

Cheesecake with Apple Cider Caramel Sauce and a Nutmeg-Lemon Shortbread Crust

A recipe from Marissa Rothkopf c/o marissarothkopf.substack.com

You will need a 9" tart pan with removable bottom

Apple Cider Syrup

What You'll Need:

2 cups fresh apple cider

What You'll Do:

In a medium saucepan, gently simmer the cider over medium-low heat until it's reduced by three-quarters, stirring occasionally. The syrup will thicken as it cools. This can burn, so keep an eye on it. It should have the consistency of liquid honey.

Apple Cider Caramel Sauce

Makes about 1 cup

What You'll Need:

1/3 cup apple cider syrup

3/4 cup (149 grams) granulated sugar

1/4 cup (53 grams) light brown sugar

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons (28 grams) butter

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon salt (or to taste)

What You'll Do:

1. In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, gently stir together the apple cider syrup, the granulated sugar and brown sugar until they turn to liquid.

2. Add the heavy cream and butter and bring to a brisk simmer, whisking non-stop, until the mixture has thickened somewhat, about 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the vanilla extract, cinnamon and salt. Let cool.
4. Store in the fridge for food safety reasons, but also to keep it out of direct sight, or you may find yourself eating spoonfuls of it at every opportunity. Give it a blast in the microwave for 20 seconds to liquify it before serving.

Nutmeg Lemon Shortbread Pie Crust

What You'll Need:

- 1 cup (120 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup (39 grams) confectioner's sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg (freshly grated preferred)
- 1/2 cup (113 grams) butter, cut into about 16 pieces
- 1 large egg yolk
- zest of one lemon

What You'll Do:

1. Heat oven to 375° F. Wrap the bottom and sides of the tart with foil to prevent any leaks.
2. In a food processor, pulse together the flour, confectioner's sugar, salt and nutmeg until blended.
3. Sprinkle the pieces of butter over the flour mixture. Pulse 10 to 15 times or until the butter is nearly invisible and the mixture resembles wet sand. Add the egg yolk and lemon zest and pulse until the mixture starts to clump together.
4. Empty the mixture into the tart pan and press the dough evenly across the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Use the flat bottom of a glass to even out the dough. Prick the bottom of the tart all over with a fork to prevent the pastry from puffing as it bakes. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes.
5. Once the tart has chilled, place it on a light-colored cookie sheet (not your grungy, darkened roasting pan), and bake for 15 to 20 minutes until very light golden brown. Set aside while you make the filling.

For the Cheesecake Filling

What You'll Need:

- 16 ounces (450 grams) cream cheese, room temperature

1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 large eggs, room temperature

What You'll Do:

1. Heat the oven to 375° F.
2. With a hand or stand mixer, blend the cream cheese and sugar on medium speed until uniform and no lumps of cream cheese remain. Raise the speed of the mixer to medium-high and continue to beat until light and creamy about 2-3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl to make sure there are no lumps-a-lurking.
3. Add the vanilla extract and lemon juice and blend.
4. Add the eggs, one at a time, until completely blended. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and the beaters and beat for 30 seconds longer until creamy.
5. Pour the mixture into the pre-baked tart shell (which should still be sitting on that cookie sheet, which will make transporting the wibbly-wobbly very sploshy uncooked cheesecake to the oven much easier). Swirl a few tablespoons of the caramel sauce over the top of the cheesecake, making it all pretty.
6. Bake until just set. The cheesecake will still jiggle, but it should jiggle as one unit...the middle of the cake should not jiggle separately.
7. Let cool for one hour, then wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.
8. Serve each slice of the tart with a generous pour of caramel, but not so generous that there isn't any left for you to sit quietly and eat it off the spoon all by yourself.

***To bake the shortbread as cookies instead of as a crust:** Press the dough into an 8" round or square pan. Sprinkle with demerara sugar if desired. Bake at 350°F until golden and just firm to the touch. While the shortbread is still warm, score it into 8 triangles.