butter

### **Filling:**

¼ c salted butter  
4 8 oz pkgs cream cheese  
1 c granulated sugar  
½ c light brown sugar  
½ c heavy cream  
4 large eggs  
1 c sour cream  
1 T vanilla extract  
¼ c all purpose flour

### **Pecan Topping:**

1 ½ c pecan halves  
5 T salted butter  
½ c light brown sugar, packed  
½ c heavy whipping cream  
1 T corn syrup  
½ t vanilla extract

### **Crust:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9-inch springform pan with at least 2 ¾ inch sides or a 10-inch springform pan with non-stick baking spray. Make sure it is properly secured, too!

Whisk together graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter. Press mixture into the bottom of the springform pan and bake in the oven for 10 minutes.

### **Filling:**

In a small saucepan, add butter and melt over medium heat. Once the butter has fully melted, white foamy bubbles will begin to appear over the top of the butter.

Watch carefully as the butter's color changes to brown and the smell of the butter becomes somewhat nutty. As soon as the butter is an amber brown color, remove from heat and cool in the refrigerator for 20-25 minutes or until it reaches room temperature. In the bowl of your stand mixer, beat together cream cheese and both sugars until completely smooth.

Next, add heavy cream and browned butter then add eggs one at a time, mixing until incorporated.

Next, add sour cream, vanilla extract, and flour and mix until smooth.

Pour cheesecake filling into the baked crust. For extra insurance against cracks, use a waterbath.

Bake cheesecake for 50-65 minutes then turn the oven off and allow the cake to cool in the oven with the door propped open for 1 hour. If using a water bath, bake for a little less time.

Remove cheesecake from the oven and allow it to come to room temperature for an additional 30-60 minutes then store in the refrigerator overnight before serving.

**Pecan Topping:**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and spread the pecans on a parchment lined baking sheet. Roast them for about 8-10 minutes or until just fragrant.

In medium saucepan, combine butter, brown sugar, heavy cream, corn syrup and vanilla extract. Cook until bubbly, then stir in the toasted pecans. Cool to room temperature before pouring over the cooled cheesecake.

Note: To ensure that your cheesecake does not have lumps, start with room temperature ingredients.

**Pat Sexton**  
**Crenshaw County**

## **Lemon Berry Cheesecake**

1 box vanilla wafers  
1 c pecans  
1 T butter, melted  
3 8 oz pkgs cream cheese  
1 ½ c granulated sugar  
4 eggs  
1 t vanilla extract

8 oz sour cream  
1 c granulated sugar

1 can lemon pie filling  
Blueberries for topping

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line 9-inch springform pan with wax paper and spray with Baker's Joy.

Chop pecans and wafers in food processor then mix with butter, press in pan.

Beat cheese and sugar; then add eggs and vanilla, beat well.

Pour in pan and bake 55 minutes.

Mix sour cream and sugar, pour over cake and bake 10 more minutes.

Let set and cool.

Use a spatula to slide cake onto a plate.

Refrigerate overnight.

Spoon on pie filling; add berries and serve.

**Lyn McDaniel**  
**Dale County**

## **Sweet Potato Pecan Baked Cheesecake**

### **Crust:**

2 c Ginger Snaps, crushed  
1/3 c finely chopped pecans  
6 T unsalted butter, melted  
3 T light brown sugar

### **Filling:**

4- 8 oz pkgs cream cheese, softened  
1 c granulated sugar  
1 t vanilla extract  
4 large eggs  
1 ½ c sweet potatoes (bake 3 medium size sweet potatoes, peel, beat with mixer removing strings from beaters as they accumulate)  
1 ½ T fresh lemon juice (one lemon)

\*\*Optional But May Prevent Sticking:

Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.

Line sides with aluminum foil (remove when removing sides and bottom)

### **Topping:**

1 c packed light brown sugar  
1/3 c whipping cream  
¼ c unsalted butter  
¼ t Kosher salt  
1 c powdered sugar-sifted  
1 t vanilla extract

### **Pecan Garnish:**

¼ c granulated sugar  
½ t cinnamon (ground)  
1 c coarsely chopped pecans (directions on how to prepare will be in step 4)

\*\* Pan ( 9" springform pan)

\*\* Preheat oven to 325 degrees

1 qt saucepan for cooking topping and to heat pecans for garnishing cheesecake

### **Step 1: Crust**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Stir together Ginger Snap crumbs, pecans, melted butter and brown sugar in a bowl until well blended. Press mixture into bottom and 1 ½ inches up sides of an ungreased 9 inch springform pan. Bake until lightly browned (8-10 minutes). Remove from oven and set crust aside. Do not turn the oven off.

### **Step 2: Filling**

Beat cream cheese, granulated sugar and vanilla with a mixer on medium speed until blended and smooth- about 2 minutes. Add eggs 1 at a time beating until blended after each addition, stopping to scrape sides as needed. Add sweet potatoes and lemon juice, beating until blended and no streaks remain- about 1 minute. Pour batter into prepared crust (batter will fill the pan). Bake at 325 degrees until almost set (about 1 hour). Turn oven off and let cheesecake stand in oven with door closed for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and gently run knife around outer edge of cheesecake to loosen from sides of pan (this will prevent the cheesecake FROM CRACKING). Do NOT remove sides of pan. Cool completely on a wire rack, about 1 hour. Cover, refrigerate for at least 8 hours. Remove sides and bottom of pan and transfer to a serving plate.

