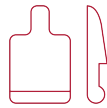




Christmas Pudding Cheesecake with Caramel Brandy Sauce



DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM



PREPARATION TIME: 50
MINUTES (PLUS MINIMUM 6
HOURS STANDING TIME FOR
THE FRUIT MIX)



COOKING TIME: 65 - 70
MINUTES



SERVES: 12

Ingredients

Fruit mix

- 1/2 cup sultanas
- 1/3 cup dates, chopped
- 1/3 cup figs, chopped
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 2-3 tbsp brandy
- 1 tbsp orange rind, grated
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice

Cheese cake base

- 1 1/2 cups shortbread fingers, crushed
- 1/2 cup almond meal
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice
- 80g butter, melted

Method

In a small bowl combine the fruit, brandy, orange rind and spices. Mix well, cover and stand 6 hours or preferably overnight.

Preheat oven on CircoTherm® to 160°C.

In a bowl combine the shortbread crumbs, almond meal, mixed spice and melted butter, mix well. Press the crumbs evenly across the base of a greased and fully lined 24cm spring form pan. Bake for 12 minutes, allow to cool. Reduce the temperature to 140°C.

Beat the cream cheese with the sugar until just combined (see note), add the eggs and mix well. Fold through the sour cream and fruit until well combined then spoon the mixture over the prepared base.

Bake for 45 minutes until set around the edges but still a little wobbly in the middle. Turn the oven off, place a tea towel in the door so it remains ajar and allow the cheesecake to cool completely in the oven. Refrigerate until required.

To make the sauce, place the sugar into a medium saucepan and cook using induction setting 6 or 7, shaking the pan and moving the sugar about gently until it begins to melt. Keep moving the pan and sugar about until it is fully melted then cook a further minute or so until an even deep golden colour.

Cheesecake filling

750g cream cheese, well softened at room temperature

1 1/3 cups caster sugar

3 eggs, beaten

1 cup sour cream

Caramel brandy sauce

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 cup cream

1/4 cup brandy

Christmas trees

6-7 Pocky sticks or pretzel sticks of various lengths

100g dark chocolate melts, gently melted

Silver cachous or Christmas themed decorations

300ml pure cream, softly whipped, for decoration

Notes

Have the cheese well softened and avoid overbeating the cream cheese mixture, as it can cause the cheesecake to crack.

The caramel brandy sauce can be made 3-4 days ahead. This recipe will make approx. 2 1/2 cups.

Remove from the heat and very gently pour in the cream, stirring as you do so. Return to the heat and stir until smooth then add the brandy. Note, it may be necessary to stir the sugar once in a while but this can interfere with the caramel.... keep stirring to an absolute minimum. Allow to cool then refrigerate until required. Reheat gently if desired.

To make the Christmas trees lay the pocky sticks onto a sheet of baking paper. Spoon the melted chocolate into the corner of a small snap lock bag (or into a paper piping bag). Twist the bag then snip the end and pipe over the pocky sticks/pretzels in sweeping movements to form the shape of a Christmas tree. Various shapes and sizes will look great. Decorate with cachous before the chocolate sets. Allow to set at room temperature, then carefully remove from the paper. Store in an airtight container until required.

To assemble, spread the cream over the cheesecake and top with a drizzle of sauce. Decorate with Christmas tree decorations and serve immediately.