

## The Hansen Girls Cheesecake

This is my favorite cheesecake. It is plain and simple with a slight lemon and almond flavor—not overpowering at all. The texture is soft and creamy, not dry and cakey. The crust is my own variation on the standard graham cracker crumb crust. I got the recipe from my friend Pat, who got it from her daughters. Unfortunately, Pat passed away a while ago and I think of her whenever I make one of her recipes.

Note: I recently updated this recipe with a few changes. I think it's even better now. Enjoy!

1. Place a rack in the middle of your oven and preheat to 350°.
2. Butter liberally a 9 inch springform pan.
3. Line the bottom of the pan with a round of parchment paper or wax paper.
4. Dust the sides with graham cracker crumbs (about ¼ cup—dump out the extra).
5. Mix together the following dry ingredients then mix in the melted butter. Press into the bottom of the springform pan.
  - 2 cups of graham cracker crumbs
  - 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
  - 1 tablespoon cinnamon
  - Pinch of salt
  - 1/2 cup roughly chopped pecans
  - 2/3 cup melted butter (unsalted)
6. Bake the crust on a sheet pan for 10 minutes. This cheesecake will be drippy by the time it is finished so you really need to bake this on a sheet pan. Set it aside while you make the filling.
7. Using your favorite mixing device cream together all of the following ingredients until smooth. Spoon into the springform pan and flatten out. You don't have to make it perfectly flat. Just be sure it is evenly distributed in the pan.
  - 2 pounds cream cheese (that's 4, 8 ounce packages)—it's easier if these are at room temperature
  - 2 eggs
  - 1 cup granulated sugar
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
  - 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
8. Bake for 30 minutes.
9. While you are baking the cake, mix these ingredients in the same bowl you used for the cheesecake. You can even scrape up any cheesecake leftovers in the bowl and mix into these ingredients.
  - 2 cups sour cream
  - 3/4 cup granulated sugar
  - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
  - 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
10. Spread the sour cream mixture over the cake and bake it for another 10 minutes.
11. Take the cake out of the oven and let it rest for 15 minutes then refrigerate for at least 2 hours before eating.