### **Step 3: Topping**

Bring brown sugar, whipping cream, butter and salt to a boil in a 1-quart saucepan over medium heat stirring until it boils. Remove from heat; gradually whisk in powdered sugar and vanilla. Let it sit for 3 minutes, whisking frequently and use immediately. Slowly pour topping over top of chilled cheesecake.

### **Step 4: Garnish/ Glazed Pecans**

Stir together sugar and cinnamon in a saucepan until combined. Stir in pecans. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until sugar melts and coats pecans, about 5 minutes. Spread on greased wax paper and cool completely, then garnish around top of cheesecake leaving center of cheesecake open.

**Jeanette Tew**  
**Elmore County**

## **Mrs. Patsy's Cheesecake**

### **Crust:**

2 cups of graham cracker crumbs  
½ c margarine or butter, melted  
2 T granulated sugar

### **Filling:**

4 packages cream cheese, softened  
1 1/3 c granulated sugar  
2 T cornstarch  
1 T vanilla extract  
3 eggs  
1 c sour cream

#### **For crust-**

Mix together graham cracker crumbs, margarine/butter and sugar.

Place a sheet of parchment paper on the bottom of the spring form pan.

Spray the sides of the pan and the parchment paper with Baker's Joy. Place the crust mixture in the bottom of the pan- working the crust up the sides. Then place the pan in the freezer while mixing the filling.

#### **For filling-**

Use an electric mixer to beat the cream cheese on medium speed until it is fluffy. Add sugar slowly, then add cornstarch and vanilla. Beat until everything is combined.

Add eggs one at a time, beating until combined.

Next, add sour cream while still beating at medium speed.

Take crust out of freezer and pour filling mixture in crust. Wrap bottom of pan in foil, twice.

Take spring form pan and place in middle of a larger, shallow pan. To the larger pan, add about an inch of water.

Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Leave cake in springform pan and let it cool to room temperature. Once cooled, cover it with press and seal and place cheesecake in fridge for at least 3 hours overnight.

If desired, you can top with remaining graham cracker crumbs or additional toppings of your choice.

**Donna Sewell**

**Etowah County**

## **Nutter Butter Cheesecake**

### **Crust:**

Cooking Spray  
18 Nutter Butter Cookies  
2 Heath Candy Bars  
6 T melted butter  
Pinch kosher salt

### **Filling:**

3- 8 oz blocks cream cheese, softened  
¾ c creamy peanut butter  
¾ c granulated sugar  
3 large eggs  
¼ c sour cream  
1 t pure vanilla extract  
½ t kosher salt

### **Topping:**

1 c sour cream  
2 T granulated sugar  
½ t pure vanilla extract  
¼ c creamy peanut butter  
2 T heavy cream  
8 mini Nutter Butter cookies or 4 crushed Nutter Butter Cookies  
2 Heath Candy Bars, chopped into small pieces

### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and spray an 8" or 9" springform pan with cooking spray.

Make crust: in large resealable bag or a food processor fitted with metal blade, crush or blend Nutter Butters until fine crumbs form. Transfer to a bowl.

Place Neath bars in large resealable bag. Crush with a rolling pin or skillet until bars are no larger than the size of a pea. Transfer to bowl with crumbs and add melted butter and pinch of salt, then stir to combine.

Make cheesecake filling: In a large bowl using a hand mixer or in a tand mixer using the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add peanut butter and sugar, beat until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time and beat until combined. Add sour cream, vanilla and salt and mix until fully incorporated, being careful not to overbeat.

Press Nutter Butter toffee crumb mixture into pan and 1/3 of the way up the sides, packing tightly. Pour cheesecake filling over crust. Wrap bottom of pan in aluminum foil and place in a large roasting pan. Pour in enough boiling water to come up halfway in the roasting pan.

Bake until center of cheesecake only slightly jiggles, 1 hour and 30 minutes.

In the meantime, prepare sour cream topping: Combine sour cream, sugar and vanilla. Spread evenly over top of baked cheesecake. Return cake to oven and bake for another 10 minutes.

Turn off heat, prop open oven door and let cheesecake cool in oven about an hour. Transfer to refrigerator and continue chilling for 5 hours or overnight.

In a large bowl using a hand mixer, blend peanut butter and heavy cream until smooth and creamy.

Transfer mixture into a pastry bag. Snip the tip of the pastry bag and decorate the top of the cake with peanut butter mixture in one direction. Rotate cake slightly and pipe lines in another direction to create a diamond pattern. Decorate with the mini Nutter Butter cookies (or crushed Nutter Butters) and sprinkle with crushed toffee bars.

