

Baby Cakes



Meet the 6-inch cake, an awww-inspiring dessert that's just the right size for dinner with friends, a family birthday or a gold-star report card. Rather than reckon with leftovers, you can save a little money and bake to fit everyday celebrations, without sacrificing flavor. Midwest pragmatism at its most adorable, buttery best!

Baby Berry-Topped Cheesecake

The classic—made with just one brick of cream cheese!

HANDS ON 30 minutes **TOTAL** 5 hours

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup finely crushed graham crackers
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream, divided
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup fresh berries, such as blackberries, blueberries, raspberries and/or sliced strawberries
- 1 tablespoon sugar

1. Allow cream cheese and egg to stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°. Meanwhile, for crust, in a small bowl, combine crushed graham crackers, the 1 teaspoon sugar, and, if desired, the cinnamon. Stir in melted butter. Press the crumb mixture onto the bottom of a 6-inch springform pan; set aside.

2. In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese and the $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar with an electric mixer on medium to high speed until fluffy. Beat in flour on low speed until smooth. Add the egg and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla and beat on low speed just until combined. Stir in 2 tablespoons of the sour cream. Pour batter into the crust-lined pan. Place in a shallow baking pan in oven.

3. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until a 1-inch area around the outside edge appears set when gently shaken. Remove from oven. In a medium bowl stir together the remaining sour cream, the 1 tablespoon sugar and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla. Gently spread mixture evenly over baked cheesecake. Return to oven and bake for 5 minutes more.

4. Cool in pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Using a small sharp knife, loosen crust from sides of pan. Cool for 30 minutes more. Remove sides of pan; cool completely on rack. Chill, covered, for at least 2 hours or overnight before serving. Let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes before slicing. To serve, toss the berries with 1 tablespoon sugar, mashing them slightly if desired. Spoon over cheesecake. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: 245 cal, 16 g fat, 68 mg chol, 197 mg sodium, 22 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Pint-Size Grasshopper Icebox Cake

A fluffy, summery, make-ahead dessert with just four ingredients? Sold.

HANDS ON 20 minutes

TOTAL 20 minutes, plus 24 hours to chill

- 19 mint-filled or cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, divided
- 1½ cups whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons crème de menthe (or 1 teaspoon mint extract and a few drops green food coloring)
- 1 tablespoon sugar

1. Lightly grease a 6-inch springform pan. Line pan with two pieces of overlapping plastic wrap, allowing excess to hang over edges. Quarter 15 of the cookies; set aside.

2. Beat the cream, crème de menthe and sugar on medium speed until cream holds firm peaks (tips stand straight when beaters are lifted).

3. Spoon a third of the mixture into prepared pan. Tap pan firmly on counter to eliminate air bubbles. Evenly top with 1 cup of the quartered cookies. Repeat layers, finishing with cream. Smooth

with a spatula, pressing gently to fill gaps between cookies. Tap on counter again.

4. Cover cake with the excess plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 24 hours, preferably 2 days. To serve, peel plastic from top and gently tug to loosen cake from side of pan. Invert cake on a plate, remove pan and gently peel off plastic. Coarsely crumble remaining cookies to garnish cake. Slice with a warm serrated knife.

Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 342 cal, 25 g fat, 62 mg chol, 152 mg sodium, 28 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.



Cutie-Pie Carrot Cake

Book club meeting. Mother's Day brunch. A well-deserved raise. Cream cheese frosting is always the answer.

HANDS ON 40 minutes

TOTAL 1 hour 30 minutes

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups lightly packed finely shredded carrot
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2¾ to 3 cups powdered sugar
- Coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted

1. Let eggs stand at room temp for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 6-inch springform or round cake pan. Line bottom with parchment paper; grease again. (If available, prep three pans.)

2. In a medium bowl, stir together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda and salt; set aside. In a small bowl, lightly beat eggs. Stir in carrot and oil. Stir egg mixture into flour mixture until combined. Spread one-third of the batter in the pan. Chill remaining batter (or spread it in the other two pans, if using).

3. Bake for 20 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool cake in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes. Run knife around cake to loosen. Remove cake from pan; gently

peel off paper. Cool completely on wire rack. If using one pan, wipe it clean and bake two more layers with remaining batter.

4. For frosting: In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and vanilla with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in powdered sugar to reach spreading consistency.

5. To assemble, place one cake layer, bottom side up, on a platter. Spread with about one-third of the frosting. Repeat with another cake layer and another one-third of the frosting. Top with the remaining cake layer, rounded side up, and remaining frosting. Sprinkle with walnuts. Store, covered, in the refrigerator. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: 595 cal, 28 g fat, 77 mg chol, 304 mg sodium, 83 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 6 g pro.



