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West County Cheesecake with Blackberry Sauce

Prep time: Prep Time: 120 minutes

Servings: 12

“West County” is the affectionate nickname of our Sonoma County valley where the lush green grasses and coastal fog make for world-class dairy and scrumptious summer berries. For a special local cheesecake, we turned to Sonoma County author Michele Anna Jordan, who featured this recipe in her book “A Cook’s Tour of Sonoma (1990, 2000). We used local valley-grown blackberries, as we missed our blueberry season. If berries are not in season, use frozen berries, thawed, instead. Because we’re not afraid to gild the lily, our deliciously lactose-free recipe not only showcases our cream cheese, but also our sour cream, with a thin layer baked on top.

Submitted by Michele Anna Jordan, Sebastopol, CA

Ingredients

Blackberry Sauce

Ingredients:

2 cups fresh in-season blackberries

1/4 cup orange juice

1/4 tsp. ground cloves

1/2 cup dessert wine, such as black muscat (We used Port, and it was divine.)

Cheesecake

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups crushed graham crackers

1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. sugar

1/2 cup Green Valley Creamery Lactose-Free Butter, melted

12 oz. Green Valley Creamery Lactose-Free Cream Cheese, chilled

3 tsp. vanilla extract

4 large eggs, beaten

1 1/2 cups Green Valley Creamery Lactose-Free Sour Cream

Instructions

1. First, make the sauce. Put the blackberries, orange juice, and cloves in the work bowl of a food processor or blender and pulse until smooth. Strain into a clean bowl, stir in the wine, taste, and adjust the consistency and flavor. If the berries are a little tart, add a tablespoon or two of granulated sugar to boost the flavor. If the sauce seems a bit too thin, simmer it on the stovetop awhile, uncovered, to reduce and thicken it. Chill the sauce until ready to serve.
2. Preheat the oven to 325° F. Toss together the graham cracker crumbs and 1/2 cup of the sugar in a medium bowl, drizzle the butter over it, and mix thoroughly. Press the mixture firmly into the bottom and 3/4 inch up the sides of an 8-inch springform pan. Place springform pan on top of a cookie sheet and bake for 10 minutes and set aside to cool.
3. In a medium bowl, mix together the cream cheese, 1/2 cup of the remaining sugar, and 2 tsp. of the vanilla. Fold in the beaten eggs and mix thoroughly. Pour the mixture into the crumb crust and bake (again on a cookie sheet) until the center is just set, about 50 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, combine the sour cream, the remaining 2 Tbsp. of sugar, and remaining 1 tsp. of the vanilla in a small bowl. Spread it over the cheesecake, return to oven, and bake for 15 minutes more. Remove from the oven, let cool to room temperature, cover, and chill thoroughly. To serve, spoon sauce onto individual dessert plates, slice the cheesecake into wedges, set a wedge on top of the sauce and serve immediately.