**Marilyn Madison**

**Fayette County**



### **Orange Pineapple Cheesecake with Saltine Cracker Crust**

1½ c crushed saltine crackers (1 sleeve)  
6 T unsalted butter, melted  
3 T brown sugar  
1 egg white (lightly beaten)  
3 packages cream cheese  
1-6 oz container pineapple Yoplait original yogurt  
¾ c granulated sugar  
4 eggs (room temperature)  
1 small can crushed pineapple  
1 T vanilla  
1 single pack Sunkist orange drink mix  
¼ c premium orange juice  
Pinch of salt  
1 c powdered sugar  
3 T margarine  
¼ c premium orange juice

#### **Crust:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

1 ½ c crushed saltine crackers  
6 T unsalted butter  
3 T brown sugar  
1 egg white lightly beaten

Mix all ingredients in a gallon zip top bag until combined. Transfer mixture into a 9 inch springform pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Firmly press mixture onto the bottom of the pan. Bake in preheated oven until crust is lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Let cool while mixing cheesecake batter.

#### **Filling:**

Leave oven at 350 degrees.

Put 9 x 13 ( 3 inch deep) baking dish half filled with water into oven on bottom shelf.

In large mixing bowl, add cream cheese, yogurt, sugar, eggs, crushed pineapple, vanilla extract, Sunkist drink mix, orange juice and pinch of salt. Mix well and pour into cooled crust. Bake in the middle of the top oven rack for 45-50 minutes or until cheesecake is almost set. Turn off oven and leave cheesecake in oven with the door cracked for about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and run a thin bladed knife along the sides of the cheesecake. Let cool completely, cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

#### **Glaze:**

In small saucepan, bring powdered sugar, butter/margarine and orange juice to a rolling boil.

Remove cheesecake from springform pan, placing it on a serving platter. Brush glaze over the cheesecake, Garnish with sliced pineapple and Mandarin oranges.

Refrigerate until ready to serve. Slice, serve, enjoy!!

**Becky Hester, Franklin County**

## **Sour Cream Cheesecake with Caramel and Toasted Pecan Topping**

### **Crust:**

2 ½ c packed graham cracker crumbs  
½ c butter softened at room temperature  
¼ c sugar

### **Cheesecake:**

5 (8 oz) packages of softened cream cheese  
3 T plain flour  
¼ t vanilla extract  
5 eggs plus 2 yolks at room temperature  
1 ¾ c granulated sugar  
1 T grated lemon peel  
¼ c heavy cream  
½ c dairy sour cream

### **Toasted Pecan Topping:**

½ c firmly packed brown sugar  
1/3 c heavy cream  
½ t vanilla extract  
½ c light corn syrup  
½ c melted, lightly cooled butter  
½ t salt  
1 ½ c toasted, chopped pecans

### **Crust:**

In medium bowl, with hands or back of spoon, mix graham cracker crumbs with sugar and soft butter until well combined.

Press mixture on the bottom and sides of 9-inch springform pan, building up sides of pan to form a rim all around. Refrigerate until needed.

Preheat oven to 500 degrees.

### **Cheesecake Filling:**

In large bowl, using an electric mixer, combine cream cheese, sugar, flour, lemon zest and vanilla. Beat on high just to blend.

Beat in eggs and egg yolks, one at a time adding to cream mixture until well combined. Pour into crust lined pan.

Bake 10 minutes in 500 degree oven, then reduce temperature to 250 degrees and bake one hour longer. Once removed from oven, spread top with sour cream while it is still warm. Let cool in pan on wire rack. Once completely cooled, place in refrigerator for three hours or overnight.

**Toasted Pecan Topping:**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees, spread in a single layer chopped pecan on rimmed baking sheet. Bake 7 to 10 minutes, stir pecans after 2 to 3 minutes. Bake until just fragrant.

In medium saucepan, combine butter, brown sugar, corn syrup and heavy cream. Cook until bubbly then stir in toasted pecans. Cool to room temperature before pouring over cooled cheesecake.

**To serve:**

With spatula, loosen crust from sides of pan. Remove side of spring form pan. Cut cheesecake into wedges. Add pecan topping. Serves 16 to 20.

**Debra Dunn**  
**Geneva County**

### **Philly Brownie Cheesecake**

1 pkg brownie mix  
4 pkgs Philadelphia cream cheese, softened  
1 c sugar  
1 t vanilla extract  
1/3 c sour cream  
3 eggs  
2 squares semi-sweet chocolate

Heat oven to 325 degrees

Prepare brownie batter as directed on package; pour into 13 x 9 inch pan sprayed with cooking spray.

Bake 25 minutes or until top is shiny and center is almost set.

Meanwhile, beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla in a large bowl with mixer until well blended. Add sour cream, mix well. Add eggs. One at a time, mixing on low speed after each just until blended. Gently pour over brownie layer in pan. (Filling will come almost to top of pan)

Bake 40 minutes or until center is almost set. Run knife or metal spatula around rim of pan to loosen sides; cool. Refrigerate 4 hours.

Melt chocolate squares as directed on package; drizzle over cheesecake. Refrigerate 15 minutes or until chocolate is firm.