MIRACLE PAN

We made this easy. You can make all our recipes with a single 6-inch springform pan. (Wilton is a reliable brand.) If you discover you love making small cakes, consider buying a set of standard 6-inch round cake pans for baking layer cakes more quickly.

Wee White Layer Cake

With two tender layers and almond-kissed buttercream, this is the stuff birthday memories are made of—just smaller.

HANDS ON 40 minutes

TOTAL 3 hours 15 minutes

- 2 egg whites
- ¼ cup butter or shortening
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- ⅔ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 2⅔ cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk, plus extra if needed
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon almond extract

1. For cake: Let egg whites and ¼ cup butter stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 6-inch springform or round cake pan. Line bottom with parchment paper; grease again. Set aside. (If available, prepare two pans.)

2. In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside. In a medium bowl, beat the ¼ cup room-temperature butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Beat in granulated sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla and ½ teaspoon almond extract. Add egg whites, one at a time, beating well. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk, beating on low speed after each addition just until combined. Spread half the batter in the pan. Chill remaining batter (or spread it in the second pan, if using).

3. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes. Run knife around cake to loosen. Remove cake from pan; gently peel off paper. Cool completely on wire rack. If using one pan, wipe it clean and bake second layer with remaining batter.

4. For frosting: In a medium bowl, beat ¼ cup butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Gradually add 1 cup powdered sugar, beating well. Slowly beat in milk, ½ teaspoon vanilla and ½ teaspoon almond extract. Gradually beat in remaining powdered sugar. If needed, beat in some additional milk to reach spreading consistency.

5. To assemble, place one cake layer, bottom side up, on a platter. Spread with ¼ cup of frosting. Top with second layer, rounded side up. Spread top and sides with remaining frosting. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: 420 cal, 12 g fat, 33 mg chol, 283 mg sodium, 75 g carbo, 4 g pro.

Mini Peach Melba Ice Cream Cake

Crystallized ginger adds unexpected zip to frosty peaches, raspberries and ice cream.

HANDS ON 25 minutes

TOTAL 5 hours 30 minutes

- 1½ cups shortbread cookie crumbs
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 cups vanilla bean ice cream
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh or frozen peaches, plus garnish
- ½ cup fresh raspberries, plus garnish
- 1 tablespoon chopped crystallized ginger

1. For crust: Preheat oven to 350°. Mix together cookie crumbs and melted butter. Press mixture onto the bottom and 1½ inches up the side of a 6-inch springform pan. Bake for 5 to 7 minutes or until set. Cool on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Freeze for 30 minutes.

2. For filling: Transfer ice cream to a large bowl and let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes or until just softened. Gently fold

in peaches, raspberries and ginger. Spoon mixture into frozen crust. Freeze, covered, for 4 hours.

3. To serve, use a thin metal spatula to loosen cake from sides of pan; unmold onto a serving plate. Let stand at room temperature for 20 to 25 minutes to soften slightly. Garnish with peaches and raspberries. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: 364 cal, 23 g fat, 85 mg chol, 208 mg sodium, 37 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.



Tiny Chocolate Torte with Salted Ganache

Say hello to your new sinfully rich dinner-party standby. (Bonus: It's gluten-free.)

HANDS ON 20 minutes

TOTAL 1 hour 15 minutes

- ¼ cup butter
- 4 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons whipping cream
- 1½ ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- Fleur de Sel (sea salt)

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 6-inch springform pan. Line bottom with parchment paper; grease again. Set pan in a 15x10x1-inch baking pan; set aside.

2. In a medium bowl, microwave butter and 4 ounces chocolate on 50% power (medium) in 30-second increments, stirring each time, until mixture is smooth. Set aside.

3. In another bowl, beat eggs and sugar with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 5 minutes; mixture should be light, airy and pale yellow. Beat in vanilla. Fold egg mixture into

chocolate mixture one-third at a time until well combined. Spoon batter into prepared pan.

4. Bake for 17 to 20 minutes or until set. Cool in pan for 30 minutes; unmold onto a platter. Meanwhile, for ganache, bring cream to just boiling in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. (This will happen quickly.) Remove from heat. Add 1½ ounces chocolate, but do not stir. Let stand 5 minutes. Add a pinch of Fleur de Sel. Stir until smooth. Spread ganache on cooled cake. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: 193 cal, 16 g fat, 67 mg chol, 139 mg sodium, 14 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.