

Raspberry & White Chocolate Cheesecake

recipe by Jeff Baldwin

Crust

1 9-oz package chocolate wafer cookies, coarsely broken
6 Tb (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, melted

Filling

12-oz package frozen unsweetened raspberries, thawed, juices reserved
6 oz good-quality white chocolate, finely chopped

4 8-oz packages cream cheese, room temperature

1 1/3 C sugar

2 Tb flour

4 large eggs

2 Tb whipping cream

2 tsp vanilla extract

1/2 tsp almond extract

White chocolate curls (optional)

For Crust: Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Butter 9-inch diameter spring form pan with 3-inch high sides. Double-wrap outside of pan with heavy-duty aluminum foil.

Place cookies in food processor and blend until coarse crumbs form. Add butter and process until evenly moistened. Press crumb mixture firmly onto bottom and halfway up sides of prepared pan. Bake crust 8 minutes; cool on rack.

For filling: Press raspberries and juices through a fine strainer into a small bowl. Measure 1/2 C puree for filling (reserve remaining puree for another use).

Stir white chocolate in a small metal bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water until just melted and smooth; set aside.

Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese and sugar in a large bowl until smooth and fluffy. Beat in flour, then eggs, 1 at a time. Beat in whipping cream and vanilla. Transfer 2 1/4 C batter to a medium bowl; stir in melted white chocolate. Stir reserved 1/2 C raspberry puree and almond extract into remaining batter in large bowl.

Pour raspberry batter into prepared crust; place spring form pan in a large roasting pan. Pour enough hot water into roasting pan to come 1-inch up sides of pan. Bake until raspberry filling is softly set in the center and beginning to puff at the edges, about 50 minutes. Remove roasting pan from oven; let raspberry layer cool 5 minutes to firm slightly.

Starting at edge of pan, spoon white chocolate batter in circles onto raspberry layer. Smooth top. Bake until white chocolate filling is set in center, about 30 minutes. Refrigerate cake uncovered until cold, at least 4 hours. (Can be prepared 2 days ahead; cover and keep refrigerated.)

Cut around pan sides with small knife to loosen cheesecake; release sides. Garnish cheesecake with white chocolate curls, if desired.

Makes 12 servings.