**Jackie Henderson**

**Lee County**

## **Mini Turtle Cheesecakes**

### **Crust**

1 c graham cracker crumbs  
4 T unsalted butter, melted

### **Cheesecake**

16 oz full fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature  
½ c granulated sugar  
1 t vanilla extract  
2 large eggs

### **Topping**

Jar of caramel sauce

Chocolate ganache

½ c semi-sweet chocolate chips  
½ c heavy whipped cream

Chopped Pecans

### **Pan Size**

Regular Sized Muffin Pan  
Cupcake Liners

## **Instructions**

### **Crust**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a regular size muffin pan with paper cupcake liners. In a mixing bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and melted butter until it resembles coarse sand. Put 1-2 T of crumbs in each muffin cup. Use a 1/3 c or similar to press the crumbs firmly in the pan. Bake the crust for 5 minutes. Remove pan from oven and allow to cool while prepping cheesecake.

### **Cheesecake**

In a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and sugar with an electric mixer until smooth, 1-2 minutes. Beat in vanilla extract and eggs, until smooth. The eggs are the last ingredient that are mixed into the cheesecake batter. Be sure to mix them in just until the yolk breaks. Over beating the eggs is the number one cause of air bubbles and cracking.

Evenly divide the cheesecake batter among the muffin cups, filling the liners full. Bake for 15-17 minutes or until the center of the cheesecake is only slightly jiggly.

Allow the cheesecakes to cool to room temperature then place them in the fridge for at least 4 hours to chill before serving.

If refrigerating overnight, loosely cover the cheesecakes in plastic wrap.

### **Topping**

Top each cheesecake with a spoonful of jarred caramel sauce, chocolate and chopped nuts.

To make chocolate ganache: Place chocolate chips in medium bowl. In a small pot over low heat, heat the heavy cream until just before boiling. Pour heavy cream over the chocolate chips. Allow the mixture to stand for 1-2 minutes. Use a spatula to stir the mixture until smooth. Allow the ganache to come to room temperature before adding it to the cheesecake.

### **How to store:**

Refrigerate your mini cheesecakes in an airtight container for up to a week.

### **How to Freeze:**

Mini cheesecakes can be frozen for up to 3 months. They can be individually wrapped or placed in an airtight container or freezer bag with parchment paper between the layers to keep them from sticking. Let them thaw in the refrigerator before serving.

**Beth Kornegay**  
**Jefferson County**

## Dreamy Lemon Cheesecake

2 ½ cups crushed cream filled lemon sandwich cookies  
2 ½ T Salted butter, melted  
5- 8 oz pkgs cream cheese  
1 ½ c granulated sugar  
2 T all purpose flour  
4 large eggs  
2 large egg yolks  
1 T lemon zest plus 5 T fresh juice (about 2 lemons)  
2 T heavy cream  
Yellow food coloring gel paste  
1 c Lemon Curd (recipe follows)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wrap outside of lightly greased 9-inch shiny springform pan in a double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil. Stir together crushed cookies and melted butter in a bowl. Press in bottom of prepared pan.

Bake in preheated oven until lightly browned, 7 to 8 minutes. Cool on wire rack until ready to use. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Beat cream cheese with heavy duty mixer on medium speed until creamy, about 5 minutes. Gradually add sugar and flour, beating until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until yellow disappears after each addition. Add egg yolks one at a time, beating just until yellow disappears after each addition. Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice and heavy cream.

Remove 3 cups of batter and place in medium bowl. Using a wooden pick, add a small amount of food coloring gel paste to the 3 cups of batter. Stir until batter is pale yellow, adding more gel paste if necessary.

Dollop half of untinted batter into prepared crust. Dollop half of pale yellow tinted batter on top of untinted batter dollops. Swirl together using a small knife, creating a marbled look. Repeat procedure with remaining halves of tinted and untinted batter.. Place springform pan in a roasting pan. Add boiling water to reach halfway up sides of springform pan.

Bake at 325 until center is almost set but still slightly wobbly, 1 hour and 10 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. Turn off oven, and let cheesecake stand in oven, with door partially open, 1 hour.

Remove cheesecake from roasting pan and water bath and place on wire rack. Cool completely, about 2 hours. Cover with plastic wrap, using wooden picks to prevent plastic wrap from touching top of cheesecake. Chill 8 to 24 hours.

Gently run a knife around outer edge of cheesecake to loosen from sides of pan. Remove sides of pan. Spread top with 1 cup of Lemon Curd.

### **Lemon Curd**

½ c salted butter, salted

2 c granulated sugar

4 large eggs

2 large egg yolks

1 T lemon zest, plus 1 c fresh juice (4 large lemons)

Beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed until blended, about 45 seconds. Add eggs and egg yolks, 1 at a time beating just until blended after each addition. Gradually add lemon juice to butter mixture beating at low speed just until blended. Stir in zest. (Mixture will look curdled)

Transfer mixture to a heavy 4 quart saucepan and cook, whisking constantly over medium-low until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, 14 to 16 minutes.

