

No-Bake Melon Cheesecake Bars

By Eric Kim

YIELD 16 bars

TIME 20 minutes, plus 6 hours' chilling

Reminiscent of creamy, honeydew-scented Korean ice cream bars, this no-bake cheesecake leans into a fruit flavor that hasn't had enough time in the sun: melon. Here, fresh cantaloupe purées into a smooth, fluffy pulp that sets into cheesecake, thanks to gelatin. Where the thick, salty-sweet base layer of buttery crackers will satisfy the crust lovers out there, the creamy, soft-set filling will change minds about what melon can truly do. Though the final drizzle of honey is optional, its floral taste works beautifully with the cantaloupe.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CRUST:

9 ½ ounces/269 grams graham crackers (about 18 whole crackers)

½ cup/115 grams unsalted butter, melted

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

½ teaspoon kosher salt (Diamond Crystal)

FOR THE FILLING:

2 (1/4-ounce/7-gram) packets powdered gelatin (about 5 teaspoons)

1 ¼ pounds/566 grams peeled cantaloupe, diced (about 3 cups)

1 (8-ounce/226-gram) package cream cheese, at room temperature

½ cup/100 grams granulated sugar

¼ teaspoon kosher salt (Diamond Crystal)

½ cup/120 milliliters heavy whipping cream

Honey, for drizzling (optional)

PREPARATION

Step 1

Prepare the crust: Place the graham crackers in a resealable plastic bag. Close the bag and, using a rolling pin, heavy can or other blunt object, crush the graham crackers into a coarse rubble. To the bag, add the melted butter, sugar and salt, and mix thoroughly.

Step 2

Transfer the crumbs to an 8- or 9-inch square baking pan and press into the bottom of the pan with your hands, forming a thick, sturdy base. Place in the freezer to set while you make the filling.

Step 3

Make the filling: In a small bowl or measuring cup, stir together 1/4 cup cold tap water and the gelatin. Let sit to bloom. Meanwhile, use a blender to purée the cantaloupe, cream cheese, sugar and salt until smooth.

Step 4

Heat the cream in a small saucepan on the stovetop over medium until simmering at the edges or in a small bowl in the microwave until hot to the touch, 45 to 60 seconds on high. Add the bloomed gelatin to the hot cream and stir vigorously until smooth. Transfer the cream to the blender and blend with the cantaloupe until smooth.

Step 5

Take the pan out of the freezer and pour the filling over the graham cracker crust. Cover and refrigerate until set, at least 6 hours or up to overnight. Cut into bars and serve, drizzled with honey, if you like.

PRIVATE NOTES

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