Transfer curd to a bowl, and place plastic wrap directly on warm curd (to prevent a film from forming). Chill until firm, about 4 hours. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

**Doris McGuire**  
**Limestone County**



## **The Best Easy Cheesecake Recipe**

### **Crust**

1 ½ c graham cracker crumbs  
4 T granulated sugar  
6 T unsalted butter, melted  
1 t vanilla extract

### **Filling**

3- 8 oz pkgs cream cheese, softened to room temperature  
¾ c granulated sugar  
3 eggs, at room temperature  
2 t vanilla extract

### **Optional Toppings**

Berries, Caramel Sauce, Chocolate Chips, Lemon Curd, Whipped Cream

### **Instructions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Using a food processor, pulse the graham cracker sheets (about 10-12) until they resemble crumbs.

Next, add sugar, vanilla extract and melted butter; pulse the mixture until well combined.

Pour graham cracker crumbs into a 9-inch springform pan and press crumbs into the bottom of the dish and up along the sides. Set it aside.

With a hand mixer or standing mixer, beat cream cheese on a low speed for about 5-10 seconds. While on a low speed, slowly add in the granulated sugar and mix until incorporated, scraping down the sides as needed, add in vanilla extract and mix until combined.

Next, add in the eggs, one at a time, mixing after each addition. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and mix on low until everything is combined and the filling is silky and smooth. Pour cheesecake batter over the graham cracker crust and spread in an even layer.

Bake for 22-25 minutes (mine is usually done at approximately 24 minutes), or until the center of the cheesecake jiggles slightly when the baking dish is gently moved. Turn the oven off, crack the door, and let the cheesecake slowly cool for about 45-60 minutes (I usually do 60 minutes, but if you're pressed for time, you can pull it out at 45 minutes). Continue to cool the cheesecake on the counter until it reaches room temperature.

Finally, chill the cheesecake in the fridge for at least 4 hours, or overnight if possible (the cheesecake gets better the colder it gets). Cut and serve with whatever toppings you like.

Refrigerate leftovers.

**Ashley Morgan**

**Mobile County**

## **Baked Cheesecake**

Butter a Deep Baking Dish  
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

2 pkgs Cream Cheese  
1 c sugar  
4 eggs  
1 t vanilla extract

Cream sugar and cream cheese. Add eggs, one at a time. Beat well; add vanilla. Pout into dish and bake 40 minutes. Remove from oven and let sit 10 minutes.

### **Toppings**

1 c sour cream  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  c sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  t vanilla extract

Mix well sour cream and sugar; add vanilla extract. Pout on top of cheesecake. Bake 10 minutes; remove from oven and let cool.

**Kathryn Blan**  
**Monroe County**

## **Biscoff Cookie Cheesecake**

### **Crust:**

8.8 oz pack Biscoff cookies

2 T light brown sugar

¼ c salted butter, melted

### **Filling:**

24 oz (3 blocks) cream cheese, softened

1 c light brown sugar, lightly packed

¾ c sour cream, room temp

1 c Biscoff cookie butter spread

1 T pure vanilla extract

¼ t fine sea salt

3 large eggs, room temperature

### **Topping:**

½ c Biscoff cookie butter spread

Extra pack of Biscoff cookies for decoration

### **Crust:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove sides of a 9" springform pan and place parchment paper on bottom, leaving an overhang. Clip sides back to the bottom of the pan and generously spray sides with cooking spray.

Place Biscoff cookies in food processor or blender, turn to full speed, until cookies are finely ground.

Add sugar and melted butter; pulse until butter is evenly distributed.

Place crumbs into prepared pan and use measuring cup to press down evenly.

Bake crust for 5 minutes, while preparing filling.

### **Filling:**

All ingredients must be softened to room temperature. Place cream cheese in bowl of stand mixer, turn mixer to low speed and stream in sugar.

Mix for 1-2 minutes, scraping edge of bowl every so often to make sure mixture is smooth with no chunks for cream cheese left.

Add sour cream, cookie butter, vanilla and salt to bowl. Mix at low speed until fluffy and combined.

With mixer still at low speed, add first egg and mix just until combined. Then add each egg separately while mixing but don't increase speed as to not incorporate air.

Reduce the oven to 300 degrees when you remove the crust.

Fold batter a few times before pouring it over crust. Place cheesecake on bottom oven rack and place another pan full of hot water next to it.

Bake for 60 minutes, until the edges of the cheesecake are set but the center is still jiggly.

Turn oven off and pull-out cheesecake just slightly and run a knife around the edge of cheesecake so it can release from pan and prevent cracking as it cools.

Put cheesecake back in oven and leave door halfway open for 20 minutes.

Remove cheesecake from oven and allow to cool to room temperature.

Topping:

Once cheesecake cools, slightly warm cookie butter spread in microwave for 5-10 seconds.

Pour on top of cheesecake and use offset spatula or spoon to spread it out.

Refrigerate for at least 4-6 hours. Serve cold or at room temperature.

**Amy Belcher**

**Montgomery County**

## **Strawberry Cheesecake**

### **Graham Cracker Crust:**

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  c graham cracker crumbs

5 T granulated sugar

6 T melted butter

### **Cheesecake Filling:**

40 ounces (5- 8 oz pkgs) cream cheese at room temperature

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

$\frac{1}{2}$  c sour cream, room temperature

2 t vanilla extract

4 large eggs, room temperature

### **Strawberry Topping:**

2 pounds fresh strawberries divided

3 T granulated sugar

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

$\frac{1}{2}$  t vanilla extract

### **Instructions:**

Place oven racks in the center of the oven. Preheat to 350 degrees.

In a medium sized bowl. Stir graham cracker crumbs together with sugar and melted butter until well incorporated and the mixture looks like damp sand. Using the bottom of a measuring cup, press crust into the bottom and halfway up the sides of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake 7 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside.

Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees.

In a large bowl or bowl of a stand mixer, mix cream cheese 30 seconds until smooth.

Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl and add granulated sugar, sour cream, and vanilla. Mix again until incorporated. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl and mix briefly.

Crack eggs into a liquid measuring cup and using a fork, beat until well scrambled. With the mixer on low, slowly pour the eggs into the cream cheese mixture and stop stirring once the eggs have been incorporated. Remove bowl from the mixer and scrape the sides and bottom again, ensuring the entire mixture is smooth. If there are a few small lumps, try to fold in using the rubber scraper.

Once the batter is completely smooth and ready, tap the bowl on the counter for 30-45 seconds to remove as many air bubbles as possible. You should see them popping on the surface as you tap the bowl. Pour filling into the center of the graham cracker crust and gently smooth the top. It will be very full.

Bake for 30 minutes at 325 degrees. Reduce temperature to 250 degrees and continue cooking for 45 minutes more. Once this time has elapsed, turn the oven off and keep cheesecake inside for another 30

minutes for some carryover cooking **without opening the door**. Crack oven door to let cheesecake cool slowly for one hour before removing. At this point, cheesecake should be slightly warm. Bring cheesecake to room temperature on the counter (3-4 hours) before covering with plastic wrap and transferring to fridge.

Refrigerate until chilled completely (6 hours to overnight). Open springform pan and remove the collar.

For the strawberry sauce, wash and slice 1 pound of strawberries and place into small saucepan. Sprinkle in sugar and water. Heat over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Cook strawberries for minutes or until tender. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract. Pour into blender and blitz until completely smooth. Chill in the freezer for 10-15 minutes in a shallow dish.

Wash and slice remaining pound of strawberries and decorate the chilled cheesecake with them. (Pile them high) Pour half of the strawberry sauce over top of the entire cheesecake.

Cut into slices and serve with the remaining strawberry sauce.

#### NOTES:

Dip a sharp knife into hot water, wipe off any excess water and slice. I like to dip my knife into water between each slice to get really clean looking pieces.

**Barbara Norred**  
**Randolph County**

## **Banana Pudding Cheesecake**

### **Ingredients**

#### **Crust:**

2  $\frac{3}{4}$  c finely crushed graham crackers  
5 T granulated sugar  
10 T salted butter

#### **Filling:**

24 oz (3 blocks) cream cheese, room temperature  
1 c sugar  
3 T all-purpose flour  
3.4 oz instant banana cream pudding mix, dry  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  sour cream  
3 large eggs, room temperature  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  t vanilla extract  
1 c ripe, mashed bananas (2-3 bananas)

#### **Topping:**

1  $\frac{1}{4}$  c heavy whipping cream, cold  
6 T powdered sugar  
1 t vanilla extract  
2-3 medium bananas

### **Instructions:**

#### **Crust:**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line a 9 inch springform pan with parchment paper in the bottom and grease the sides.

Combine the crust ingredients in a small bowl. Press the mixture into the bottom and up the sides of the springform pan.

Bake the crust for 8-10 minutes, then set aside to cool.

Wrap the outside of the pan with aluminum foil so that water from the water bath can't get in.

#### **Cheesecake Filling:**

Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees.

In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar, flour and pudding mix on low speed until well combined and smooth. Mixture will be sticky. Be sure to use low speed to reduce the amount of air added to the batter, which can cause cracks. Scrape down the sides of the bowl.

Add the sour cream and mix on low speed until well combined.

Add the eggs one at a time, mixing slowly to combine after each addition. Scrape down the side of the bowl as needed to make sure everything is well combined.

Add the mashed banana and vanilla extract and mix on low speed until well combined. Mixture will be a little lumpy.

Pour the cheesecake batter into the crust.

Place the springform pan inside another larger pan like a broiler pan. Fill the outside pan with enough warm water to go about halfway up the sides of the springform pan. The water should not go above the top edge of the aluminum foil on the springform pan.

Bake for 1 hour 30-45 minutes. The center should be set, but still jiggle.

Turn off the oven and leave the door closed for 30 minutes. The cheesecake will continue to cook, but slowly begin to cool as well.

Crack the door of the oven for 30 minutes to allow the cheesecake to continue to cool slowly.

Remove the cheesecake from the oven and water bath wrapping and refrigerate until cool and firm, 5-6 hours or overnight.

### **Topping:**

When cooled and ready to serve, remove the cheesecake from the springform pan and place on a serving plate.

To make the whipped cream, add the heavy whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla extract to a large mixing bowl and whip on high speed until stiff peaks form. (Options are Cool Whip or Dream Whip) Slice bananas into a bowl. Pour lemon juice lightly over the bananas. Gently toss so all bananas have been coated. This keeps bananas from turning brown.

Place a layer of sliced bananas on top of the cheesecake, then pipe a layer of whipped cream swirls on top. You can use a piping bag and tip of your choice to simply fill large zip lock bag with whipped cream, cut a small hole in the corner and push whipped cream through bag making desired swirls.

Finish off the cheesecake with a few more banana slices. The fresh banana slices are the best when added just before serving.

Cheesecake is best when stored well covered in the fridge for 3-4 days.

**Pam Ward**  
**Russell County**



## **Caramel Apple Cheesecake**

### **Ingredients**

#### **Crust:**

2 c graham cracker crumbs (about 14 sheets)  
3 T granulated sugar  
Pinch of salt  
¼ t ground cinnamon  
5 T unsalted butter, melted

#### **Crumble Topping:**

4 T unsalted butter, melted  
1/3 c granulated sugar  
½ t ground cinnamon  
½ t vanilla extract  
Pinch of salt  
¾ c all-purpose flour

#### **Apple Layer:**

2 medium apples, peeled and diced  
½ t ground cinnamon  
1 t cornstarch  
Juice of ½ lemon  
1 T granulated sugar

#### **Filling:**

32 ounces cream cheese, room temperature  
2 T all-purpose flour  
1 c granulated sugar  
1 T vanilla extract  
4 large eggs, room temperature  
1 c sour cream, room temperature

#### **Serving:**

½ c caramel sauce, homemade or store-bought (4 oz)

#### **Instructions:**

##### **Crust:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Invert the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan so the cheesecake can easily slide off onto a serving platter once chilled. Line with parchment paper if desired.

In a food processor, process the graham crackers to fine, even crumbs, about 30 seconds. Add the sugar, cinnamon and salt. Pulse to combine. Add the melted butter in a slow steady stream while processing. Pulse until the mixture is evenly moistened and resembles wet sand.

Transfer to the prepared 9 inch springform pan. Using the bottom of a dry measuring cup, press the crumb mixture into the bottom and 1 inch up the sides of the pan. Don't press too hard; slightly firm is good. Bake until set and fragrant, about 8 to 10 minutes. Remove a wire rack to cool for about 30 minutes before filling.

Reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Once cooled, wrap the bottom and the sides of the pan in a double or triple layer of heavy duty foil. Set the wrapped pan inside a large roasting pan for the hot water bath.

### **Crumble Topping:**

Melt the butter in a measuring cup. Add vanilla, sugar, salt cinnamon and flour. Mix with a fork until combined. Refrigerate until needed.

### **Apple Layer:**

Place diced apple in small bowl and toss with lemon juice. Combine the cinnamon, sugar and cornstarch. Pour over the apples and toss to coat. Set aside.

### **Filling:**

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese until smooth and creamy. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl. In a small bowl combine the sugar and flour. With the mixer running on medium-low, slowly add the sugar mixture. Beat until smooth, scraping down the sides as needed.

With the mixer set on medium-low add the eggs one at a time, beating just until the yolk disappears before adding the next one. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl and blend again. Don't overbeat.

Add the vanilla and sour cream and beat on low until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl with a spatula and fold together to ensure the mixture is well blended.

### **Assembling:**

Pour cheesecake filling into the baked, cooled crust. Gently spoon the diced apple mixture over the filling taking care not to mound it all in the middle.

Use the fork to break the crumble topping apart leaving some pieces in large clumps. Sprinkle over the apples taking care not to overload the center of the cheesecake.

Fill the outer roasting pan with enough hot tap water to come halfway up the side of the springform pan. Bake at 325 degrees until the center jiggles slightly, the sides are puffed and the topping is golden brown, about 90 to 100 minutes.

Turn off the oven and prop the door open slightly using a thin pot holder or wooden spoon handle.

Allow the cheesecake to cool in the hot water bath for 1 hour.

Transfer the cheesecake the cheesecake to a wire rack and remove the foil wrap. Slide a small thin knife around the inside edge of the pan and loosen the cheesecake. Leave the cheesecake in the springform pan and cool to room temperature, about 2 hours.

Once cooled, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight or up to 24 hours.

**To serve:**

Remove the sides of the springform pan and carefully slide the cheesecake onto a serving platter. Drizzle with caramel sauce and slice into wedges.

**Vinetta Blow**

**St. Clair County**

## **Red Velvet Cheesecake**

### **Red Velvet Cookie Layer:**

1 ½ c + 1 T all-purpose flour  
¼ c unsweetened cocoa powder  
1 t baking soda  
1 t baking powder  
¼ t salt  
½ c unsalted butter, room temperature  
¾ c dark brown sugar, packed  
¼ c granulated sugar  
1 egg, room temperature  
1 T milk  
2 t pure vanilla extract  
1 t red food coloring

### **Cheesecake Layer:**

24 oz full fat cream cheese, room temp  
¼ c plain Greek yogurt  
2/3 c granulated sugar  
2 eggs, room temperature  
2 t pure vanilla extract  
1 bag mini semi-sweet chocolate chips

### **Chocolate Buttercream Frosting:**

1 ½ c salted butter, room temperature  
8 oz cream cheese, room temperature  
1 ½ c unsweetened cocoa powder  
3 t pure vanilla extract  
7 c powdered sugar  
¼ c milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Use standard springform cheesecake pan. Mix together flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt for cookie layer. Set aside. Using a handheld or stand mixer with paddle attachment, beat the butter on high until creamy, about 1 minute. Scrape sides and bottom of bowl as needed. On medium speed, beat in brown and white sugar until combined. Then beat in egg, milk and vanilla extract, scraping sides and bottom of bowl as needed. Add in food coloring and beat until combined. Turn the mixer off to add dry ingredients. Use a low speed to incorporate the dry ingredients into the wet. Mix until soft dough is formed. The dough will be kind of sticky. Spray spring form pan with Baker's Joy or something similar. For a thinner, less dense crust layer, take about ½-¾ of dough and press evenly into spring form pan. Make sure to press dough all the way to sides of pan. Bake this layer for about 8 minutes. Remaining dough can be baked separately as cookies and eaten, or baked, crusted and used as a garnish on the cheesecake.

While the crust is baking, make the cheesecake layer. With a handheld or stand mixer with paddle attachment, beat cream cheese on medium-high until completely smooth. Add in yogurt and sugar. Beat on high scraping down sides as needed. Add in egg and vanilla. Beat on medium until combined. Don't overbeat as incorporating too much air will cause cracking. Fold in the chocolate chips. Spread this mixture over the slightly baked cookie layer. Turn oven down to 325 degrees. Return the pan to the oven. Bake approximately 30-35 minutes or until cheesecake reaches desired doneness. The cheesecake layer will likely still jiggle slightly in the middle. Allow cheesecake to cool on counter for 30 - 45 minutes and then refrigerate. It's best to allow the cheesecake to cool overnight in the refrigerator before decorating/serving.

If desired, garnish/decorate the cheesecake with Chocolate Buttercream Frosting. Directions: cream together butter and cream cheese. Add in cocoa powder and vanilla. Then add in powdered sugar one cup at a time, alternating with some of the milk until all ingredients are incorporated. It is easiest to use this frosting when it is room temp. Put frosting into piping bag with appropriate tip or Spritz cookie tube with tip and garnish cheesecake as desired. Extra frosting can be refrigerated and used on other baked goods. Frosting can be stored in refrigerator until the date that was on the cream cheese used for the recipe.

**Dawn Smith**  
**Tallapoosa County**

## Classic New York Cheesecake

### **Crust:**

1 ½ c graham cracker crumbs (12 whole crackers)  
5 T unsalted butter, melted  
2 T granulated sugar  
1/8 t salt

### **Filling:**

32 oz cream cheese at room temperature  
2 c granulated sugar  
3 T all-purpose flour  
4 t vanilla extract  
1 t lemon zest  
2 t fresh lemon juice  
¼ t salt  
6 large eggs  
½ c sour cream

### **Crust:**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees and set an oven rack in the lower middle position. Wrap a springform pan with heavy duty aluminum foil, covering the underside and extending all the way to the top so there are no seams on the bottom or sides of the pan. Repeat with another sheet of foil for insurance. Spray the inside of the pan with nonstick cooking spray.

### **Make the crust:**

In a bowl, combine the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, sugar and salt. Stir until well combined. Press the crumbs into an even layer on the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake the crust for 10 minutes until set. Remove the pan from the oven and set aside. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees. Set a kettle of water to boil.

### **For the Filling:**

**Make the batter:** In the bowl of an electric mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment or beaters, beat the cream cheese, sugar and flour together on medium speed until just smooth, about 1 minutes. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl to be sure the mixture is evenly combined. Add the vanilla, lemon zest, lemon juice and salt; beat on low speed until just combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing on low speed until just combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing on low speed until incorporated, scraping the bowl as necessary. Mix in the sour cream. Make sure the batter is uniform, but don't overmix.

Check to make sure your oven has cooled to 325 degrees, then set the cheesecake pan in a large roasting pan. Pour the batter on top of the crust. Pour the boiling water into the large roasting pan to come about 1 inch up the side of the cake pan. Bake until the cake is just set, 1 ½ hours to 1 hr 45 minutes.

The cake should not look liquidy at all but will wobble just a bit when the pan is nudged. It will continue to cook as it cools. Carefully remove the roasting pan from the oven and set it on a wire rack. Cook the cheesecake in the water bath until the water is just warm, about 45 minutes. Remove the springform pan from the water bath and discard the foil. If necessary, run a thin-bladed knife around the edge of the cake to make sure it's not sticking to the sides, then cover with plastic wrap and transfer to the refrigerator to cool for at least 8 hours.

**Susan Ryan**

**Tuscaloosa County**